

Customers' Shopping and Buying Experiences with Small Scale Retail Units – A Case Study

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Small scale retailing is an age old trading activity spread over the nooks and corners of India. Small scale retail units are challenged with the emergence of corporate retailing on a big scale in the recent years. In order to face competition and to protect the business interest of the small scale retailers there is need to develop loyal customer base by providing services that are capable of creating positive experiences to the customers. Shopping and buying experiences are critical influencing factors of buyer behavior towards the retail outlets. This article is based on an empirical study analysing the responses of the customers on shopping and buying experiences related to small scale retail units. Findings of the study will be useful to small scale retailers to optimize their customer service performance.

Keywords: Retailing, Shopping and Buying Experience, Global Retail Development Index (GRDI), Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

Introduction

Retail sector plays a major role the world over in increasing productivity across a wide range of consumer goods and services. The impact can be best seen in countries like the United States of America (U.S.A.), United Kingdom (U.K.), Mexico, Thailand and more recently China. Retailing is one of the largest industries in the world. It is the second-largest industry in the United States both in number of establishments and number of employees¹. The Indian Retail Industry is the largest among all the industries, accounting for over 10 per cent of the country's GDP and around 8 per cent of the employment. The sector in India has come forth as one of the most dynamic and fast paced industries with several players entering the market². According to AT Kearney's annual Global Retail Development Index (GRDI), in 2011, India is the fourth largest retail destination globally³. India has also been

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ranked as the third most attractive nation for retail investment among 30 emerging markets by the US-based global management consulting firm, A T Kearney in its 9th annual Global Retail Development Index (GRDI) 2010.

Retailing plays a significant role in the economic system of any country. It involves selling goods and services to the ultimate consumers. "Retailing is a part of the continuous process going in between the farm and the factory and household in which goods are changed in form, packed, transported and subdivided"⁴. Retailing is one of the oldest of all business institutions. It has developed along with various stages of civilization, altering its form or varying its offerings to meet the changing demands of the people it has served⁵. The roots of retailing are embedded deeply in antiquity. In the earliest cultures, trading and bartering took place. These activities were conducted for the purposes of satisfying basic needs and accumulating luxuries⁶. The importance of retail trade runs through the entire story of human race. From the very beginning of human history, it is found that people traded with one another for necessities of their lives. And throughout, the objective have been the same – the struggle of mankind to satisfy their wants⁷.

The earliest traders were soldiers of fortune who travelled from place to place engaging in barter with whoever had something desirable to trade⁸. In the earliest nations of antiquity of which there are historical records as well as those which came later, trading was widely carried on. Every city and village had its market places; most of them seem to have had retail shops of one kind or another. In ancient Greece and Rome, for example, retailers of many kinds abounded. In the larger cities the shops were apparently grouped together by various kinds of businesses in certain locations⁹. Over a period of time, the retailing business passed through various stages of development¹⁰.

The retailing business has reached a stage of playing a critical role in the development of economy. The major problem which confronts the business is the problem of distribution. No other business is as widely affects the public as retailing does. It closely touches the common life of the people. The standard of living of the mass of the people depends upon it. If it is carried on as a national service, it consciously seeks to give the best for reasonable prices and strives to bring all the luxuries of beauty in design and taste within the reach of the people¹¹. Retailing is a vital, potent and articulate economic institution in the distributive system. Retailer is the last link in the long chain of distribution. Retailers will be more in number when compared to manufacturers and wholesalers. Retailing creates place, time and possession utility and supplies of goods to consumers effectively. Though producers may directly sell their products to consumers, such method of distribution is inconvenient, expensive and time consuming as compared

to the job performed by retailers who are the specialists in the line. As a result of which, more often, the manufacturers depend on the retailers to sell their products to the consumers. "The retailer, who is able to provide appropriate amenities without an excessive advance of prices of goods, is rewarded by a larger or more loyal patronage. Retailing helps in transfer of merchandise and adds to their economic value by synchronizing time and place"¹².

Uniqueness of Indian Consumers

There has been a remarkable change in consumer taste and preferences in India over the years. With increasing disposable income and exposure to global products and the media, preference for relatively expensive but quality-guaranteed branded products has increased. "Urban population is increasingly becoming fashion conscious and hence brand names are more important to them, than the utility aspect of the products. Exposure to the internet and privatization of the television channels also contributed immense influence on consumer demands, lead to the need for more sophisticated retail chains to cater to their varied and specialized demands. The huge proportion of young population in India implies a demographic dividend for the retail sector since this portion of the population is more brand conscious and is ready for spending more on consumer goods"¹³.

The Mc Kensey Report on Indian Retail: Great Indian Bazaar says that while Indian shoppers have some similarities to their peers in other markets, they have also been shaped by a unique context and history and, therefore, differ in ways that are important for retailers to understand. For instance: it is not wise to think in terms of averages when catering to Indian shoppers; it is better to shape rather than predict the behaviour of the Indian shopper; some Indian shoppers are universal in their shopping habits, while some are similar to the shoppers in other BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) countries, and some are unique; and Indian shoppers are highly value and price-conscious¹⁴.

Purchasing power of Indian urban consumer is growing and branded merchandise in categories like Apparels, Cosmetics, Shoes, Watches, Beverages, Food and even Jewellery, are slowly leading to lifestyle products that are widely accepted by the urban Indian consumer. Indian retailers need to take advantage of this growth plan growth and diversification and aiming to grow, diversify and introduce new formats to pay greater attention to the brand building process. The emphasis here is on retail as a brand rather than retailers selling brands. The focus should be on branding the retail business itself. In their preparation to face fierce competitive pressure, Indian retailers must come to recognize the value of building their own stores as brands to reinforce their marketing positioning, to communicate quality as well as value for money.

Sustainable competitive advantage will be dependent on translating core values combining products, image and reputation into a coherent retail brand strategy¹⁵.

Impact of Organized Retailing on the Small Scale Retailing

Traditional retailing continues to be the backbone of the Indian retail industry, with traditional/unorganized retailing contributing to over 95 per cent of total retail revenues. The quintessential mom-and-pop retailing outlets or the corner store formats constitute a major part of Indian retail store formats. Over 12 million small and medium retail outlets exist in India are the highest in any country. More than 80 per cent of these are run as small family businesses. Prevalence of traditional retailing is highly pronounced in small towns and cities with primary presence of neighbourhood “kirana” stores, push-cart vendors, “melas” and “mandis”. Retail sector in India is primarily categorised by the type of products retailed, as opposed to the different retail formats in operation. The Food and Beverages vertical accounts for the largest share of revenues at 74 per cent of the total retail market. This category has the highest consumer demand across all income levels and various retail formats. The Indian consumer behaviour of preferring proximity to retail formats is highly pronounced in this sector, with food, grocery and allied products largely sourced from the local stores or push-cart vendors. Apparels and consumer durables are the fastest growing verticals in the retail sector¹⁶.

Small scale retailing has a cultural history of several centuries in India as other in many countries of the world. The business practices and strategies in different conventional retail formats got more or less standardized. However, improvements in each retail format took place over the years through generational contributions in the form of minor improvements. Departmental stores, super bazaars, services retailing and the like are the change drivers during the last century. The organized retailing in India though started long back in India, remained a minor contender until recently. The changes that crept into the Indian economy after 1991 liberalization created marketing opportunities for organized retailing in India. The consistently high growth rate of GDP, freedom for the market forces to operate, an increased middle income households, a significant shift in consumer behavior from saving to consumption and so on created excellent opportunities in retailing. As a response many corporate giants entered retailing business on a large scale. Huge investments, high business growth rate, wide range of product choices, different kinds of quality services and a new family shopping experience to the consumers signal a new era in Indian retailing. The changes have impacted small scale retailing significantly. As per the changing needs they have also introduced changes in their retail service offerings to protect their businesses and develop a defensive shield against a growing threat from the organized retail segment. The small

scale retailers are facing unprecedented challenges in recent years. They need to be systematic and strategic in their approach to maintain their local leadership in retail services.

Objective

The objective of this study is to measure the respondents' perceptions of shopping and buying experiences in small scale retail stores and identify the key factors contributing in shopping and buying experiences.

Research Methodology

The study covers small scale retail units in different retail categories. For the purpose of the study, five retail categories were selected based on the number of retailing units established in Andhra Pradesh. The five categories selected for the study are food & grocery, textile & apparel, electrical & electronics, jewellery, and footwear. To elicit the opinion of the customers on shopping and buying experiences with small scale retail establishments, a sample of 450 customers are selected from three regions of the state viz, Coastal Andhra, Telangana and Rayalaseema. Scaling technique is used to measure the opinions and weighed scores are calculated for analysis and interpretation.

Shopping Experience

Shopping experience of the respondents was measured in terms of sufficient product choices, adequacy of information, qualitative information, information access, pressure from salesman and evaluation assistance provided by the sales person. The data presented in Table 1 reveals the respondents' assessment of shopping experience in the small scale *food and grocery* retail outlets. As per the study, 'sufficient product choices', 'information access' and 'adequacy of information' are the three highly rated shopping experiences in that order indicated by the respondents. The factor 'sufficient product choices' got the highest score of 1711 with a mean value of 3.80 which represents 76.04 per cent to MPS. The factor that secured the second highest score was 'information access' with a score of 1562 (mean value 3.47; 69.42 per cent to MPS). 'Adequacy of information' is the factor which secured third place in rating with a score of 1536 (mean value 3.41; 68.27 per cent to MPS). The study revealed that all the six factors contributing to shopping experience got more than 54 per cent to MPS in the case of food and grocery retail outlets. 'Pressure from sales person' is the factor which secured the lowest score of 1225 which represents 54.44 per cent to MPS (mean value 2.72).

Table - 1. Shopping experiences with food and grocery small scale retailers.

Particulars	Score	WM	% to MPS
Sufficient product choices	1711	3.80	76.04
Adequacy of information	1536	3.41	68.27
Qualitative information	1531	3.40	68.04
Information access	1562	3.47	69.42
Pressure from salesman	1225	2.72	54.44
Evaluation assistance	1320	2.93	58.67

WM=Weighed Mean, MPS=Maximum Possible Score

Source: primary data

The data presented in Table 2 reveals the respondents' assessment of shopping experience in the small scale *textile and apparel* retail outlets. Sufficient product choices, qualitative information and information access are the three highly rated shopping experiences in that order indicates by the respondents. The factor 'sufficient product choices' got the highest score of 1622 with a mean value of 3.60 representing 72.09 per cent to MPS. The factor that secured the second highest score was 'qualitative information' with a score of 1583 (mean value 3.52; 70.36 per cent to MPS). 'Information access' is the factor which secured the third place in rating with a score of 1564 (mean value 3.48; 69.51 per cent to MPS). The study revealed that all the six factors contributing to shopping experience got a score that represents more than 58 per cent to MPS in the case of textile and apparel retail outlets. 'Pressure from sales person' is the factor that secured the lowest score of 1306 representing 58.04 per cent to MPS (mean value 2.90).

Table - 2. Shopping experiences with textile and apparel small scale retailers.

Particulars	Score	WM	% to MPS
Sufficient product choices	1622	3.60	72.09
Adequacy of information	1528	3.40	67.79
Qualitative information	1583	3.52	70.36
Information access	1564	3.48	69.51
Pressure from salesman	1306	2.90	58.04
Evaluation assistance	1430	3.18	63.56

WM=Weighed Mean, MPS=Maximum Possible Score

Source: primary data

The data presented in Table 3 reveals the respondents' assessment of shopping experience in the small scale *electrical and electronics* retail outlets. Information access, sufficient product choices, and adequacy of information

are the three highly rated shopping experiences in that order indicated by the respondents. The factor 'information access' got the highest score of 1509 with a mean value of 3.35 which represents 67.07 per cent to MPS. The factor that secured the second highest rating was 'sufficient product choices'. This factor got a score of 1488 (mean value 3.31) which represents 66.13 per cent to MPS. 'Adequacy of information' is the factor which secured the third place in rating with a score of 1486 (mean value 3.30). The score of this factor represents 66.04 per cent to MPS. The study revealed that all the six factors contributing to shopping experience got more than 56 per cent to MPS in the case of electrical and electronics retail outlets. 'Pressure from sales person' is the factor which secured the lowest score of 1274 which represents 56.62 per cent to MPS (mean value 2.83).

Table-3. Shopping experiences with electrical and electronics small scale retailers

Particulars	Score	WM	% to MPS
Sufficient product choices	1488	3.31	66.13
Adequacy of information	1486	3.30	66.04
Qualitative information	1473	3.27	65.47
Information access	1509	3.35	67.07
Pressure from salesman	1274	2.83	56.62
Evaluation assistance	1392	3.09	61.87

WM=Weighed Mean, MPS=Maximum Possible Score

Source: primary data

The data presented in Table 4 reveals the respondents' assessment of shopping experience in the small scale *jewellery* retail outlets. Qualitative information, adequacy of information and information access are the three highly rated shopping experiences in that order indicated by the respondents. The factor 'qualitative information' got the highest score of 1501 with a mean value of 3.33 representing 66.71 per cent to MPS. The factor 'adequacy of information' secured the second highest score with a score of 1449 (mean value 3.2) representing 64.40 per cent to MPS. 'Information access' secured the third place in rating with a score of 1536 (mean value 3.41) representing 68.27 per cent to MPS. The study revealed that all the six factors contributing to shopping experience got more than 51 per cent to MPS in the case of jewellery retail outlets. 'Pressure from sales person' is the factor that secured the lowest score of 1169 representing 51.96 per cent to MPS (mean value 2.60).

Table - 4. Shopping experiences with jewellery small scale retailers.

Particulars	Score	WM	% to MPS
Sufficient product choices	1408	3.13	62.58
Adequacy of information	1489	3.31	66.18
Qualitative information	1501	3.33	66.71
Information access	1449	3.22	64.40
Pressure from salesman	1169	2.60	51.96
Evaluation assistance	1345	2.99	59.78

WM=Weighed Mean, MPS=Maximum Possible Score

Source: primary data

The data presented in Table 5 reveals the respondents' assessment of shopping experience in the small scale *footwear* retail outlets. Adequacy of information, information access and sufficient product choices are the three highly rated shopping experiences in that order indicated by the respondents. The factor 'adequacy of information' got the highest score of 1528 with a mean value of 3.40. The score of this factor represents 67.91 per cent to MPS. The factor that secured the second highest score was 'information access' with a score of 1462 (mean value 3.25) which represents 64.98 per cent to MPS. 'Sufficient product choices' is the factor which secured the third place in rating with a score of 1451 (mean value 3.22; 64.49 per cent to MPS). The study revealed that all the six factors contributing to shopping experience got more than 59 per cent to MPS in the case of footwear retail outlets. 'Pressure from sales person' got the lowest score of 1336 which represents 59.38 per cent to MPS (mean value 2.97).

Table - 5: Shopping experiences with footwear small scale retailers.

Particulars	Score	WM	% to MPS
Sufficient product choices	1451	3.22	64.49
Adequacy of information	1528	3.40	67.91
Qualitative information	1394	3.10	61.96
Information access	1462	3.25	64.98
Pressure from salesman	1336	2.97	59.38
Evaluation assistance	1365	3.03	60.67

WM=Weighed Mean, MPS=Maximum Possible Score

Source: primary data

The top three rated shopping experiences of the respondents in relation to small scale retail shops of the five categories under the study are shown in Table 6. The study revealed that the top three rated shopping experiences

are not similar among the five categories. However, some experiences have commonly figured in top three ratings. 'Sufficient product choices' is the factor that figured in the top three ratings of all the categories except jewellery category. 'Information access' is the factor that found a place in the top three ratings of all the categories. 'Adequacy of information' is another identified shopping experience in four of the five categories (this factor was not found in the top three ratings in the case of textile and apparel category). 'Qualitative information' is the factor identified with textile and apparel and jewellery categories.

Table - 6: Top three rated shopping experiences with small scale retail shops.

Factor Ratings	Food & Grocery	Textile & Apparel	Electrical & Electronics	Jewellery	Footwear
1	Sufficient product choices	Sufficient product choices	Information access	Qualitative information	Adequacy of information
2	Information access	Qualitative information	Sufficient product choices	Adequacy of information	Information access
3	Adequacy of information	Information access	Adequacy of information	Information access	Sufficient product choices

Source: tables 1-5

The overall assessment of factors contributing to the shopping experience related to small scale retail outlets is presented in Table 7. It reveals that 'sufficient product choices' (score: 7680) got the highest rating followed by 'adequacy of information' (score: 7567 and 'information access' (score 7546). The mean value of all the six variables varied between 2.80 and 3.41. In terms of percentage to MPS the value of each variable varied between 56.09 per cent and 68.27 per cent. The study reveals that all the variables got more than 50 per cent value rating by the respondents in respect of shopping experience from small scale retail outlets under study.

Table-7. Shopping experiences with small scale retailers.

Particulars	Score	WM	% to MPS
Sufficient product choices	7680	3.41	68.27
Adequacy of information	7567	3.36	67.26
Qualitative information	7482	3.32	66.51
Information access	7546	3.35	67.08
Pressure from salesman	6310	2.80	56.09
Evaluation assistance	6852	3.05	60.91

WM=Weighed Mean, MPS=Maximum Possible Score

Source: Tables 1-5

Buying Experience

The buying experience of the respondents with the small scale retail shops is ascertained by using six variables which include fair price, fair negotiation process, free from deception and dishonesty, convenience, honest and courteous treatment, and availability of sufficient inventory. The findings of the study related to buying experience of the respondents with the *food and grocery* retail shops are presented in Table 8. It can be seen from the table 'fair price' is the highly rated buying experience as this variable got a score of 1651 with a mean value of 3.67 representing 73.38 per cent to MPS. 'Convenience' is the other buying experience which got the second highest score of 1563 which represents 69.47 per cent to MPS (mean value 3.47). 'Fair negotiation process' is the variable that secured the third place with a score of 1533 representing 68.13 per cent to MPS (mean value 3.41). The study revealed that the small scale food and grocery retail stores got positive ratings in all the variables of buying experience. The mean value of all the variables is >3 and the percentage to MPS varied between 61.56 and 73.38.

Table-8. Buying experiences with small scale food and grocery retail shops

Particulars	Score	WM	% to MPS
Fair price	1651	3.67	73.38
Fair negotiation process	1533	3.41	68.13
Free from deception and dishonesty	1387	3.08	61.64
Convenience	1563	3.47	69.47
Honest and courteous treatment	1385	3.08	61.56
Availability of sufficient inventory	1461	3.25	64.93

WM=Weighed Mean, MPS=Maximum Possible Score

Source: primary data

The data related to buying experience of the respondents with the *textile and apparel* small scale retail shops is presented in Table 9. The study revealed that 'convenience' is the highly rated buying experience. This variable got a score of 1632 with a mean value of 3.63 representing 72.53 per cent to MPS. 'Fair negotiation process' is the second major buying experience which got the score of 1459 representing 64.84 per cent to MPS (mean value 3.24). 'Free from deception and dishonesty' is the variable that secured the third place with a score of 1395 representing 62.00 per cent to MPS (mean value 3.10). The study reveals that the small scale textile and apparel retail stores got positive ratings in all the variables of buying experience. The mean value of all the variables (except honest and courteous treatment) is >3 and the percentage to MPS varied between 59.29 per cent and 72.53 per cent. The factor 'honest and courteous treatment' got the lowest score of 1334.

Table - 9. **Buying experiences with small scale textile and apparel retail shops**

Particulars	Score	WM	% to MPS
Fair price	1363	3.03	60.58
Fair negotiation process	1459	3.24	64.84
Free from deception and dishonesty	1395	3.10	62.00
Convenience	1632	3.63	72.53
Honest and courteous treatment	1334	2.96	59.29
Availability of sufficient inventory	1390	3.09	61.78

WM=Weighed Mean, MPS=Maximum Possible Score

Source: primary data

The findings of the study related to buying experience of the respondents with the *electrical and electronics* retail shops are presented in Table 10. It reveals from the table that 'convenience' is the highly rated buying experience as this variable got a score of 1512 with a mean value of 3.36 representing 67.20 per cent to MPS. 'Fair negotiation process' is the second major buying experience which got the score of 1511 representing 67.16 per cent to MPS (mean value 3.36). 'Availability of sufficient inventory' is the variable that secured the third place with a score of 1431 representing 63.60 per cent to MPS (mean value 3.18). The study reveals that the small scale electrical and electronics retail stores got positive ratings in all the variables of buying experience. The mean value of all the variables (except fair price) is >3 and the percentage to MPS varied between 59.38 per cent and 67.20 per cent. The factor 'fair price' got the lowest score (1336) with a mean value of 2.97.

Table-10. **Buying experiences with the small scale electrical and electronics retail shops.**

Particulars	Score	WM	% to MPS
Fair price	1336	2.97	59.38
Fair negotiation process	1511	3.36	67.16
Free from deception and dishonesty	1386	3.08	61.60
Convenience	1512	3.36	67.20
Honest and courteous treatment	1360	3.02	60.44
Availability of sufficient inventory	1431	3.18	63.60

WM=Weighed Mean, MPS=Maximum Possible Score

Source: primary data

The particulars related to buying experience of the respondents with the *jewellery* retail shops were presented in Table 11. The table reveals that 'fair price' is the highly rated buying experience as this variable got a score of 1468 with a mean value of 3.26 (65.24 per cent to MPS). 'Convenience' is the buying experience which got the second highest score of 1456 representing 64.58 per cent to MPS (mean value 3.24). 'Honest and courteous treatment' is the variable that secured the third place with a score of 1395 representing 62.00 per cent to MPS (mean value 3.10). The study reveals that the small scale jewellery retail stores got positive ratings in all the variables of buying experience. The mean value of four variables is >3 each and the mean value of the factors 'fair negotiation process' and 'availability of sufficient inventory' is < 3. The score of each variable as a percentage to MPS varied between 58.49 and 65.24.

Table - 11. **Buying experiences with small scale jewellery retail shops**

Particulars	Score	WM	% to MPS
Fair price	1468	3.26	65.24
Fair negotiation process	1341	2.98	59.60
Free from deception and dishonesty	1353	3.07	60.13
Convenience	1456	3.24	64.58
Honest and courteous treatment	1395	3.10	62.00
Availability of sufficient inventory	1316	2.92	58.49

WM=Weighed Mean, MPS=Maximum Possible Score

Source: primary data

The data related to buying experience of the respondents with the *footwear* retail shops is presented in Table 12. The study revealed that 'convenience' is the highly rated buying experience. This variable got a score of 1633 with a mean value of 3.63 which represents 72.58 per cent to MPS. 'Fair negotiation

process' is the second most rated buying experience that secured a score of 1453 representing 64.58 per cent to MPS (mean value 3.23). 'Free from deception and dishonesty' is the variable that secured the third place with a score of 1381 representing 61.38 per cent to MPS (mean value 3.07). It can be inferred from the study that the small scale footwear retail stores got positive ratings in all the variables of buying experience. The mean values of convenience, fair negotiation process, and free from deception and dishonesty are > 3 each. The mean values of the other three variables such as fair price, honest and courteous treatment, and availability of sufficient inventory are >2.7 each. The scores obtained by each variable as a percentage to MPS varied between 54.89 and 72.58.

Table - 12. **Buying experiences with small scale footwear retail shops**

Particulars	Score	WM	%to MPS
Fair price	1292	2.87	57.42
Fair negotiation process	1453	3.23	64.58
Free from deception and dishonesty	1381	3.07	61.38
Convenience	1633	3.63	72.58
Honest and courteous treatment	1235	2.74	54.89
Availability of sufficient inventory	1329	2.95	59.07
WM=Weighed Mean, MPS=Maximum Possible Score			

Source: primary data

The top three rated buying experiences of the respondents related to small scale retail shops were presented in Table 13. 'Convenience' is the factor that is found in all the five categories as one of the top three factors influencing buying experience of the respondents. 'Fair negotiation process' is the other buying experience identified by the respondents. This factor finds place in the top three positions in food and grocery, textile and apparel, electrical and electronics and footwear categories. 'Fair price' is the highly rated factor in food and grocery, and jewellery categories. 'Free from deception and dishonesty' is the identified buying experience in textile and apparel, and footwear categories. 'Availability of sufficient inventory' is specially rated in electrical and electronics category while the 'honest and courteous treatment' is the buying experience specially identified with jewellery category.

Table - 13. Top three rated buying experiences with small scale retail shops.

Factor Ratings	Food & Grocery	Textile & Apparel	Electrical & Electronics	Jewellery	Footwear
1	Fair price	Convenience	Convenience	Fair price	Convenience
2	Convenience	Fair negotiation process	Fair negotiation process	Convenience	Fair negotiation process
3	Fair negotiation process	Free from deception and dishonesty	Availability of sufficient inventory	Honest and courteous treatment	Free from deception and dishonesty

Source: Tables 8-12

Table 14 depicts the overall rating of the respondents in buying experience related to the small scale retail outlets selected for the study. The study reveals 'convenience' (score: 7796) is the top rated buying experience followed by 'fair negotiation process' (score: 7279) and 'fair price' (score: 7110). The mean value of each variable varied between 2.98 and 3.46 and the percentage to MPS varied between 59.64 and 69.30.

Table - 14. Buying experiences with small scale retail shops.

Particulars	Score	WM	% to MPS
Fair price	7110	3.16	63.20
Fair negotiation process	7279	3.24	64.70
Free from deception and dishonesty	6902	3.07	61.35
Convenience	7796	3.46	69.30
Honest and courteous treatment	6709	2.98	59.64
Availability of sufficient inventory	6927	3.08	61.57

WM=Weighed Mean, MPS=Maximum Possible Score

Source: Tables 8-12

Conclusion

Shopping and buying experiences of the customers play an important role in shaping the shoppers' behavior. Customers expect sufficient information support and visual evidences that support their purchase decision making in shopping while they look for fair price, service support, honesty, right treatment and quick processes at the buying situations. The experiences gained by the customers in shopping buying play a dominant role in influencing the customers' loyalty positions. The study revealed that sufficient product choices, adequacy of information and information access are the three major influencing factors of shopping experience while the factors such as convenience,

fair negotiation process and fair price influence buying experience. Small scale retailers need to understand these expectations from the customers and take measures to create positive and distinctive experiences in these areas to build loyal customer base.

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- ¹⁵ Dhanabhakyaam M. and Shanthi A., Indian retail Industry - It's growth, challenges and opportunities, www.fibre2fashion.com
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