



Research Paper

Consumer Behavior and Buying Practices in Tier 1,2,3 Cities of India

Tanmay Maka

Degloor college, Degloor

Abstract

The Indian market is one of the most clustered markets and typically one of the hardest markets to crack. In this paper, I have analyzed 20 different research papers and to the best of my knowledge tried to merge the results into a single research paper. The paper will help the reader better understand the consumer mindset and factors considered by them during shopping. I have as well described the themes which influence the consumer like Frictionless Checkout, Supply Chain, Forecasting Sales, Consumer Analytics, Consumer Buying Behaviors, Product Assortment, Path Data, Social Media Data, Outlet Size, and Relation With Shopkeepers. Is it viable that the product would sustain? Or how can a product owner manipulate consumers and mold them to purchase it? What are those molds? What factors are considered by consumers during shopping? All these questions are attempted to be answered in this paper in one of the easiest terminologies so as to make everyone understand each word of it. This paper would be helping different companies who are selling or planning to sell the product/service in India along with the researchers who are researching more on this topic.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior, Business, Selling, Market

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AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to understand Consumer Behavior and Buying Practices of people in tier 1,2,3 cities

I. INTRODUCTION

Willing to open a new business in India or want to sell your product or service in India but unsure about its niche market or the market size? This is a question that anyone would have in a country of 130 cr people, few will also have myths of having all 130 cr as their market audience but that's not eventually possible. So to answer this question, the research paper has been published. Various factors are considered while researching are 1) Purchasing Capacity of People 2) Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3 People Distribution 3) Commodity Distinction like a Necessity, Worthy or Luxury 4) Availability of Products 5) Ease of Getting 6) Marketing 7) Advertising Campaign. All these factors will help any business forecast their sales and indirectly help maintain stock, supply chain, and handling easier. The intent of this paper is to provide a review of the way in which this explosion of data is impacting forecasting. So as to understand, we will focus on "consumer analytics" by using data driven technology to get insight into consumer buying behaviors. For the purposes of this review, we focus on "consumer analytics" from a forecasting perspective, encompassing a set of data-driven techniques that provide insights into consumer buying behaviors. The better a firm understands its customers' buying behaviors, the more accurate its demand forecasts will be, which in turn helps it to plan and execute supply chain operations more efficiently. In this paper, we provide a systematic review of the most recent economic literature on buying practices and consumer behavior and their impact on firms, consumers, and markets. Our goal is to provide a unified picture of the potential impact of data analytics and trends on different businesses in tiers 1,2,3. By doing so, this paper aims to provide the trends that are showcased by consumers while shopping and help the reader understand the consumer mindset in a better way. we aim at providing a new perspective that could help scholars to move ahead from the fragmented state of the recent, but rapidly expanding literature and to develop more cumulative knowledge, particularly in those directions that are more conducive to inform the businesses.

Business

In this paper we have defined business in the following ways: Business can be said to be an economic activity that is related to continuous and regular production and distribution of goods and services for satisfying human wants. (Needle & Burns,2010) According to David Needle(2010), a business is the organized activity or effort of individuals to produce and provide goods and services to meet the needs of society.

Niche market

In this paper, we have defined the Niche market in the following ways. Niche market is highly popular among academics and practitioners as well as considered to be an important tool for any business. Niche marketing is a popular concept among academics and practitioners and is commonly accepted as an important tool in the marketer's toolbox today. Indeed, niche marketing has been applied to a variety of industries, products, and services over the last couple of decades, such as food products (Tregear, 2003; Suryanata, 2000; Tamagnini and Tregear, 1998); Saperstein, 1994); retailing (Ashworth et al., 2006; Heim and Sinha, 2005; Azuma and Fernie, 2001); fashion, textile, and apparel (Parrish et al., 2004, 2006a, b; Doeringer and Crean, 2006); banking (Cocheo, 2010; Dusuki and Abdullah, 2007); accounting services

(Lowry and Wrege, 1996); health services (Reichman, 2005; Volz, 1999); chemical industry (Guisinger and Ghorashi, 2004); and metropolitan regions (Filion et al., 2004). [Toeften et al.,2013]. A small market which is not being served by any competing product (Keegan et.al., 1992). A small market that is not served by competing products.” (Keegan et.al., 1992)

Consumer Behavior

In this paper, we have defined consumer behavior in the following ways. a) Consumer behavior is the study of how people buy, what they buy when they buy and why they buy. (Kotler, 1994). The behavior which is displayed by consumers during searching, purchasing, using, evaluating, disposing of products and services, which will satisfy their need. b) “the behavior that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs” (Schiffman, 2007)

1.5 Tier 1,2,3

In this paper we have defined tier 1,2,3 in the following ways i) In India cities that are part of tier-1 are Delhi and NCR, Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad; key cities that are part of tier-2 are like Agra, Ajmer, Aligarh, Amritsar, Asansol, Aurangabad, Bareilly, Bhavnagar, Bhiwandi, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Bikaner, Salem, Tiruchirappalli, Chandigarh, Coimbatore, Cuttack, Dehradun, Dhanbad, Erode, Gwalior, Durgapur, Faridabad, Firozabad, Ghaziabad, Gulbarga, Guntur, Guwahati, Hubli-Dharwad, Indore, Jabalpur, Jaipur, Jalandhar, Jammu, Jamnagar, Jamshedpur, Jhansi, Jodhpur, Kannur, Kakinada, Kochi, Kota, Kozhikode, Kurnool, Lucknow, Ludhiana, Madurai, Malappuram, Mathura, Mangalore, Meerut, Moradabad, Mysore, Nagpur, Nanded, Nashik, Nellore, Pune, Palakkad, Patna, Pondicherry, Raipur, Rajkot, Siliguri, Rajahmundry, Ranchi, Rourkela, Srinagar, Thrissur, Tirunelveli, Tirupur, Tiruvannamalai, Ujjain, Vadodara, Varanasi, Vellore, Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam, Vasai-Virar City, Warangal and New Mumbai; all other cities are part of tier-3 (ganesha & Aithal, 2020)

1.6 consumer analytics

In this paper, we have defined consumer analytics in the following ways that part of the CRM system involves the systematic collection, warehousing, analysis, and deployment of customer data (Marsella et al., 2005) Customer analytics is a robust procedure to manage today's ever-changing customers in the data-rich environment (Sun et al., 2014)

1.7 data analytics

In this paper, we have defined data analytics in the following ways: Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data. (Marshall and Rossman,1999) It is the activity of making sense of, interpreting, and theorizing data that signifies a search for general statements among categories of data (Schwandt, 2007)

1.3 Procedure

I have reviewed 20 research papers from authors all over the world on the topic of Consumer behavior, and buying practices in tier 1,2,3 cities in India 15-20 papers that I would be reviewing are taken from the research papers of authors from all over the world on the topic of Consumer behavior, and buying practices in tier 1,2,3 cities on India. In this, This research papers included the participants that would usually be of age around 23-45 and majorly belonging from the middle-class background from different tier 1,2,3 cities in India. The reason behind choosing these papers is that they exclusively had all the necessary data which I was looking forward to in the calculation of niche markets and buying patterns of the common public. I started using Google

scholar and started looking especially for the paper which had data on the topic which I was going to study about. The papers helped me in finding themes influencing a consumer's mindset. These papers made a clearer way for me in sorting out the essential factors considered by a consumer while making a purchase. I used key phrases like buying pattern, tier 1,2,3, buying trend in India, and spending pattern of the common man and I found a lot of papers that were similar to what I was looking out and after thoroughly looking over the papers I separated this for use in my research paper. The reason behind choosing this topic was to clear the myth which was very popularly growing among the young generation typically 12-17 years that we could start any startup or business in India and there is a 100% chance that it would become successful because of the huge population of 130cr, but it was very much needed to let them know that not every person from 130cr could be your target audience for your specific products. These paper as well dismisses the common trend showcased my majority that India having a massive population will lead to our product success While researching I further got to know that this myth isn't only based in India but several foreigners believe the same to make things clear and help them in getting an overview of the market I started writing this research paper

II. RESULTS

Themes	Definitions	Empirical evidence 1	Empirical Evidence 2
Frictionless Checkout	Self-checkout and minimally-assisted POS kiosks reduce lines and increase the checkout speed.	In this paper authors have discussed the benefits of forecasting sales and different methods used for it & how data could help us get insights about the consumer analytics and organizational forecasting. He has also talked about the frictionless checkout where he explains about quick checkout and lesser number of steps involved, leading to a positive outlook towards sale.	Howard Li (2018) has shared his thoughts over frictionless checkout development, its benefits with the example of Amazon go. In this paper he also talks about the loss aversion factor which would be reduced by frictionless checkout additionally he talks about lack of friction directly leading to increased efficiency in shopping.
Supply Chain	Supply chain activities are the activities about sourcing, making and distributing products.	(Boone et al., 2019) has highly emphasized on supply chain to be critical part of any business due to increase in customer expectations, shortening lead times, and the need to manage scarce resource.	(Haddud et al., 2020) discusses the digitizing supply chain leading to overall improvements in business performance by better visualization and traceability as well as the more accurate process and responsive to change better inventory management and control, accurate error identification and better maintenance predictions, better supplier/customer participation, and improved overall business performance effectiveness.
forecasting sales	A sales forecast is a projection of future sales revenue and a prediction of which deals will move through the sales cycle	Boone et al. (2019) have talked about the forecasting sales as an important factor for management of supply chain which could be done by the consumer analytics and using different data to predict the overall demand	(Makridakis et al., 2020) have described systematic forecasting as the use of appropriate quantitative method while the necessary data are available
Consumer analytics	That part of the CRM system that involves the systematic collection, warehousing, analysis and deployment of customer data.	Boone et al., (2019) emphasizes on consumer analytics by talking about a) point of sales b) in store data c)in store data d) google trends and its significance in buying behavior.	(Erevelles et al., 2016) have defined consumer analytics as the epicenter of a Big Data revolution, additionally showcased the method to use the rich and plentiful data on consumer phenomena in real time. He further states that Data provides behavior insights about consumers as well as market translated those insights into market advantage
consumer buying behaviors	Consumer behavior is the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and all the activities associated with the purchase, use and disposal of goods and services.	Authors states that a better a company would understand its consumer buying behaviors, the better it would be at forecasting the demand and managing the supply chain.	Run Srisawat & Joemsittiprasert, 2019 showcase that there are many factors determining buying behaviors in online shopping few direct and few inverse like security, privacy & trust have a direct relationship on the other hand perceived risk have inverse relationship.
product assortment	It is the allocation of inventory at the store as per the planning.	The authors state that merging product assortment with sales transactions will provide us with a complete picture of customers' choice process.	(Simonson,1999) writes in his paper that retailers would have an edge in the near future for influencing preferences specially the internet and the use of agents in identifying options can make it easier to influence buyer preferences based on assortment.

path data	position of product display, its distance and position from the entry.	The researchers accentuated that path information helps the retailer in detecting consumer interest and to position inventory closer to customers.	Hui et al., 2009 affirmed that path data has valuable information for marketing, as they showcase the interaction between the consumer and environment and help in making dynamic choices.
social media data	Collecting data from the trends showcased in different social media apps and predicting sales.	The authors highlight that in Social media more people share their experiences that to in real time, leading to inform the consumers of the data as well as help in shaping their decision.	(Townsend & Wallace, 2016) researchers say that social media provides us a environment of a greater ability to access a larger population and one could as well find the people from geographical limitations.
outlet size	It's the size of the shop and the no of products capacity.	(Dholakia et al., 2018) In this research authors compare the sales of a supermarket with a local kirana store and discuss the factors involved in the sales. In this paper the authors describe the size of outlet too plays a crucial role in sales of a product (how does it play a role).	Howe & Dugard (1993) believes that outlet size plays a vital role but coordinating with certain factors like geographical location and other dimensions of their trading formulae.
relation with shopkeeper	The relationships that a business has with its customers and the way in which it treats them.	Here the authors suggest that there is a critical role of shopkeepers in shoppers' journey as the consumer prefers 'counter service' more than 'self-service'.	Gupta & Tondon (2013) have also showcased that 88% of people's decisions were based on relation with the shopkeeper.

III. Discussion

The study aims to find consumer behavior and buying practices of people in tier 1,2,3 cities. I have collected multiple research papers and after a thorough analysis, I have given my verdict over it. We have used the themes derived from the Analysis as follows

a. Frictionless Checkout.

Self-checkout and minimally-assisted POS kiosks reduce lines and increase the checkout speed. Example 1:- Boone et al., (2019) in this paper authors have discussed the benefits of forecasting sales and different methods used for it & how data could help us get insights about consumer analytics and organizational forecasting. he has also talked about the frictionless checkout where he explains about quick checkout and the lesser number of steps involved, leading to a positive outlook towards the sale. Example 2:- Howard Li (2018) has shared his thoughts on frictionless checkout development, and its benefits with the example of Amazon go. In this paper, he also talks about the loss aversion factor which would be reduced by frictionless checkout additionally he talks about lack of friction directly leading to increased efficiency in shopping. Customers are annoyed by big lines while checkout. The retention period has brought a new question about the patience of customers. Due to ongoing circumstances there arose a lack of patience. The new demand for quick checkout has certainly increased leading to the development of frictionless checkout which is considered to be a brilliant move as it would make shopping unique and quite hustle-free.

b. Supply chain

Supply chains are the activities of sourcing, making, and distributing products Example 1:- Boone et al., (2019) emphasizes consumer analytics by talking about a) point of sales b) in-store data c) in-store data d) google trends and their significance in buying behavior. Example 2:- (Haddud et al., 2020) discuss the digitizing supply chain leading to overall improvements in business performance through better visualization and traceability as well as a more accurate process and responsiveness to change, better inventory management and control, accurate error identification, and better maintenance predictions, better supplier/customer participation, and improved overall business performance effectiveness. Does managing efficient inventory help in sales is a point argued for a long time and I believe that it is very much necessary for managing one business needs to have an excellent supply chain as it would help us keep the update of likes and dislikes of the customers additionally it would keep a check over all the items present.

c. forecasting sales.

A sales forecast is a projection of future sales revenue and a prediction of which deals will move through the sales cycle. Example 1:- Boone et al. (2019) have talked about forecasting sales as an important factor for the management of the supply chain which could be done by consumer analytics and using different data to predict the overall demand. Example 2:- (Makridakis et al., 2020) have described systematic forecasting as the use of appropriate quantitative methods while the necessary data are available. Forecasting sales is a key factor in business. As it would always help us manage inventory and get ready with demand. One could use this technique very efficiently and get the best out of it. Supposedly there is a festival called la Tomatina so one could predict that the demand for tomatoes is going to go up severely, same goes for our day-to-day life products which would enable business owners to be ready.

d. Consumer analytics.

That part of the CRM system involves the systematic collection, warehousing, analysis, and deployment of customer data. Example 1:- Boone et al., (2019) emphasizes consumer analytics by talking about a) point of sales b) in-store data c) in-store data d) google trends and their significance in buying behavior. Example 2:- (Erevelles et al., 2016) have defined consumer analytics as the epicenter of a Big Data revolution, additionally showcased the method to use the rich and plentiful data on consumer phenomena in real-time. He further states that Data provides behavior insights about consumers as well as market translated those insights into market advantage. Consumer analytics is directly related to the sales of a product. If one has all the necessary data which would enable them to get an overview, sales will help in predicting product sales in a specific time interval which would lead to better inventory, and hence chances of expiration of a product decrease. Suppose in a hypothetical case in an ice cream shop sales are way too high for vanilla flavored ice cream in summer and negligible in winter so the business could use this data and have better inventory management.

e. Consumer buying behaviors.

Supply chain activities are the activities about sourcing, making, and distributing products. Example 1:- Boone et al., (2019) state that the better a company would understand its consumer buying behaviors, the better it would be at forecasting the demand and managing the supply chain. Example 2:- Run Srisawat & Joemsitti Prasert, (2019) showcase that there are many factors determining buying behaviors in online shopping, few direct and few inverses like security, privacy & trust have a direct relationship on the other hand perceived risk has an inverse relationship. Consumer buying behavior helps a lot in marketing, and product placement. There is a very unique pattern followed by customers in buying a specific product and studying this is called consumer buying behaviors. Cracking the observation is quite a moderate-level task. It could be done with close observation and once it's done shopkeepers target the same sentiment and promote the remaining products leading to higher sales and higher profit.

f. Product assortment

It is the allocation of inventory at the store as per the planning. Example 1:- Boone et al., (2019) state that merging product assortment with sales transactions will provide us with a complete picture of customers' choice process. Example 2:- Simonson, (1999) writes in his paper that retailers would have an edge in the near future for influencing preferences, especially on the internet and the use of agents in identifying options can make it easier to influence buyer preferences based on assortment. Product assortment helps customers in finding the product quickly and more efficiently and thus leading to satisfaction of the same. Sorting out the products and arranging them separately not only helps customers but also the shopkeeper as it would make it convenient for shoppers and hustle-free for shop owners to track the inventory of a product. A classic example of this is a pharmacist, he can find any medicines in a fraction of a second saving both customers and his time.

g. path data

position of product display, its distance, and position from the entry. Example 1:- the researchers Boone et al., (2019) emphasized that path information helps the retailer detect consumer interest and position inventory closer to customers. Example 2:- Hui et al., (2009) affirmed that path data has valuable information for marketing, as they showcase the interaction between the consumer and environment and helps in making dynamic choices. Front desk product sales are tentatively higher if the same product is kept somewhere in the corner. There has been a lot of research on the topic and it is found that the product kept on the shelf is usually observed by the customers leading to the potential sale of the same. This is a very common strategy used by the shop owners as they keep the products on the front shelf which are close to expiration and one common method followed is to put back the new inventory in the backside of the inventory of products with expiration closer indirectly saving business owners from loss.

h. social media data

Collect data from the trends showcased in different social media apps and predict sales. Example 1:- Boone et al., (2019) highlight that in Social media more people share their experiences in real-time leading to informing the consumers of the data as well as helping in shaping their decision. Example 2:- (Townsend & Wallace, 2016) researchers say that social media provides us with a greater ability to access a larger population and one could as well find people from geographical limitations. Social media helps out predicting sales and find the trends of customer shopping lists directly helping in keeping a better inventory available. The best example would be the time during the corona outbreak in India when the dalgona coffee trend was broken. Every 2nd person was trying to make the same, and the shopkeepers who saw the trend were able to maintain the stock of fresh cream and coffee powder, leading to good sales.

i. outlet size

It's the size of the shop and the product capacity. Example 1:- (Dholakia et al., 2018) In this research authors compare the sales of a supermarket with a local Kirana store and discuss the factors involved in the sales. Example 2:- Howe & Dugard (1993) believes that outlet size plays a vital role by coordinating with certain factors like geographical location and other dimensions of their trading formulae. Outlet size has a psychological effect on the mindset of consumers behind potentially being able to find the specific product in the shop. It is commonly considered that an outlet with a bigger size would have a larger inventory and several options to choose from so consumers trying to find a new product would tend to prefer an outlet with a bigger size. An Example which would be the best for the situation would suppose a consumer is looking for new types of chocolate to try he would surely look for a chocolate shop or retail shop which tends to have a bigger rather than the regular outlet present nearby.

j. relation with shopkeeper

The relationships that a business has with its customers and the way in which they treat them. Example 1:- Here the authors suggest that there is a critical role of shopkeepers in shoppers' journey as the consumer prefers 'counter service' more than 'self-service'. Example 2:- Gupta & Tondon (2013) have also showcased that 88% of people's decisions were based on the relationship with the shopkeeper. Consumers are emotionally attached to shop owners. It either could be a psychological bond or the convenience factor in shopping. We are more comfortable shopping from the same shop and as well as we get more connected with shop attendants or shop owners. One of the important factors here would also be the convenience of counter service as in this case we are more relaxed and our workload is reduced. The best example here would be a person who has specific items to be purchased with a list ready with him, he would handover the list to the owner and the owner will sort out the items and provide those to the consumers this method is much more convenient and time-saving and several times these shops are close to our homes so the owner usually also provides us with the option of free delivery leading to again a lot of convenience and saving of our time .

IV. Conclusion

Consumer buying pattern is a trend that is commonly found in consumers while shopping, the study of this topic makes it easier for sellers as well as researchers to understand the consumer buying patterns and thus increase sales.

Here in this research paper, I aim to showcase the common trends or patterns followed by the general public in tier 1,2,3 of India during their shopping and showcase how this pattern affects their buying decisions. For this, I read 20 research papers and summarized the best of my knowledge in this paper. For doing this research I used the method of qualitative analysis and collected different research papers which were similar to my aim. The themes which I found to be very supportive of my paper are a. frictionless checkout b. Supply chain c. Forecasting sales d. Consumer analytics e. Product assortment f. Consumer buying behavior g. Path data h. social media data i. Outlet size j. Relation with the shopkeeper. These themes gave me an overall perspective of the consumer mindset during their shopping experience. This topic is specifically on the tier 1,2,3 cities in India, which isn't covered by many researchers and hence there is very limited research available on this. As a result, it is advised to have better and broader research on this topic.

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