Store Format Choice and Service Quality: A Study of Selected Apparel Retail Formats in Delhi-NCR

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Abstract

The purpose of this research paper is to examine the impact of perceived service quality factors on the store format choice of shoppers across the different apparel retail formats. A modified version of RSQS model comprising of 32 scale items is developed using extant literature. Data was collected using questionnaires through mall-intercept method from the shoppers of Delhi-NCR (National Capital Region). Shoppers from three different formats viz., discount shops, exclusive outlets and multi-branded outlets were targeted for responding to the questionnaires. Mall-intercept method was used for data collection. This method was useful in due the limitation of cost of time for this research work. In addition, mall-intercept method was useful as the respondents were requested to fill the questionnaire once they have completed their shopping. Their shopping experience was fresh while responding to the questionnaire.

The scale items were reduced to five factors using exploratory factor analysis. These were used to predict the store format choice using discriminant analysis. Among the identified factors, store format choice was strongly affected by the physical aspects and the ambient factors.

This research is has strong relevance for the retailers who cater to the urban population of Delhi-NCR. Shoppers in this region exhibit affluence in terms of shopping in the modern retailing format. Shopping is no more a necessity for them but a lifestyle need. The expectation of high levels of service quality and rich shopping experience is an indicator of their store format choice. ; The study familiarizes the apparel retailers with the precise factors, which are considered important by the consumers while choosing a particular store format. It will also help in understanding why the shoppers prefer one format over the other based on the service quality factors. The formats that are investing more towards store design would be able to understand why the competing formats are delivering competitive levels of service quality with lower investments and hence need to re-work on those service quality factors. The study is unique in terms of its format-wise comparison of the apparel retailing using the modified RSQS model.

Keywords: Store Format Choice, Service Quality, Apparel, Retail, India

Introduction

The store format provided by a retailer describes its offering to the shoppers in a holistic manner. Many big Indian retailers for example, Future Group, offer a wide variety of formats in different categories especially in the apparel segment. Basu etal. (2014) highlighted the consumer preference for different apparel formats depends on various factors like merchandise, value for money, location and service. The consumers are not only switching between retailers within a particular format but they also tend to switch among the formats (Anand and Sinha 2009). The Indian organized retail industry is in growth phase with FDI in the Multi-Brand Outlets in contention to be approved. The consumers yearn for excellent shopping experience and high quality of service from the retailer. The lifestyle of urban Indian consumers is changing due to the increase in the number of working women, international brands coming into the Indian market, rising per capita income, increase in the youth population and increase in the retail

outlets (chain and stand alone; national and international). The organized retail environment emotionally influences the shopping behaviour of the consumers (Donovan and Rossiter 1982 cited by Khare and Rakesh 2010). The concept of store formats is more suited to the organized segment in the Indian context where various formats have emerged catering to the shopping experience needs of various consumer segments.

Basu (2015) found in a comparative study of US and Indian organised apparel retail format choice behaviour that multi brand formats are perceived as fun shopping destination and single brand store as target shopping destination. Further, multi brand retailers are perceived as leisure shopping experience provider and single brand stores as best possible assortment and service provider. These factors are similar to the service quality factors in retailing context and hence find significance from the point of view of shoppers' choice of store format. Das (2015) has studied fashion retailers about the impact of store attributes on consumer based retail equity and highlighted its importance for long term sustainability for the any retail store.

This suggests a strong need to research the shopper's choice of store format because consumers are associated with a particular store format in the long-run and may find it difficult to change due to habitual shopping behaviour. The retailers also need to understand which factors help the shoppers to differentiate among various formats and hence provide foundations for store format choice. This can also be done by differentiated and improved service quality levels, which are intangible in nature and attempt to provide excellent shopping experience.

SERVQUAL (Service quality scale model) has been the most popular tool used for its evaluation (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1988). For retailing services RSQS scale (Dabholkar, Thorpe, and Rentz 1996) is the most widely referred model. This study attempts to find out how shoppers choose among different retail store formats based on perceived service quality dimensions pertaining to the retail. Three different formats (discount stores, exclusive stores and multi-brand outlets) are compared in the category of apparels.

Objectives

The objective of this research paper is –

> To compare different retail formats based on the customer's perception of service quality.

Research Question

The key research question pertaining to this study is-

> Which retail service quality factors are significant in differentiating the apparel retail store formats?

The research paper attempts to review the relevant literature on store format choice in the context of Indian apparel retail, overlapping studies on store choice and other related literature. Moreover, the review of literature covers the factors, which influence the store format choice with a special focus on the inclusion of ambient factors. An appended version of RSQS model is used by incorporating the ambient factor as scale items. The modified scale is refined and is tested for its reliability and the factors extracted are further tested to highlight their influence on store format choice made by the shoppers. The analysis is augmented with discussions, limitations and managerial implications. The results found are helpful to understand which service quality factors are relevant from the point of view of differentiating between store formats. It will help the apparel store managers to understand the competitive strength of their format offerings.

Review of Literature
Store format choice
Choice of retail store formats among shoppers, hold strong importance in the retail marketing literature due to its strong linkages with consumer behaviour. This topic has emerged recently in the Indian context (Sinha and Banerjee 2004; Prasad and Aryasri 2011). The influencers of retail store format choice include demographic characteristics (Carpenter and Moore 2006; Carpenter and Balija 2010; Carpenter and Brosdahl 2011; Prasad and Aryasri 2011, Khare 2013), psychographic characteristics (Narang 2011; Prasad and Aryasri 2011), store attributes (Sinha and Banerjee 2004; Carpenter and Moore 2006; Carpenter and Balija 2010), store image (Wakefield and Baker 1998; Erdem, Oumlil, and Tuncalp 1999; Visser, Du Preez, and Van Noordwyk 2006), shopping orientations (Visser and Du Preez, 2001) and cultural factors (Khare 2013).

Choosing a store is a cognitive process (Sinha and Banerjee 2004) and requires information processing (Van Waterschoot et al. 2008). The belief, which shoppers exhibit about the product and service quality in the store, determines the store choice (Sinha, Banerjee, and Uniyal 2002). The desired shopping experiences of the customers affect the store choice (Messinger and Narasimhan 1997). This is applicable for choosing a format as well as choosing a store within a format. Moreover, store choice has been referred as store preference in the literature (Khare 2013). Visser and Du Preez (2001) discussed various shopping orientations pertaining to the choice of the store, which included fashion and brand name being related only to the apparels. Sinha and Banerjee (2004) have highlighted the concept of store choice in the context of apparel stores where store format/design and ambience are the key drivers of store choice apart from quality and variety of merchandise. Mittal and Mittal (2008) evaluated the store choice in the context of Indian apparel retail and found that two set of factors - loyalty drivers and experience enhancers are the key influencers of store choice. Moreover, store choice has direct relationship with perceived reliability pertaining to retail formats (Fowler and Bridges 2010).

Anand and Sinha (2009) have pointed out that store choice is widely discussed in the literature but the discussion of store format choice in the literature is limited. The authors also highlighted the difference between store format choice and store choice. Narang (2011) researched on apparel store selection in a tier-2 Indian city and found the influence of psychographics on store choice among youth. Prasad and Aryasri (2011) focussed particularly on store format choice in Indian context. The formats included in the study were convenience stores, neighbourhood kirana stores, hypermarkets and supermarkets. However, the distinction between store choice and store format choice remained very slender. Recently, Khare (2013) researched on the small local store and evaluated the influence of demographic factors towards moderating the cultural factors while exhibiting their choice for small stores. Tripathi and Dave (2013) evaluated store format choice in the context of apparel retailers in India using relationship quality factors. Although the distinction between store choice and store format choice was provided, the authors did not consider service quality or store environment factors as predictors of store format choice.

The studies by Sinha and Banerjee (2004), Anand and Sinha (2009), Prasad and Aryasri (2011) and Tripathi and Dave (2013) are significant in the Indian context pertaining to store format choice. However, most studies in the literature ponder on store choice while attempting to discuss store format choice and therefore the distinction has not been very prominent. Van Waterschoot et al. (2008) have used both these terms interchangeably. Retail store format choice has strong linkages with service quality. However, the discussion of the same in the retail marketing literature is limited. The factors extracted and the scale items used by Mittal and

Mittal (2008) were mostly similar to the retail service quality scale (Dabholkar, Thorpe, and Rentz 1996), and the study focused on the apparel segment. Interestingly, this study extracted ambient conditions as one of the factors, which influences store choice.

Service quality and its relationship with store format choice

A recent study by Amorim and Saghezchi (2014) opined the existence of differences in customer's service quality assessment across retail store formats and it leads to difference in customer loyalty. Seock (2009) tested the influence of store environment on store choice in the apparel segment pertaining to the Hispanic customers in the US. Earlier, Moye and Kincade (2002) evaluated the influence of shopping orientations and usage situations on the importance given to the store environment for female apparel shoppers in USA but did not consider either store choice or store format choice. Ailawadi and Keller (2004) found that ambient factors are responsible for influencing the customer's perceptions of store image with Baker et al. (2002) extending support for store environments' effect on perceptions of service quality.

The positive affect delivered by background music encourages association (Dubé, Chebat, Morin 1995). Jain and Bagdare (2011) suggested that music affects consumer's cognition by evaluating the service quality. Sweeney and Wyber (2002) concluded that the in-store music could be used to communicate the service quality conceptions, which should be based on the positioning of the store in the minds of the consumers. Vida, Obadia, and Kunz (2007) tested the effect of music on shopper's responses and found support for store offerings and personnel but did not tested its effect on store choice or store format choice. Spangenberg et al., (1996) concluded that the scent could be used for positive store evaluations as it accounts for store differentiation. The effect of scent on store evaluation has been robust with customers tending to spend more in a pleasant smelling environment (Morrin, 2010). Milotic (2003) has pointed out that scent can alter the shopper's behaviour before the sensory evaluation of the product takes place. Kumar et al. (2010) found that ambient scent and music have significant influence on the store image, which in turn influences store choice, which is also supported in the earlier literature (Donovan et al. 1994; Turley and Milliman 2000).

Brady and Cronin Jr (2001) proposed a three-factor model of service quality i.e. physical environment quality, interaction quality, and outcome quality. The physical environment quality has three dimensions – design, ambient conditions, and social factors. Ambient conditions are intangible in nature and include music and fragrance (Bitner, 1992). Therefore, it is interpreted that the ambient factors are constituents of service quality, which influences customer satisfaction, and hence should form part of the modified RSQS scale for this study.

Fragrance and music have been found to influence the shopper's behaviour and subsequently the store evaluations. Therefore, it becomes important to include music and fragrance under the retail service quality model. Scale modification is justified as the service quality scales lack universality and may not be applicable across industries as well as cultures. Gaur and Agrawal (2006) have pointed out problems with the factor structure of the RSQS scale. The solution for refinement of the scale as suggested by Gaur and Agrawal (2006) is the extensive review of literature for modifying the scale items and further applying them to various retail formats across different cross-cultural settings. This suggests the limitations of the RSQS model in its universal applicability.

The research works of Finn and Lamb Jr. (1991), Gagliano and Hathcote (1994), Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1994), Dabholkar, Thorpe, and Rentz (1996), Hurley and Estelami (1998), Reynolds and Beatty (1999), Mehta, Lalwani, and Han (2000), Too, Souchon, and Thirkell (2001), Kim and Jin (2002) and Svensson (2001) are among the significant research on service

quality in apparel retailing however the ambient factors have not been brought under the retail service quality model. Among the aforementioned research works Dabholkar, Thorpe, and Rentz (1996)'s contribution of RSQS model is very significant in the literature. The earlier discussion about factors affecting store format choice suggests that these factors are similar to the dimensions of RSQS model but for music and fragrance. The RSQS dimensions are personal interaction, problem solving, physical aspects, reliability, and policy. Therefore, the scale items of RSQS model have been considered for this research along with addition of four items for ambient factors (music and fragrance) which were not present under the RSQS model.

Hence, the literature suggests testing the influence of modified RSQS scale (including ambient factors) on retail format choice in apparel category. This study attempts to highlight the influence of retail service quality on format choice of apparel store category in India.

Methodology
Sample
The sampling unit for this study were the shoppers. The sampling frame consisted of the shoppers of the apparels from the retail stores in the major markets of Delhi-NCR (National Capital Region). Systematic sampling was deployed in order to choose the sampling units from the sampling frame. 450 questionnaires were administered out of which 287 questionnaires were found usable. Mall/Marketplace intercept method was applied to collect the data. Mall intercept method is useful for surveys where the data can be collected in a short span of time with the researcher's interest being maintained and were able to screen the respondents (O'Cass and Grace, 2008). The personal nature of administration of the survey forms in the mall intercept method delivers responses with higher quality and therefore was applied to compare the physical retailers with the non-store retailers (Keen et al., 2004). In addition, the responses should be collected at the purchase or consumption location (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). The paucity of time and limitation of funds also supported the choice of mall-intercept method and has found strong application in studies pertaining to retail store format choice (Prasad and Aryasri, 2011) and store choice Joyce and Lambert (1996).

The data was collected from the shoppers visiting various malls of New Delhi and the (National Capital Region of India) NCR such that major locations (malls and market places) could be covered.

Those respondents were chosen who had just shopped from an apparel store. The profile of shoppers (respondents) is given in the Table 1. The sample is suitable for our study because it represents mostly the urban middle and upper middle class who are amongst the frequent shopper of apparels in the organized retail format.

[Table 1: Profile of respondents]

Questionnaire and Scale Design
The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part comprised of basic demographic questions. This was followed by questions on store format type, which the customers patronized. The customers did not have a strong understanding about the name of the store format type and hence we asked them to choose from an exhaustive list of popular retail stores. The second part comprised of the 32-item modified RSQS model (Table 5), which were anchored with 7-point Likert scale. For each item, a rating of 1 meant high disagreement and rating of 7 meant high agreement. The scale items were jumbled in their order in the questionnaire.

All 28 items were picked from the RSQS model. Based on literature review we found that two atmospheric elements, which are not included in the RSQS scale, namely music and fragrance also contribute towards the perception of service quality in the retail stores. Hence, four additional items based on two ambient factors were included based on literature review.

Finding and Discussion

Factor analysis and reliability scores

The factor analysis was run on the 32-item scale using SPSS. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy was found to be 0.896 and Bartlett's test was also found to be significant. Principle component method was used for extraction and Varimax with Kaiser Normalizaton was used as rotation method.

The scale refinement process involves dropping the items with cross-loadings. The total variance explained 69%. The rule for dropping an item was based on cross loadings, and communality (Hair Jr et al., 2006). The minimum communality required was 0.5 and the cut-off score for the factor loadings was 0.5 for practical significance. This process was repeated thrice such that there were no cross-loadings remaining.

The final run resulted in the retention of the remaining 17-items. These were grouped into five factors. These are described with their reliability scores. The five factors are named as Ambient Factors (α= .841), Personal Interaction (α= .812), Appearance (α= .838), Convenience & Promises (α= .728) and Problem Solving (α= .777). The reliability score measured through Cronbach's α suggest a strong reliability and internal consistency among the scale items (see Table 2). The factors identified are used to evaluate the store choice behaviour by using discriminant analysis.

[Table 2: Rotated Component Matrix with Reliability Scores]

Store Format Choice Comparison

Discriminant Analysis is used for comparing the perceived service quality levels among the three formats and will outline the factors, which play significant role in discriminating between the store formats in the minds of the shoppers.

[Table 3: Structure Matrix]

The structure matrix (see Table 3) contains two functions. The first functions have a high loading with the three of the modified RSQS factors. These are Ambient Factors, Appearance, and Convenience & Promises. Therefore, the first function can be understood as a combination of these three factors. On the other hand, Personal Interaction and Problem Solving show a high loading with the second function and hence the second function can be understood as a combination of these two factors. It is interpreted that the first function is comprised of factors related to Physical Evidence and Ambient Factors while the second function is a set of Intangibles and Relationship based factors. Largely, the first function is more about the store environment while the second function is more about intangibles (relationships). It is also seen through the test for equality of group means that the factors related to Physical Evidence and Ambient Factors are significant while Intangibles and Relationship are insignificant suggesting that the former will account for greater discrimination while making a store choice in comparison to the latter.

[Table 4: Functions at Group Centroids]

Finally, the groups can be compared based on functions at group centroid. This analysis suggests that the Exclusive stores emphasize most on the factors related to Physical Evidence and

Ambient Factors, which is followed by the Multi-brand outlets while focus of the Discount stores is least under these factors. However, the stores Exclusive and the MBOs show less difference in the average scores as per the centroid table while the discount store lag far behind. Thus, the shoppers discriminate their format choice to a greater degree based on the factors related to Physical Evidence and Ambient Factors. On the other hand, the Multi-brand outlets give the highest weight to the factors related to Intangibles and Relationships, which is followed by the Exclusive stores and the Discount stores take the last position. It is also observed that distances between the centroids of the three store formats are not very high. Hence, the discrimination by the shoppers about the store format choice is low in magnitude based on the Intangibles and Relationship. (See Table 4) The test of equality of group means also suggest that the two factors under the second function is not significant. This test is used for evaluating the significant difference between groups under study based on the means of the predicting factors (Meyers, Gamst, and Guarino, 2006). According to Meyers, Gamst, and Guarino (2006), the non-significant predictors can be eliminated from the study. The non-significant factors combine together to form the second function, which does not show sizeable differences between the group centroids and hence are eliminated from the consideration set. Therefore, it is concluded that the factors related to Physical Evidence and Ambient Factors are having an impact on apparel store format choice. (See Table 4)

Conclusion

This study provides a strong contribution to the existing literature pertaining to store format choice by bringing in the service quality dimensions in apparel retailing in Indian context. The ambient factors – music and scent have been brought under the retail service quality. The results from the scale refinement suggest the lack of applicability of the RSQS model and are similar to the results produced by Kaul (2005). The five dimensions produced after the refinement show high reliability. The addition of Ambient Factors as a separate feature is the key contribution.

The customers are able to discriminate the three store formats based on the extracted service quality factors. On one side, the factors like the Ambient Factors, Appearance, and Convenience & Promises suitably discriminate between the store formats while Personal Interaction and Problem Solving have not been significant enough to influence the customers in discriminating among the formats.

The Exclusive stores show a high score on the three significant discriminating factors and have left the MBOs behind and the Discount stores far behind. Therefore, the Exclusive stores demonstrate a higher level of service quality in contrast with the other two formats based on the three discriminating factors. The non-discriminating factors, which are found insignificant for differentiation, account for competition among the three formats in terms of service quality. This may lead to switching of the store formats by the shoppers.

Concisely, this study helps in empirically delineating the service quality factors, which acts as the base for distinction between the three formats. Therefore, apart from the material offerings by the retailer the extrinsic and intangible (relationship) features also differentiate the store formats.

Limitations and Future research

The study focuses on the shoppers from the Delhi-NCR hence the results can differ from the shoppers in the other major cities in India due to the diverse nature of the country in cultural aspects. The results can also differ in other countries. Further work can be done on comparing the customers in their assessment of service quality based on demographics and psychographics towards making decisions about the store formats. In addition, store format choice can also be evaluated for other product categories, which are sold under the organized retail. These

categories may include grocery stores, computer and peripherals stores, white good stores, mobile phone stores, bookstores, gift stores etc. Service outlets can also be compared in terms of formats and may include product categories like restaurants, bars, cafés, and mobile service providers.

Managerial Implications

Since apparels reflect an individual's image on the social front the shoppers need a calm environment and a promising level of service quality during shopping. If the experience is pleasing than the customer would like to further associate with the retail store and would recommend the same to others. The customer chooses one format over the other because of different motives. The higher levels of physical aspects of service quality shown by the exclusive stores, carves a different image, which will always be recalled by the shoppers.

The customers would like to patronize an exclusive store because they promise to be exclusive in all kinds of clothing solutions, which they offer. Along with this, they provide fun, fantasy and feeling with the help of enhanced ambient factors. These promises can include home delivery, repairing, alterations and above all timely delivery of services. The same goes for MBOs where the customer gets a chance to compare the various brands, which could be from the third-party manufacturer/supplier or may be private labels. In this case, apart from the promises mentioned for the Exclusive outlets, the promise of variety of offerings includes products and value for money deals. For the discount stores, the promises would be offering apparels, which ask for lesser compromise on the customer's wallet, and apparels being able to substitute high quality merchandise offered from the premium stores.

The results show that the convenience and promises are put together under one factor. The convenience is pertaining to the customer's movement within the store. The ease of the movement across the Exclusive store will be the most comfortable due to selected patronage and high margins while it will be very limited for the discount stores. The customer's expectation about the store appearance in terms of equipments, physical facilities and visual appeal of other associated materials pertaining to the store's services has also been well discriminated across the three formats. The Exclusive stores charge premiums on their merchandise offerings and hence are able to create a highly exclusive physical appearance, however, the MBOs, which are very large size stores, offer a variety of brands, they also provide pleasant appearance. However, their appearance levels are marginally downsized due to huge rentals they pay with respect to the exclusives outlets. The discount stores compromise heavily on these features.

An important result in this study is pertaining to the ambient factors (music and scent). The Exclusive stores are able to put up a very unique environment based on some theme as is done in Levi's Exclusive stores. The kind of music and fragrance is very unique. However, this is difficult for the MBOs where the variety of products and brands does not find support for varying ambient factors across sections. This is a problem for the Discount Stores due to limited budget based on narrow margins.

The aforementioned factors help in providing the shoppers a tranquilized environment, which supports their preference of Exclusives or MBOs over the Discount Stores. The customers patronizing Discount Stores look for a solution, which allows them to save money, and look for limited variety. Hence expecting a high quality ambient environment conditioning by the shoppers in these stores is a phenomenon, which is highly unlikely. However, the management of these ambient factors by the Exclusives and MBOs is important and the shopper's behaviour and mood should be observed on regular basis. This will help in further enhancing the customer's shopping experience.

Despite the aforementioned differences across the three formats, the differentiation among them is extremely narrow in terms of personal interaction, problem solving and complaint handling, which allow the shoppers to have a look at the merchandise offerings in the discount stores. Interestingly, the MBOs have been able to demonstrate a higher score over the other formats, which is due to the strong corporate level training systems. The employees are also superiors in terms of soft-skills and qualifications. However, since the discrimination is not very strong and the difference between the exclusives and the discounters is meaningless in terms of the intangible factors, the store formats witness a strong switching behaviour with the discount stores need to stress more on these factors. This means that the discounters are breathing down the neck of the other retailers. Since the offers and schemes at the Discount Stores are very attractive, the effect of the fascinating physical appearance and store environment on the shoppers appears to be moderated due to the lack of focus on the intangibles and relationships by the MBOs and Exclusives. Retailers (MBOs and Exclusives) are investing immensely on these features and should understand the need for greater focus on intangibles and relationships. The intangibles and relationships are very similar to an attractive gadget, which needs the right software to function properly.

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Appendix

Table 1 *Profile of respondents*

Variable	Level/Description	Frequency	Percent
Gender			
	Male	147	51.2
	Female	140	48.8
	Total	287	100
Age			
	Below 30	189	65.9
	30-45	84	29.3
	Above 45	14	4.9
	Total	287	100
Education			
	Graduate	108	37.6
	Post Graduate	109	38
	Professionally Qualified	70	24.4
	Total	287	100
Occupation			
	Business	35	12.2
	Student	96	33.4
	Professional	111	38.7
	Housewife	30	10.5
	Government Service	12	4.2
	Retired	3	1
	Total	287	100
Income (Rs.1 lakh =Rs. 0.1 million)			
	Below 4 lakhs	80	27.9
	4 lakhs to 8 lakhs	148	51.6
	Above 8 lakhs	59	20.6
	Total	287	100

Table 2 *Rotated Component Matrix with Reliability Scores*

Item	1	2	3	4	5	Factors
			Components			
RSQS7	0.722					
RSQS8	0.784					
RSQS10	0.823					Ambient Factors
RSQS9	0.832					(α=0.841)
RSQS20		0.656				
RSQS16		0.741				
RSQS19		0.761				Personal Interaction
RSQS17		0.808				(α=0.812)
RSQS2			0.750			
RSQS3			0.821			
RSQS1			0.887			Appearance (α=0.838)
RSQS31				0.632		
RSQS6				0.642		
RSQS11				0.677		
RSQS12				0.729		Convenience & Promises (α=0.728)
RSQS27					0.782	Problem Solving
RSQS26					0.825	(α=0.777)

Table 3 *Structure Matrix*

Factors	Function 1	Function 2
Appearance	.640[*]	-.303
Convenience & Promises	.468[*]	.049
Ambient Factors	.453[*]	.196
Problem Solving	.251	.750[*]
Personal Interaction	.199	-.554[*]

Pooled within-groups correlations between discriminating variables and standardized canonical discriminant functions
Variables ordered by absolute size of correlation within function.

[*]Largest absolute correlation between each variable and any discriminant function

Table 4 *Functions at Group Centroids*

Store Formats	Function 1	Function 2
Discount Stores	-.578	-.128
Exclusive Stores	.367	-.101
Multi-Brand Outlets (MBOs)	-.025	.097

	Function	
Store Formats	1	2
Discount Stores	-.578	-.128
Exclusive Stores	.367	-.101
Multi-Brand Outlets (MBOs)	-.025	.097

Unstandardized canonical discriminant functions
evaluated at group means

Table 5 *Scale Items Used in the Survey*

S.No.	Item-Description	Mean	Std. Deviation
RSQS1	This store has modern looking equipment and fixtures (such as display racks, sales counters).	5.418	1.161
RSQS2	The physical facilities (such as building, heating/ air conditioning, lighting, furnishings, entrance & exits, uniformed employees) at this store are visually attractive.	5.547	0.974
RSQS3	Materials associated with this store's services (such as shopping bag, loyalty cards, catalogue, website etc) are visually appealing.	5.279	1.268
RSQS4	The store has clean, attractive and convenient public areas (like trial rooms, rest rooms, parking).	5.439	1.154
RSQS5	The store layout at this store makes it easy for customers what they need.	5.502	1.100
RSQS6	The store layout at this store makes it easy for customers to move around in the store.	5.491	1.074
RSQS7[+]	The music played in the store is according to the type of garments (like trendy music for casuals etc.).	4.868	1.430
RSQS8[+]	The store music is always soothing and helpful in making my choice.	4.721	1.443
RSQS9[+]	The fragrance used in store is impactful in developing the shopping mood.	4.380	1.575
RSQS10[+]	The fragrance changes with the change in the section.	4.143	1.577
RSQS11	When this store promises to do something (like repairs, alterations, home delivery etc.) by a certain time, it will do so.	5.181	1.255
RSQS12	This store provides its service at the time when it promises to do so.	5.303	1.163
RSQS13	This store performs the service right from the very first time.	5.209	1.146
RSQS14	This store has merchandise available when the customer wants it.	5.286	1.163

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RSQS15	This store insists on error free sales transactions and records.	5.418	1.093
RSQS16	Employees in this store have the knowledge to answer customer's questions.	5.317	0.939
RSQS17	The behaviour of employees in this store instils confidence in customers.	5.227	0.972
RSQS18	Customers feel safe in their transactions with this store.	5.540	0.967
RSQS19	Employees in this store give prompt service to customers.	5.237	0.964
RSQS20	Employees in this store tell customers exactly when services will be performed.	4.976	1.178
RSQS21	Employees in this store are never too busy to respond to customer's request.	4.896	1.244
RSQS22	This store gives individual attention to the customers.	4.899	1.197
RSQS23	Employees in this store are always courteous with the customers.	5.192	1.075
RSQS24	Employees in this store treat customers courteously on the telephone or in-person.	4.808	1.153
RSQS25	This store willingly handles returns and exchanges.	4.916	1.229
RSQS26	When a customer has a problem, this store shows a sincere interest in solving it.	5.216	1.039
RSQS27	Employees of this store are able to handle customer complaints directly and immediately.	5.066	1.200
RSQS28	This store offers a wide variety of merchandise.	5.505	1.137
RSQS29	This store offers high quality merchandise.	5.495	1.173
RSQS30	This store provides plenty of convenient parking for customers.	4.843	1.290
RSQS31	This store has operation hours convenient to all customers.	5.732	1.038
RSQS32	This store accepts all major credit cards.	5.913	0.944

[+]Items added to the scale based on ambient factors