



## A STUDY ON CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE IN PUNNIAMOORTHY PILLAI DEPARTMENT STORE AT THANJAVUR

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### INTRODUCTION

Customer experience (CX) is the product of an interaction between an organization and a customer over the duration of their relationship. This interaction includes a customer's attraction, awareness, discovery, cultivation, advocacy and purchase and use of a service. It is measured by the individual's experience during all points of contact against the individual's expectations. Analysts and commentators have increasingly recognized the importance of managing the customer's experience. Forbes says that customer experience is the "cumulative impact of multiple touch points" over the course of a customer's interaction with an organization. Some companies are known to segment the customer experience into interactions through the web and social media, while others define human interaction such as over-the-phone customer service or face-to-face retail service as the customer experience.

According to Fast Company, the six disciplines for great customer experience are strategy, customer understanding, design, measurement, governance and culture. A company's ability to deliver an experience that sets it apart in the eyes of its customers will increase the amount of consumer spending with the company and inspire loyalty to its brand. According to Jessica Sebor, "loyalty is now driven primarily by a company's interaction with its customers and how well it delivers on their wants and needs."

Wharton's Professor of Marketing Barbara E. Kahn has established an evolutionary approach to customer experience as the third of four stages of any company in terms of its customer centricity maturity.

These progressive phases are

1. Product orientation: Companies just manufacture goods and offer them the best way possible.
2. Market orientation: Some consideration on customer needs and segmentation arises, developing different marketing-mix bundles for each one.
3. Customer experience: Adding to the other two factors some recognition of the importance of providing an emotionally positive experience to customers.
4. Authenticity: This is the top maturity stage of companies. Products and service emerge from real soul of brand and connect naturally and on long term sustainable basis with clients and other stakeholders. Today, it is widely recognized that customer experience is a qualitatively different concept than concepts such as customer engagement, customer satisfaction, and customer commitment.

### PUNNIAMOORTHY PILLAI DEPARTMENT STORE

Consumers' Surplus Differentiates Punniamoorthy Pillai Department Store from Others Nearly a century old brand image in retail business, Punniamoorthy Pillai Department Store (PPDS) is on its strides today retaining and expanding its customer base. It was started by a visionary R.Punnamoorthy Pillai in retail trade. Visionary because he introduced innovative management practices far ahead of his times when business schools were unheard of in the country. He started a traditional grocery shop early in the last century at Ayyankadai Street. It has blossomed into a chain of department stores with all modern amenities, ambience and customer care that characterize today's retail revolution. "Sourcing", "Packaging," "Processing" and "Caring for employee's welfare" are capsules given today to management students in business schools. But Punniamoorthy Pillai intuitively laid his hands on these axioms a century ago. He was a pioneer in this regard. His literary accomplishments however were not high! To cite one example he introduced the practice of making packets, to pack the products, out of unused news papers (minding environmental hygiene and pollution).

One could easily identify from the sight of the packets where one has come from! His son Late P.Subramania Pillai- a many sided personality-consolidated the business and steered through the turbulent period of economic depression and the second world war without compromising on ethical content in business. The next generation is a team, rather a blend of diverse talents. It is deliberately attempted to drive home the point that a proper blend of traditional values and modern methods with an ethical thread to run through will not only help in the growth but in the sustenance of any business endeavor during changing and at times challenging phases in the external environment. The establishment presently has three outlets, each catering to a specific segment chiselled to meet the needs and personal comforts of the customers. The oldest one functions in



Ayyankadai Street, the older in South Rampart and the young in Medical College Road. But customer care, pricing and courteous extended is the same in all centers. A unique feature of PPDS is that it offers Groceries, FMCGS, House Hold Appliances of all reputed brands (both small and big) Sports and Fitness Goods and Bakery under one roof - A rare sight to come across. PPDS bestows equal attention to after sale service for home appliances as on sales. Customer friendly novel schemes introduced by PPDS find good response from the customers. "Buy More and Win More" though aiming at customer retention confers the benefit of customers accumulating small trickles into a sizeable amount at the year end.

"EARLY BIRD SCHEME" offered at the New Year Sale is unique by itself. Customers pay the price in full for the durables they buy not knowing the real price they will be charged. Each customer is invited later to receive the discount amounts and gifts. The customers have such implicit faith that PPDS will offer the best prices to them. PPDS organizes a Customer Meet every year.

It is a mega event for which admission is by invitation. Invitation is restricted only to those participating in the New Year Sale. The response is so over whelming that no public hall in the town is found spacious enough to accommodate the audience. It is conducted in an enclosed but well guarded open area. The invitees throng at 6.00pm sharp and sit through quietly enjoying the programmed, given by artists of standard quality and high repute. Orderly conduct of the annual event with nearly several thousand people participating is a rare event in a small town like Thanjavur. PPDS is now a household name in Thanjavur and its suburbs. The hinterland served by PPDS extends far beyond the bounds of Thanjavur district. Thanjavur is always a reservoir for skills and talents. People tend to move out in search of greener pastures for career making. When the families visit their home town Thanjavur, an important item in their literary is making purchase of their annual requirements of groceries in PPDS. That is their insatiable quest for quality which is unmistakably assured by PPDS. "Commerce without Ethics" is one of the seven sins identified by the father of the nation. PPDS practices this axiom in letter and spirit; Generations pass by, decades pass by but the ethical content in retail business remains static and permanent in PPDS. The core strength of PPDS is this guiding principle. People who care for their money's worth continue to patronize PPDS because they are aware that there is "consumers' surplus" in their bargain.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH**

- To analyze the customer behavior based on observation study in thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu (India) in some of the punnai moorthi pillai departmental stores.
- To identify the factors influencing the homemakers in purchasing various fast moving consumer goods (FMGC).
- To find out the customer influence of purchasing survey in ppds.

**Table: 1, Distribution of respondents based on mean score and standard deviation with Reference on Punniamoorthi Pillai Department Store.**

S.No.	Pattern of Usages Punniamoorthi Pillai Department Store	Mean	S.D.
1	Typically use the punniamoorthi pillai department store card	1.78	0.887
2	purchased of goods to the punniamoorthi pillai department store card	2.06	0.935
3	Performance on customer service	2.18	1.101
4	Level of satisfaction	1.76	0.894
5	Handling Customer problems	1.44	0.501
6	Experience / recommended friends	1.38	0.490

Source: Data generated from the customer of Punniamoorthi Pillai Department Store .

The Table shows the Distribution of respondents based on mean score and standard deviation with respect on Punniamoorthi Pillai Department Store Based on mean score most important factor is Performance on customer service (2.18) purchased of goods to the Punniamoorthi Pillai Department Store Card (2.06) Typically use the Punniamoorthi Pillai Department Store Card (1.78) Level of satisfaction (1.76) Handling Customer problems (1.44) Experience / recommended to friends (1.38).

**CONCLUSION**

Research was concentrated on finding out the purchasing behavior of the homemakers. The dimensions like types of goods available, displays of items, variety of products, price of the product and pester power were analyzed. Types of goods



available are more and most of the products are branded items. There were many display items, but not very attractive to make a sale. Price of the product was found to be moderate in departmental stores than the other ordinary retail stores. Pester power is the major factor which influences the purchase of the products in the departmental stores in thanjavur.

Display items may be made more attractive, so that it induces the customer to purchase the product. Sales executives can be given more training for serving the needs of customers .Billing can be made faster, reducing the waiting time of the customer. Love for children is visible through the influence of them in buying behavior of the parents.

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