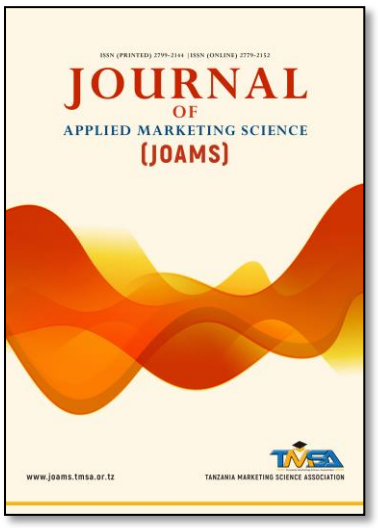


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Factors Motivating Consumers to Visit Supermarkets in Developing Economies

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FACTORS MOTIVATING CONSUMERS TO VISIT SUPERMARKETS IN DEVELOPING ECONOMIES

By Emmanuel Chao

INTRODUCTION

Supermarkets are increasingly adopted new form of retail shopping especially for the middle to high-income earners in developing countries. The changes in the economic level of consumers tend to shift their purchase preferences but such a switch is not always automatic due to individual and contextual factors. Traditional retailing which is prevalent in most parts of developing economies range from micro, small to medium. In spite of the emergence of new forms of retail in most parts of developing economies of Africa, the success has not always been direct as less is understood in terms of consumer behavioural attributes and motives for visiting these supermakets. Understanding such motives is very important for the survival and performance of the supermarkets. For example some of the Kenyan supermarkets in Uganda did not manage to survive because they did not match with the consumer lifestyle and preferences. The preferences and behavioral attributes of consumers will likely vary from one country to the other and even from one region to the other within the same nation. With a special focus on Tanzanian context, the chapter intends to examine the factors which motivate consumers to purchase products from supermarkets.

Overview of Retail Industry In Developing Countries

From early 1990s there has been a significant revolution of supermarkets in developing countries. The supermarkets have now gone well beyond the initial upper- and middle-class consumers in many countries to reach the mass market.

This trend touches the traditional retailers, the wholesale, processing, and farm sectors (Reardon and Gulati, 2008). The supermarket revolution can be perceived as a "double-edged sword", whereby on one side it can lower prices for buyers and create opportunities for suppliers to gain access to markets and on the other side, it can generate challenges for small retailers, or other value chain actors who are not equipped to deal with the competition and requirements from supermarkets (ibid).

The growth of supermarkets in developing countries tend to start in large cities, then spread to intermediate cities and towns, and then enter small towns in rural areas. In other words, the richest and largest market is entered first because it offers the highest profit per capital invested; competition and saturation of the initial base drives investment by a given chain into the series of subsequent markets.

Tanzania and Africa in general have witnessed the rise of urban modern retailing due to an increase in the size of the middle class which demands quality and differentiated products.

For example, it is estimated that in Tanzania, the middle class has grown to 12 per cent of the population in 2010, up from 9 per cent in 2008, due to an increase in income (AfDB, 2011). Furthermore, the country's average per capita income increased to US$948 in 2015 from US$695 in 2012. This stimulated the growth of modern retailing in Tanzania.

Inspite of the booming of the supermarkets culture, there has been a negative trend of failure of some of the supermarkets in Tanzania and within East Africa. For example Uchumi, Shoprite and Games closed their supermarkets in Tanzania for various reasons. While some claim the closure could have been caused by their inability to face up to competition from other big local businesses, some claim this to lack of understanding of local culture because other local supermarkets such as Shoppers Plaza, Shrijees and Imalaseko continued to thrive (Ighe, 2015).

Tanzania's retail market comprises a mixture of modern retail outlets that supply consumer goods from major international firms and informal traders or family-run business that sell more basic goods. Traditional retailing is dispersed over the country with the highest concentration in kiosks/dukas (small shops), open air markets, and street hawking.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Concept of Retailling and supermarkets

There is no precise definition of retailing but several definitions have been advanced. Kotler (1997) asserts that the retailing includes all activities involved in selling goods and services directly to final consumers for their personal, non-business use. According to Redinbourgh (1976), retailing includes all those business activities associated with selling goods and services to the ultimate consumer or final user for personal consumption. This definition concurs with Kibera and Waruingi (1998) definition, that a retailer is usually an individual or organization, which predominantly sells goods and services to final users. Davidson (1988) refers to a retail institution as a generic store, never a specific store, which some of the common types today include supermarkets, departmental stores, drug stores, offering merchandise at the right place, at the right time, in the right quantities at the right price. Further, Appel (1992) views a supermarket as a store with at least 2000 square feet sales area with three or more check-outs and operated mainly on a self-service basis, whose range of merchandise comprise of food groups, basic house-hold requirements and cleaning materials. Supermarkets in this chapter refer to all modern retail, which includes chain stores of variety of formats such as hypermarkets, and convenience and neighborhood stores.

Consumer Behaviour Theory

Consumer behaviour is defined as the behaviour that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs and desires. Consumer behavior includes all the decisions a consumer makes when spending their time and money. It also attempts to understand how the decision-making process goes and how it affects consumers' buying behavior (Solomon 2004). The reasons why consumers buy a specific product or visit a particular store is complex because the answer is locked within the consumers' mind (Kardes et al. 2011, Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). Generally consumers can be categorized to individual and organizational consumers. Individual consumers try to satisfy their own needs and wants by purchasing for themselves or satisfy the need of others by buying for them. These

individual consumers can come from different backgrounds, ages and life stages (Kardes et al. 2011). A consumer's buying behavior is influenced by cultural, social, personal and psychological factors.

Factors affecting consumer buying behavior

1. Cultural Factors: Culture is the part of every society which influences the individual's wants and behaviour. Each culture contains different subcultures such as religions, nationalities, geographic regions, racial groups etc. The influence of culture on buying behaviour varies from country to country.

Culture refers to the norms and values that a group of individuals share and is passed down from one generation to another. It also defines what individuals eat, what they wear, what they think is right or wrong, and much more (Bannon et al., 2003). A culture can be divided into subcultures on the basis of demographic characteristics, geographic regions, national and ethnic background, political beliefs, and religious beliefs. A subculture is a homogeneous group of people who share elements of the overall culture as well as cultural elements unique to their own group. Sub cultural differences may result in considerable variation within a culture in what, how, when, and where people buy goods and services. Within subcultures, people's attitudes, values, and purchase decisions are even more similar than they are within the broader culture.

2. Social Factors: Social factors also impact the buying behaviour of consumers. The important social factors are: reference groups, family, role and status. Social factors affect consumer behavior significantly. The important social factors are: reference groups, family, role and status (Perreau, 2014). Every consumer is an individual, but still belongs to a group. The group to which a consumer belongs is called a membership group. This is a direct and simple classification. The second group type is a reference group. The reference group influences the self-image of consumers and consumers' behavior. The reference group provides some points of comparison to consumers about their behavior, lifestyle or habits. Usually there are many smaller reference groups, which are formed by family, close friends, neighbors, work group or other people that consumers associate with. The groups to which a consumer does not belong yet can also influence. These aspirational groups are groups where a consumer aspires to belong and wants to be part in the future (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010; Khan, 2006). A family forms the environment for an individual to acquire values, develop and shape personality and can influence individual consumers' buying behavior (ibid). Social status reflects the position that individuals have in social groups based on such things as money and wealth, education or occupation (Wright 2010) and can be acquired through being successful in life or being born into money.

3. Personal Factors

An individual's decisions are influenced by personal factors such as a buyer's age and life cycle state, occupation, economic situation, lifestyle, and personality and self-concept. Consumers' change during their life and buying of products alter depending on age and stage of life. Moreover, environment, values, lifestyle, hobbies and consumer habits evolve during lifetime (Kotler&Armstrong 2010). The income level affects what consumers can afford and the perspective towards money. Income level affects on what consumer can afford and perspective towards money (Solomon 2004).

4. Psychological Factors: Factors like perception, motivation, learning, beliefs and attitudes affect the consumer buying behaviour.

Motivation: Motives can be defined as relatively enduring, strong, and persistent internal stimuli that arouse and direct behavior toward certain goals (Trehan, 2009). A person can be motivated to buy a product for convenience, for style, for prestige, for self-pride or being at par with others (Khan, 2007).

Perception: Perception is the energy which makes us aware of the world around us and attaches a meaning to it after a sensing process. In relation to consumer, perception is how consumers understand the environment around them based on information received through their senses. In response to stimuli, consumers subconsciously evaluate their needs, values and expectations, and then they use that evaluation to select, organize and interpret the stimuli (Connolly, 2010).

Learning: Learning describes changes in an individual's behavior arising from experience. In every circumstance our perception is conditioned by our prior experience, for it is this which constitutes our expectations and the framework into which we seek to place and organize new stimuli. In other words, we have learned from our earlier experience and seek to maintain balance or consistency by relating to and interpreting new stimuli in terms of past or learned stimuli (Blythe, 2008).

Belief and attitude: Consumer attitudes and belief influences their behavior. Kotler (2010) defines belief as "descriptive thought that a person holds about something" and attitude as "a person's enduring favorable or unfavorable cognitive evaluations, emotional feelings, and action tendencies toward some object or idea". Individuals can have specific beliefs and attitudes about specific products and services (Sarangapani, 2009). Consumers tend to develop a set of beliefs about a product's attributes and then, through these make a decision about a particular brand or a product (Lee, 2007).

5. Lifestyle Factors: Lifestyle is an indicator of how people live and express themselves on the basis of their activities, interests, and opinions. The life style of a consumer tells how the person lives and spends money. It is a combination of earlier experiences, current situation and congenital characteristics. An individual's lifestyle consists of different life style dimensions (Khan 2006). These life style dimensions are the indicators of a person's pattern of living. Lifestyle will influence consumers' buying behavior and decisions (Kotler&Armstrong 2010).

FACTORS MOTIVATING CONSUMERS VISITING SUPERMARKETS

Store choice is recognized as a cognitive process. It is as much an information processing behaviour as any other purchase decision. Visiting a supermarket is similar to any form of a decision which a consumer makes when choosing a brand (Hasty, 1983). It is important to pay attention on factors that motivate consumers to visit the supermarkets especially in developing economies because it assist to develop proper strategies that fits with the specific context.

Store Image Factors

Store image represents to the consumer a comprehensive picture of the store and it is one of the most powerful tools in attracting and satisfying consumers (du Preez, Visser & Van Noordwyk, 2008a). Further, the image of a store serve to influence the perceived quality of the products they carry and the decisions of

consumers regarding the store choice (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009). Saraswat, Mammen, Aaja & Tewari (2010) defined store image as the symbolic, experiential expression of the manner in which consumers see or visualise a store. du Preez, Visser and Van Noordwyk (2008b) classified store attributes into eight dimensions; namely, atmosphere, convenience, facilities, institutional, merchandise, promotion, sales personnel and service. Amine and Cadenat (2003) also identified the store appearance, its employees and promotional materials as noticeable cues to consumers that contribute to their perception of a store's image. Developing economies are witnessing a growing middle income class which demands for different types of products and services. Consumers in developing economies tend to associate the purchase of products from supermarkets with success. This is because a significant percentage of the retail sector which operates under small shops often viewed to be relatively cheaper compare to those of supermarkets. Further, there is a general image that the products from supermarkets have better quality. Thus, consumer in developing economies tend to visit the supermarkets as a status symbol that match with their class of life.

Personal preferences

Preferences are the result of consumer personal characteristics. Personal characteristics that influence a buyer's decision include age and stage in the life cycle, occupation and economic circumstances, personality and self concept, lifestyle and values (Kotler & Keller, 2016). At the personal level, consumer behaviour is influenced by various shades of likes, dislikes, priorities, morals and values. In certain dynamic industries such as fashion, food and personal care, the personal view and opinion of the consumer pertaining to style and fun can become the dominant influencing factor. The personal preferences which can arise from issues such as age and stage of life cycle, occupation and economic circumstances, personality and self concept as well as life style and values influences the choices the consumer makes. Consumers tend to seek a store where other consumers with similar lifestyles are likely to shop (Foxall & Yani-de-Soriano, 2005). Those consumers who have relatively stable and middle to higher income tend to be a key group which visit the supermarkets for shopping. Further, the young generation in developing economies tend to follow the trends of what is happening around and thus their life style pattern tend to influence their decision to visit the supermarkets.

Group influence (keep up with Johns) (Social appeal)

Peer influence is commonly defined as the extent to which peers exert influence on the attitudes, thoughts, and actions of an individual (Bristol and Mangleburg, 2005). From the consumer behaviour perspective, reference groups serve as frames of reference for individuals in their purchase or consumption decisions (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000). Consumer behaviour is highly influenced by the opinion of others for their product choices and usage (Bearden and Etzel, 1982). The primary influential group consisting of family members, classmates, immediate relatives and the secondary influential group consisting of neighbours and acquaintances are seen have greater influence on the purchasing decisions of a consumer.

Consumers develop and realize the importance of products when they interact with others and gather related information (Oliver and Lee, 2010). Consumers, as a part

of a community or a social group, receive and share information, and know what others think for a particular product or service provider (Dholakia et al., 2004) and evaluate the products or service provider based on the comments and opinions of others (Escalas and Bettman, 2005). This way, they form, clearly define and elaborate on their own preferences and tastes (Dholakia et al., 2004).

A significant number of consumers in developing economies tend to visit the supermarkets so as to keep u with the perceptions of their reference groups such as family and friends. The opinion from these reference groups tends to exert an influence for supermarket purchase decisions.

Sales Assistance

Sales assistance relates to the availability of store personnel who wait to assist customers (Moschis, Ferguson and Zhu, 2011). Consumers usually patronise stores where they find experienced sales personnel who are friendly, supportive, attentive and courteous when shopping (Gundala, 2010; Clodfelter, 2010).

Helpful and knowledgeable sales personnel in a store influences the consumers' perception of store image. To have sufficient, well trained and skilled sales personnel in the retailing sector, creates a competitive advantage (Grewal, Baker, Levy & Voss, 2003). According to Ghosh et al. (2010) sales assistants in retail stores should have sufficient knowledge of the products offered, and must also be willing and capable of responding. In developing economies, there are growing numbers of new types of products that are being introduced through the supermarkets. These new products require some knowledge before the users adopt. The availability of the sales assistants who are knowledgeable can influence the consumers' decision to visit a supermarket. Further, the assistance builds a good purchase experience that in turn motivates the consumers to revisit the stores. The sales assistants do also assist the consumers to make a best selection of the items that they need, adding to the shopping experience and thus building loyalty.

Store Atmospherics

Kotler (1974) was among the early researchers to acknowledge the importance of store atmospherics and defined it as the design of environments in order to produce emotional effects in the customer with the intent to enhance the purchasing probability. According to Hoffman and Turley (2002), atmospherics consist of both tangible elements (furniture/equipment) and intangible elements (lights, scent, colour, temperature) that comprise the service experience. Store atmosphere can be divided into four sub elements; namely, exterior variables, store layout, interior display and general interior (Berman and Evans, 2010). Atmospherics form the first impression of the store and influence consumers' perceptions towards a store, and that also impacts on a stores' image and consumers' expectations of the retailer's offerings (Oh et al., 2008). A number of scholars (Du Preez & Van der Vyver, 2010; Petermans & Van Ceempoel, 2010; Thenmozhi & Dhanapal, 2011) concluded that the store atmospherics and ambience characteristics are influential determinants of store choice and satisfaction. Moye and Giddings (2002) found that store atmospherics which includes store interior (attractive, fashionable, stylish decorations, lightings, temperature) seem to have a positive direct influence on shopping behaviour. North and Croeser (2006) also suggest that shoppers seek stores that have a pleasant atmosphere. Consumer in developing economies tends to

visit supermarkets for the atmospherics which in some cases are used as place where family can visit. In some supermarkets there are spaces for children to play, restaurants, or sinema within the vasinity. All these makes it convenience for shopping while accessing other facilities for pleasure. With growing population of middle income class, the demands for shopping within developing economies are also changing. Consumer are no longer just interested with the purchase itself, but the entire experience in terms of emotional pleasure is increasingly becoming a motivating factor for shopping.

Location

Location has long been recognised as one of the prime determinants of choice of retail store and success in retailing. The location of a store and the distance which consumers have to travel to go shopping are basic criteria in their decision to choose a store where such shopping is done. In addition, store visibility is an element often discussed in literature that does affect consumers' decision of choosing one store over another (Grewal, Levy & Kumar, 2009). They argue that the decision to choose a store also depends on the total shopping costs and time which is required to access the store. Therefore, it can be argued that location makes the overall shopping experience of customers convenient, thus enhancing the image of the retail store. For purposes of this study location refers to where the shop is situated for easy access by consumers to buy goods. In developing markets supermarkets face a huge competition from street hawkers and small shops which are relatively more convenient. Due to a wider range of options for accessing the products, the location of a supermarket if it is easy to access can motivate the customers to visit.

Store Appeal

Store appeals are among the most important attributes when choosing a retails store and results in the satisfaction of customers (Koksal, 2007). A store that is able to communicate product information via in-store display assists consumers to make-informed purchase decisions (Tlapana, 2009). Aspfors (2010) opines that the merchandise that is seen as less attractive is more likely to be purchased when displayed together with popular brands.

The elements associated with store appeal factor relate to the variety of brands marketed by the store, the appeal of in-store displays, the appeal of the entrance of the store, the appeal of the exit of the store, the proximity of the store in relation to others and the attractiveness of exterior design which shoppers interact with while visiting shopping malls (Ibrahim & Najjar, 2008). These aspects contribute to the uniqueness of the store (Terblanche & Boshoff, 2006). Appealing store interiors and exteriors which are integrated with an appealing in-store display of various brands are therefore necessary factors that promote engagement from consumers (Moerloose, Antioco & Palmer Lindgreen, 2005). Inspite of the existing competition between the hawkers and small shops, most consumers in developing economies visit supermarkets because of the appeal. The supermarkets appeals makes consumers to combine the purchase experience with pleasure. Furthermore, these consumers tend to use the supermarkets appeal as a symbol for association, which features their lifestyle.

Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty

Satisfaction and loyalty can motivate the customer to visit a supermarket.

Store satisfaction which can motivate consumers to build loyalty can be viewed as the consumer's fulfillment response, which is

a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provides a pleasurable level of consumption (Veloutsou, Gilbert, Moutinho and Goode (2005). There are several factors which can contribute to the store satisfaction. These include courteous and knowledgeable employees, good value for money, and quick service (Yi & La, 2004); experience of the store reliability, price, product quality and service quality (Lu & Lukoma, 2011).

Customer loyalty which is the deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronise a preferred product or services consistently in the future from the same store (Jones, Reynolds and Arnold, 2006) is an outcome of customer satisfaction. Consumers express loyalty by revisiting the same store and that is measured by the ratio of the time spent at a single store irrespective of the offerings in competing stores (De Wulf & Odekerken-Schroder, 2003). There are three dimensions of customer loyalty are, the likelihood to continue shopping in the future, likelihood of purchasing other categories of merchandise in the future and the willingness to recommend the store to friends and peer groups (Knox and Denison, 2000). Consumers in developing economies tend to purchase in a given supermarket due to perceived satisfaction that leads into loyalty. With increased level of complexity in determining the quality of products purchase, the consumers in developing countries tend to prefer in developing closer relations with supermarkets that they have found to satisfy their needs.

CONCLUSION

There has been a growing population of middle income class in most parts of developing economies. The immediate implication of such a demographic shift is the changes of purchase priorities and choices. Further, there have been a growing number of supermarkets, which take the advantage of these economic and demographic changes.

In spite of growth of supermarkets in most parts of developing economies, they are facing major challenges due to a significant competition with the small shops and traditional retail structures. Further, there has been growing number of new establishments of the supermarkets but not all of them end up with the success. The failure of Kenyan and South African supermarkets in East African region has been associated with the failure to the lack of understanding of the consumers within those regions. Understanding the factors that influence the consumer decision to visit them is a key factor for stimulating their survival.

The chapter has examined the factors which influence the buyers decision to visit supermarkets in developing economies. The factors can be grouped in terms of those which are based on consumer themselves such as personal interests, lifestyle, those which are based on the location and those which are based on the features of the supermarkets such as the store appeal and availability of supporting staffs.

Key points of consideration from the chapter is that, the retail sector in developing economies is still very dynamic and complex. Furthermore, the survival of the new established supermarket chains will depend on the clear understanding of the factors which motivate their success.

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