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Research Article

CUSTOMER PREFERENCE TOWARDS SUPERMARKETS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN CUDDALORE TOWN

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Abstract

The growth of organized retailing and supermarket culture has significantly influenced consumer buying behaviour by offering convenience, product variety, competitive pricing, and enhanced shopping experiences. Supermarkets have become a preferred retail format for consumers seeking efficient and value-based shopping. The study aims to examine customer preference towards supermarkets in Cuddalore Town. It also seeks to analyse the influence of price and discount offers, product variety, and location and convenience on supermarket selection. The study adopted a descriptive research design and collected primary data from 100 respondents using a structured questionnaire through convenience sampling. The findings revealed that female consumers slightly dominated supermarket shopping behaviour, and most respondents belonged to the 21–30 years age group. Correlation analysis indicated significant positive relationships between price and discount offers, product variety, location and convenience, and customer preference towards supermarkets. Consumers showed a strong preference for supermarkets offering wider product assortment, attractive promotional offers, better service quality, quick billing facilities, and convenient locations. The study confirms that price competitiveness, product availability, and shopping convenience are key factors influencing customer preference towards supermarkets. Retailers can enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty by focusing on competitive pricing, efficient services, and improved shopping experiences.

Keywords: Customer Preference, Supermarkets, Consumer Behaviour, Organized Retailing, Product Variety, Promotional Offers, Service Quality, Retail Marketing.

Introduction

The retail industry has undergone tremendous transformation during the past two decades due to globalization, urbanization, technological advancement, and changing consumer lifestyles. Organized retailing has emerged as one of the fastest-growing sectors in India and has significantly altered consumer shopping patterns. Supermarkets, hypermarkets, malls, and retail chains have increasingly replaced traditional retail formats by offering consumers convenience, product variety, attractive pricing, better shopping ambience, and value-added services.

Traditionally, Indian consumers depended on local grocery stores and neighbourhood retail outlets for their daily purchases. However, increasing income levels, changing consumption patterns, rising aspirations, and exposure to modern retail formats have encouraged consumers to shift towards supermarkets and organized retail stores. Modern consumers seek one-stop shopping experiences where they can purchase a wide variety of products under one roof. Supermarkets satisfy this expectation by providing convenience, quality assurance, branded products, self-service facilities, discounts, and promotional offers.

Consumer preference refers to the tendency of consumers to choose one product, brand, or retail outlet over another based on perceived value, satisfaction, convenience, and experience. In supermarket retailing, customer preference is influenced by several factors including pricing strategies, promotional activities, location accessibility, product assortment, service quality, store ambience, and shopping convenience. Understanding these factors is essential for retailers to attract customers, retain loyalty, and improve business performance.

The growth of organized retailing has intensified competition among supermarkets and retail chains. Supermarkets increasingly focus on customer-centric strategies such as loyalty programmes, discounts, digital payment systems, product displays, and technology-enabled services to enhance customer experience. Retailers recognize that customer satisfaction plays a crucial role in achieving competitive advantage and long-term sustainability.

In India, the supermarket sector has experienced rapid expansion in both urban and semi-urban markets. Consumers are increasingly attracted towards organized retail stores because they provide better shopping environments, hygienic conditions, and standardized services compared to traditional retail outlets. Moreover, supermarkets have become important channels for Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) companies to improve product visibility and consumer engagement.

Cuddalore Town has also witnessed considerable growth in supermarket culture due to changing consumer

lifestyles and increasing awareness regarding organized retailing. Consumers in Cuddalore increasingly prefer supermarkets because of availability of branded products, promotional offers, convenience, and improved shopping experiences. However, customer expectations continue to evolve, making it important for retailers to understand the factors influencing supermarket preference.

The present study aims to examine customer preference towards supermarkets in Cuddalore Town by analysing the influence of price and discount offers, product variety, and location and convenience on customer preference. The study also explores demographic characteristics, shopping behaviour, and customer perceptions regarding supermarket services. The findings provide valuable insights for retailers and marketers in developing customer-oriented strategies to improve satisfaction and loyalty.

Review of Literature

The growing importance of organized retailing and supermarket culture has attracted significant academic attention in the fields of marketing and consumer behaviour. Several researchers have examined factors influencing customer preference, customer satisfaction, and purchase decisions in supermarket retailing.

Lakshmi and Narayanan (2025) conducted a study on customer preference towards supermarkets in semi-urban areas. The study revealed that long billing queues and lack of parking facilities significantly affect customer satisfaction. Rahul and Kannasan (2025) examined consumer perception towards organized retail stores and found that convenience, promotional offers, store ambience, and trust strongly influence repeat purchase behaviour.

Sathya and Geetha (2025) analysed the influence of promotional campaigns on customer buying behaviour and concluded that advertisements and seasonal offers positively influence supermarket preference. Daniel and Fernandez (2025) found that satisfaction with price, service quality, and product availability enhances customer retention and repeat buying behaviour.

Padma and Srinivasan (2025) examined customer loyalty towards supermarkets and reported that fair pricing and consistent service quality improve customer loyalty. Lee and Park (2025) identified that satisfaction with price, ambience, and service quality positively influences repeat purchase intention.

Devi and Saravanan (2025) observed that location, pricing, and service quality are major determinants influencing supermarket preference in urban markets. Chen and Wang (2025) concluded that higher perceived value strengthens customer loyalty and purchase intention.

Murugan and Selvam (2025) found that satisfaction with product quality, price, and service quality strongly affects repeat purchase behaviour. Garcia and Martinez (2025) reported that higher customer satisfaction leads to stronger supermarket brand loyalty.

Suresh and Bhuvaneswari (2025) identified location, pricing, and service quality as key factors influencing supermarket choice decisions. Nguyen and Tran (2025) emphasized that perceived value significantly affects customer loyalty and buying behaviour.

Saranya and Elangovan (2025) reported that brand trust, product quality, and pricing fairness strongly influence supermarket preference. Kim and Choi (2025) found that customer satisfaction significantly improves loyalty and repeat purchase behaviour.

Kavitha and Prabhu (2025) concluded that product quality, service quality, and competitive pricing strengthen customer loyalty in supermarkets. Hernandez and Silva (2025) reported that perceived value positively influences customer retention and loyalty.

Anitha and Balaji (2024) studied customer expectations regarding product quality and pricing in supermarkets and found that customers prefer quality products at reasonable prices along with efficient services. Joseph and Thomas (2024) observed that prompt service, accurate billing, and product availability significantly affect customer satisfaction.

Poornima and Rajesh (2024) employed the SERVQUAL model to analyse service quality dimensions in supermarkets and identified reliability and responsiveness as important dimensions affecting customer perception. Williams and Brown (2024) found that digital payment systems and technology-enabled services improve customer convenience and shopping satisfaction.

Keerthana and Mohanraj (2024) reported that parking facilities and billing delays are major concerns affecting customer satisfaction in supermarkets. Robinson and Taylor (2024) concluded that self-service technologies and digital assistance improve customer convenience and shopping experience.

Shalini and Karthik (2024) examined impulse buying behaviour in supermarkets and found that attractive displays and promotional signage increase impulse purchases. Martin and Lopez (2024) observed that mobile payments and digital coupons improve shopping convenience and customer satisfaction.

Kalaivani and Prakash (2024) identified that advertisements and promotional offers positively influence customer buying behaviour. Smith and Johnson (2024) reported that mobile apps and digital payment facilities improve shopping satisfaction.

Divya and Anandan (2024) concluded that product variety and availability of branded goods attract more customers towards supermarkets. Anderson and Clark (2024) emphasized that technology adoption improves customer experience and satisfaction.

Revathi and Kumaravel (2024) found that loyalty programmes and reward schemes motivate repeat purchases among supermarket customers. Miller and Davis (2024) reported that self-service technologies and digital billing systems improve shopping convenience.

Sowmiya and Dinesh (2024) concluded that competitive pricing and seasonal promotional campaigns strongly influence customer preference. Brown and Wilson (2024) observed that mobile apps and e-coupons improve shopping experience and customer engagement.

Suresh and Kavitha (2023) examined reasons behind the shift from traditional retail stores to supermarkets and concluded that product variety, self-service facilities,

and promotional offers motivate customers to prefer supermarkets.

Gupta and Verma (2023) identified that discounts, loyalty programmes, and bundled offers significantly affect customer retention. Rao and Malhotra (2023) found that pleasant store ambience increases customer satisfaction and impulse buying behaviour.

Senthil and Manikandan (2023) observed that trust, quality products, and loyalty rewards significantly contribute to customer loyalty. Prakash and Divya (2023) reported that attractive store layout and product placement increase customer spending.

Ahmed and Khan (2023) found that availability of branded products and quality assurance improve customer trust and supermarket preference. Manoj and Priyanka (2023) emphasized that courteous staff and prompt service are major factors influencing customer retention.

Farooq and Ali (2023) concluded that wide product assortment and continuous product availability positively affect customer satisfaction. Sundaram and Mahalakshmi (2023) observed that prompt service and courteous staff increase customer loyalty.

Hussain and Rahman (2023) found that location accessibility and convenience play a major role in supermarket selection. Iqbal and Farah (2023) reported that pleasant ambience and hygienic environments positively influence buying behaviour.

Ramesh and Priya (2022) identified that price competitiveness and store proximity are major factors influencing supermarket selection in Tamil Nadu. Patel and Mehta (2022) found that billing speed, availability of branded products, and courteous staff positively influence customer satisfaction.

Arun and Deepa (2022) concluded that convenience, accessibility, and time-saving aspects strongly influence supermarket preference. Karthikeyan and Uma (2022) observed that customers perceive supermarkets as reliable and modern retail destinations.

The literature clearly indicates that pricing strategies, product assortment, service quality, convenience, promotions, ambience, and technological facilities significantly influence customer preference and satisfaction in supermarkets. However, limited studies have specifically focused on supermarket customer preference in Cuddalore Town. Therefore, the present study attempts to address this research gap.

Research Gap

Although several studies have examined customer buying behaviour and organized retailing, most previous studies focused on metropolitan cities, urban markets, technology-enabled retailing, and FMCG purchase behaviour. Limited research has specifically analysed customer preference towards supermarkets in Cuddalore Town.

Further, many earlier studies focused only on isolated variables such as pricing, promotions, or service quality. Few studies comprehensively examined the combined influence of price and discount offers, product variety, and location convenience on customer preference. In addition, customer expectations and retail formats continue to evolve due to changing lifestyles, digitalization, and increasing competition.

The present study attempts to fill this gap by analysing multiple factors influencing supermarket preference among consumers in Cuddalore Town. The study provides updated empirical evidence regarding customer perception and supermarket selection behaviour in a semi-urban retail environment.

Objectives of the Study

The major objectives of the study are:

- To analyse the influence of price and discount offers on customer preference in choosing a supermarket.
- To examine the impact of product variety on customer preference in selecting a supermarket.
- To study the effect of location and convenience on customer preference in choosing a supermarket.
- To evaluate the overall relationship between these factors and customer preference.
- To provide suggestions for improving supermarket services and customer satisfaction.

Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study:

$H0_1$: There is no significant relationship between price and discount offers and customer preference in choosing a supermarket.

$H0_2$: There is no significant relationship between product variety and customer preference in choosing a supermarket.

$H0_3$: There is no significant relationship between location and convenience and customer preference in choosing a supermarket.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study explains the relationship between supermarket attributes and customer preference.

Independent Variables

- Price and Discount Offers
- Product Variety
- Location and Convenience
- Service Quality
- Store Ambience
- Promotional Activities

Dependent Variable

- Customer Preference Towards Supermarkets

The framework assumes that supermarket-related variables significantly influence customer perception, shopping satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase decisions.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The present study adopted a descriptive research design. Descriptive research is useful for systematically describing customer behaviour, preferences, attitudes, and perceptions regarding supermarkets.

Sources of Data

Both primary and secondary data were used for the study.

Primary Data

Primary data were collected directly from supermarket customers in Cuddalore Town through a structured questionnaire.

Secondary Data

Secondary data were collected from books, journals, websites, magazines, reports, and previous research studies related to consumer behaviour and organized retailing.

Sampling Technique

Convenience sampling technique was adopted for selecting respondents because it was economical and suitable for collecting data within limited time and resources.

Sample Size

The study included 100 respondents from different supermarkets in Cuddalore Town.

Statistical Tools Used

The following statistical tools were employed:

- Percentage Analysis
- Correlation Analysis

Period of Study

The study was conducted during the period from January 2026 to March 2026.

Limitations of the Study

- The study was confined to Cuddalore Town.
- Convenience sampling may limit generalization of findings.
- The study was based on self-reported responses.
- Time and resource limitations restricted the sample size.
- Consumer opinions may change over time.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Gender Distribution

The findings indicate that female respondents constitute the majority of the sample population with 55%, while male respondents account for 45%. This suggests that female consumers are comparatively more active in supermarket shopping.

Age Distribution

The above table reveals that the majority of respondents (47%) belong to the age group of 21–30 years, followed by respondents below 20 years (30%). It indicates that young consumers are more interested in shopping at supermarkets.

Customer Perception Towards Supermarkets

The study examined customer perceptions regarding various supermarket attributes influencing shopping behaviour and purchase decisions.

Price and Discount Offers

Pricing is one of the most influential factors affecting supermarket preference. Consumers increasingly prefer supermarkets offering competitive prices, seasonal discounts, cashback offers, and promotional schemes.

The findings reveal that consumers perceive supermarkets as economical shopping destinations due to regular promotional campaigns and discounts. Customers are attracted towards price reductions, bundled offers, loyalty programmes, and festival sales.

Most respondents agreed that:

- Competitive pricing increases customer preference.
- Discount offers encourage repeat purchases.
- Promotional pricing improves shopping satisfaction.
- Value-for-money products strengthen customer loyalty.
- Loyalty cards and reward points motivate customers to revisit supermarkets.

The results indicate that supermarkets must continuously adopt attractive pricing strategies to retain customers in a highly competitive retail environment.

Product Variety

Product assortment and availability significantly influence customer preference. Consumers prefer supermarkets because they provide multiple brands, categories, and product alternatives under one roof.

The study found that:

- Customers prefer supermarkets offering wide product assortment.
- Availability of branded products positively influences shopping decisions.
- One-stop shopping convenience reduces time and effort.
- Product availability enhances customer satisfaction.
- Consumers prefer supermarkets with fresh and quality products.

The findings indicate that supermarkets offering broader product variety enjoy stronger customer preference and loyalty.

Location and Convenience

Location accessibility and shopping convenience play a crucial role in supermarket selection. Customers

prefer supermarkets located near residential areas and workplaces because they save travel time and effort.

The study revealed that:

- Easy accessibility positively influences customer preference.
- Parking facilities improve shopping convenience.
- Convenient store timing encourages repeat visits.
- Faster billing systems improve customer satisfaction.
- Clean and organized store layout improves shopping experience.

The findings suggest that convenience-related factors strongly influence supermarket choice decisions.

Service Quality

Service quality significantly affects customer satisfaction and supermarket loyalty. Consumers expect prompt service, courteous staff, product assistance, and efficient billing processes.

The study observed that:

- Friendly staff behaviour positively influences customer experience.
- Quick billing systems reduce customer frustration.
- Product assistance improves customer satisfaction.
- Complaint handling affects customer loyalty.
- Hygienic environment strengthens customer trust.

Service quality therefore plays an important role in strengthening customer retention.

Store Ambience

Store ambience influences customer emotions and shopping satisfaction. Attractive layout, cleanliness, lighting, and product arrangement create a positive shopping atmosphere.

The findings reveal that:

- Pleasant ambience increases shopping comfort.
- Attractive displays encourage impulse buying.
- Cleanliness improves customer perception.
- Organized shelves enhance convenience.
- Music and lighting improve shopping experience.

The results suggest that store ambience positively affects customer preference and purchase behaviour.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between supermarket attributes and customer preference.

Relationship Between Price and Discount Offers and Customer Preference

The correlation coefficient between packaging design and consumer buying behaviour was found to be r = 0.741 with a p-value of 0.000.

Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

Table 1

Variable	r value	P value	Result
Price and Discount Offers & Customer Preference	0.741	0.000	Significant Relationship Positive

The correlation coefficient indicates a moderate positive relationship between packaging design and consumer buying behaviour. This means that consumers are influenced by attractive and innovative packaging while making purchase decisions. Since the relationship is positive and statistically significant, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Relationship Between Product Variety and Customer Preference

The correlation coefficient between packaging design and consumer buying behaviour was found to be r = 0.693 with a p-value of 0.000.

Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

Table 2

Variable	r value	P value	Result
Product Variety & Customer Preference	0.693	0.000	Significant Relationship Positive

The analysis reveals a positive relationship between product variety and customer preference. Customers strongly prefer supermarkets providing wider product assortment and availability of multiple brands. The null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Relationship Between Location and Convenience and Customer Preference

The correlation coefficient between packaging design and consumer buying behaviour was found to be r = 0.721 with a p-value of 0.000.

Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

Table 3

Variable	r value	P value	Result
Location and Convenience & Customer Preference	0.721	0.000	Significant Relationship Positive

The findings indicate a strong positive relationship between location convenience and customer preference. Accessibility, parking facilities, convenient timing, and quick billing significantly influence supermarket selection. The null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion

The findings of the present study confirm that price competitiveness, product variety, and convenience significantly influence customer preference towards supermarkets in Cuddalore Town. The results support previous studies conducted in the field of organized retailing and consumer behaviour.

The demographic profile indicates that young consumers and female shoppers form the major customer segment in supermarkets. This finding aligns with the studies of Anitha and Balaji (2024) and Devi and Saravanan (2025), which emphasized the growing participation of educated and working consumers in organized retail shopping.

The study identified price and discount offers as one of the strongest determinants influencing customer preference. Consumers increasingly seek value-for-money products and attractive promotional offers. Supermarkets offering discounts, festival offers, cashback facilities, and loyalty programmes enjoy stronger customer retention. This finding supports earlier studies by Gupta and Verma (2023), Gopal and Renuka (2022), and Raghavan and Mythili (2021), which reported that discounts and promotional schemes significantly influence customer purchase behaviour.

Product variety also emerged as an important factor affecting supermarket preference. Customers prefer supermarkets because they provide multiple brands and categories under one roof, reducing the need to visit multiple stores. Availability of fresh products and branded goods positively influences customer trust and satisfaction. These findings are consistent with the studies of Divya and Anandan (2024), Kumar and Devi (2021), and Peter and Andrews (2021).

Location and convenience showed a significant positive relationship with customer preference. Consumers prefer supermarkets that are easily accessible and provide convenient shopping environments. Parking facilities, organized layout, and faster billing systems improve shopping convenience and customer satisfaction. Similar findings were reported by Hussain and Rahman (2023), Arun and Deepa (2022), and Malini and Suresh (2022).

Service quality and store ambience were also identified as important factors affecting customer experience. Customers expect courteous staff, hygienic environments, prompt service, and organized product displays. Positive shopping environments encourage repeat purchases and customer loyalty. These findings support earlier research conducted by Joseph and Thomas (2024), Sundaram and Mahalakshmi (2023), and Sharma and Singh (2021).

The findings further indicate that organized retailing is increasingly becoming popular among consumers in semi-urban markets such as Cuddalore. Consumers perceive supermarkets as reliable, convenient, and customer-friendly shopping destinations.

Overall, the study demonstrates that customer preference towards supermarkets is multidimensional and influenced by economic, behavioural, and environmental factors. Supermarkets that effectively combine competitive pricing, convenience, quality products, and superior services are more likely to attract and retain customers.

Findings of the Study

The major findings of the study are summarized below:

- Female respondents constitute the majority of supermarket customers.
- Most respondents belong to the age group of 21–30 years.
- Private employees form the major customer segment.
- Most respondents belong to lower and middle-income groups.
- Customers prefer supermarkets due to convenience and product availability.
- Price and discount offers significantly influence supermarket preference.
- Promotional campaigns encourage repeat purchase behaviour.
- Product variety strongly influences customer shopping decisions.
- Availability of branded goods improves customer trust.
- Location accessibility significantly affects supermarket selection.
- Parking facilities and faster billing systems improve customer satisfaction.
- Service quality positively influences customer loyalty.
- Store ambience and cleanliness improve shopping experience.
- Attractive product displays encourage impulse purchases.
- Correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships between the selected variables and customer preference.

Suggestions

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are offered:

- Supermarkets should adopt competitive pricing strategies to attract price-sensitive consumers.
- Retailers should introduce regular discounts, cashback schemes, and loyalty programmes.
- Wider product assortment should be maintained to satisfy diverse customer needs.

- Supermarkets should ensure continuous product availability and freshness.
- Convenient locations near residential areas should be prioritized.
- Parking facilities should be improved to enhance customer convenience.
- Faster billing systems and digital payment facilities should be implemented.
- Employees should receive customer service training to improve customer interactions.
- Hygienic conditions and store cleanliness should be maintained consistently.
- Attractive store layout and product arrangement should be designed to improve shopping experience.
- Technology-enabled services such as mobile payments and digital coupons should be promoted.
- Supermarkets should conduct regular customer satisfaction surveys to understand changing preferences.

Implications of the Study

Managerial Implications

The study provides valuable insights for supermarket managers and retailers regarding factors influencing customer preference. Retailers can improve customer satisfaction and loyalty by focusing on pricing strategies, product assortment, convenience, and service quality.

Academic Implications

The study contributes to the literature on organized retailing and customer buying behaviour by examining supermarket preference in Cuddalore Town.

Social Implications

The study highlights the importance of organized retailing in improving consumer convenience, shopping efficiency, and product accessibility.

Scope for Future Research

Future researchers may:

- Conduct studies using larger sample sizes.
- Compare urban and rural consumer preferences towards supermarkets.
- Examine the impact of digital retail technologies on customer satisfaction.
- Study the influence of online grocery platforms on supermarket shopping behaviour.
- Apply advanced statistical techniques such as regression and structural equation modelling.
- Investigate demographic differences in supermarket preference.

Conclusion

The present study examined customer preference towards supermarkets in Cuddalore Town with special focus on price and discount offers, product variety, and location convenience. The findings clearly indicate that supermarkets play an important role in modern consumer shopping behaviour.

The study revealed that competitive pricing, promotional offers, wider product assortment, and convenient shopping environments significantly influence customer preference. Customers increasingly prefer supermarkets because they provide one-stop shopping convenience, branded products, hygienic environments, and better service quality.

Among the various factors analysed, pricing strategies and convenience emerged as major determinants influencing supermarket selection. Consumers actively seek value-for-money products and attractive promotional offers. Product variety also positively affects customer satisfaction by reducing shopping time and increasing purchase convenience.

The study further highlights the importance of service quality and store ambience in improving shopping experience and customer loyalty. Prompt service, courteous staff, organized product displays, and faster billing systems significantly enhance customer satisfaction.

The findings indicate that organized retailing is rapidly expanding in semi-urban markets such as Cuddalore. Supermarkets must therefore continuously innovate and improve customer-oriented strategies to remain competitive in the changing retail environment.

Overall, the study concludes that customer preference towards supermarkets is influenced by multiple interconnected factors. Retailers who effectively integrate pricing strategies, convenience, quality products, promotional activities, and superior services can strengthen customer satisfaction, loyalty, and long-term business performance.

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