

# Store Preference Criteria and Its Attributes

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**Abstract**--- Store loyalty is considered as the key determinant of retail business. Therefore, patronage concept has created a lot of interest in the consumer research and this concept is being largely investigated by market researcher who are looking for untapped rural market. The Urban durable retail market is being saturated. Due to this circumstances, retailers are looking towards the untapped suburban market as a prospect. It is important to understand their store choice criteria for setting up the retail store in the suburban market and competing with the existing store. This study investigates the store choice criteria of suburban consumers for analysis of store patronage. The primary objective of this study was to analyze store choice criteria of a suburban consumer for consumer durable goods and other objectives was to identify key determinant of store patronage. The factor analysis technique was used to explore the factors of determinants of customer patronage. Researcher identifies the determinants of patronage such as easy credit facility, warranty, price, various offers, and location of the store, variety, and quantity. On the basis of findings, researcher tested the model for correlation with store choice criteria. Marketing myopia concept is really needed to address in suburban market. The result of this study provides some insightful idea for the decision maker for the analysis of determinant of store choice. This study will significantly helpful for the market researcher as well as retailers.

**Keywords**--- Store Choice Criteria, Retail Store, Buying Behaviour, Store Patronage.

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## I. Introduction

Suburban consumer is somewhat unaware of the purchasing process, but sometimes such consumer takes the decision on his own belief and knowledge. It is difficult to use standard marketing strategy in the suburban market. It is major task for the market researcher to understand the behavior of such consumers. Retailers are looking towards this untapped suburban market as a prospect. Research revealed that the scope for the durable industry in the suburban market is high (IBEF, 2012). It is important to understand their store choice criteria for setting up a retail store in the suburban market and competing with existing stores. Store patronage is considered as a key determinant of retail business. There are two general ways of thinking about customer patronage, one in terms of customers' attitudes and the other in terms of their behaviors (Dick & Basu, 1994). Therefore, the loyalty concept has created a lot of interest in the consumer research and nowadays, most of rural market researcher investigates this concept for further development. This study investigates the store choice criteria of suburban consumers for analysis of store patronage. Customer retention and share of wallet in the store is the aim of retailer. Due to this intent, understanding of store choice criteria of suburban consumers is necessary. Rural Marketing Association of India (RMAI) confirms that suburban income level is on a rise, and the habits, preferences, and attitudes are changing rapidly. The urban market deals extremely with a replacement and gift policy, where old branded products are continuously replaced with new branded products. This offers the great opportunity and scope for companies who are willing to convert consumers to buy branded products and develop marketing strategies to treat the suburban

consumer differently from their counterparts in urban because they are economical, social and psychographically different from each other. Store patronage behavior is a part of the understanding of rural customer's motives.

Suburban markets experience the ill effects of the issue of low penetration and poor accessibility of branded items. Thus, in spite of the fact that there is a enormous interest for branded items, there is absence of mindfulness and poor circulation channels to make the item effectively get the customer. As suburban customer constantly needed an incentive for cash with the changed recognition, one can see contrast in current market situation, a portion of the urban national brands and some local brands are making culmination in the suburban market. Some studies evident that low-priced brands are accepted and due to this, some low price non-branded can grow in such a market. The present study analyzes the determinant of store patronage on the basis of existing store choice criteria of suburban consumers. This will be really useful for further analysis of the key store selection indicator of the suburban consumer to setting marketing strategies of a store.

### ***Suburban Retail Market***

Comparison of the urban market suburban market is untapped and which creates demand for the retailer to enter in this market. MRSI & MSUI (2011) are the major marketing research firm conducted research on the penetration of durable in the suburban market. These firms have studied the opportunities for durable goods in suburban India and did the socioeconomic classification of rural market. The study analyzed that huge scope for the most durable goods in the suburban area. New SEC Study describes the penetration of Television, Washing machine, Refrigeration, Micro oven, AC or cooler in suburban market is less as compared to saturated urban. The research report released by the CII and Yes Bank on suburban retail established that suburban retail includes autos like tractors, fast-moving consumer goods, and agricultural equipments. In India, per capita income of suburban area would double to 14,000 rupees in five years as a number of families switch to for-profit from survival farming. The household income of the suburban area is expected to rise to 153 million in 2009-10 from 135 million in 2001-02. However, there is no organized marketing and distribution in 87 percent of India's villages and home to 50 percent of the suburban population. Corporates are increasingly looking for suburban areas as drivers of future growth. The companies planning to enter into the suburban retail have to focus on improving infrastructure, seasonality of demand, heterogeneous population, complex buying behavior and price sensitivity. The urban consumer durables market is growing at an annual rate of nine to 12 per cent, the suburban durables market is growing at 30 per cent annually (ASSOCHAM, 2010).

## **II. Research Problem**

In the Indian scenario, consumer durable industry in the urban market is going to saturate in the few years. It is difficult for the marketer to sustain in the competitive age. The suburban market is yet to be untapped, especially for durable goods and to enter into this market is difficult task for new retailers. Past analysis shows that there is a number of factors, which are responsible for the selection of stores in the suburban market. Demographic characteristics of customers are different in the suburban area. It is observed that limited income group customer in suburban is searching for monetary benefits and seeking for best offers (East et.al. 1997). Such customer always changes his decision at the time of promotional offers. Cherry picking behavior is widely practiced among store switcher customers those switches to the nearby retail store easily who offers something new (Fox & Hoch, 2005). This is the big question for the retailer to retain such a customer for a long time. The Indian suburban consumer has less awareness about the sophisticated household goods. According to Kumar & Madhavi (2006) suburban consumer is price conscious but not compromise with the quality of goods. Convenience at the Point of Purchase is also not a satisfactory factor of these consumers, whereas they are not dissatisfied with the price factor also if we consider the convenience factor (Shrivastava & Parveer, 2009). Brennan & Lundsten (2000) confirm that the large discount store has the impact on the small store because the pricing strategies of the large store can bite the small once. In this situation, consumer switch to the such is store as a variety seeker and discount. Such types of customers are price sensitive who buys products only on discounts and offers (Levy & Researcheritz, 2004). "Cherry picking behavior can be defined as to selecting the best or most desirable" (Merriam – Webster Dictionary). Definition of this behavior describes the behavior of buyers, which are easily switched to the alternative. The present study has to identify the behavior of such price sensitive consumer and to formulate the strategy to find the solution for this problem.

### ***The Objectives of this Study Was To***

1. To analyze store choice criteria of suburban consumes.
2. To identify key determinant of store preference criteria and their relation with store patronage behavior.

### III. Literature review

NCEAR carried out detailed study in the area of suburban marketing; the income of the low middle-income section is rising at double rate in contrast to an urban household. Suburban market buying capacity has amplified due to rise in income, government support, modernisation of transportation and communication network. Balaji S. N. (2007) advised to concentrate on the suburban market and grow the companies share in the area where businesses are planning to get into the niche of the suburban market. Few of the companies have by now entered into the market with the same ambitions, such as HLL, Coca-Cola, Britannia, LG, Philips and Colgate. Dhumal et al. (2009) found that the purchasing choice is influenced by the media. He also added the significance of different type of media to gain access into a suburban market for marketing communication. Also, some marketing tactics that are deployed in suburban markets are miles on few occasions. The opinion of enhanced societal position because of the utilization of marked item is additionally of real impacts on buying process. In the buying, head of the family influences a decision in the buying the product. The study shows that men as well as, are important influencers in decision while making buying decisions (Hitesh D. Vyas, 2011). Whereas few studies are further explain that women have the major impact on the buying decision for consumer durables, but the final purchase decision can be taken by mutual consent of all family members. Even though purchase decision for consumer durables depends on the factors like, festivals, access to credit facility and savings. Extra earnings and access to credit is relatively less important. Few researches say that the factors accountable for the purchasing of goods are a brand name, quality, and durability, customer services, warranty, and products worth etc. Whereas prettiness of goods and rate cuts are also regarded as significant issue while buying consumer goods. The study summarises Brand names, worth of the product, availability, quality are of immense importance in product buying decision.

Brennan, D. P., and Lundsten, L. (2000) found that in the small American town customers make purchases at the reasonably priced store and the large collection of goods and stores with a exclusive products they can't buy anywhere else. It was also found that customer make purchases at the new Low Cost shops more than that of existing shops. Information about the particular product is vital in promoting any brand in the marketplace (Rao g.Srinivas, 2002). Hence, businesses need to design a marketing strategy which can offer more in detail information to cosumers about their merchandise. Suburban consumers source information from friends, radio, TV, Newspapers, cinema, and retailer, etc. Srinivas further study suggests that the suburban customer have an excessive attachment to credit in their buying behaviour. Converse P.D (1949) theory on the location-based shopping suggests that growth of retail store is influenced by customers choice for the particular place of purchase and discount or services offered by that retail store. Studies on suburban consumer preference have also found that consumers belonging to suburban area sometimes purchases from other places also. Retail Gravitation theory claims that profitability of the retail store is affected by presence of the other store in the area.

Kolte & Simonetti (2018) have pointed out rise in trade and economic activity in india post economic reforms, which ultimately increases income level of consumers. Factors like income level, the existing products, age and education of the main member of the family has major certain influence on the possession of various consumer durables (Bijaya Panda and Siba Pothal, 2008). Disposable earnings are one of the most important factors affecting buying behaviour and possession of consumer durables. Education also have a positive influence on the purchasing decision of consumer durables such as TVs, automobiles and coolers and influence cannot be seen on the buying behaviour of minor consumer durables. Above study makes clear the idea of factors like earning, education of decision maker and a number of consumer durables owned and these factors are vital for influencing any choice related to buying of consumer durables. Kumar, S.A and Madhavi C (2006) are of opinion that suburban customers are quality conscious but with the realistic value offer. Suburban customer has lesser awareness about organized retail and they are less satisfied with the existing traditional/ unorganized retailers, whereas their rate of recurrence to visit city markets is high. On the other hand, they are least content with brand range and home delivery services offered by traditional/ unorganized retailers. Convenience at point of purchase is also not satisfactory whereas they are not dissatisfied with the price factor (Shrivastava & parve (2009).

Companies need to work on effective marketing strategies to use the opportunity of this suburban area and necessitate to plan the effective marketing plan with consideration of the complex market structure and preferences of the suburban consumer and market structure. Using the similar marketing plan to urban market is not useful the suburban market. Marketing approach should be innovative to reach the suburban market with an integrated marketing system. Jha Mithaleswar (2007) twist up the factor like reasonability of agriculture production influence seasonal suburban consumer demand, there are some facts that the small farmers and farm workers can not afford to buy in large quantity because of this company need to rethink their packaging size for this market. If compared, Famer from Punjab is more developed than the Bihar similarly Karnataka has a more educated suburban population

than Rajasthan with reference to the farmers (Kashyap Pradeep, 2005). In villages women are less connected to market as compared to men, this is the important reason for an involvement of men in the purchase decision-making. Frequent change in strategies may lead to confusion in the mind of the consumer and weaken perception of the consumer towards a brand.

In village, strong social level community decision making is quite common. Businesses that took efforts to understand needs and peculiarities have tested successfully. Once the marketer creates the positive attitude for brand and service in the suburban consumer's mind, then it is easy for getting inside into market (Mahapatra D.P, 2006). Some reports are describing that literacy rate and media reach is growing in the suburban market. Similarly, Research found that television is an important source of the information in the suburban area. According to Ennew T. et al. (2000), word of mouth is an important message carriage in suburban areas. The impact of word of mouth is at strongest when it originates from social contacts because of their greatest perceived reliability, word of Mouth as positive words said about the products used by customers to influence people who purchase the product.

Sirbhaiya observed that the suburban market depends upon word of mouth communication to the large extent. The villagers prefer to use a source on which he can trust these are generally friends, relatives or neighbors'. The younger generation is variety seekers as compare to the older generation in the suburban market those generation satisfied with the deal they become loyal to store (Bishnoi & Bharti, 2009). Suburban consumer is ready to travel for buying some good from selected store has the great impact on the Hats system of the suburban market (Ghosh, A., 1986). Various studies examine the expansion of the fixed store format in the suburban market creating competition for the older retail format in suburban market Which help to customer to getting economical as well as recreational benefits of shopping. In some cases, consumers are ready to travel some distance for buying goods and make the multipurpose trip to the retail store.

### ***Measures and Research Hypothesis***

Patronage behaviour has been a subject of research for as long as a couple of decades. According to Dick and Basu (1994), "customer loyalty is defined as the strength of individual's relative attitude repeat patronage". The real explanation of this term is to investigate the relative significance of store patronage intentions. Store patronage depends on the price of products and location of the retail store which is identified as an important determinant (Arnold and et al., 1983).

Bellenger, Robertson, and Greenberg (1977) also found the quality of retail center and location convenience is to be the most important shopping center patronage motive factor. Sreedhara (2010) found that satisfaction with product prices of merchandise (Product Variety) leads to repeat patronage. Although, some studies found that convenience of the store is an important determinant of patronage and price is major amongst all other factors (Ivan-Damir Anić Rudolf Vouk, 2005).

In general suburban marketers have to differentiate their store choice based on quality and value for money. The effect of price, product quality, and shopping experience had on value perceptions. To support this statement by Kerin, Jain, and Howard (1992) reported that the shopping knowledge had a more noteworthy impact than cost or item quality.

Shopping variety, service, facilities, quality, nutrition, convenience, freshness are the important factors for the patronizing customer (Sirohi et al. 1998). Customers make buying alternative evaluations based on products price and quality (Grewal and et.al, 1998). Shopper conduct for the purpose of procurement is impacted by out-of-store memory-based components (e.g., mark mindfulness and brand picture) and by in-store jolts (e.g., bundle plan, rack position, and various facings)(Chandon et al.2006). According to American Marketing Association, "Store Patronage is defined as the degree to which consumer shops at a particular store relative to competitive outlets."

Researcher has done factor analysis using already available construct of variables from the review of literature and measures of previous studies (construct). Hypothesis has been developed after naming of extracted factors and used for testing propotions.

*H1: Affordability as a suburban store preference attribute is related with patronage behaviour.*

*H2: Accessibility as a suburban store preference attribute is related with patronage behaviour.*

*H3: Visibility as a suburban store preference attribute is related with patronage behaviour.*

*H4: Affordability as suburban a store preference attribute is related with patronage behaviour.*

#### IV. Research methodology

The context of store patronage analysis can be done through measuring store choice criteria. In order to extend literature beyond the retail stores, this study was done in the consumer durable stores in the suburban area. Research has used structured questionnaire as an instrument for data collection and data has been collected from shoppers who lives at suburban part of Pune district for this study. Respondents are existing customers who are purchasing from retail store available in their location. Demographic characteristics of shoppers contain 146 males and 54 females from a range of occupations and aged between 18 and 75. The questionnaire contains total 15+ 4 questions which measure store preference criteria on a seven-point Likert scale with a range of "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7). Demographic data collected through the asking questions about the demographic profile of respondents. A structured questionnaire was distributed to 224 respondents, out of these 213 questionnaires returned, 200 qualified questionnaires used for the data analysis after eliminating those which respondent completed incorrectly, or missing too many questions, for example, missing more than half of the items in a scale. Data analysis was done using SPSS Version 19 and SmartPLs.

##### *Demographic Profile of Respondent*

Table 1: Characteristic of survey sample

Characteristics	Value	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male	146	73
	Female	54	27
<b>Age Group</b>	18-25	38	19
	25-35	43	21.50
	35-40	62	31
	More than 40	57	28.50
<b>Income Group</b>	Less than 1 Lakh	86	43
	1 Lakh to upto 3 Lakh	42	21
	3 Lakh to upto 6 Lakh	39	19.50
	More than 6 Lac	33	16.50
<b>Occupation</b>	Student	43	21.50
	Employed	39	19.50
	Self-employed	118	59

##### *Sample adequacy test*

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.661
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1457.915
	Df	105
	Sig.	.000

On the basis of KMO and Bartlett's Test Table No.2 reveals that the sample adequacy for the present research is significant as Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy is 0.661 that is > 0.5. Bartlett's test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square value is 1457.915. At significance level 0.00 with Degree of freedom 105.

Table 3: Communalities

Variables	Initial	Extraction
Quantity	1.000	.832
Point of Stimuli	1.000	.706
Easy Warranty	1.000	.879
Advanced Technology	1.000	.327
Exchange Offer	1.000	.905
Easy Credit	1.000	.514
Festival Offer	1.000	.643
Decision on Visibility	1.000	.643
Opening Hours	1.000	.591
Ready to Travel	1.000	.863
Handling	1.000	.575
Variety	1.000	.746
In store information	1.000	.601
Decision on Available Product	1.000	.541
Free Gift	1.000	.740

**Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.**

Communalities analysis (Table No.3) shows that advanced technology, easy credit, opening hours, handling, decision on available product and their extraction value are .327, 0.514, 0.591, 0.575, 0.541 respectively. Communalities value shows that these variables have value less than 0.6. In the initial stage of factor analysis researcher can say that these variables may be excluded from factor analysis.

Table 4: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.223	21.484	21.484	3.223	21.484	21.484	3.173	21.154	21.154
2	2.668	17.789	39.273	2.668	17.789	39.273	2.555	17.030	38.185
3	2.222	14.810	54.083	2.222	14.810	54.083	2.224	14.827	53.012
4	1.993	13.287	67.370	1.993	13.287	67.370	2.154	14.359	67.370
5	.832	5.549	72.919						
6	.746	4.974	77.893						
7	.667	4.448	82.342						
8	.614	4.092	86.434						
9	.497	3.312	89.746						
10	.414	2.763	92.509						
11	.383	2.552	95.061						
12	.314	2.096	97.157						
13	.195	1.299	98.456						
14	.162	1.080	99.536						
15	.070	.464	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

With the analysis of above table no. 4 (Total Variance Explained) researcher can interpret that after extraction of four factors from the total fifteen observed variables, Researcher can collect the 67% of essence of fifteen variables while Researcher reduces the variables from fifteen to four. If researcher collect the data through these four variables researcher only overlook less than 23% of data essence if researcher collect data with the help of fifteen observed variables.

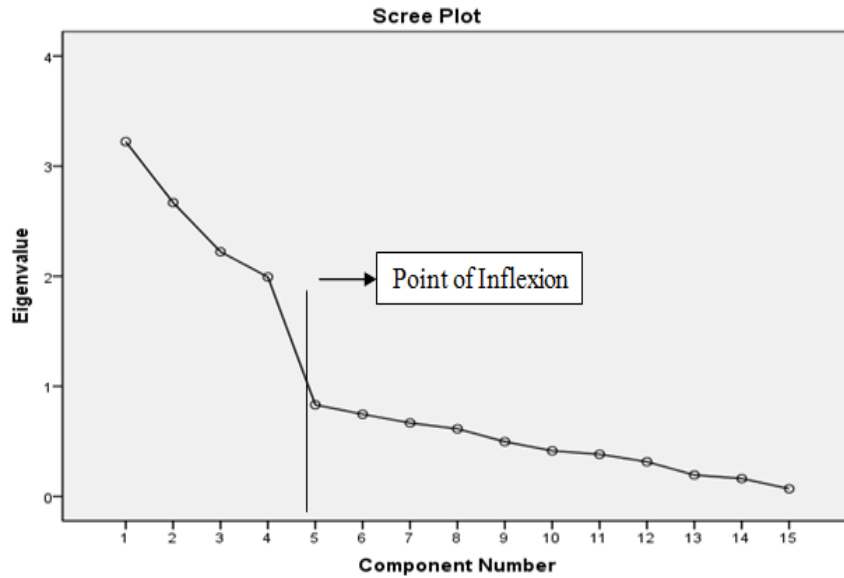


Table 5: Rotated Component Matrix

Variables	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Quantity	.910			
Point of Stimuli			.815	
Easy Warranty		.934		
Advanced Technology				
Exchange Offer	.946			
Easy Credit		.705		
Festival Offer	.801			
Decision on Visibility			.796	
Opening Hours		.766		
Ready to Travel				.927
Handling		.755		
Variety				.862
In store information			.771	
Decision on Available Product				.720
Free Gift	.860			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.  
 a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Based on Scree Plot researcher can conclude that there is possibility of extraction of four factors as the point of inflexion comes on component number four.

Table 6: Outcome of Factor Analysis

Variables	Rotated Component Matrix	Cronbach's Alpha	Naming of factor
I purchase those products which are high in quantity.	.910	.906	Affordability
I replace electronics on exchange offer.	.946		
I purchase excess in festival offer.	.801		
I look for free gift on purchase.	.860		
Store should give me warranty of product.	.934	.803	Accessibility
I purchase products on easy credit.	.705		
Store opening hours should be 10am to 8pm.	.766		
Product should be easy to handle.	.755		
I make purchase decision on the point of purchase.	.815	.761	Visibility
I prefer that product which is visible to me in the store.	.796		
I get detail information about product in the store.	.771		
I travel more to purchase product which I want to buy.	.927	.787	Availability
I purchase those products which are available in the store at the time of store visit.	.862		
Variety of products should be available in the store.	.720		
I prefer to buy technologically advanced products.	.327		Factor excluded from analysis
	(Communalities)		

Table No.5 (rotate component matrix) confirms that there is the extraction of four factors with the consideration of fifteen observed variables. The researcher used Principle Component Method and Varimax rotation method for factor extraction. Factor 1 include quantity, exchange offer, festival offer and free gift, Factor 2 considered easy warranty, easy credit, opening hours and handling, Factor 3 includes point of stimuli, decision on visibility and in-store information, and Factor 4 consist of ready to travel, variety and decision on available. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Table No.6) for the fifteen items is .906, 0.803, 0.761 and .787, suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency. (Note that a reliability coefficient of .70 or higher is considered "acceptable" in most social science research situations).The result of this study extracted four factors from the fifteen factors. Those four factors are affordability, accessibility, visibility, and availability. Store choices criteria significantly depend on these four factors.

**Hypothesis testing with structural model**

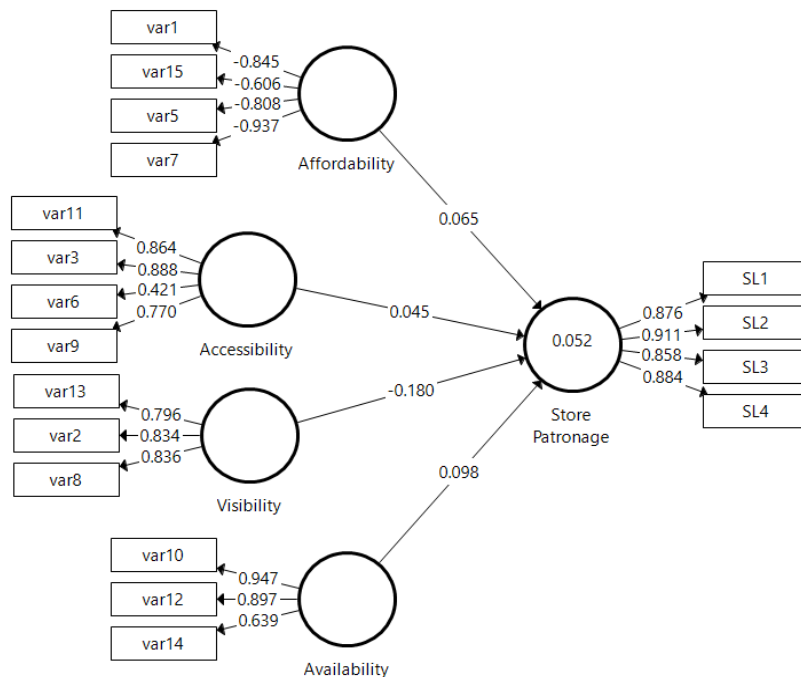


Figure 1: Structural model.  $p$ -value , 0.05 and Negative path values indicate that a path is not statistically significant ( $p$ -value . 0.05) (Ringle, C. M., et.al. (2015).



**Path coefficient**

Table 6: Mean, STDEV, T-Values, P-Values

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ((O/STDEV))	P Values
Accessibility -> Store Patronage_	0.045	0.007	0.111	0.402	0.688
Affordability -> Store Patronage_	0.065	0.008	0.117	0.553	0.580
Availability -> Store Patronage_	0.098	0.109	0.076	1.293	0.197
Visibility -> Store Patronage_	-0.180	-0.168	0.105	1.711	0.088

R Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted		
Store Patronage_	0.052	0.033		

**V. Results**

As shown in Table 6, Researcher summarised the hypotheses and path coefficients. With respect to the effects of store preference attribute, research found that outcome and affordability don't have significant positive effects (p , 0.05) on store patronage behaviour, which is not supporting H1. Similarly, With respect to the effects of store preference attribute, research found that outcome and accessibility and availabilty has also not significant effects (p,0.05) on store patronage behaviour which rejects H2 and H4.In addition, path coefficient value of outcome and visibility is no positive effects (p ,0.05) on store patronage behaviour, H3 is also not supporting our proposition in model development approach.R square is 0.052 which is low for prediction but can not excluded on the basis of weak value.

While interpreting smartpls results, hypotheses were tested by computing path coefficients, t-statistics and examining the significance level of structural path coefficients. Path coefficient is (hypothesized relationship) standardize values approx between -1 to +1 (+1 is strong).Closer the path coefficient at 0 level the weaker is the relationship. The critical value should above 1.96 (significance level =5%) 95% confidence level.P value-when assuming significance level of 5%, the p value must be smaller than 0.05 to conclude relationship is significant (Hair, J. F. et.al.,2012).

**VI. Implications and conclusion**

Customer loyalty is an important customer relation strategy used by various retailers to retain the customer and increase the share of existing customer. To understand the patronage behavior of suburban customers store choice criteria should be known. Consumer opinion about store choice criteria gives us an idea about their preferences. A marketer should understand those drivers before opening the retail store in the suburban area. This study will help to consumer researcher who working buying pattern of a suburban customer. It is necessary to understand these patronage buying behavior before making the final decision to setting up the store in the suburban area.The decision of the suburban consumers is based on in-store stimuli, so marketer should consider this kind of buying behavior and to make product visible to the customer in their store.

Determinants such as availability, affordability, accessibility and visibility are the key drivers of store choice criteria in the urban area and which has positive relationship with store patronage. Similarly,This situation is not true in the suburban market which has multiple factors involves in the shopping decision.The result of this study further supports to the existing literature that suburban consumers are variety seekers and always look for affordable goods. Results of study can be varies in different region and influence of factors may changes with perception of customers.Small sample size is one of the major limitation of this study which may varies results in another rgeographical location.It could not be considered as representative sample of entire population.Some other factor also could influence store choice decision and It can be explored in future reseach on store patronage.

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