CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS,
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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

7.1. Introduction

The growth of supermarkets in India is remarkable in the past one decade. However, the market remains quite fragmented, yet organized retail has made impressive gains in ten years. Regulatory challenges prevented many retailers from entering, while others were forced into the unfamiliar stance of entering the country with a partner. Despite the hurdles, many Indian corporate heavy weights commenced their outlets in different formats at many urban centres and they could register a favourable result. But such giants yet to spread their operations at smaller cities like Tirunelveli.

Supermarkets should acquaint with the retail business trend of a particular place before they start their retail operations. The success of a supermarket depends on many factors and among various factors, store attributes of a supermarket are important. This study is an attempt to understand the perception of buyers towards the supermarket in Tirunelveli District.

In this research work, the factors that influence the buyers’ perception on supermarket and their buying behaviour have been examined. In addition to this, demographic profile of buyers in supermarket and their levels of satisfaction have also been analysed. This chapter summates the facts unearthed through the theoretical and empirical analyses in the following pages.
7.2. Lead findings

This research work is an empirical study based on the primary data collected from the buyers in supermarket. Prior to the empirical analysis, adequate theoretical analyses have been made. In order to make better analysis the study was categorised into three phases. The first phase of the analytical portion deals with the demographic profile of the buyers. The second phase dealt with the buying process and attitude of buyers towards the supermarket and the last section examined the perception of buyers, retail service quality in supermarket and level of satisfaction of buyers. The lead findings of both theoretical as well as empirical analyses have been given below.

7.2.1. Summation of the theoretical frame work on supermarkets

This phase took stock of the conceptual background related to supermarkets. It covered various types of retail formats which lead to the growth and history of supermarket. In addition, current trend on supermarket both at global and Indian level, and relevant literature on the concept of supermarket have been overviewed. It also focussed on the growth and status of supermarket in the Tirunelveli District. The following information has been observed from the theoretical review.

- Expenditure on food and grocery constitutes a major share among the total consumption expenditure of Indian consumers.
- Consumption expenditure of Indian consumers has increased in the past few years.
The share of organised retail among total retail trade is more than 70 percent in developed countries but in India it is only 5 percent.

The concept of supermarket was originated before 150 years in the form of self-service chain stores.

The concept of supermarket was originated in United States of America.

Nilgiris is the first supermarket started in India and it is considered as the pioneer which started its self-service mode of retail format in India, in Tamil Nadu.

The PDS (Public Distribution System) in India paved the way for the spread of supermarket concept, but it could not sustain.

In India the concept of supermarket regained since 1970 and in the last one decade there is a tremendous growth on supermarket.

In India steady growth is recorded on the retail sector.

At global level, India performs well on retail sector as in the past six years it stands in the top position on retail growth.

In Tamil Nadu the concept of supermarket grows steadily.

In Tirunelveli District the concept of supermarket is in nascent stage.

Many supermarkets have been closed in the recent years particularly in Tirunelveli Municipal Corporation area.
7.2.2. **Demographic profile of the buyers in supermarket**

In the study of buyer behaviour, demographic factors play a dominant role as they are closely associated with the buying behaviour. The demographic variables are many, but all the variables do not influence the buying behaviour. In this study, important demographic variables such as gender, nature of living place, age, occupational status, marital status, educational qualification, monthly income of the family and type of family have been taken for analysis. These variables were analysed with factors such as the monthly expenses on provisions, periodicity of shopping in supermarket, type of buyer, frequency of buying in supermarket, preferred supermarket, extend of buying in supermarket and other factors. The continuing pages provide the lead findings of demographic profile of the buyers in supermarket in Tirunelveli District.

- Almost equal representation has been given to male and female respondents. However, dominant gender among the respondents is the male (52.7 percent) irrespective of nature of living place; whereas female buyers represent 47.3 percent.

- Majority of the buyers in supermarket falls between the age group of 26 – 35 years. Thus it is inferred that middle age group buyers show better patronage towards supermarket.

- Homemakers provide a stronger patronage towards supermarket; however, analysis from the occupational angle
shows that salaried class people evince more patronage than other classes.

- Married buyers prefer supermarkets than the unmarried buyers.
- More than 90 percent of the buyers in supermarket are educated.
- Upper middle income group buyers are the dominant buyers in supermarket in Tirunelveli District.
- Buyers belong to nuclear family in the case of urban area and buyers belong to joint family type in the case of non-urban area show a good patronage towards supermarket in Tirunelveli District.
- Buyers belong to small family shows more patronage towards supermarkets than large family buyers.
- Supermarkets gain more patronage from the buyers living in own house than the buyers living in leased or rented houses.
- Majority of the buyers in the supermarket do not own car.
- The average monthly purchase in a supermarket falls between ₹ 2,000 and 3,000 per month and it varies by ₹ 1,000 to 2,000 depending on the area. The mean purchases of the urban, semi-urban and rural buyers are ₹ 3,044, ₹ 2,436 and ₹ 3,377 respectively. The average purchases in supermarket in Tirunelveli District is ₹ 2,861. This analysis shows that the
mean purchases of rural buyers are higher than the buyers of other areas.

- There is no association between the average monthly purchases and the demographic variables such as age and marital status. However, demographic variables such as gender, nature of living place, occupational status, educational status, monthly family income, family type and family size are associated with the average monthly purchases of buyers in supermarket.

- Majority of the buyers in supermarket are regular buyers. In Tirunelveli District, 67.9 percent of semi-urban buyers and 68.4 percent of rural buyers and 61.8 percent of urban buyers are regular buyers in a supermarket. It is clear that semi-urban and rural buyers are more regular than urban buyers.

- Income, family type, family size, type of residence and average monthly expenses on provisions are the dominant forces which decide the type of buyer to a supermarket.

- Major purchase in supermarket occurs in the first week of a month.

- Size of a family and the average monthly expense on provisions are the important factors that decide the periodicity of shopping in a supermarket.

- Buyers visit supermarkets once in a fortnight.
The frequency of buying in a supermarket is determined by the demographic variables such as gender, age, and educational qualification and other variables do not influence the frequency of visit to a supermarket.

In Tirunelveli Municipal Corporation area, majority of buyers patronize Aryas supermarket. In Tenkasi, the supermarket preferred by the respondents is Nellai supermarket, in Ambasamuthuram area, Akshaya supermarket is the most preferred supermarket, in Sankarankovil area, Gomathi supermarket is preferred and in Vallioor area, widely preferred supermarket among the respondents is Akshay supermarket.

In the case of semi-urban areas, buyers patronize supermarkets in their respective areas and they do not prefer supermarkets located at urban area. In the case of rural areas, buyers patronize supermarkets located in the nearby urban and semi-urban areas. Thus there exists area-centric buying attitude.

While analysing the influence of demographic variable on the preference of a supermarket it is computed that nature of living place, occupational position and family type, influence the preference of a particular supermarket.

In Tirunelveli District, majority of the buyers do not patronize more than one supermarket at a time. It shows that the buyers have a closer affinity of mindset towards a supermarket in which they buy.
Buyers know about supermarkets on their own intuition. Beyond own intuition, buyers gather information about supermarkets from non-sponsored sources such as friends, relatives and family members. This depicts that supermarkets did not effectively utilise sponsored medium such as advertisements, window display and the like.

In Tirunelveli District, the period of patronage towards supermarkets is moderate and it lies between 6 months to 2 years. Semi-urban and rural buyers have longer period of patronage than the urban buyers.

While analysing the factors that influence the period of patronage towards supermarket, it was found that income group, average monthly purchases and preferred supermarket influence the period of patronage.

Week end days are the most preferred days for shopping in a supermarket by the buyers of Tirunelveli District. Sunday is the widely preferred day for shopping by the buyers.

Nature of living place is the dominant factor in preferring a particular day for shopping in a supermarket.

While seeking the opinion of urban and semi-urban buyers, Sunday is the best day for shopping in a supermarket, but in the opinion of rural buyers, Saturday is the best day for shopping. Mostly buyers prefer to shop in a day which they consider as the best day.
Irrespective of the nature of living place of the respondents, buyers prefer to buy in the evening time i.e. after 5 p.m.

The demographic variables such as gender, nature of living place, age, occupational status, educational status, income group and average monthly expenses on provisions determine the preference of a particular time.

In the opinion of the buyers, the best time for shopping in a supermarket is after 5 p.m. in all areas.

In Tirunelveli District the most preferred mode of transport to visit a supermarket is two wheelers. Less than one fifth of the buyers prefer motor car to visit supermarket.

7.2.3. Findings on the buying process and the attitude of buyers towards the supermarket

The second part of the study analysed the factors that influence the buying behaviour of buyers in supermarket. This section analyses the reason for buying in supermarket, frequency of purchase at supermarket and time spent in supermarket. In addition, perception of buyers on the location of supermarket, possession of membership card, trend in purchases, comparison of quality and price of commodities in supermarket with small retail grocery shops and purchase of private brand from supermarket were analysed. The following pages provide the prominent findings.
Antecedents or reasons for buying in supermarkets have been examined on 22 important reasons related to the supermarket with the help of mean scores and ‘F’ statistics. The quality of the merchandise, wide varieties of commodities, good internal store layout, offering of discounts and availability of all commodities without shortage were the major reasons for buying in supermarket in Tirunelveli District.

While making the area-wise analysis on the reason for buying in supermarket, it was found that among the urban buyers, quality of the merchandise, availability of all commodities without shortage, good internal store layout, all commodities under one roof, ambience of the supermarket and offer of discounts are the major reasons for buying in a supermarket.

Among semi-urban buyers, wide varieties of commodities in supermarket, quality of the products, good internal store layout, availability of all commodities without shortage, and mega size of the supermarket are the important reasons for buying in supermarket. Among rural buyers, quality of the merchandise, wide varieties of commodities, and offer of discounts are the major reasons for buying in a supermarket.

In order to know the relationship between the place of residence and the reasons for buying in supermarket F-test was applied. In that analysis it was found that there is a relationship between the place of residence and the reasons such as quality
of the commodities, offer of discount, internal store layout, providing sales offers, behaviour of the employees and assistance of employees. It was concluded from both from the mean scores and the F-test results that quality of the commodities, offer of discounts and internal store layout are the important reasons for buying in a supermarket.

In order to narrow down the twenty-two reasons into important factors for buying in supermarket, the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) has been administered. This was done after ensuring the sufficiency, suitability and validity of data for factor analysis with the help of Kaiser-Meyer Ohlin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. The executed EFA clustered the twenty-two observed reasons into six latent reasons for buying in supermarket, such as merchandise, tangibility, service, accessibility, promotional measures and staff behaviour.

All the six latent reasons have been tested with the help of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) in order to know the reliability and validity of variables in each latent reason. The CFA provided that all the six latent reasons are clearly explained by their respective variables. Thus the identified six latent reasons are confirmed.

Among various reasons for patronising supermarket, reasons such as merchandise and service offered by supermarket differ
Among the buyers of different places. Other reasons remain common for the buyers of almost all areas.

➢ Among the six latent reasons, attempt was made to know the Important Latent Reasons (ILR) with the help of their clustered mean scores and F-Statistics. It is concluded through the mean scores that in Tirunelveli District the merchandise, the tangibility of supermarket and promotional measures offered are the highly viewed latent reasons for buying in supermarket irrespective of nature of living place.

➢ The F-Statistics results exhibited that the tangibility and promotional measures are the important ILR in Tirunelveli District as there is no significant difference among the buyers of different areas on having these two ILR. From the mean scores and the ‘F’ test results it is found that tangible features and promotional measured offered are the important latent reasons for buying in supermarket.

➢ Further, the identified six ILR have been analysed in the light of 10 profile variables of buyers such as gender, age, occupational cluster, marital status, educational status, income group, family type, family size, average monthly purchases on provisions and type of buyer. This analysis was made to know the presence of difference among these profile variables and the ILR. It is found that the reasons expressed by the buyers belong to different gender, marital status and type of buyer should be given
importance as the ILRs did not differ among these three profile variables.

- In addition, an attempt has been made to know the discriminant ILR among the buyers of urban, semi-urban and rural areas with the help of Multi Discriminant Analysis (MDA). In this analysis it is found that the important discriminators among the buyers of three areas are merchandise and service.

- In the analysis of duration of shopping in supermarket, it is found that more than a half of the buyers perform shopping for duration of thirty minutes to one hour. In the case of urban and semi-urban buyers, they make shopping for thirty minutes to one hour. But in the case of rural buyers, majority of the buyers perform their shopping in a supermarket for less than thirty minutes. The mean shopping duration in Tirunelveli District is thirty minutes.

- The shopping duration in a supermarket depends on many demographic factors. An attempt was made to know the presence of association between the duration of shopping and ten demographic variables such as gender, nature of living place, age, occupational status, marital status, educational status, income group, family size, average monthly expenses on provisions and type of buyer in a supermarket. Chi-square test was applied and it is concluded that the profile variables such as gender, nature of living place, occupational cluster,
educational status, income group, family size, average monthly expenses on provisions and type of buyer are closely associated with the duration of shopping in supermarket.

- Location of a supermarket is viewed as an important factor for its success. An attempt was made to know the opinion of the buyers on the suitable location for the supermarket. In the opinion of buyers residential area is the suitable location for a supermarket.

- The opinion on the preferred location for a supermarket is influenced by many factors. In order to know dominant factor, which influence the preference of a particular location for supermarket, Chi-square test ($\chi^2$) was applied. In this analysis demographic factors such as gender, nature of living place, age, occupational cluster, marital status, educational status, income group, family size, average monthly expenses on provisions and type of buyers have been analysed. It is identified in this analysis that the demographic variables such as gender, nature of living place, age, occupational cluster and educational status are influencing the opinion on the preferred location of supermarket.

- Issue of membership card to the buyers is an add-on service rendered by supermarkets. But in this study it is found that majority of the supermarkets (81.4 percent) do not issue membership card. However, buyers are willing to accept the
Among the buyers owning the membership card, there exists a tendency to have only one membership card.

- Among the buyers owning membership card, an attempt was made to know the reasons for possessing it. In order to know this, Garrett ranking technique was applied. It was found that the first important reason for possessing the membership card in a supermarket is to avail discount, the second most important reason is to avail special offers and the third one is to avail turnover discount. So to conclude, the reason for possessing a membership card is to avail the sales promotional offers.

- Supermarkets which issued membership card do not insist their buyers to bring membership card when they visit the supermarket to buy commodities.

- An effort was made to know the inclination of buyers towards the supermarket. The buying inclination was analysed on the basis of quantum of commodities bought. It is observed that over a period there is an increasing trend on quantity of commodity bought by the buyers in supermarket.

- Increase or decrease in the quantity of purchase is determined by many factors, but few dominant factors are to be identified. In this attempt, it is identified that the educational status,
income, family size and type of buyer are the dominant factors which influence the quantity of purchases.

- An attempt was made to study the level of satisfaction of buyers on supermarket comparing to small retail grocery shops or provision stores. In that analysis it was found that there exists a better level of satisfaction among the buyers irrespective of nature of living place.

- While analysing the association between the profile variables and the trend in quantity of buying in supermarkets it is discovered that there is an association between level of satisfaction and the demographic factors such as occupational position, income, family size, average monthly expenses on provisions and type of buyer.

- In the study area, majority of the buyers compare the prices of commodities sold supermarkets and small retail grocery shops/provision stores.

- An attempt was made to know profile variables of buyers that force them to compare prices fixed by supermarkets and small grocery shops. In that attempt it was identified that demographic variables like gender, nature of living place, occupational cluster, income and average monthly expenses on provision are the influencing factors to make the price comparison.
Similar to the price, there exists an inclination among the buyers of different areas in Tirunelveli District to compare the quality of the commodities in the supermarkets and small retail grocery shops or provision stores.

Among many demographic factors, gender is the only factor that is associated with the quality consciousness. Between male and female buyers, female buyers have more quality consciousness than the male buyers.

Cosmetics and the grocery are the frequently bought commodities in supermarket. Other commodities are preferred occasionally or bought to fulfill the specific needs of the buyers. The area-wise analysis revealed that both the cosmetics and groceries are the frequently bought commodities by the urban buyers. Among semi-urban and rural buyers, the cosmetic alone is the frequently bought commodity.

F-test results revealed that the household appliances and other commodities are not frequently bought. Taking into consideration both the mean scores and the F-test results, it is concluded that there exists a disproportionate buying preference among the buyers of all areas on all commodities except household appliances.

In Tirunelveli District, most of the supermarkets do not offer private brands. However, among supermarkets which offer private brands majority of the buyers patronize such brands.
Urban buyers evince better patronage towards the private brands than other area buyers.

- Among various types of private brands it was identified that most of the private brands commodities except groceries are less preferred.

- While analysing the reasons for preferring private brands, it was found that quality and lower price of the private brands are the important reasons among the buyers.

- Buyers expressed their willingness to buy private brands of supermarkets, if offered in future.

**7.2.4. Findings on the perception of buyers on the service quality of supermarkets and their level of satisfaction**

Supermarkets are growing in a faster pace in the Indian subcontinent. Even Small and medium size towns have supermarkets. Many corporate supermarkets are attempting to commence their operation in sub-urban locations. Even though many corporate supermarkets have established hundreds of their outlets in cities, still there are many unexplored prospective areas. Prior to the commencement of new outlets, organizers of supermarkets should know the perceived notion of the buyers on supermarket. In this section the perception of buyers on service quality of supermarkets in Tirunelveli District have been analysed. The findings are summarised below.
An attempt was made to know the prominent attributes of supermarket which come to the minds of the buyers when they hear the word supermarket. Among twenty-one attributes, it was found that the important attributes which come to the minds of buyers are rich collection of products, mega size, all under one roof, availability of all commodities, easy to shop in and quick shopping.

Area-wise analysis reveals that the important perceived attributes among the urban buyers are rich collection of products, mega size, all under one roof, availability of all commodities, easy to shop in and quick shopping.

Rich collection of products, all under one roof, mega size, availability of all commodities and quick shopping are considered as the important perceived features of a supermarket among semi-urban buyers. In the perception of rural buyers, rich collection of products and mega size are the important perceived attributes towards a supermarket.

An attempt was made to know the influence of nature of living place on the perception of buyers on twenty-one attributes. One-way Analysis of variance was applied. In that analysis, it was found that the perception of buyers on the attributes of supermarket changes due to the nature of living place. Taking into consideration the mean value and the one-way ANOVA results, it is concluded that rich collection of products and mega
size of the supermarket are the predominant attributes which come to the mind of buyers when they hear the word supermarket.

- The perception of buyers on the service quality of supermarkets has been studied under five dimensions such as physical aspects, reliability, staff behaviour, problem solving and policy of supermarket. Under each dimension six factors were analysed. In order to verify the fitness of factors under each dimension, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was applied. The CFA confirmed that all the factors matches well with all the respective dimensions.

- In each dimension, the perception and expectation of buyers are analysed using Mean scores. Mean gap is calculated and positive mean gaps are considered. Paired sample t-test was applied to find the significant difference between perception and expectation. Among the various aspects of the physical dimension of a supermarket, the modern equipments and fixtures used in a supermarket is the highly perceived tangible feature irrespective of nature of living place. Among various tangibility factors, higher expectation persists on the physical facilities irrespective of nature of living place.

- While analysing the gap between perception and expectation, it is found that there is a negative mean gap between the perception and the expectation of buyers on all the factors of
physical dimension. Wide gap is noted on the physical facilities of a supermarket. The paired sample $t$-test also confirmed the gap. It is concluded that the expectations of the buyers in Tirunelveli District are not fulfilled on the physical dimension of supermarket.

- In reliability dimension of a supermarket, the highly perceived factors are availability of all commodities, quality of commodities and nominal price of commodities. Area-wise analysis showed that in the case of urban area, highly perceived factors are availability of all commodities and quality of commodities. Among the buyers of semi-urban area, availability of all commodities, quality of commodities and nominal price of commodities are the highly perceived factors in reliability dimension. Availability of all commodities is the highly perceived factor among the rural buyers.

- There exist high expectation among the buyers on the reliability dimension factors such as availability of all commodities, quality of the commodity, introduction of new products, price of the commodity and the error-free sales. Among the urban buyers, high expectations are identified on factors such as availability of all commodities, quality of the commodity, introduction of new products and the price of the commodity.

- Semi-urban buyers expect that all the aspects of supermarket should be reliable. However, high expectations among the semi-
urban buyers are noted on the factors such as availability of all commodities, quality of the commodity and the price of the commodity. The expectations of rural buyers are higher on the factors of availability of all commodities, error-free sales and introduction of new products.

➢ There exists only a marginal negative gap between the perception and the expectation of buyers on all the factors of the reliability dimension of supermarket. It is concluded that in the study area the expectation of buyers over the reliability dimension of supermarket is somehow satisfied. The paired t-test results confirmed the negative gap and it is resolved that in Tirunelveli District the expectation of buyers on all the factors under reliability dimension except the qualities of commodities sold were not fulfilled.

➢ On the dimension of staff behaviour, it is found that irrespective of the nature of living place of buyers, the highly perceived factors are polite and courteous nature of employees, and ability of workers in responding the buyers.

➢ Amidst the dimension of staff behaviour, there exists a high expectation among all the buyers irrespective of their nature of living place on the factors of polite and courteous nature of employees, and patience of employees.

➢ It is discerned that the expectations are higher than the perception on all the factors under the dimension of staff
behaviour. Wider gap is noted on the factors of staff reception and their patience. In addition, the Paired sample $t$-test analysis also confirmed the gap. It is resolved from the mean gap and Paired sample $t$-test that, the expectation of buyers on staff behaviour could not be fulfilled by the supermarket.

- Highly perceived factors among the dimension of problem solving tendency are solving problems relating to product quality and the excessive price. These two factors are also highly perceived by all the buyers irrespective of their nature of living place. It is concluded that in the opinion of the buyers, supermarkets are somehow ready to solve problems relating to the buyers as and when demanded.

- The analysis on the expectation of buyers over the problem solving tendency of supermarket showed that irrespective of nature of living place, buyers have high expectation on all the factors under problem solving tendency. Among all the factors, buyers have very high expectation on the readiness of supermarkets in solving problems relating to price and quality of products.

- Under the dimension of problem solving tendency of supermarket, there exists a negative gap between perception and expectation of buyers on all the factors. Thus it is noted that in Tirunelveli District the expectations of the buyers on the problems solving tendency of supermarkets are not fulfilled.
The Paired sample t-test also confirmed this. It is concluded that even though the buyers perceived well about the problem solving tendency, their expectations are even higher than their perception and thus they are not satisfied with the problem solving tendency of supermarkets.

- Among the policy dimension of supermarkets, quality product policy and zero-complaint policy are the highly perceived factors. It is concluded that in Tirunelveli District, buyers have a better notion that supermarket maintain quality product policy and zero-complaint policy.

- The expectation of buyers is higher on all the factors under policy dimension and a very high expectation is identified on policies like providing quality product and zero-complaint transaction.

- There exists a negative gap between perception and expectation of buyers on all the factors under the policy dimension of supermarket. Wider negative gap is noted on the factors of issue of membership card and convenient working hours. In the Paired Sample t-test results, it is found that in Tirunelveli District, the expectations of the buyers on policy aspects of supermarkets are not fulfilled.

- When analysing all the five service dimensions of supermarkets in total, it is explored that the highly perceived service dimension is the reliability dimension and low level of
perception persists on the tangibility dimension. Area-wise analysis revealed that among the urban and semi-urban buyers highly noted service dimension is the reliability. In the case of rural buyers, highly viewed service dimension is the staff behaviour.

- With reference to the expectation of buyers, there exists a high expectation on all the service dimensions of a supermarket. However, high expectation persists on the dimension of problem solving nature of supermarket. The area-wise analysis visualizes that among urban buyers, tangibility dimension is the highly expected feature of supermarket. Among the buyers of semi-urban and rural areas, problem solving nature of supermarket is the highly expected service dimension.

- The analysis on the perception of buyers on retail supermarkets in Tirunelveli District provided the findings that the expectations of the buyers on various dimensions of supermarkets are not fulfilled. Wider negative gaps between perception and expectation were noted on the dimensions of tangibility and policy. In the case of the service dimension reliability, even though there exists a negative gap, the gap is narrow. Thus it is concluded that the buyers have perceived the supermarkets well but their expectations are not fulfilled.

- The analysis on the satisfaction of buyers on the supermarket provided the findings that the buyers are satisfied more on the
factors of product availability, weight or measurement of product and door delivery facility. Low level of satisfaction is registered on the factors of parking facility, product pricing and acceptance of ATM or Credit Cards. However, considering all the features of a supermarket in total, in Tirunelveli District buyers are satisfied. The applied F-test analysis provided the conclusion that all the buyers are satisfied with the supermarkets in Tirunelveli District. Considering the mean scores and F-test results in total, it is inferred that high level of satisfaction prevails on product availability and all under one roof facility of supermarkets. Low level of satisfaction persists on the parking facility.

➢ While attempting to know the factors that are responsible for the satisfaction of buyers, it is found that education, income and occupational status of buyers are associated with their satisfaction towards supermarket.

7.3. Conclusion

In Tirunelveli District, the concept of supermarket has gained good popularity and thus there exists much scope for the supermarkets as it is functioning less in number. Majority of the buyers in supermarket are regular buyers and this shows that once buyers buy in a supermarket, they become a regular buyer to the supermarket. Major segment of buyers in supermarket belong to middle age group, salaried class and married. Moreover, buyers in
supermarket have minimum educational background and they belong to upper middle income group. Another interesting point to be noted is buyers belong to nuclear family who live in own house evince better patronize towards supermarket. Once a buyer begins to buy commodities from a supermarket he sustains with it.

The quantum of purchases is determined by the income type of family. Major purchases in supermarket occur in the first and second week in a month. Week end days are the most preferred days for shopping in a supermarket. Buying frequency of majority of buyers is once in a fortnight. Supermarkets did not utilise the advertising media effectively. The customer base for a supermarket is geocentric. The supermarkets in Tirunelveli District have customer base with better patronage period. Motor cycle is mostly used as mode of transport.

Merchandise related aspects are the important reasons for preferring a supermarket. Internal layout of supermarket is another alluring feature. The reasons for patronising supermarket are almost common among the buyers of all areas. Supermarkets have the ability to retain buyers for an average duration of 30 minutes, thus much time is available for supermarkets to expose commodities. Most preferred location for a supermarket is residential area. Majority of the supermarkets did not issue membership card, but buyers are ready to get such cards if issued.
The buying inclination of buyers in Tirunelveli District towards a supermarket is increasing. This inclination is more among educated and upper middle class buyers from small family. Mostly buyers have the habit of comparing the price and quality of the commodities in supermarket with that of small retail grocery shops or provision stores. But majority of the buyers are satisfied with the price and quality of the commodities sold in supermarkets.

Cosmetics and the grocery are the frequently bought commodities in supermarkets. None of the supermarkets except one have pharmaceutical division. Thus this seems to be a grey area among the supermarkets. Most of the supermarkets do not offer private brands, but the buyers are ready to buy if it is offered in the future. Rich collection of products and mega size of the supermarket are the two predominant attributes which come to the mind of buyers when they hear the word 'supermarket'.

In the perception of buyers all the service dimensions of supermarkets are good; but their expectations are higher than the actual service qualities of supermarket, actually exists, that is the expectations of buyers are not fulfilled to some extent. Even though the service quality is not upto the expectations of buyers in Tirunelveli District, there exists a better level of satisfaction towards supermarkets.
7.4. **Suggestions for the improvement of supermarkets**

This study primarily aimed at knowing the perception of buyers towards retail supermarket. Analyses were made on various aspects of supermarket and many findings have been arrived. Based on the findings the following suggestions are given for the development of supermarkets.

- Special attention through various sales promotion measures can be given on upper middle income group, middle aged and salaried class buyers as they are the majority buyer among the total customer base of a supermarket.

- Middle or lower middle income group buyers who constitute a major portion of Indian population are being the less attracted customer segment for the supermarkets, so effective measures should be taken to attract them.

- Weightage should be given to buyers belong to nuclear family in the case of urban buyers and joint family in the case of non-urban areas.

- Buyers belong to Rural areas buy more in supermarket thus efforts should be taken to attract more rural buyers.

- Additional quantity discount can be given to the buyers who buy more, because majority of the regular buyers make bulk purchases. By providing quantity discount they can be retained.
• Attempts have to be made to introduce the membership or discount cards to buyers as many supermarkets in Tirunelveli District do not issue such cards.

• Frequent shoppers in supermarket have to be identified and they should be given loyalty cards in addition to the regular membership cards.

• While selecting the location for a supermarket priority should be given for the residential area.

• Customer base of a supermarket is area-centric in nature, thus demographic profile of buyers residing around a supermarket should be analysed before commencing a supermarket.

• The customer data base should be created through modern computer data base management systems so that issue of membership or loyalty cards and providing turnover discount will be easier.

• Supermarkets should make effective advertisements as many supermarkets lack in making advertisements. In addition to that, point of purchase advertisements should also be concentrated.

• Weekend days are preferred by the buyers for shopping in a supermarket, so efforts should be taken to keep adequate stock of all commodities particularly eatables.
As more buyers choose to shop on Saturdays and Sundays additional security measures to be taken to avoid shoplifting.

In order to attract more buyers in weekend days more special offers can be announced in these two days.

Special attention should be given on man power planning on week days.

Majority of the employees of a supermarket should be engaged in attending customers in the evening as buyers prefer to shop in the evening time.

Efforts are to be taken to enhance the internal ambience of supermarkets in the weekends to attract more buyers.

Convenient internal store layout should be maintained taking into consideration buyers of all ages.

The commodities are to be arranged in such a manner that almost all of them are at the sight of the buyers.

Bigger floor area of a supermarket is another attracting feature among the buyers thus effective floor planning should be made.

More special offers can be given in the first two weeks in a month as major purchases are made in first two weeks. Attractive schemes can be announced specifically on second Saturdays and Sundays.

Special care should be taken on inventory management to keep more SKUs during the first two weeks.
• Adequate two wheeler and four wheeler parking facilities should be provided.

• Utmost care should be taken in maintaining the quality of merchandise.

• Buyers expect discounted prices, therefore providing discount should be a regular feature and it should be revealed to the buyers. A supermarket should be a combination of supermarket and discount stores.

• At the time of formation of a supermarket the factors like bigger size, good internal layout, better ambience and neat arrangement of commodities are to be kept in mind. After the formation product related aspects should be given priority.

• Add-on services like offering door delivery facility, allowing Debit/Credit cards and the like should be instilled.

• Make a system of door deliver facility even to the rural buyers and the buyers of lower value purchases.

• Make a periodical revision on the add-on services rendered to the buyers.

• While fixing the prices for the commodities, pricing policies of other supermarkets and small retail grocery shops or provisions stores are to be considered.

• Among the SKUs cosmetics and grocery items should be the dominant commodities as they are widely preferred.
Efforts are to be made to introduce private brands particularly on groceries.

The image of mega size and rich collection of commodities are to be maintained.

Physical facilities of supermarket like fan facility, air-conditioning, wash room facility and the like are to be provided.

Steps to be taken to use modern devices like computers, barcode scanners, RFID, surveillance camera and the like for the effective functioning of supermarkets.

As the buyers’ expectations are higher on tangible dimension of a supermarket, efforts should be made to make even a slight change on the tangible features.

Create an impression amidst the buyers that the supermarket is introducing new commodities every then and now. It can be done by allocating a stand or space for the new arrivals.

Insist the workers to perform error-free sales. In order to avoid errors on sales introduce computerised billing and update the billing software regularly. Introduce a system of physical check before the delivery.

In order to maintain the quality of commodities quality check should be made. Substandard products should be avoided. In case of eatables date of manufacturing and expiry should be noted on each purchase.
• Impart training to workers on attending the customers and instruct the workers to be polite and maintain patience while answering the customer queries.

• Maintain the Re-order level for all commodities and ensure the availability of all commodities at any time.

• Try to provide convenient working hours for the buyers depending on the location of the supermarket.

• Efforts are to be made to maintain the physical facilities like maintaining better ambience, using modern equipments, convenient internal layout, providing parking facility and so on.

• Frame policies relating to buyers like quality policy, zero-complaint policy and so on and let the buyers to know them.

• Maintain reasonable prices for the commodities through effective pricing policy.

• Most of the supermarkets in the district do not have the Pharmaceutical section. It is suggested to open pharmaceutical section also in the supermarkets for the convenience of buyers.

• Diligent care should be taken to satisfy the buyers on all aspects of supermarket and should not underestimate that the buyers are fully satisfied. Moreover, supermarkets should not think that buyers’ expectations are lesser and we could fulfill all their expectations. Care should be taken to explore the unfulfilled expectations.
7.5. Scope for further research

The researcher while analysing the buyer behaviour in Tirunelveli District has interacted both formally and informally with respondents and administrators of supermarkets. In the interaction the researcher gathered and observed many aspects relating to supermarket which he left untouched as the study limited to the perception of buyers. Thus based on the observation the following topics of research are suggested for the future researchers and scholars.

- A study on impact of supermarkets on small retailers.
- A study on the perception of buyers on multinational retail giants in comparison to domestic corporate retailers.
- A study on reason for the failure of supermarkets in Tirunelveli District.
- A study on locational analysis of supermarket in Tirunelveli District.
- A study on hedonic values on supermarkets in Tirunelveli District.
- A study on deshopping behaviour at supermarkets in Tirunelveli District.
- A study on retail theft with special reference to supermarkets in Tirunelveli District.
- A study on shoplifting habit of buyers at supermarkets in Tirunelveli District.
• A study on human resource management in supermarkets in Tirunelveli District.

• A study on security measures followed at supermarkets in Tirunelveli District.

• A study on RFID application and its cost effectiveness in Tirunelveli District.

• A study on inventory management in supermarkets Tirunelveli District.

• A study on the perception of buyers on supermarket in comparison to hypermarkets.

• A study on service quality of supermarkets in Tamil Nadu.

• A study on challenges faced by the supermarkets in Tirunelveli District.

• A SWOT analysis of supermarkets in Tirunelveli District.

• A study on supply chain management in supermarkets in Tirunelveli District.

• A study on impact of layout of supermarkets on the buying habits.