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Hypermarket Study in the Mumbai Suburban Region

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ABSTRACT

Store design and the in-store environment shape how customers move through a store, what they notice and what they buy. This study examines how a value-format hypermarket in the Mumbai Suburban region uses store design, space management, visual merchandising and store atmosphere, and how satisfied its customers are with the shopping experience. It combines direct observation during store visits with a descriptive survey of 122 live customers of the store, collected through a structured online questionnaire and analysed using frequency distributions and percentages. Observation shows a grid layout with wide aisles, bilingual signage, prominent yellow price tags, end-cap and brand displays, bulk stacking and festive theme displays under bright LED lighting. Survey results are broadly positive: 65.6% of respondents rated the ease of locating products at 4 or 5 on a five-point scale, 73.0% rated product arrangement at 4 or 5, 69.7% said that displays attract their attention often or very often, and 80.3% considered prices the same as or lower than at other supermarkets. Overall satisfaction was rated 4 or 5 by 67.2% of respondents, and 70.5% were likely to recommend the store. However, a consistent middle group of about 22–35% of respondents on most questions points to room for improvement in signage clarity, movement during busy hours and stock availability. As the sample is young and largely made up of students, the findings are indicative rather than generalisable.

Keywords: Retail store design; Visual merchandising; Space management; Store atmosphere; Customer satisfaction; Value retail; Hypermarket; Mumbai Suburban region.

INTRODUCTION

Retailing is the business of selling goods to customers for their personal use. The look and feel of a store has a strong effect on what customers notice, how they move through the store and what they finally buy, and layout, signage, displays, lighting and colour all contribute to this effect (Levy et al., 2019). Store design and the in-store environment therefore influence how shoppers navigate, find products, notice displays, assess promotions and judge the overall shopping experience.

This study examines a value-format hypermarket where customers buy groceries, fruits and vegetables and household items. The outlet studied is located on the lower ground floor of a shopping mall in the Mumbai Suburban region and belongs to a national hypermarket chain. To maintain anonymity, the store and its operator are not named in this paper.

The study has two parts. The first describes four aspects of the store, namely store design elements, space management, visual merchandising and store atmosphere, based on direct observation and photographs taken during store visits. The second analyses a survey of 122 live customers of the store to assess satisfaction with navigation and space, product presentation, promotions, store atmosphere, merchandise, pricing and service. The paper concludes with findings, suggestions and limitations.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kotler (1973) introduced the term “atmospherics” to describe the deliberate design of buying environments to produce emotional effects that increase the probability of purchase. Drawing on the stimulus–organism–response framework of Mehrabian and Russell (1974), Donovan and Rossiter (1982) showed that the pleasure and arousal created by a store environment are linked to shoppers’ willingness to spend time and money in the store. Bitner (1992) extended this view to service settings through the “servicescape” model, which groups physical surroundings into ambient conditions, spatial layout and functionality, and signs, symbols and artefacts.

Individual atmospheric elements have also been studied. Milliman (1982) found that slower background music slowed the pace of supermarket shoppers and increased sales volume, while Spangenberg, Crowley and Henderson (1996) reported that a pleasant ambient scent improved evaluations of the store. Bellizzi, Crowley and Hasty (1983) showed that colour affects how attractive and pleasant a store appears, and Areni and Kim (1994) found that brighter lighting increased the extent to which shoppers examined and handled merchandise. In a review of experimental evidence, Turley and Milliman (2000) concluded that atmospheric variables consistently influence shopping behaviour, although the size of the effect varies across settings.

Research on space management and visual merchandising shows that the amount and location of shelf space affect sales. Chevalier (1975) found that in-store displays increased product sales, and Drèze, Hoch and Purk (1994) showed that shelf position, particularly placement at eye level, affected sales more than the number of facings. Inman, Winer and Ferraro (2009) found that category characteristics such as display activity contribute to unplanned purchases. Baker et al. (2002) showed that design, social and ambient

cues together shape customers' perceptions of merchandise value and their intention to patronise a store. In the Indian context, Mohan, Sivakumaran and Sharma (2013) found that store environment cues influence impulse buying through shoppers' positive affect and urge to buy.

Most of these studies were conducted in Western markets or in controlled settings. Fewer studies combine an on-site observation of a specific value-format store in an Indian city with a survey of its customers. This study addresses that gap by examining a hypermarket in the Mumbai Suburban region.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To understand the respondents' preferences about shopping.
- To check how respondents find their way in the store and find what they are looking for.
- To assess the customers' views about the space of aisles, movement and product location.
- To find out how customers view the display, discounts, and promotional offers.
- To learn customer perceptions about the lighting, cleanliness, temperature, and ambience of the store.
- To examine the merchandise variety, availability, and pricing in the store.
- To review billing or checkout and overall satisfaction with the store.
- To learn the customers' expectations for improving their shopping experience.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study follows a descriptive research design and combines direct observation of the store with a customer survey.

- **Research design:** Descriptive.
- **Observation:** Visits to the selected hypermarket, with photographs of the layout, fixtures, displays and atmosphere. Each observation is interpreted using standard retail concepts.
- **Research instrument:** Structured online questionnaire (Google Forms) with multiple-choice questions and five-point rating scales (1 = lowest, 5 = highest).
- **Sample size:** 122 respondents.
- **Sampling method:** Non-probability convenience sampling. Respondents were live customers of the selected hypermarket who were shopping at the store and completed the questionnaire.
- **Data analysis:** Frequency distributions, percentages and descriptive interpretation. Blank responses were excluded from the denominator of the relevant question.

The findings reflect the views of the respondents and should not be generalised to all customers of the store.

STORE OBSERVATION: DESIGN, SPACE, VISUAL MERCHANDISING AND ATMOSPHERE

This section describes the store design elements, space management, visual merchandising and store atmosphere of the selected outlet. Store design covers the planning of layout, signage and display spaces so that products are easy to locate and offers are visible to customers, while space management is the allocation of floor and shelf area among product categories, brands and customer traffic (Levy et al., 2019). The hypermarket studied is located on the lower ground floor of a shopping mall in the Mumbai Suburban region. It sells household goods, clothing and groceries and is open daily from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. The observations below are based on store visits and photographs, and each is explained with a standard retail concept.

5.1 Store design elements

Store design – the layout, the signs and graphics and the feature areas which determine the flow of customers in a store and what they see. The store is in a mall, so the exterior walls, entrance and the columns are held in place by the mall building, with the result that the store's design appears primarily on the inside.

5.1.1 Layouts

Store Layout is the arrangement of fixtures and aisles on the floor. There are three basic varieties. A grid layout has long rows of fixtures in parallel aisles. A free form layout disposes fixtures in a flowing or irregular pattern. A loop or racetrack design features branches off from the main path around the store. The grid layout is the preferred layout in most supermarkets as it maximizes the amount of products that can be stored in the available space, allows easy replenishment of products and enables customers to locate products easily.

The hypermarket follows a grid layout. There are long gondola shelves in parallel rows with aisles in between, and a cross row of shelves at the end of the aisles. One product group is placed in each row. The store has a personal care section, a hair care area, a fruits and vegetables section and a staples and bulk section with racks lining the walls. Snacks hang from wire hooks and are displayed on metal shelves. The aisles are wide enough for two trolleys to pass each other, which is important because customers usually purchase large quantities of goods. Long white LED tube lights are installed along the aisles, allowing customers to see the whole way down and navigate accordingly.

The fruits and vegetables area differs from the rest of the grid. Produce is placed on steps, in crates and in baskets, giving the section the look of a fresh market. This free-form feel slows customers down and suggests freshness. The drawback of a grid format is that it can feel dull and speed up customer movement through the aisles; the store offsets this with wide aisles and with displays at the ends of the aisles and in the fresh section.

5.1.2 Signage and graphics

Signage assists customers who are self-service by assisting them in locating products, comparing prices, and informing them about offers without having to ask employees for assistance. Retail signs are normally classified into category sign, location sign, price sign, information sign and promotional signs. Graphics: pictures, posters and cut-outs that add colour and brand image. All of these are used by the store.

- **Category signs.** The section boards are red with the store logo or blue with white lettering, and hang from the ceiling. The blue boards for bakery and dairy goods are visible from a distance. Boards and price tags are in both English and Hindi, so most customers are able to read them.
- **Price and information signs.** The MRP is displayed on the bright yellow price tags on the edge of the blue shelf of every gondola which also shows the selling price and the amount saved. There is a QR code on the tags for additional details.
- **Graphics.** A hanging healthy-eating banner with a picture of a salad hangs over the fruits and vegetables section.
- **Safety signs.** Exits are situated so that customers can see them, CCTV cameras are visible on the ceiling and fire extinguishers are visible. The boards are painted in the same red and blue colours as the store and it helps customers to remember the brand.

5.1.3 Feature area

Feature areas are areas that are created to draw attention and to draw the customer to certain products. Examples include end-caps, which are at the end of an aisle, free-standing displays, and promotional or theme displays. They do not follow the grid style and allow the store to focus on brands and offers.

Several feature areas were observed in the store. An end-cap with a large poster on top is located at the end of the personal care aisle and is the first thing customers encounter on entering the aisle. Brand stands, such as a black TRESemmé stand in the hair care area and a Colgate stand in the fruits and vegetables area, are free-standing. Nescafe Gold jars are displayed in a cardboard unit at the beginning of the snack aisle. In the bulk area, 10 kg bags of atta are piled on the floor in front of the wall racks, indicating that bulk buying is central to the store's concept.

A theme display is placed in the fruits and vegetables section. The healthy-eating banner, hanging decorations, the "Pooja Specials" banners and a TV screen make it one of the most eye-catching parts of the store.

5.2 Space management

Space Management is choosing the amount of floor and shelf space for each merchandise category and brand and the positioning of each. The goal is to have good sales in each square foot with room for customers to move around. These are typically made based on sales, profit and the significance of the brand, and are documented in a planogram, which is a plan of where every product is located on the shelf. This section describes how space is used, rather than by measurement, because the total floor area and sales data of this branch are not published.

5.2.1 Allocation of space in the store to merchandise categories and brands

Most of the observed floor area is devoted to food and daily-need products: staples and bulk goods, fruits and vegetables, packaged snacks, and personal care and hair care. This suits a value store whose customers visit regularly and buy groceries in large quantities. The store also stocks home items and clothing, but the photographs focus on groceries and personal care items, so this paper does not assess the share of space allocated to these two categories.

Space is also divided by brand and pack size. Displays, end-caps, stands and posters give well-known brands such as Vaseline, TRESemmé, Colgate and Nescafe more than a regular shelf presence. Skincare products such as Vaseline lotions are stocked on the middle shelves. Heavy products like 10 kg atta bags are kept on the floor rather than on high shelves, and papad and loose rice are stored in open drums for customers to buy by weight. Space is used efficiently: small packs of creams and lotions hang from hooks or sit on small side shelves, and snacks hang from wire racks. Double-sided gondolas serve two aisles with one run of shelving, and rice and flour are stored on wall racks.

The store allocates most of its space to merchandise and leaves the remaining space for trolleys and walking. The displays were kept full, with no empty shelf space visible in the photographs.

5.2.2 Location of departments or merchandise categories

Retailers group their products so that customers can easily locate high-demand items and have the opportunity to buy other products along the way. Here, fruits and vegetables and bulk staples are located close together, and the red baskets and trolleys are grouped near the bulk items, so a customer buying heavy or daily-need goods can find them in one part of the store. The bakery and dairy sections are located next to the fruits and vegetables area. Packaged snacks have their own aisles, and personal care and hair care

have separate aisles of the grid with end-caps and stands to attract customers. Boards over each area show customers where they are.

Cross display, where a product is displayed in two or more locations, is also used. The Colgate stand in the fruits and vegetables and staples section gives the toothpaste exposure outside the aisle where it is normally sold.

5.2.3 Highly trafficked areas

High-traffic areas are the sections of a store with the most customer movement, including the entrance, main walkways, high-demand areas and the billing area. Retailers use them for offers and impulse products, although space in these areas is limited.

The fruits and vegetables and bulk staples section appeared to be the busiest part of the store observed. It holds daily-use items, it is where the baskets and trolleys are kept, and it has the most attention-drawing displays: the Colgate stand, the TV screen, festival banners and the healthy eating banner. During the visits, many customers were seen walking along the main walkway in front of this section while others bought produce at the stands. The wide aisles keep this zone manageable, but it is likely to become crowded at peak hours. This observation is based on store visits and photographs, not on footfall counts.

5.2.4 Highly visible areas

Highly visible areas are the places that are noticed by the customers, whether they are busy or not. Typical locations include the ends of aisles, eye level shelves and signs mounted at height. They are used by retailers to stock new products, offers and high margin products.

At this store, the Vaseline end-cap is the first display customers see when they turn into the personal care aisle. The middle shelf is at eye level, the most accessible area, and holds branded items such as Vaseline lotions. The hanging section boards and the “Pooja Specials” and healthy-eating banners are above head height and can be read from a distance. The yellow price tags stand out, although the blue shelf edges are less noticeable, and the TV screen, posters and a Batman cut-out above the shelves catch the eye. In the aisles, the long LED lights lead the eye towards the shelves at the far end, while the Nescafe Gold display is the first thing visible at the start of the snack aisle. The bags of atta stacked along the edge of the aisle can be seen from a distance.

5.3 Visual merchandising

Visual merchandising is the way a store arranges and displays its products so that customers notice and buy them. Customers come to the hypermarket for low prices, so most of its displays emphasise large quantities, clear prices and easy-to-find sections. This section is based on photographs taken during the store visits.

5.3.1 Fixtures

Fixtures are the racks, shelves and stands that hold the products. The following fixtures were observed.

- Gondolas are the long metal shelves in the aisles, open on both sides. Shampoo, lotion, toothpaste and handwash sit on them. The shelf edges are blue and carry the price tags. The aisles are wide enough for two trolleys to pass.
- Small packs like creams and lotion bottles hang from hooks or sit on small shelves at the side of the aisle, which fits a lot of products into little space.
- At the end of the personal care aisle there is a Vaseline end-cap display with a big poster on top. It is the first thing customers see when they turn into the aisle.
- Two brand stands stood out. In the hair care area there is a black TRESemmé stand with a model's photo. In the fruits and vegetables area there is a Colgate stand with a Batman cut-out that appeals to children.
- Fruits and vegetables go on stepped stands with a green signboard in front, so the produce is shown at different heights. Tomatoes, capsicum and carrots are kept in black crates. Oranges and sweet limes are in cane baskets, and packed tomatoes sit on a raised platform. The whole section looks like a fresh market.
- Loose rice and papad are kept in open drums with yellow price tags, so customers can buy by weight. Packed rice and flour are on metal racks along the walls, and 10 kg bags of private-label atta are stacked on the floor in front of them. Red baskets and trolleys are kept near the fruits and vegetables and the bulk items.

5.3.2 Presentation techniques

- **Bulk stacking.** The stacked 10 kg atta bags make the store look full and tell customers that buying in bulk is the main idea here.
- **Prices first.** The bright yellow price tags are the first thing customers notice on the shelves. Each shows the MRP, the selling price and the amount saved. For example, a 10 kg atta pack with an MRP of ₹619 is priced at ₹419, a saving of ₹200 that is easy to see at a glance.
- **Two languages.** Price tags and section boards are in both English and Hindi, so most customers can read them.
- **QR codes.** The tags carry QR codes that customers can scan for more details about the product or offer.
- **Brand posters.** Vaseline and TRESemmé use big posters and headers to catch the eye.
- **Eye-level placement.** Branded products like Vaseline lotions are on the middle shelves, which are the easiest to see and reach.

- **Grouping.** Products of the same brand and type are kept together with the labels facing front, so the shelves look neat.
- Fruits and vegetables are piled up neatly. Red tomatoes, green capsicum, orange carrots and oranges look colourful together, and the piles look full.
- **Festival offers.** "Pooja Specials" banners advertise deals like "Pick at ₹99" and "Buy 1 Get 1 Free", which ties the store to the festival season.
- **Theme banner.** A hanging healthy-eating banner with a salad picture suits the fruits and vegetables section and promotes healthy eating.
- **TV screens.** Screens near the fruits and vegetables area play brand ads.
- **Cross display.** The Colgate stand in the fruits and vegetables and staples area gives the product a second chance to be seen outside its own aisle.

5.4 Store atmosphere

Store atmosphere is the overall feel of the store created by colour, lighting, music and scent. It affects how comfortable customers feel, how long they stay and how much they buy (Kotler, 1973; Turley & Milliman, 2000).

5.4.1 Colour

- The store's boards are red and blue. The hanging section boards have a red part with the store logo and a blue part with white lettering. The same colours show up everywhere, which helps customers remember the brand.
- The bright yellow price tags stand out and tell customers there is an offer or a saving.
- For the festival season, the store has yellow and orange marigold garlands, red and orange "Pooja Specials" banners and hanging decorations. These give it a happy festive feel.
- The fruits and vegetables area uses green boards, hanging leaves and green posters, which makes it feel fresh and healthy.
- The background is plain. The floor tiles are cream and the walls and ceiling are off-white, so the colourful products and boards stand out against it.

5.4.2 Lighting

- Long white LED tube lights run in rows along the ceiling above the aisles. The light is bright and even, so labels and prices are easy to read. Because the rows follow the aisles, the shopper's eye is drawn down the aisle and customers can see far ahead.
- The ceiling is left open. The beams, pipes and air ducts are visible and painted dark red and white. It is a low-cost look, and it suits a store known for low prices.
- In the fruits and vegetables area, the bright white light makes the produce look clean and fresh.
- CCTV cameras, exit signs and fire extinguishers are easy to spot, which makes customers feel safe.

5.4.3 Music

Light background music was playing, but it was barely noticeable and did not disturb shoppers. The ceiling speakers visible in the photographs show that the store does use sound, but because the music was so soft, it contributed little to the mood of the store.

5.4.4 Scent

No particular scent was noticed in the store, and it does not appear to use fragrance to attract customers. Scent therefore plays little part in the atmosphere at the hypermarket, which relies more on colour, lighting and displays.

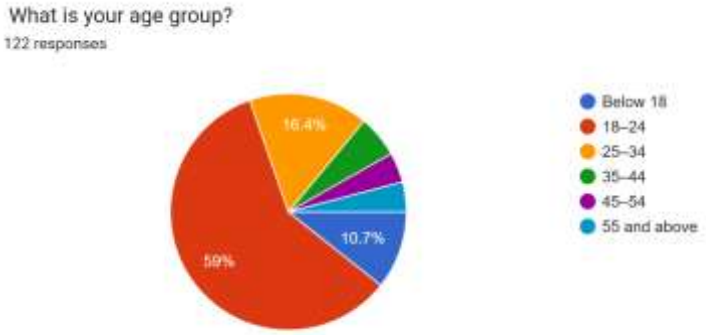
5.5 Summary of Observations

The hypermarket uses its displays to communicate value and abundance through stacked bulk packs, bright yellow price tags, bilingual boards and festival banners. The atmosphere is bright, colourful and functional rather than upmarket, with red and blue branding, strong LED lighting and seasonal decorations. This suits customers who want low prices and buy in large quantities.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The following section presents the analysis of responses collected through the questionnaire on customers' shopping experience at the hypermarket. The survey received 122 responses. Each question is followed by a brief analysis and a table of responses; charts are shown where available. For rating-scale questions, 1 represents the lowest and 5 the highest rating. Question 5 allowed multiple answers.

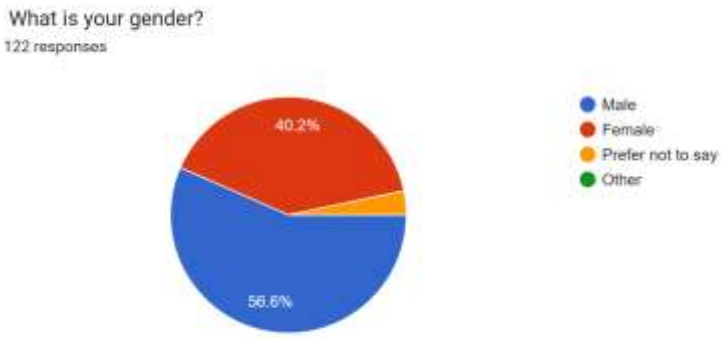
Question 1: What is your age group?



Analysis: The highest representation was amongst the 18-24 age bracket comprising 72 respondents (59%) followed by the 25-34 age bracket with 20 respondents (16.4%). Thus, while the analysis reflects the views of young people, it cannot be generalized to represent the views of all store customers.

Response	Count	Percentage
18–24	72	59.0%
25–34	20	16.4%
Below 18	13	10.7%
35–44	7	5.7%
55 and above	5	4.1%
45–54	5	4.1%

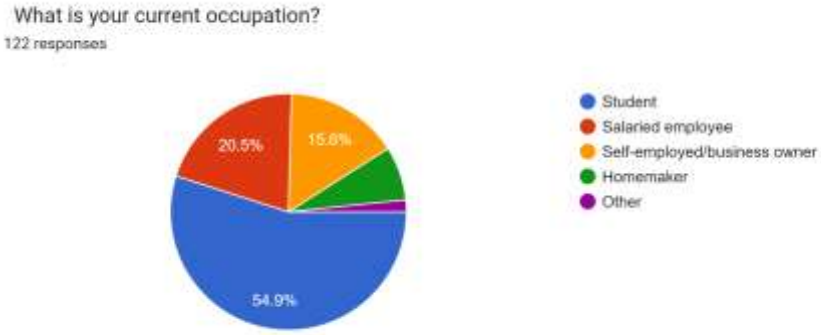
Question 2: What is your gender?



Analysis: Respondents fall into three groups. The majority are male, 69 (56.6%), while 49 (40.2%) are female and 4 (3.3%) preferred not to say. The sample is therefore somewhat male-leaning, and it is unclear whether this distribution is the same among the entire customer base of the store.

Response	Count	Percentage
Male	69	56.6%
Female	49	40.2%
Prefer not to say	4	3.3%

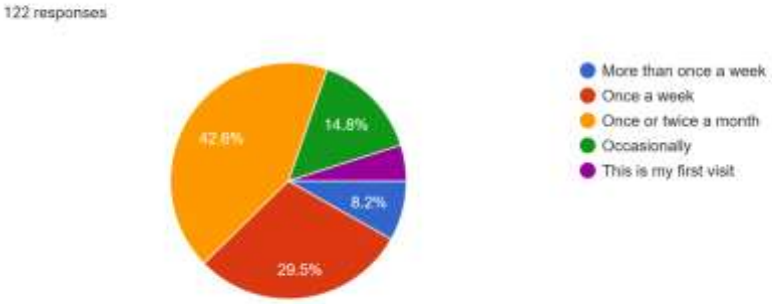
Question 3: What is your current occupation?



Analysis: It should be noted that the majority of respondents (67) are students (54.9%), with salaried employees accounting for the second-largest group (25, 20.5%). Therefore, when interpreting the survey's results, it is important to consider students' responses as the prevalent part of the sample that may differ from the target population. The expectations toward prices, convenience, and frequency of purchases may be different for these groups.

Response	Count	Percentage
Student	67	54.9%
Salaried employee	25	20.5%
Self-employed/business owner	19	15.6%
Homemaker	9	7.4%
Other	2	1.6%

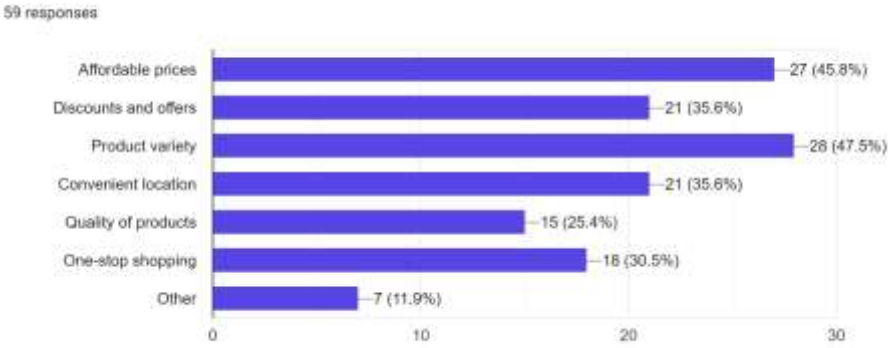
Question 4: How frequently do you shop at this hypermarket?



Analysis: The most common frequency of shopping is once or twice a month, reported by 52 respondents (42.6%). Another 36 respondents (29.5%) visit once a week and 10 (8.2%) more than once a week, while 18 (14.8%) shop occasionally and only 6 (4.9%) were on their first visit. Therefore, 116 respondents (95.1%) are return visitors, which makes their opinions about the layout of goods, assortment and service quality well informed.

Response	Count	Percentage
Once or twice a month	52	42.6%
Once a week	36	29.5%
Occasionally	18	14.8%
More than once a week	10	8.2%
This is my first visit	6	4.9%

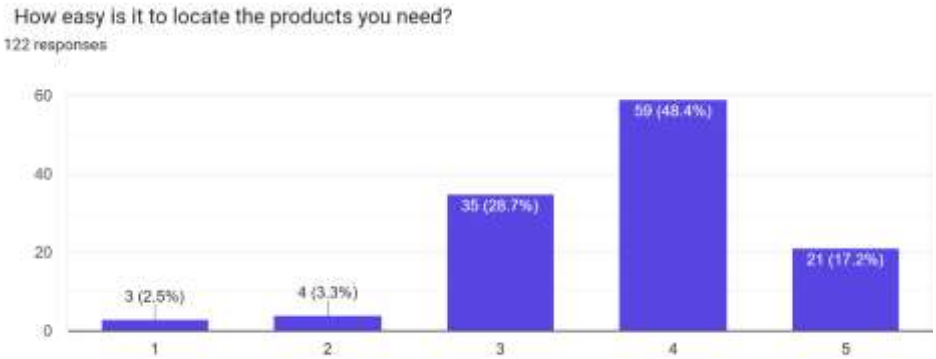
Question 5: What is your main reason for shopping at this hypermarket?



Analysis: Respondents could select more than one reason, so the table lists the most frequent answer combinations. The most common single answers are Product variety (9 respondents, 7.4%) and Affordable prices (8 respondents, 6.6%), and these two reasons also appear in most of the frequent combinations. The option-wise chart above (based on 59 responses to this question) confirms this pattern: Product variety was selected by 28 respondents (47.5%), Affordable prices by 27 (45.8%), Discounts and offers and Convenient location by 21 each (35.6%), One-stop shopping by 18 (30.5%) and Quality of products by 15 (25.4%). Because respondents could choose multiple reasons, the percentages add up to more than 100%. The data shows that customers weigh several factors, mainly variety and price, rather than just one.

Response	Count	Percentage
Product variety	9	7.4%
Affordable prices	8	6.6%
Discounts and offers	6	4.9%
Product variety; Quality of products	6	4.9%
Convenient location	5	4.1%
Affordable prices; Discounts and offers	4	3.3%
Quality of products; One-stop shopping	4	3.3%
Other	4	3.3%
Affordable prices; Discounts and offers; Product variety	4	3.3%
Product variety; One-stop shopping	4	3.3%
Product variety; Convenient location	4	3.3%
Affordable prices; Discounts and offers; One-stop shopping	3	2.5%

Question 6: How easy is it to locate the products you need?

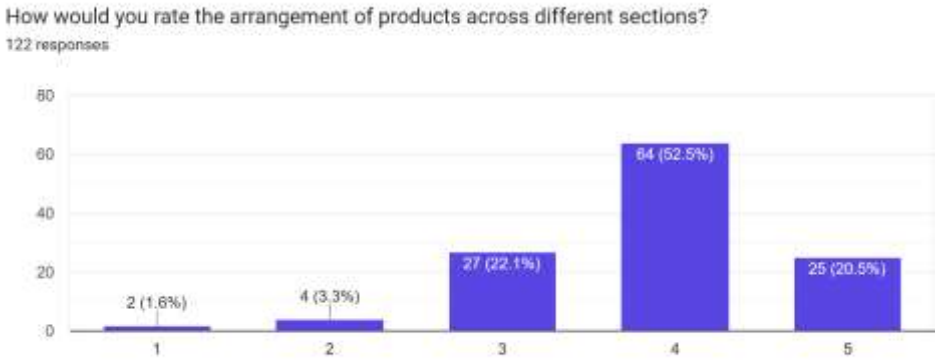


Analysis: Out of 122 respondents, 80 respondents (65.6%) selected options 4 and 5, 35 respondents (28.7%) selected option 3, and 7 respondents (5.7%) selected options 1 and 2. The survey results indicate that most respondents can find products without much difficulty. However, there is also a considerable middle group who do not find the ease of finding products very high. Better

arrangement and more informative category tags could be implemented to help customers find what they are looking for more easily, especially when they know exactly what they want to find.

Response	Count	Percentage
1	3	2.5%
2	4	3.3%
3	35	28.7%
4	59	48.4%
5	21	17.2%

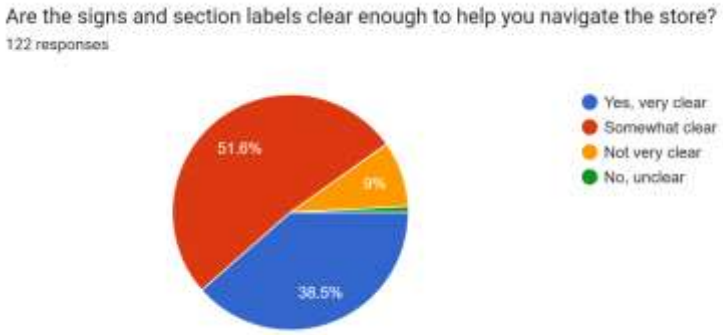
Question 7: How would you rate the arrangement of products across different sections?



Analysis: 89 out of 122 participants (73.0%) scored either 4 or 5, which shows a clearly positive impression of the product arrangement. 27 participants (22.1%) scored 3 and 6 participants (4.9%) scored 1 or 2. The scores are concentrated at 4, with a sizeable middle group, which suggests that while most are satisfied with the general product arrangement, there is room for improvement. Keeping items in clear sections and placing products that go together near each other might improve the overall experience.

Response	Count	Percentage
1	2	1.6%
2	4	3.3%
3	27	22.1%
4	64	52.5%
5	25	20.5%

Question 8: Are the signs and section labels clear enough to help you navigate the store?

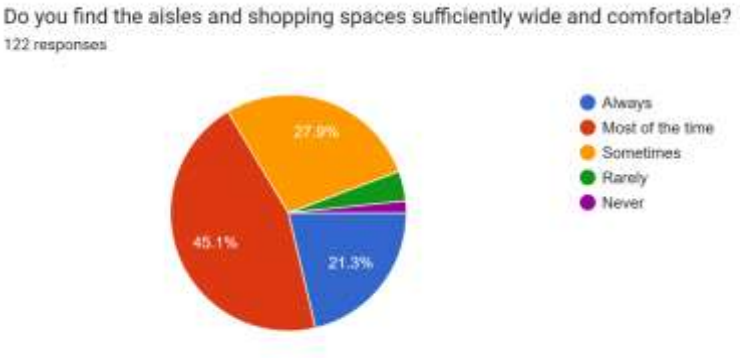


Analysis: 110 out of 122 respondents (90.2%) chose “Yes, very clear” or “Somewhat clear”, compared to 12 (9.8%) who chose “Not very clear” or “No, unclear”. However, the largest group, 63 respondents (51.6%), found the signs only “Somewhat clear”,

while 47 (38.5%) found them "Very clear". The signage therefore works for most customers, but making the signs more prominent and standardized would help customers find sections without effort.

Response	Count	Percentage
Somewhat clear	63	51.6%
Yes, very clear	47	38.5%
Not very clear	11	9.0%
No, unclear	1	0.8%

Question 9: Do you find the aisles and shopping spaces sufficiently wide and comfortable?



Analysis: 81 out of 122 respondents (66.4%) chose "Always" or "Most of the time", while 34 (27.9%) chose "Sometimes" and 7 respondents (5.7%) chose "Rarely" or "Never". The highest frequency is "Most of the time" (55, 45.1%), followed by "Sometimes". The aisles therefore appear satisfactory for the majority of customers. However, it may be essential to ensure proper clearance for trolleys and check whether customers can pass comfortably during peak hours.

Response	Count	Percentage
Most of the time	55	45.1%
Sometimes	34	27.9%
Always	26	21.3%
Rarely	5	4.1%
Never	2	1.6%

Question 10: How easy is it to move around the store during busy hours?



Analysis: 75 out of 122 respondents (61.5%) chose "Very easy" or "Easy", 38 (31.1%) chose "Neither easy nor difficult" and 9 (7.4%) selected "Difficult" or "Very difficult". Most respondents find moving around easy or very easy, but the large neutral group indicates that movement during busy hours is not equally convenient for everyone. Keeping promotional stands and stock away from the main path could help keep the way clear when the store is busy.

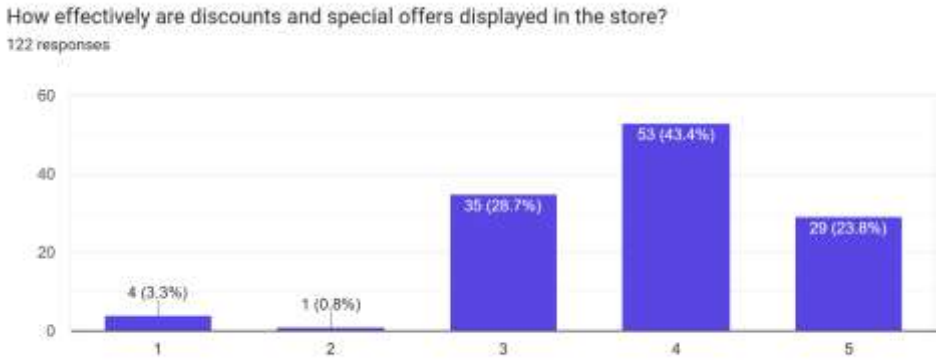
Response	Count	Percentage
Easy	51	41.8%
Neither easy nor difficult	38	31.1%
Very easy	24	19.7%
Difficult	6	4.9%
Very difficult	3	2.5%

Question 11: Do product displays and promotional signs attract your attention while shopping?

Analysis: 85 out of 122 respondents (69.7%) chose "Very often" or "Often", 30 (24.6%) chose "Sometimes" and only 7 (5.7%) selected "Rarely" or "Never". This implies that in-store displays are effective in attracting the attention of consumers and guiding their focus towards products and promotions. However, the share of respondents who answered "Sometimes" shows there is still room for improvement in this area.

Response	Count	Percentage
Often	49	40.2%
Very often	36	29.5%
Sometimes	30	24.6%
Rarely	5	4.1%
Never	2	1.6%

Question 12: How effectively are discounts and special offers displayed in the store?



Analysis: 82 out of 122 respondents (67.2%) selected a rating of 4 or 5, while 35 (28.7%) selected 3 and 5 (4.1%) selected 1 or 2. The majority of ratings fall at 4 or 5, indicating that discounts and special offers are generally easy to notice. At the same time, the middle ratings show room to improve consistency. Clear price labels, offer conditions and display placement can help customers understand promotions before reaching the checkout.

Response	Count	Percentage
1	4	3.3%
2	1	0.8%
3	35	28.7%
4	53	43.4%
5	29	23.8%

Question 13: Do the lighting and overall atmosphere make shopping comfortable?

Analysis: 85 out of 122 respondents (69.7%) selected a rating of 4 or 5, while 33 (27.0%) selected 3 and 4 (3.3%) selected 1 or 2. Most respondents give a positive rating to the lighting and overall atmosphere, while very few give the lowest ratings. This indicates that the store environment is generally comfortable for the sample. Maintaining adequate lighting throughout the store is important because it helps customers inspect products and move around comfortably.

Response	Count	Percentage
1	2	1.6%
2	2	1.6%
3	33	27.0%
4	56	45.9%
5	29	23.8%

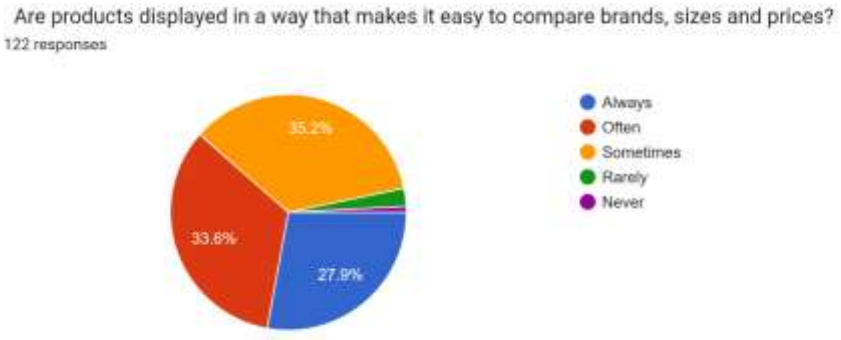
Question 14: How would you rate the store's ambience, cleanliness, temperature and ventilation?

Analysis: 79 out of 122 respondents (64.8%) chose a grade of 4 or 5, while 36 (29.5%) selected 3 and 7 (5.7%) chose 1 or 2. The grade distribution is concentrated in scores 4 and 5, which implies that most respondents were satisfied with the store's ambience

and conditions. Still, the middle scores suggest that the overall rating was not perfect. Checking cleanliness, air temperature and flow on a regular basis will ensure a high standard of shopping experience.

Response	Count	Percentage
1	3	2.5%
2	4	3.3%
3	36	29.5%
4	51	41.8%
5	28	23.0%

Question 15: Are products displayed in a way that makes it easy to compare brands, sizes and prices?



Analysis: 75 out of 122 respondents (61.5%) selected “Always” or “Often”, compared with 4 (3.3%) who selected “Rarely” or “Never”. Most respondents say product presentation makes comparison possible often or always, although the largest single group selected “Sometimes.” This indicates that comparison is reasonably supported but may not be consistent across all product categories. Grouping similar products and displaying prices clearly can make it easier to compare alternatives and make informed choices.

Response	Count	Percentage
Sometimes	43	35.2%
Often	41	33.6%
Always	34	27.9%
Rarely	3	2.5%
Never	1	0.8%

Question 16: How satisfied are you with product availability, variety, including whether your preferred brands and sizes are in stock?

Analysis: 81 out of 122 respondents (66.4%) chose a rating of 4 or 5, 35 (28.7%) selected 3 and 6 (4.9%) chose 1 or 2. Most respondents therefore rate product availability and variety positively, which means the store offers a satisfactory selection. The number of middle ratings may indicate that preferred brands or sizes are sometimes out of stock, so it is important to monitor shortages and replenish the products that are in demand.

Response	Count	Percentage
1	2	1.6%
2	4	3.3%
3	35	28.7%
4	54	44.3%
5	27	22.1%

Question 17: How often do you find the products you intended to purchase in stock?

Analysis: 78 out of 122 respondents (63.9%) selected “Almost always” or “Often”, compared with 5 (4.1%) who selected “Rarely” or “Almost never”. Most respondents find intended products in stock almost always or often, while only a small number select rarely

or almost never. This is a positive indication of perceived availability. However, the "Sometimes" responses show that availability is not guaranteed for every shopping trip, making regular replenishment important.

Response	Count	Percentage
Often	44	36.1%
Sometimes	39	32.0%
Almost always	34	27.9%
Rarely	4	3.3%
Almost never	1	0.8%

Question 18: How would you rate the prices compared with other supermarkets you shop at?

Analysis: 44 respondents (36.1%) consider prices about the same as other supermarkets. A further 54 (44.3%) view prices as more affordable (35 somewhat and 19 much more affordable), whereas 20 (16.4%) consider them more expensive and 4 (3.3%) were unable to compare. In total, 98 respondents (80.3%) see the prices as the same or lower than elsewhere. The store is therefore seen as competitively priced by most respondents, but affordability is not experienced equally by all shoppers.

Response	Count	Percentage
About the same	44	36.1%
Somewhat more affordable	35	28.7%
Much more affordable	19	15.6%
Somewhat more expensive	17	13.9%
Unable to compare	4	3.3%
Much more expensive	3	2.5%

Question 19: How often do discounts, combo offers or promotional schemes influence what you buy?

Analysis: 70 out of 122 respondents (57.4%) selected "Very often" or "Often", compared with 11 (9.0%) who selected "Rarely" or "Never". A large share of respondents say promotions influence their purchases often or very often, while many others say sometimes. This suggests that discounts and combo offers are relevant to purchasing decisions for much of this sample. Clear communication of savings and offer conditions may help customers evaluate promotions and plan their purchases.

Response	Count	Percentage
Often	42	34.4%
Sometimes	41	33.6%
Very often	28	23.0%
Rarely	9	7.4%
Never	2	1.6%

Question 20: How would you rate the billing and checkout experience?

Analysis: 82 out of 122 responses (67.2%) are graded as "Good" or "Excellent", 23 (18.9%) as "Average" and 7 (5.7%) as "Poor" or "Very poor". The distribution peaks at "Good" (53, 43.4%), followed by "Excellent" (29, 23.8%). However, ten responses (8.2%) are recorded as "Multiple choice", which is a data entry or export error and not a satisfaction level. Excluding these, 82 of the 112 valid ratings (73.2%) are "Good" or "Excellent". Overall, the checkout experience is rated positively, but the ten unclear responses should be checked against the original form.

Response	Count	Percentage
Good	53	43.4%
Excellent	29	23.8%
Average	23	18.9%
Multiple choice	10	8.2%
Very poor	4	3.3%
Poor	3	2.5%

Question 21: Overall, how satisfied are you with your shopping experience at this hypermarket?

Analysis: 82 out of 122 respondents (67.2%) selected a rating of 4 or 5, while 34 (27.9%) selected 3 and 6 (4.9%) selected 1 or 2. Most respondents selected 4 or 5 for the overall satisfaction while only a few selected 1 or 2. This suggests that the overall experience

is favourable to most of the respondents. The middle ratings indicate that there is room for making the experience consistently satisfying by addressing the practical issues such as navigation, stock availability and checkout.

Response	Count	Percentage
1	3	2.5%
2	3	2.5%
3	34	27.9%
4	55	45.1%
5	27	22.1%

Question 22: How likely are you to recommend this hypermarket to friends or family?

Analysis: 86 out of 122 respondents (70.5%) chose a score of 4 or 5, 34 (27.9%) chose 3, and only 2 (1.6%) chose the lowest score; nobody chose 2. The most common score was 4 (50, 41.0%), followed by 5 (36, 29.5%), which shows that many customers would be willing to recommend the store. However, more than a quarter of respondents gave a neutral score of 3, so the store needs to improve its overall performance to turn these neutral customers into active promoters.

Response	Count	Percentage
1	2	1.6%
3	34	27.9%
4	50	41.0%
5	36	29.5%

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The survey results suggest that the participants generally have a positive perception of the store's product organization, navigation, promotions, and overall experience. For instance, 80 respondents (65.6%) rated the product location at 4 or 5, while 89 (73.0%) gave the same scores to the organization of the products.

Most participants also report positively on the signage and ease of movement in the store, although less strongly. 110 respondents (90.2%) find the signs at least somewhat clear, but the largest group (63, 51.6%) rate them only "Somewhat clear". Similarly, 75 respondents (61.5%) state that moving around during busy hours is easy or very easy, while 38 (31.1%) are neutral. This noticeable "middle" category appears in most questions, suggesting that the customer experience should be improved to keep it consistently positive.

It is also noteworthy that the majority of respondents find promotions relevant and effective. 85 participants (69.7%) state that displays and promotional signs attract their attention very often or often, 82 (67.2%) rate the display of discounts and offers at 4 or 5, and 70 (57.4%) say that discounts and combo offers influence their purchases very often or often. Therefore, the store should continue its price offers and make sure customers can easily find the best deals.

The participants have mostly positive views concerning product availability and the store environment. 81 respondents (66.4%) rate availability and variety at 4 or 5 and 78 (63.9%) find intended products in stock almost always or often, while 85 (69.7%) rate the lighting and atmosphere and 79 (64.8%) the ambience and cleanliness at 4 or 5. As with other aspects, the middle scores are significant, which implies room for improvement. The store should keep shelves consistently filled with the goods customers want, and the largest group on product comparison (43, 35.2%) answered only "Sometimes", so clearer grouping and price display would help customers choose between products.

The overall assessment of the store's prices is positive: 98 respondents (80.3%) state that prices are lower than or the same as other supermarkets, including 54 (44.3%) who find them more affordable. Still, 20 participants (16.4%) consider the prices somewhat or much more expensive than in other stores.

The general opinion of the customers concerning overall satisfaction and willingness to recommend the store is positive as well: 82 respondents (67.2%) rate their overall satisfaction at 4 or 5, and 86 (70.5%) give a 4 or 5 for recommending the store. However, 34 respondents (27.9%) gave a neutral score of 3 on each of these questions. The management should address the weak points that hold these customers back, for example by analysing the customer journey, to increase loyalty and provide a consistently positive experience.

These results are consistent with earlier research. The positive response to displays and promotional signs supports evidence that in-store displays draw attention and drive unplanned purchases (Chevalier, 1975; Inman et al., 2009), and the favourable ratings for lighting and atmosphere agree with studies showing that ambient conditions shape store evaluations (Areni & Kim, 1994; Baker et al., 2002). At the same time, the large neutral group on signage and on movement during busy hours suggests that the spatial layout and functionality described by Bitner (1992) work less well at peak times.

SUGGESTIONS

- Ensure that there are clear signs on different sections and products to help customers navigate the store.
- Create more space in the aisles to help avoid congestion, especially during peak hours.
- Make sure that promotional messages and prices are visible and easy to read.
- Display goods in a manner that makes it easy for customers to compare similar products, including brands and sizes.
- Keep track of the most popular items and ensure their stock is visible.
- Take customer feedback and use it to check the least attractive sections and monitor changes over time.

LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- The analysis is based on a dataset of 122 responses, so the findings should not automatically be generalised to all customers.
- The questionnaire uses fixed response options, which may not capture every reason behind a respondent's opinion.
- The study focuses on a single hypermarket in the Mumbai Suburban region, and the results may differ at other store locations.
- The analysis identifies patterns in responses but does not establish that a particular store feature directly causes a change in purchasing behaviour.
- Future research could use a larger and more representative sample that includes more older shoppers and non-students.
- Comparative studies across several outlets of the same chain or competing supermarkets, using inferential statistics, could test whether specific store features influence satisfaction and purchase behaviour.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how a hypermarket in the Mumbai Suburban region uses store design, space management, visual merchandising and store atmosphere, and how its customers rate the shopping experience. Observation shows a value-oriented store: a grid layout with wide aisles, clear price communication through yellow price tags, bilingual signage, bulk displays and seasonal theme displays under bright, even lighting.

The survey of 122 respondents shows that customers are broadly satisfied. Between 65.6% and 73.0% of respondents rate the ease of locating products, product arrangement, display of offers, lighting and atmosphere, and overall satisfaction at 4 or 5, and 80.3% consider prices the same as or lower than at other supermarkets. However, a consistent neutral group across most questions shows that the experience is not yet uniformly positive, particularly for signage clarity, movement during busy hours and stock availability. Addressing these areas would help the store turn satisfied but neutral shoppers into loyal customers. As the findings are based on a young, largely student sample at a single store, they should be read as indicative.

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