SUMMARY

Rising per capita income coupled with increased consumerism has led to the tremendous growth of modern India retail market, which is primarily triggered by changing demographics on account of growing urbanization and the socio-economic dynamics. This has resulted in increased competition with a growing interest among retailers to analyze customers buying behaviour at retail outlets. Prior studies in varying retail contexts have validated the existence of different variables and factors such as store image attributes, consumer demographics, shopping pattern and orientation, etc., that drive store choice behaviour. The current study is carried out in the context of food and grocery retail shopping behaviour.

The current research study has focused on the evolving consumer behaviour among urban Bengaluru customers who are showing a growing preference towards visiting modern outlets for purchasing food and groceries. While selecting stores for food and groceries customers look out for certain store attributes and if they are satisfied with the availability of these at the outlets they are likely to patronize such stores in the future-this is the premise on which the current study is based. Additionally, it is seen that consumer dynamics affects the lifestyle pattern of customers, which in turn could influence their food and grocery shopping behaviour. The basic research question examined was: In a modern retail context, are shoppers strongly influenced by store attributes? The other related questions were: Do shopper’s socio-demographics and shopping patterns significantly influence their store choice behaviour? and Whether the relationship between store attributes, satisfaction and lifestyle can have an impact on patronage intention amongst food and grocery shoppers?

For developing the questionnaire prior studies were used as references. To measure store attributes a research framework called the store image instrument adapted from Du Preez, Visser, and Janse Van Noordwyk, (2008) and used as the theoretical structure, for measuring satisfaction, scales were adapted from Parasuraman, Valarie, Zeithaml, and Leonard L. Berry, 1988 and Dabholkar, Thorpe, and Rentz, 1996; for Store Patronage Intention, the three statements were adapted from Grewal, Baker, Levy, and Voss (2003);and to measure the Lifestyle dimensions in terms of the activities, interests and opinions (AIOs) measuring statements were adapted from Plummer, 1974; and, Prasad and Aryasri, 2011. All the constructs were measured using the 5 point Likert scale. The sample frame (population) for this study included only those adult shoppers of households (sample unit) that have been purchasing either food and/or grocery products from modern stores at Bengaluru for at least
three months or more. Stratified random sampling method was used for the cross-sectional sample and the final sample size obtained was 346 households.

In the study, Store attributes, Satisfaction and Lifestyle constructs are the independent variables, and Patronage intention is the dependent variable. The result of reliability test Cronbach alpha for each construct was found to be more than .75, which is satisfactory ensuring the consistency of the instrument and that the data is very reliable (Nunnally, 1978).

Data analysis tools included Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation); Bivariate analysis – T test, 1 way Anova, Correlation analysis; and Multiple Analysis – Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), Multiple linear regression and Path Analysis. The descriptive statistics helped to describe the respondent’s socio-demographics and geographic pattern. The Pearson correlation analysis found all the constructs to be positively related at 1, 0.46 & 0.27 respectively and statistically significant at 1% level, indicating of the increasing linear relationships among store image (attribute), satisfaction and patronage intentions. The T test and 1way Anova analysis were used for multiple comparisons and the significant differences indicated that demographics and shopping pattern variables make respondent’s perceive constructs-lifestyle, store attributes, satisfaction level and patronage intention in different ways. The CFA confirmed the theoretical structure of the model used for the study. Thereafter, multiple linear regression and path analysis (mediation analysis and moderated-mediation analysis) was carried out to test the causality of Store image on Store patronage. The mediation analysis indicated the role of satisfaction as a mediator in the relationship between store image attributes and store patronage intention. Whereas, the moderated-mediation analysis found that lifestyle cannot act as the moderator between: (a) Satisfaction and Store Patronage intention; and (b) Store Image and Store Patronage intention. All (but one) of the hypothesis statements formulated for the study are supported and validated. Only one hypothesis statement Ho: Lifestyle can act as a moderator between: (a) Satisfaction and patronage intention. (b) Store attributes and patronage intention was not supported by this study.

Thus, in the current study it is empirically established that store attributes influences shoppers food and grocery store choice behaviour, and there exists a causal relationship between the constructs measured, where satisfaction mediates the relationship between store attributes and patronage intention, while, lifestyle cannot act as the moderator between: (a) Satisfaction and Store Patronage intention; and (b) Store Image and Store Patronage intention.
This study makes an important contribution to marketing literature on store environment/image attributes in that, it is one of the few studies to examine the relationship between Store Image attributes and Store Patronage with Satisfaction acting as the mediator in food and grocery retail market segment and lifestyle not moderating the relationships among the other variables. This study has commercial implications for retail managers enabling them to plan strategic moves pertaining to store atmospherics and product positioning based on the attributes that satisfy customers. The long term benefit of such strategies could be seen in the form of customers’ future behaviour-patronage intentions.

This thesis will help expand knowledge on the evolving consumer dynamics especially in terms of shoppers’ food and grocery store buying behaviour. This research has academic implications for consumer psychology and retail marketing disciplines and commercial implications for marketing and retail management.