

Customers Buying Experience of Short Expiry Products from Supermarkets An Evidence from 5 Supermarkets of Pakistan

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Abstract

In recent years there has been rapid growth of supermarket chains like Imtiaz, Naheed, Metro and Hyperstar in Pakistan. Selling of expired products is one the major issues among customers who mostly buy the food products from supermarkets. In this report, We set out to investigate customer experienced about short expiry products. A questionnaire is distributed to 120 customers in which 100 are selected for the study. From the analysis and results it can be understand that about 56% were female and 44% were male respondents who mostly go for food shopping from supermarkets respectively. Some Factors affecting customers buying decision from supermarkets are product quality, product price, store environment, discount rate and product availability. By applying hypothesis on these factors, we conclude that all the factors are affecting buying decision. On investigation about experience of buying expiry product, 27% respondents revealed that they have sometime experienced buying short expiry products. The results are very significant for product suppliers, supermarket owners and most importantly to authorities.

Keywords: Customers experience, short expiry, super markets

1. Introduction

Developing countries are experiencing dramatic changes in the industry of retail for decades, with the emergence of new retail formats such as supermarkets and convenience. (Ting, 2003) Supermarket today becomes a necessity for consumers to buy and buy staples. Shopping has changed its character of necessity to a high involvement occasion. This change is not new to the developed countries, but in Pakistan this changing scenario of industry retail is a new trend. Pakistani retail industry - following their counterparts in the developed world - is also adopting new formats, offering a wide variety of quality products at a good price in one place with a friendly atmosphere.

Customer satisfaction should be paramount for any firms marketing strategy. It is through satisfaction of customers that firms remain afloat and prosper. Customers have become an important part of any firm especially those in the grocery retail sector and many researchers have also placed emphasis on the importance of customers. Zairi (2000) cited in Singh (2006:1) said, "Customers are the purpose of what we do and rather than depending on us, we very much depend on them. The customer is not the source of a problem; we should not perhaps make that customer „should go away “ because our future and our security will be put in jeopardy". That is the main reason why organizations today are focusing on customer satisfaction and loyalty. According to Hansemark & Albinsson (2004) cited in Singh (2006:1), "satisfaction is an overall attitude towards a product provider or an emotional reaction to the difference between what customers expect and what they actually receive regarding the fulfillment of a need". Kotler (2000) also define satisfaction as a person's feeling of pleasure, excitement, delight or disappointment which results from comparing a products perceived performance to his or her expectations.

This trend has changed the conventional grocery store for the man in the big tent super, the first step in changing industry retail in Pakistan. Apart from this phenomenon, a gradual change in developing countries (such as Pakistan) to liberalize trade and investment has brought global supermarket chains in the scene, along with economies of scale and focus on skills chain management (Codron, et al, 2004). This change has occurred because customers are now more aware of the variety of products and shopping environment. Today, not only about the grocery store, this is turning into a family event. Apart from this, was conducted initially in the newspaper, but now that working women are rapidly increasing in society so now generally done weekly or monthly basis.

Expired products are sold in the supermarkets of Karachi is one the major issue among customers who

mostly buy the food products from supermarkets. Sometimes they didn't check the expiry dates printed on the product or sometimes the product was near to expiry and sold on low prices.

The purpose of this research is to discover that there are now about to expire or expired products sold in Pakistan. This study identifies that how far customer in the Pakistani market aware of this experience or expired products. This study also highlights the most important features according to customer satisfaction to the supermarket.

2. Literature Review

According to Austrian law (1993), food packaging has a legal obligation to report the product name, ingredients, amount of food, the direction of producer and an appropriate durability indication.

Two labels with different meanings are making durability and only one of them has to be used: "Best before" ("mindestens haltbar bis") indicates the time until the product maintains the quality if you stored. After this date, the food will not necessarily harmful, but may start to lose its flavor and texture. Foods one expired "best before" date of permit sold in stores if clearly marked. "Best before dates "must include: (i) Day and month of expiration if the durability of the product is less than 3 months (ii) Month and year if the duration is between 3 and 18 months (iii) Only the year of maturity if the product lasts more than 18 months Products with a "use by" ("zu verbrauchen bis") label should not be used after the expiration, as it could put the health of consumers at risk. Such labeling is mandatory for food that goes off quickly, as raw milk, raw meat products and fresh fish's against the law to sell food or drink after this date. However, food can be frozen within households that would extend its life beyond the "expiration date no health problems". (Lebensmittelnet, 2007)

Previous studies have shown that the risks relevant with before buying to increase production, greater desire information (Blackwell, Miniard & Engel 2001; Greenleaf & Lehmann 1995; forest 1994). In an effort to reduce the risk and loss of product attributes and to provide them with the information, consumers can search before buying.

According to the Webster's International (1993), in the supermarket or store independent retail markets, which are widely used in food and household items, organized into several sections? The large size and has a wider selection traditional grocery stores and smallest of the large supermarkets.

Decisions made by the supermarket operators are: the quality of the products they sell, the prices they charge and the discount offered.

According to Webster's Dictionary (1993), Supermarket is a supermarket and a department store or supermarket combines generally, products clothing, furniture, and such an instrument (the store is sold out Electronics, more, other products such as paints, select the row Hardware, bathroom, cosmetics, photographic equipment, jewelry, toys, Sportswear), so it is a very large commercial facilities, carried full line of groceries, a wide range of products under one roof general merchandise.

The product meets a customer expectation, the customer is happy, satisfied and believes that this product is of acceptable quality or even higher. Your expectations are not met; the client believes the product is of poor quality. This elaborates that the quality of the product should be expressed as "the ability to meet the customer needs and expectations."

The quality of products Garvin (1987) is connected to the eight attributes are described as (i) Performance: the product's primary operating characteristics associated with. (ii) Features: This is an additional feature known as watches and product whistles. (iii) Conformance: the number of which is described in product in a particular time in a particular work Terms of Use? (iv) Reliability: the ability to work well a certain time under certain operating conditions. (v) Durability: It is the cost of using the customer's use of the product before it is physically deteriorated or superior. (vi) Service: Speed Competence and friendliness of the repair. (vii) Aesthetics: How does the product appeal to all the five senses of human beings? Customers recognize quality: company's reputation is based on customer perception and quality of that product.

While purchasing the food from supermarkets, reliability is required to be considered. Reliability refers to the confidence that came from the organization working in supermarket, for example, through frame works as meticulous billing. "Reliability refers to the promises given by the store. If the store cannot keep or break promises, does not meet the customer and results in negative word-of-mouth. Conversely, when the company is able to their promises, increases customer confidence in the store and make customer satisfaction and loyalty carry "(Yuen and Chan 2010:236).

Another factor is Perceived quality. It is recognized and defined as a statement about the superiority and reliability of products. This view is similar to the approach based on user Garvin (1983) and differs from the base product and manufacturing-based approaches.

Consumer perception on prices is unique (Ramirez and Goldsmith, 2009). According Veale et al. (2009), information and details on the cost of the product, transaction costs and accessibility through the media influence consumer evaluations and reactions to price. If the price is too low, it can lead to a negative perception about the quality (Chandrashkaran and Grewal, 2006). Dr. S. T Foster, professor at Boise State University. Indicates the

duration "the degree to which these products bear the stress or trauma without fail." (Foster P6)

3. Research Methodology

Research methodology is written plan for conducting research. The study is descriptive in type and quantitative in nature. The findings of research are primarily based on personal knowledge and understanding. Information through surveys and to go shopping collected through questionnaire in selected supermarkets.

The aim of the study is to record the experiences of all customers who buy the product from supermarkets. The target population is customers who are actually involved in buying food for their households. They can be men or women, but mostly women do shopping for home. The target population is the population of Karachi.

Research study is the compilation and analysis of data from a sample of persons with the characteristics, morals, behaviors, attitudes and opinions (Market Research Society, 1998), gathered together. Purpose of the interview can be accepted or answered using the same i.e. primary and secondary

After defining the research problem the research design has been sketch, the task of collecting the data begins. The data is collected mainly through primary source. Primary data is related to the current study, The convenience sampling technique is used due to limitation of time. 120 questionnaires were distributed, 106 were returned. 6 questionnaires were rejected asked by the defendant available due to insufficient information and finally 100 questionnaires were coded.

Questionnaire is developed in a way that covers the complete customer information who make the purchases. Customers are asked the reasons for their frequent visits to a particular store. The questionnaire asks customers to evaluate the importance of the characteristics of their respective stores. And in the end customers are asked about the expired product if they ever experience.

4 Analysis and Results

4.1 Demographic information:

Age Group	Percent
20-29	41.0
30-39	25.0
40-49	20.0
50-55	8.0
56-60	4.0
Above 60	2.0
Total	100%
Gender	
Male	44.0
Female	56.0
Total	100%
Education	
Masters	30.0
Bachelors	58.0
Intermediate	12.0
Total	100%
Marital Status	
Single	32
Married	67
Widow Or Widower	1
Total	100

The table shows that the majority of respondents aged 20-29 and 30-39, which shows that the defendant is usually young, and some are in the early stages of their careers between. Out of 100 respondents 56% are female and 44% are male which indicates that there is almost balancing of gender in this data. The table further shows that about 30% of the respondents were masters while about 58% are at graduate level and 12% of the respondents were intermediate. It means the ratio of bachelors is high for food shopping which strengthen the reliability of the data since our research is about identifying expiry product purchase at supermarkets it is very essential that customers are educated enough to read and understand expiry dates.

4.2 Customers visit to supermarket

Customers visit to supermarket	Percent
Daily	5.0
At Least Once A Week	22.0
More Than Once A Week	10.0
At Least Once In Fifteen Days	26.0
At Least Once A Month	37.0
Total	100.0

In order to understand how frequently students visit to supermarkets, we ask the respondents to tell their visit frequency. This question is very important to know for our study since the frequency of visits at supermarkets can reveal that customers shopping tendency from supermarkets and their experiences with every visit. From above tabulation it is indicated that from 100 respondent about 5% people daily visit the supermarket, 22% people weekly visit the supermarket, 10% people visit more than once a week to the supermarket, 26% people visit at least once in fifteen days and 37% people visit the supermarket at least once a month. The results show a great tendency to visit supermarkets therefore it is very much necessary to understand their experience.

4.3 Factors affecting customers buying decision from supermarkets

In order to understand which factors affecting customers buying decision from supermarkets, four factors are taken including product quality, price, environment and discount. The hypothesis are mentioned as The result is given below in the table.

1. H1. Customers are satisfied with the product quality available at supermarkets
2. H2. Customers are satisfied with the product prices available at supermarkets
3. H3. Customers are satisfied with the environment of supermarkets
4. H4. Customers are satisfied with the discount available to them at supermarkets
5. H5. Customers are satisfied with the availability of the products at supermarkets

The result is given below as:

One-Sample Test						
Test Value = 3						
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Product Quality	17.933	99	.000	1.130	1.00	1.26
Product Price	9.915	99	.000	.770	.62	.92
Store Environment	10.109	99	.000	.800	.64	.96
Discount Rate	7.881	99	.000	.800	.60	1.00
Product Availability	13.537	99	.000	1.090	.93	1.25

From the above table we can interpret that all factors affect the buying decision of the customers. However, it is also very necessary to understand that which factors are of importance among all. With the help of the coefficient of the variables, we rank the factors affecting customers buying decision from supermarkets:

Variable	Coefficient
Product Quality	65.55
Product Price	48.51
Store Environment	48.04
Discount Rate	37.43
Product Availability	50.80

4.4 People check expiry dates before buying any product available at the stores

From the respondents, we ask that how often they check the expiry dates when they purchase products, 34% respondents answered that they always check the expiry dates whereas 11% respondents answered they have never checked expiry date.

Frequency	Percent
Always	34.0
Sometimes	32.0
Rarely	23.0
Never	11.0
Total	100.0

4.5 Customers experience buying expired food products from supermarkets.

We further ask the respondents whether they have experienced buying expired food products from supermarkets. The 27% respondents revealed that they have experienced buying such products. The answer is really important because experiencing expired products have serious consequences on perceived image of supermarkets. We further investigate from this 21% respondents that what is the impact of buying such expired products from supermarkets. 59% responded that they will visit again.

Respondents (Out of 27 who have experienced buying expired products)	Yes	No
Visit again	59%	41%

4.6 Customers buy products if they are near to expire:

We further investigate that if the product is about to expire in sometime, they will buy it from the stores, if they buy what will be the reasons to buy. Their responses are given below:

Reasons	Percent
definitely buy because discount is high	4.1
buy because expiry does not matter to me	9.6
buy because it is not available anywhere else	13.7
buy if it urgent to me	27.4
NEVER BUY because I am conscious about product expiry	45.2
Total	100.0

5. Discussion

The research about “Customers purchasing experience of expired food products at supermarkets” was preliminary investigated to identify about the expired Food products that are sold in the supermarkets have a huge impact on customers. About 41% respondents in this research were aged between 20 to 29, 25% respondents were aged between 30 to 39, 20% aged between 40 to 49, 8% aged between 50 to 55, 4% aged between 56 to 60 and 2% aged between above 60 respectively.

From 100 respondents about 56% were female and 44% were male respondents who mostly go for food shopping from supermarkets respectively. In which about 5% people daily visit the supermarket, 22% people weekly visit the supermarket, 10% people visit more than once a week to the supermarket, 26% people visit at least once in fifteen days and 37% people visit the supermarket at least once a month.

In this research there are different supermarkets in Karachi but my research is focus on five supermarkets of Karachi where customer frequently do food shopping. From the above analysis it can be understand that 23% of customers visiting to Hyperstar, 36% of customers visiting to Imtiaz, 36% of customers visiting to Metro, 34% of customers visiting to Makro and 27% of customers visiting to Naheed. It could be understood that mostly customers do their food shopping from Imtiaz and Metro.

Some Factors affecting customers buying decision from supermarkets are product quality, product price, store environment, discount rate and product availability.

By applying hypothesis on these factors, all alternative hypotheses are truly accepted at 95% confidence interval because customers are satisfied with these factors. Customers also buy household, dairy, grocery and other items rather than food products.

Other factors are also considered as important for customers when they do their shopping these factors are Food Quality, Food Expiry Date, food price and discount on food items. My research is based on expired products so the question is that did the customers check the expiry date before buying any product? With the help of questionnaire, surveys and interviews conducted by me I observe that 34% of the answerers who regularly examines the expiry date, 32% of the respondents who sometimes examine the expiry date, 23% of the respondents who rarely check the expiry date and 11% the respondents who never check the expiry date. In which 27% of respondents experienced expire product and 73% of the respondent didn't experienced expire product. Out of 27% of respondent who have experienced buying expired in which 16% of respondent visit again

and 11% of respondent didn't visit again.

4.1% respondent buys near to expiry products because they have a high discounted rate, 9.6% respondent buy near to expiry products because expiry does not matter to them, 13.7% respondent buy near to expiry products because products are not available anywhere else, 27.4% respondent buy near to expiry products because if the product is urgent to them and 45.2% respondents never buy expired products because I am conscious about product expiry.

I also conduct the interviews from those customers who have faced expired products. The interview was conducted from 5 respondents. These customers are asked the question about expired product most of them checked the expired products and they also face expired products from supermarket and they were very disappointed because some supermarkets accepted the products and some of them argue with the customers, some says they never visit that supermarket again and some says they visited the supermarket again because it happens only one time. I conducted the interview from females only because I didn't find any male who experienced expired food product.

With the help of interview and questionnaire I realize that some people don't aware from expire products, awareness among customers is necessary and they should check the expired product before buy any product.

6. Conclusion:

The study concludes that there is relationship between some variables. Based on the results, all hypotheses were accepted and show some relation to do food shopping from supermarkets. This shows that these factors influence customers to any significant level while choosing supermarkets for food shopping.

This study has shown that the people of Karachi are welcoming the upcoming new trend of the shopping from supermarket. This research is the first research of its own kind in Pakistani domain. Such researches have been done in the other parts of the World. And the results are different.

In the study it has also been studied that according to the demographics people living in different areas behave in different ways for the food shopping. Residents of P.E.C.H.S / Bahadurabad / K.D.A / Defense / Clifton / Gulshan / Gulistan-e-Johar will likely do their food shopping from super stores though they think that the super stores are charging good discounted price. The people living in Nazimabad / Federal B Area / North Karachi preferably go to the nearby located shops.

According to the respondents prioritization it has been observed that customers think that the most important factors in food shopping are as follows: product quality as the top most important factor, Product availability is the second most important factor, product price is the third most important factor, store environment is the fourth most important factor and the discounts on product is the fifth and last most important factor in the eyes of food shoppers.

Pakistani shoppers have welcomed the competitive trend in the supermarket. This whole shift in the trend has also shown that the customer is now more conscious, educated and well-informed about the competition and availability of options in the market.

7. Future Research

This research is limited to supermarkets in Karachi only. The research can be further conducted on other cities of Pakistan to take the different sample frame and a huge market. This study is also helpful for the store keepers to understand the demand of the customers. Also this study helps them to understand the factors which will encourage customers to choose their store instead of other existing stores in the market. Initially there was an understanding that the super stores are very expensive stores than the nearby located/Kiryana stores and are not for every market. But now the increasing competition has rejected this understanding and now there is not much difference in the prices but is a vast difference in the quality and variety of products.

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APPENDIX:

QUESTIONNAIRE RELATED TO FOOD SHOPPING **SOME BASIC DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

What is your age group?

- 20 to 29
- 30 to 39
- 40 to 49
- 50 to 55
- 56 to 60
- Above 60

Gender

- Male

Female No of members in the Family _____

Resident of (area) _____

What is your highest level of education?

- Masters
- Bachelors

Intermediate What is your Status?

- Single
- Married

Widow or widower

1. How frequently would you visit the supermarkets?

- Daily
- At least once a week
- More than once a week (_____ times per week)
- At least once in fifteen days
- At least once a month

2. Where do you usually do your food shopping? (Tick more than one if applicable)

- Hyper star
- Imtiaz
- Metro
- Makro
- Naheed
- Other specify _____

3. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree to the following statements (please answer all the statements)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The quality of the products you buy from supermarket is satisfactory.					
The Prices of the products are fair and reasonable.					
The environment of the store is hygiene and pleasurable.					
The products are available with good discounted rates.					
The products you require most for your shopping are usually available.					

4. Please indicate the level of importance for you when you do your food shopping

	Of most importance	Very Importance	importance	Not very important	Not important at all
Food quality					
food expiry dates					
price					
Discount					

5. Which type of product do you mostly purchase?(Tick All which applicable)

- Household
- Dairy product
- Grocery
- Food item
- Others (please specify _____)

6. Do you check the expiry date before buying any product available at the store?

- Always
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

7. Have you ever experienced buying expired product from that store?

- Yes
- No

8. Will you visit to that store again?

- Yes
- No

9. If the product is available to sell at discounted rate but near to expire, will you buy?

Please indicate anyone reason

- I will definitely buy because discount is very high.
- I will buy because expiry does not matter to me.
- I will buy because it is not available anywhere else.
- I will buy if it is urgent to me.
- I will NEVER BUY because I am very conscious toward product expiry.

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