

**Influence of Retail Staff Attributes on Shopping Behaviour of Consumers: A Study**

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**Abstract:**

<b>Purpose</b>	The main purpose of this study is to analyse the shopping behaviour of the customers in organised retail store. The agreeability of the customers towards the attributes related to the sales staff is also analysed in this study.
<b>Methodology</b>	This study is descriptive in nature, based on both primary and secondary data. Survey Method has been applied. A predefined structure questionnaire has been used for collection of data. Shopping mall can invite huge no. of customers so non-probability convenience sampling has been utilised in this study. Total 350 questionnaires have been administered to consumers. Out of 350 questionnaires 300 are completely filled and included in this study. Mall intercept technique has been used for collection of data.
<b>Findings</b>	The findings reveal that customers usually visit the store in the weekends and in the evening and mostly spend 2-3 hours in mall. Customers like to get the information from the sales person and they rely on it. They want their help in making purchase decision. Most of the customers do appreciate the sales person for their help and services. Poor services of the sales person make them switch from one store to another. However excess of the salesperson leads to negative impact on customers and their purchase decision is highly depended on the sales person's suggestions. Customers want sales person's attention and they treat them well. They are easily convinced by the sales staff. Convincing ability of the sales person makes customers buy the products. It is concluded that customers expect a good sales team in the store for having better shopping experience.
<b>Originality</b>	Based on reviewed literature, and perception of the respondents towards the retail staff attributes.
<b>Practical Implication</b>	This study will help the policy makers to frame out new policies, and strategies to develop the sales person of the retail stores. In order to make them more aware and more presentable towards the customers of the store.
<b>Research Limitation (If any)</b>	Due to limitation of time it is based on primary data collected from Chhattisgarh state only. Also the statistical techniques used in the study are limited due to time constraint.
<b>Keywords</b>	Retailing, Retail staff attributes, shopping behaviour

**Introduction:**

Customer- employee relationship plays a vital role in continuous existence of a retail stores or a brand. Almost every person in country indulges in shopping activity. For staying ahead to

their competitors every organisation has to provide excellent experience to their customer, and in the case of retail organisation this becomes mandatory because retail is all about providing excellent experience to their shoppers. Sales personnel are most important element in providing excellent experience to shoppers. Any mistake done by sales person can have immediate negative impact on shopping experience of shoppers. Assistance provided by sales people can create WOW effect in shoppers mind. So personal selling in promotion mix of retail proved to be very critical and important element for survival and growth of retail stores. With the proper guidance and assistance provided by sale person a shopping trip can be converted in to more joyful trip. With the help of sales people satisfaction level of shoppers improve during shopping. From ancient day it is believed that employee of retail store facilitate in increasing the value between customer and store. In retail store employee of all level influence the marketing and promotional activity and also influence the customer's willingness to buy from stores. Verbal and non-verbal communication exchanged by store employee also influence customer's perception towards particular store. For retaining an old customer and attracting a new one major role is played by sales people in store and interaction with staff is considered as most important aspect of service provided by stores. This effective communication between sales people and customer can convert a window shopper into an actual buyer.

It is known fact that in this modern scenario, taste , preference and expectations of customers changes rapidly and retail sales people play the role of bridge between store and customers by proper communicating and understanding customer's need wants and demands. And these sales people also play a crucial role in communicating positive image of store to their customer.

The shopping process of consumer started with need recognition because a consumer is aware of his need and according to which he want to purchase the products. For getting awareness about products needed, he goes for information search and evaluates the different alternatives available and after that he take final decision of purchase the product. After making purchase of product he re-evaluates it. During shopping in store, assistance and help provided by sales people much influence the behaviour of consumers. Apart from this accompanied person also influence shopping pattern of consumers. A consumer can spend more money and time when going out with someone.

### **Need for the study:**

In India Organised retail in its developing stage and most of the big cities are now witnessing the presence of numerous retail chains and outlets. Many sub urban areas are also undergone in process of opening such retail outlets because there is huge opportunity in Indian village for organised retail. Indian retail sector in expected to be US \$ 1.3 trillion by 2018 and compound annual growth rate of about 10% which is quite profitable. Purchasing ability of Indian customer is growing day by day and now customers are having more interest in branded products and these branded merchandises are heartily accepted by Indian consumers. There is paradigm shift between mind-set of ancient customer to modern Indian customer. Now customer wants better quality, valuable products with pleasant shopping experience.

In Indiadifferent formats of organised retail is evolved like hypermarket, supermarket, departmental stores, life style stores. Retail is one of the fastest growing sectors in India. So adoption of latest technology, retail location and improvement of soft skill of retail staff and executive will be the growth factor of organised retail. By keeping this fact in mind that organised retail sector is growing rapidly, there is need to understand the changing preferences of customers and handle it with extra care and effort. And for handling the customers, sales people proves to be one of the most effective elements of the business. Sales people are the connecting link between store and their customers, so play a pivotal role in persuading and retaining customers in store. Till date there has been a limited research on the retail personal selling and sales people. So in this research paper it has been tried to fill

this gap by investigating the role of personal selling in consumers shopping behaviour and agreeability of respondents towards the attributes related to the store's staff.

### **Scope of the study:**

Scope of the study is limited to Chhattisgarh state only. In which manner organised retail sector growing in this state clearly shows that Chhattisgarh indeed going to be a hot spot destination for organised retail in near future. Organise retail chains are basically established in Bilaspur, Raipur and Durg city of the state.

Residents of Chhattisgarh are found to have enough income due to their hard working and entrepreneurial nature. There is numerous study has been done in organised retail sector and its different aspect across world but there is still massive scope to do research in retail and its elements because retailing environments are changing rapidly and with passing of time consumers preferences and expectation are also changes. So there is need of research in this field from time to time to explore current situation. This study is conducted by considering Apparel retailers in shopping malls in Chhattisgarh.

### **Objectives of the study:**

- To analyse the shopping behaviour of customers towards the retail stores.
- To analyse the agreeability of respondents towards the attributes related to the store's staff.

### **Literature Review:**

Literature review of study collected from various academic and trade journals, websites, magazines, newspapers etc. this section includes literature related to personal selling and consumer shopping behaviour. From customer's point of view, sales people are one of the influential elements of all promotional strategy adopted by retailers in store.

### **A: Personal Selling**

**Churchill et al. (1985)** has done a meta-analysis technique to investigate the determinant of sales people performance. They use 116 articles in their analysis. The results indicate that determinants can be ordered in the following way in terms of the average size of their association with performance: (1) role variables, (2) skill, (3) motivation, (4) personal factors, (5) aptitude, and (6) organizational/environmental factors. The results revealed that the strength of the association between the major factors and salespeople's performance is affected by the type of products Salespeople sell.

**Birger (1994)** argued about the concept of practicing of using sales assistance. A model showing consumers situation determines his need has been used in this study. The procedure involved that consumers revealed their need and sales person match that need with desired products. It is found in the study that reputational consideration makes a sales person more honest and trustworthy.

**Guenzi (2002)** reviewed the literature related to relationship marketing and personal selling and provides empirical evidence of the current state of sales-force activities in sample of 113 sales managers of Italian firms, and explores sales-force role, as perceived by the respondents, in gaining customer trust. The findings show four typical roles performed by the sales force and three classes of customer trust drivers, as well as identifying clusters of companies characterized by the diverse activities carried out by the sales force and the different contributions made by the later to gaining customer trust.

**Ahearne et al. (2007)** revealed in their study about a set of behaviour referred as- sales person service behaviour. They empirically describe effect of this behaviour on customers trust and satisfaction. They developed a model that evaluates customer's evaluation of competing sales representative. Result revealed that sales person service behaviour is the important factor in building trust and customer satisfaction, which ultimately lead to customer share of the market.

**Amanda et al. (2008)** described the relationship quality as a multidimensional Metaconstruct which contains three dimensions: satisfaction, trust, and commitment. Data collected from 728 travellers. Structure equation modelling has been used to test the concepts. They find that service orientation affects relationship satisfaction and trust, and that the latter influences satisfaction and commitment. In turn, satisfaction, trust and commitment have a positive impact on positive behavioural intentions, trust a negative one on activism, and commitment a positive one on perceived switching costs.

**Merwe et al. (2008)** investigated the effect of clothing sales assistant on consumer shopping behaviour in South African context through an exploratory research. They revealed that when female consumer and sales assistance interact while shopping clothes different attribute of sales people like approach, behaviour, characteristics and appearance influences the consumers shopping decision. Consumers like helpful, competent, and friendly sales people in store, which ultimately lead to consumer satisfaction.

**Barnes et al. (2011)** revealed in their study three main issue: first is the evaluating the types of employee behaviour in a service encounter that lead to delight, second is analysing consumers expectation earlier to their delightful encounter and the third one is describing the differences between satisfactory and delightful encounter at customers level. The results revealed that employee affect and employee effort are the strongest factors in producing delight. Further, this research provides support for the usefulness of both the disconfirmation paradigm and the less-utilized needs-based model for evaluating customer delight.

**Bode et al. (2011)** revealed in their study how and under what conditions delivery persons, specifically truck drivers of a supplier firm, affect customers 'purchase behaviour in industrial customer-supplier relationships. They test a proposed theoretical model that suggests a positive direct effect of personal contact quality (provided by a delivery person) on sales as well as three situational constraints that determine the occurrence and strength of the direct effect.

**Bouguerra et al. (2011)** examined the influence of consumers 'evaluation of sellers 'ethical behaviour on their emotion and behaviour intention. Earlier studies have combined few indirect effects of ethics on behaviour intention through the mediation of affective reactions. The objective of this research was to evaluate all possible direct effects of ethics on frequentation intention and indirect effect on emotions. Structure equation modelling has been used in this research. Data were collected from 227 customers who were involved in shopping experience. Contrarily to previous studies 'results, the frequentation intention was found not increased by emotions.

**Musgrove (2011)** in his study explained a retail salesperson behaviour that has not been studied in literature. Generally retail sales people stand and wait for customers near entrance of the store in shopping malls. Previous work in this area suggests that sales people have positive influence on shopping behaviour of customers. However, some study suggests the opposite result they revealed that sometime consumers feel uncomfortable with sales people because they think that sales people can use high pressure sales tactics.

**Blocker et al. (2012)** in their study examined an integrative framework describing how the sales force create and sustain value in buyer seller relationship. Frame work develops with the help of relevant theory from a variety of discipline and elaborated a set of boundary condition (e.g., relationship life cycle and globalization) that influence the role of the sales force in value creation and appropriation. The paper concludes with a discussion of opportunities that provide fertile areas for future research in the area.

## **B: Customers' Shopping Behaviour**

Shopping is exploring goods and services with intent to buy or to make a search. There are mainly two category of shopping: convenience and recreational shopping. In research shopping motive of consumers can be divided into hedonic and utilitarian motive. Hedonic

shoppers do shopping for pleasure and excitement on the other hand, utilitarian shoppers consider shopping as a task, with product acquirement as a goal. Some researcher considers shopping as a leisure activity as well as economic one. Shopping experience can be ranges from “delightful” to “terrible” based on a variety of factors.

**Dholakia(1999)** stated that shopping is making physical visit to shopping store. It is consider as household task as well as recreational, relaxation and entertainment. Shopping behaviour of consumer is different in different countries. The reason behind this varying shopping behaviour is the diverse cultures and changing economies of the various countries. So there is need to study the different type of shopping behaviour in different context.

**Hemalatha et al. (2009)** described various reasons for shopping and has a broad variety of applications to retail research. For devising effective retail strategies and designing appealing and pleasant store environment, they explain about different shopper segment. According to each specific segment specific strategy can be formulated.

**Ghose et al. (2010)** explained shopping and purchase behaviour of consumer in organised retail outlets in Allahabad. Variable identified with the help of factor analysis. Factor influencing store selection and purchase pattern on each shopping trip has also been analysed. The finding suggests an opportunity for retailers in formulating effective retail strategies for tier II and III cities.

**Arpita (2011)** explained mall shopping behaviour of the small city consumers. Small cities people are not very familiar with the concepts of malls and their exposure to the organised retail is very limited. Evolution of malls creates functional and experiential benefits and affects their shopping behaviour. The perceived benefits, however, may differ among consumer groups. Shopping behaviour differs with age and gender groups. ANOVA test was used for analysis. Result revealed that consumer’s age and gender play an important role in determining their attitude shopping’s in malls. Mall attributes like décor, layout, entertainment facilities, and services have influence on shopping behaviour of small city consumers and this must be taken into consideration while planning malls in smaller cities.

### **Research Methodology:**

Research Methodology comprises research design, sampling design, data collection and data analysis techniques that have been used for the study.

**Research Design:** This research is descriptive in nature. Descriptive research describe who, what, when, how type of queries. This describes what is happening at present and there is no control of researcher over variable.

**Data Sources:** - This study includes both primary and secondary data. The most common method used in descriptive research is survey method for collecting data.

- **Secondary Data:** - Secondary data has been collected from various books, magazines, academic and trade journals, newspapers, articles, websites, internet etc.
- **Primary Data:** - The primary data for the study has been collected with the help of structure questionnaire. The questionnaire has been distributed to various shopping malls in Bilaspur, Raipur and Durg city by intercepting consumers at exit of retail outlets just after their shopping in malls.

**Sampling Design:** Shoppers who come for shopping in shopping mall make the population of study. Shopping mall can invite huge no. of customers, so Non-probability Convenience sampling has been utilised in this study. Total 350 questionnaires have been administered to consumers. Out of 350 questionnaires 300 are completely filled and included in this study. Mall intercept technique has been used for collection of data.

**Data collection Instrument:** In this study a structure questionnaire has been used for collection of data. Best method for validation of any research is borrowing questions from

previous studies. So for completing this study a questionnaire has been adopted from previous study. In order to measure sales staff influence towards customers, Larson and Bone (2009) four-factor structure scale was adopted. The research questionnaire contains 20 variables and 4 construct. Information seeking tendencies of respondents, behavioural variations as perceived by respondents on staff, avoidance by customers of retail staff and Convince ability as perceived by respondents. For taking the response of respondent a standard measurement scale (5 point likert scale) ranging from strongly agree = 5 to strongly disagree= 1 has been used. Since the adopted questionnaire has to be validated for the present context, its reliability and validity has to be ensured.

**Information seeking tendencies of respondents:**

1. When a salesperson is helping, customers' usually take their advice.
2. Customers go to sales person to get his attention and information.
3. Customers' feel more comfortable buying something when a salesperson has recommended it.
4. Customers' want salesperson to support them to make a purchase decision.
5. Customers' trust the information given by the salesperson.

**Behavioural variations as perceived by the customers on staff**

1. Customers' appreciate or motivate salesperson for his/her good service
2. Customers' never mind switching from one store to another if they are not satisfied with service.
3. Customers' always demand for exceptional service from salesperson.
4. Customers' never mind what salesperson think of them while purchasing
5. Customers' complain if something goes wrong from the part of salesperson service.

**Avoidance by customers of retail staff Statements**

1. Avoid stores with a lot of salesperson
2. Customers' make the decision on their own before talking to any salesperson
3. Wish salesperson only to answer their questions instead of trying to convince to buy something
4. Feel more comfortable entering a store where they know salesperson will not approach them
5. Customers' wish they could forever avoid having to talk to a salesperson.

**Convince ability as perceived by the customer's statements**

1. Appreciate if sales person perform well to convince them.
2. Purchase decisions are highly influenced by salesperson that assists them from entrance of the shop.
3. Customers' who are easily convinced by salesperson.
4. Customers taken into a purchase by a persuasive salesperson.
5. Prior experience of making good purchases based on influential inputs of salesperson.

**Establishing Reliability and Validity of the Instrument:** For checking the reliability of questionnaire cronbach alpha reliability test was performed. Value of alpha ranges between .755 to .811. Value exceed than .7 considered to be good estimate. So all the item of scale are internally consistence. For measuring the content validity, before collecting data instrument were given two academic experts and two retail expert, and requested to provide valuable feedback and suggestions related to wordings, content, and layout of questionnaire. Feedback and suggestion obtain from experts was included in final data collection instrument.

**Data Analysis& Interpretation:**

**1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

**1.1 Gender:**

For the purpose of this study it has been tried to get an equal number of respondents in both male and female categories. So the total number of respondents in the study was 300 out of which 150 were male and 150 female.

**1.2 Age Wise Classification:**

The data set of the respondent age was classified into three categories 18-35 years, 36-50 years, and 50 above. And out of the respondents 132 (44%) belong to 18-35 years, 117 (39%) belong to 36-50 age group and remaining 51 respondents belong to 50 above years in age.

**1.3 Education Level:**

On the basis of education level of the respondents three categories were formed Graduation, Post-graduation, Others. The respondents belonging to the first category were 120 (40%), 123 (41%) having their education level of post-graduation and above and lastly 57 (19%) respondents were other education like professionals.

**1.4 Occupation Level:**

It was observed that out of 300 respondents 154 were students, 51 were involved in business, 57 were doing service (job) and lastly remaining 38 were professionals.

**1.5 Income Level:**

For the purpose of classifying the income levels of the respondents four categories had been formed. The results were observed as 68 (22.67%) respondents had Rs. 10000 or less as their monthly income, 125 (41.67%) respondents were having their monthly income ranges from 10000 to 30000, and lastly 107 (35.66%) respondents had their monthly income above Rs. 30000.

**2. Shopping Behaviour**

**2.1 Pattern of Store Visit**

S. No	Occasion of Visit	Number of Respondent	Percentage
1.	Weekends	123	41%
2.	Occasionally	93	31%
3.	Festive Seasons	75	25%
4.	Others	9	3%
	Total	300	100

**Interpretation:**It was observed from the collected data that mainly 41% of the respondents visit the store in the weekends, 31% of the respondents visit the store occasionally, 25% of the respondents visit the store only in festive seasons and remaining 3% respondents visiting pattern is not in above categories. This shows that majority of the respondent visits the store in the weekends and on specific occasions like birthday etc. However customers do visit stores in festive seasons too in a good number.

**2.2 Time of Visiting the Outlet**

S. No	Timing of Store Visit	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Morning	45	15%
2.	Afternoon	63	21%
3.	Evening	114	38%
4.	Late Evening	78	26%
	Total	300	100

**Interpretation:** It can be observed from the above table that evening time is mostly liked timing of store visit by the customers as around 40% of the respondents visit the store in the evening. Around 26% and 21% of the respondents visit the store in late evening and afternoon hours. It was also observed that morning time is the least preferred time of store visit by the customers.

**2.3 Time Spent in Store**

S. No	Hours Spent	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	< 1 Hour	24	8%
2.	1-2 Hours	72	24%
3.	2-3 Hours	156	52%
4.	3 < Hours	48	16%
	Total	300	100

**Interpretation:**It is clearly evident from the above data that most of the customers visiting the store spend 2-3 hours' time in the store. However 24% of the respondents visiting the store spend their 1-2 hours' time in the store. The number of respondents visiting the store for less than 1 hour time or more than 3 hours' time is quite less.

**3. Attributes Related to Retail Staff**

**3.1 Information Seeking Tendencies of Respondents.**

S.No	Information seeking tendencies of respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	When a Salesperson is helping customers usually take their advice.	28 (9.33)	29 (9.67)	24 (8)	68 (22.6)	151 (50.33)
2.	Customers go to sales person to get his attention and information.	43 (14.33)	61 (20.33)	131 (43.6)	41 (13.6)	24 (8)
3.	Customers feel more comfortable buying something when a salesperson has recommended it.	18 (6)	27 (9)	84 (28)	142 (47.3)	29 (9.67)
4.	Customers want salesperson to support them to make a purchase decision.	9 (3)	22 (7.33)	78 (26)	101 (33.6)	90 (30)
5.	Customers trust the information given by the salesperson.	11 (3.67)	26 (8.67)	84 (28)	114 (38)	65 (21.67)

(Value in bracket represents percentage in respect of total respondents).



**Interpretation:** It is observed from the above table that more than 70% of the customers generally take the advice of the sales person while shopping if the person is having helping approach. One third of the customers feel that they did not approach the sales person in order to get his attention or information from him about the products. However 44% of the customers are indifferent towards the statement that they approach the salesperson to get his attention or any information. It is clearly evident from the table that customers feel more comfortable in buying a product if it is recommended by the salesperson, as 58% of the respondents feel so. And 28% of them are neutral about the effect of recommendation of salesperson on their buying decision. More than 60% of the customers want the salesperson to help them in their purchase decision. On the other hand only 10% of them did not feel so. So it can be concluded here that customers do need the support from salesperson in their buying decisions. Lastly it was observed from the data set that most of the customers do rely and trust the information given by the salesperson. Only 11% of the customers belong to the class who do not rely on the information given by the salesperson but majority of them do believe on the same.

**3.2 Behavioural Variations as Perceived by the Customers on Staff.**

S. No	Behavioural variations as perceived by the customers on staff	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Customers appreciate or motivate sales person for his/her good service.	18 (6)	34 (11.33)	75 (25)	119 (39.6)	54 (16.2)
2.	Customers never mind switching from store to another if they are not satisfied with services.	9 (3)	21 (7)	28 (9.3)	124 (41.3)	118 (39.33)
3.	Customers always demand for exceptional services from sales person.	45 (15)	93 (31)	124 (41.3)	24 (8)	14 (4.67)
4.	Customer never minds what salesperson think of them while purchasing.	11 (3.67)	34 (11.33)	41 (13.6)	154 (51.3)	60 (20)
5.	Customer complains if something goes wrong from the part of salesperson service.	17 (5.67)	19 (6.33)	9 (3)	134 (44.6)	179 (59.67)

(Value in bracket represents percentage in respect of total respondents.)

**Interpretation:** It can be observed from the above table that around 56% of the customers appreciate the sales person for the services provided by him. And only 17% of them disagree with this statement and they do not appreciate the salesperson for their decisions. It is also observed from the table that customers do switch from one store to another if they are not satisfied with the services of the salesperson. More than 70% of the respondents feel so. Only 10% of them do not switch the stores. It is also observed that customers do not demand for exceptional services from sales person in the stores around 80% of the customers do not expect exceptional services from the sales person.

**3.3 Avoidance by Customers of Retail Staff.**

S. No.	Avoidance of customers of retail staff	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Avoid store with a lot of sales person.	34 (11.33)	95 (31.67)	24 (8)	49 (16.33)	104 (34.67)
2.	Customers make the decision on their own before talking to sales person.	38 (12.67)	169 (56.33)	45 (15)	31 (10.33)	17 (5.67)
3.	Wish salesperson only to answer their question instead of trying to convince or buy something.	41 (13.66)	158 (52.67)	32 (10.67)	41 (13.67)	28 (9.33)
4.	Feeling more comfortable entering a store where they know salesperson will not approach them.	90 (30)	138 (46)	28 (9.33)	30 (10)	14 (4.67)
5.	Customers wish they could forever avoid having talk to a salesperson.	78 (26)	138 (46)	44 (14.67)	19 (6.33)	21 (7)

(Value in bracket represents percentage in respect of total respondents).

**Interpretation:** It is observed from the above table that around 50% of the respondents avoid the stores with a lot of sales person. It is also observed from the table that around 70% of the respondents do not make their decision on their own before talking to any sales person. Most of the customers do not wish from the sales person to answer their questions only instead of trying to convince them to buy something. This also shows that customers do seek information from the sales persons about the products. Most of the respondents (76%) do not feel comfortable where they know that sales person will not approach them. This shows that customers do need sales person in the store to shop better. Lastly it can be observed that most of the customers want the salesperson to talk to them and they do not avoid the salesperson to talk with them. Thus overall it can be concluded that customers insist on sales person for their purchase decision and shopping experience in the store.

**3.4 Convince Ability of Retail Staff as Perceived by the Customers.**

S. No.	Convince ability of retail staff as perceived by customers	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Appreciate if sales person perform well to convince them.	24 (8)	42 (14)	68 (22.67)	108 (36)	58 (19.33)
2.	Purchase decisions are highly influenced by salesperson which assisted them from entrance of the shop.	38 (12.67)	56 (18.67)	94 (31.33)	83 (27.67)	29 (9.67)
3.	Customers who are easily convinced by salesperson.	49 (16.2)	46 (16.2)	86 (25.68)	97 (32.45)	22 (7.33)
4.	Customers taken into a purchase by a persuasive salesperson.	17 (5.67)	41 (13.67)	92 (30.67)	111 (37)	39 (13)
5.	Prior experience of making good purchases based on influential inputs of salesperson.	26 (8.67)	33 (9.1)	30 (10)	127 (42.33)	84 (28)

(Value in bracket represents percentage in respect of total respondents).

**Interpretation:** It is observed from the table that around 56% of the retail customers appreciate the sales staff when they are convinced by them and more than 20% of the customers did not appreciate the retail sales staff even after the staff does well effort in convincing them. When it comes to influence of salesperson on the purchase decision of the customers it is observed that the customers are quite indifferent about this statement as around one third of customers feel their purchase decisions are influenced by the sales staff and around one third did not feel the same. It is also observed from the table that around 40% of the customers are easily convinced by the sales staff in store and around 25% of them are neutral towards this statement that they are easily convinced by the sales staff. However one third of the customer disagrees and feels that it is not easy for the sales staff to convince them easily. Another observation which can be drawn from the above table is that convincing ability (persuasiveness) of a sales person makes 50% of the customers to buy the products from the store. However more than 30% of them was neutral towards this statement. Lastly it can be observed from the table that around 70% of the customers feel that their prior experience of making good purchases is based on the influential inputs of a sales person. This clearly shows that if a sales person is influential it can make the customers purchase from the stores.

**Major Findings:**

**Shopping Behaviour**

1. Majority of the customers prefer to visit the store in the weekend days.
2. Evening hours are usually the most preferred time of the store visit by customers.
3. Most of the customers spend time span of 2-3 hours in the stores.

### **Attributes related to Staff**

1. Customers like to get the information about the products from the retail staff. They also wish to get help and support from the sales person in their purchase decision. And they do rely on the information provided by sales person.
2. Most of the customers appreciate the sales person for the information and suggestion provided them, also the adverse behaviour of the sales staff makes the customers switch from one store to another.
3. Any store with excess or over crowded with staff is usually avoided by the customers. Most of the customers make their purchase decision only after talking with the sales person, and they do like the sales person's approach while they stay in the store.
4. Nearly half of the customers are easily convinced by the sales person. The ability of the sales person to convince the customers makes a decisive role in finalisation of purchase decision related to any product.

### **Limitations of the study:**

Though extra precaution has been taken still, there are some limitations in this study which are as follow:

- The study is limited only in Chhattisgarh state so the finding can't be generalized for all over Indian customers.
- This study based on responses from respondents so there is possibility of response bias.
- Also the statistical techniques used in the study are limited due to time constraint.
- The limitation of statistical tools and techniques has an implication for the study.

### **Conclusion:**

It has been rightly said that "Customer is a King" and in the context of organised retail store the customers want and expect the retail store persons to treat them well. Every customer relies and depends on the information about the products available in the store to be provided to them by the sales person. It is the most complex decision in the store for the customer to finalise a product from the large range of the available products with the similar features, and this is the situation in which it highly depends on the sales person to select the best among the rest. However excess of any good thing can also covert it into a bad one. So is the case with sales staff as customers avoid the store where excess staff exists. The behaviour of the sales staff also highly affects the customers to stay and come again into the store. As poor behaviour of the staff may make them switch the store. So from point of view a customer, personal selling is one of those elements of promotion which is much needed during shopping in store. It is truth of present business scenario that commitment of sale people towards the store attracts more customers into store, convince customers to buy from the store and ultimately increase sales volume of retail business.

Customer's perception about image and environments of store is shaped by its sales people. They occupy a major position in all retail strategy as they are the first who are contacted by the customers in store. So lastly from the above study it can be concluded that sales person is one of the most important factor present in the store to attract and maintain the customers of the store. And a well-trained sales staff can become decisive factor in getting an edge over your competitors as it is a factor which is highly preferred and relied up on by the customers too.

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