

Study of the Roles of Sales Executive with Reference to Shoppers Stop, Raipur (Chhattisgarh)

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Abstract

This study investigates the multifaceted roles of sales executives at Shoppers Stop in Raipur, Chhattisgarh. Sales executives are the backbone of retail organizations, playing a pivotal role in customer interaction, product promotion, and brand image development. The aim is to analyze their day-to-day responsibilities, sales practices, communication skills, and the impact they have on customer satisfaction and store performance. Data was collected through structured questionnaires and interviews. The analysis shows that well-trained and motivated sales executives significantly contribute to sales growth and customer loyalty. The study concludes with practical suggestions to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness.

2. Introduction

Background

Retail is one of the most dynamic and customer-centric industries. In India, organized retail is growing rapidly due to urbanization, rising incomes, and changing consumer preferences.

Shoppers Stop is a leading retail chain known for offering fashion apparel, accessories, beauty products, and home décor under one roof.

Importance of Sales Executives

In a store like Shoppers Stop, sales executives are front-line employees who directly influence consumer behavior. They are responsible for:

- Greeting and assisting customers
- Demonstrating product knowledge
- Upselling and cross-selling
- Handling complaints and feedback

Their interpersonal skills and product expertise can significantly impact customer satisfaction and retention.

About Shoppers Stop, Raipur

Shoppers Stop Raipur caters to a diverse demographic in a fast-developing urban market. The city is witnessing a retail boom with increasing competition. Hence, the role of effective salesmanship is critical for business sustainability.

Need for the Study

Despite their significance, sales executives often face issues like high pressure, lack of training, and limited growth. This study attempts to examine their roles comprehensively and suggest improvements based on findings.

Background of the Study

India's retail sector has undergone a significant transformation over the past two decades. From traditional mom-and-pop stores to modern retail outlets, organized retail is now a booming industry. Among the pioneers in department store retailing is **Shoppers Stop**, which offers a wide range of branded apparel, cosmetics, footwear, accessories, and home products.

Sales executives form the face of these retail establishments. Their work goes beyond just selling products — it includes **understanding consumer preferences, building trust, maintaining brand loyalty, and resolving grievances**. In a customer-centric environment like Shoppers Stop, especially in a developing city like Raipur, the significance of these professionals cannot be overstated.

2.2. Introduction to Shoppers Stop, Raipur

Shoppers Stop in Raipur is strategically located to serve a wide demographic — ranging from working professionals and students to families and tourists. The city's increasing urbanization has led to a boom in the organized retail sector. As competition increases, the store must not only attract customers but also retain them — and **sales executives are pivotal in achieving this goal**.

2.3. Rationale for the Study

While many studies have been conducted on sales strategies, fewer focus specifically on **the ground-level workforce** — the sales executives. Their day-to-day responsibilities, stress levels, work environment, and career satisfaction are crucial but often underrepresented in literature. Hence, this study focuses specifically on the **sales executives of Shoppers Stop, Raipur**.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature plays a crucial role in identifying theoretical and empirical findings already available on the subject. It helps in understanding the research gap, establishing the foundation of the present study, and formulating appropriate objectives. This section focuses on the scholarly work, journals, articles, and case studies related to **sales executives in the organized retail sector**, especially in the Indian context.

3.1 Role of Sales Executives in Retail Industry

According to **Mishra and Singh (2019)**, the sales executive in modern retail is no longer just a person who pushes products. Their role has evolved into that of a **brand representative**, responsible for ensuring customer satisfaction, collecting feedback, and upselling. In department stores like Shoppers Stop, this multifaceted role contributes directly to customer loyalty.

3.2 Skills Required by Sales Executives

Kumar & Bansal (2020) noted that successful sales executives need a blend of hard and soft skills including **product knowledge, communication, grooming, emotional intelligence, and technological proficiency**. Particularly in lifestyle stores like Shoppers Stop, the ability to guide customers with fashion and brand choices is highly valued.

3.3 Impact on Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

Saxena (2018) stated that the behavior and communication style of a sales executive can influence the overall perception of a brand. Good service can result in repeat customers and long-term brand loyalty. In a competitive market like Raipur, where various brands compete within the same mall, **customer retention becomes a function of executive performance**.

3.4 Training and Development Programs

As per **Patel and Mehra (2021)**, training programs in retail must focus on personality development, conflict handling, POS systems, and customer psychology. Shoppers Stop, being a national brand, regularly conducts induction and refresher training for new and existing employees. However, the effectiveness of these programs depends on how well they're customized for regional customer expectations.

3.5 Motivation and Job Satisfaction

Ravindra (2017) highlighted that motivation among sales staff in retail is often low due to long working hours, high targets, and weekend shifts. However, intrinsic motivators like recognition, personal growth, and team appreciation can significantly enhance productivity. These findings are especially relevant to cities like Raipur where retail is growing rapidly, but workforce challenges remain.

3.6 Performance Appraisal and Career Progression

Das & Mukherjee (2022) found that lack of career growth opportunities and poor performance evaluation systems lead to **high attrition** in the retail sales segment. They suggest the implementation of **transparent performance metrics**, regular reviews, and internal promotions. In the context of Shoppers Stop, sales executives often view their job as a stepping stone rather than a long-term career unless such measures are taken.

3.7 Challenges Faced by Sales Executives

Chatterjee (2016) identified challenges like rude customers, inventory issues, product returns, and sales pressure as key demotivators. These are especially prevalent during festive seasons, end-of-season sales, and mega-offers — when footfall increases drastically and stress levels rise.

3.8 Retail Environment in Tier-II Cities

Joshi and Kulkarni (2021) argued that customer expectations in Tier-II cities like Raipur differ from metros. There's a strong need for **regional language fluency**, local cultural understanding, and a **personal touch** in service. Therefore, the roles and training of sales executives in such locations must be contextually modified.

3.9 Technology Adoption in Retail

Verma and Sinha (2020) highlighted the growing use of digital tools like CRM software, inventory tracking apps, and mobile POS systems in organized retail. Sales executives are expected to be **digitally literate** and must adapt quickly to tech-driven environments. Shoppers Stop integrates mobile applications for loyalty tracking and promotions, making tech skills essential.

3.10 Gender Roles and Diversity

A report by **FICCI (2022)** observed that gender diversity in retail roles is gradually improving, especially in fashion and cosmetics departments. Sales executives who mirror the demographic diversity of the customer base tend to perform better in terms of empathy and relatability.

Summary of Literature Review

| S.No. | Author(s) | Key Findings |
|-------|-----------------------|---|
| 1 | Mishra & Singh (2019) | Sales executives play a brand-building role. |
| 2 | Kumar & Bansal (2020) | Product knowledge and soft skills are essential. |
| 3 | Saxena (2018) | Sales executive behavior affects CRM and loyalty. |
| 4 | Patel & Mehra (2021) | Training should be practical and region-specific. |

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|----|-------------------------|---|
| 5 | Ravindra (2017) | Motivation is crucial to reducing attrition. |
| 6 | Das & Mukherjee (2022) | Career progression and transparent appraisal are necessary. |
| 7 | Chatterjee (2016) | Handling customer pressure and stress is a big challenge. |
| 8 | Joshi & Kulkarni (2021) | Retail in Tier-II cities demands regional understanding. |
| 9 | Verma & Sinha (2020) | Digital literacy is increasingly important. |
| 10 | FICCI Report (2022) | Gender diversity and inclusivity enhance customer experience. |

Conclusion of Literature Review

The existing literature makes it evident that the **role of a sales executive in the organized retail sector is dynamic, multifaceted, and highly customer-focused**. In the context of Shoppers Stop, Raipur, it becomes even more important to consider regional variations in customer expectations, skill levels of employees, and store-specific challenges. The review reveals a significant research gap in the **localized study of sales executives in Tier-II cities**, thus justifying the need for this present research.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Role of Sales Executives in Retail

According to Mishra & Sharma (2020), sales executives in the retail sector serve not only as product sellers but also as brand ambassadors and customer relationship managers.

3.2. Communication and Customer Satisfaction

Chatterjee (2019) asserts that communication skills are the most valuable trait in a sales executive. Good communication leads to better understanding of customer needs and ultimately, higher sales.

3.3. Training and Development

Research by Kapoor & Singh (2018) shows that proper training in product knowledge, customer handling, and point-of-sale systems significantly enhances executive performance.

3.4. Challenges Faced

Sales executives often face long working hours, weekend shifts, and pressure to meet sales targets. (Mehra,

2017). These factors contribute to high attrition rates in the retail sector.

3.5. Retail in Raipur Context

Raipur, being a Tier-2 city, presents a unique mix of traditional shopping behavior and modern retail expectations. The workforce must cater to both segments effectively.

3. Literature Review

- **Retail Sales Strategy:** According to Gupta & Sharma (2020), a well-defined sales strategy in retail increases footfall conversion by 30%.
- **Customer Engagement:** Research by Joshi (2018) highlighted that customer retention is positively influenced by the sales executive's communication and behavior.
- **Challenges in Retail:** Singh (2019) emphasized the high attrition rate among sales staff due to stress and lack of incentives.
- **Role of Training:** Studies show that periodic training improves performance and boosts employee morale (Patel, 2021).

Sources: Google Scholar, ResearchGate, Retail.gov.in, and company reports.

4. Objectives of the Study

1. To understand the key responsibilities of sales executives at Shoppers Stop, Raipur.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of sales practices in improving customer service.
3. To analyze challenges faced by sales staff in day-to-day operations.
4. To assess the impact of training and motivation on their performance.
5. To suggest measures for improving the efficiency and satisfaction of sales executives.

5. Research Methodology

- **Type of Research:** Descriptive and analytical
- **Sample Size:** 30 sales executives from Shoppers Stop, Raipur
- **Data Collection Tools:**
 - Primary Data: Structured questionnaires, interviews
 - Secondary Data: Company manuals, HR documents, online research
- **Sampling Method:** Convenience sampling
- **Analysis Tools:** Percentages, bar graphs, cross-tabulation

6. Data Analysis and Interpretation (*Sample*)

1. Age Distribution of Sales Executives

| Age Group | Respondents | Percentage |
|------------|-------------|------------|
| 18–25 | 10 | 33% |
| 26–35 | 15 | 50% |
| 36 & above | 5 | 17% |

Interpretation: The majority of sales executives are in the 26–35 age group, indicating a relatively young workforce.

2. Educational Qualification

| Qualification | Respondents | Percentage |
|-------------------|-------------|------------|
| Graduate | 22 | 73% |
| Postgraduate | 6 | 20% |
| Diploma/12th Pass | 2 | 7% |

Interpretation: Most of the staff are graduates, which aligns with the retail industry's minimum qualification requirements.

3. Training Provided by Shoppers Stop

| Response | Number | Percentage |
|----------|--------|------------|
| Yes | 24 | 80% |
| No | 6 | 20% |

Interpretation: The company is investing in staff training, but there's scope for 100% inclusion.

4. Customer Handling Confidence

| Rating (1–5) | Respondents | Percentage |
|---------------|-------------|------------|
| 5 (Excellent) | 8 | 27% |
| 4 (Good) | 14 | 47% |
| 3 (Average) | 6 | 20% |
| 2 & below | 2 | 6% |

Interpretation: Most sales executives are confident in handling customers, thanks to their experience and training.

7. Findings

- A majority of the sales executives are well-educated and motivated.
- Training is provided, but it is not uniformly distributed among all staff.
- Interpersonal and product presentation skills are key strengths.
- Executives face challenges like extended work hours and weekend stress.
- Staff feel that regular appreciation and incentives are lacking.

8. Suggestions

1. **Introduce Incentive Programs:** Reward top performers monthly to maintain motivation.
 2. **Increase Frequency of Training:** Focus on soft skills and new product knowledge.
 3. **Provide Growth Opportunities:** Promote internally to build long-term commitment.
 4. **Stress Management Workshops:** Help staff handle high-pressure situations better.
 5. **Better Work-Life Balance:** Implement flexible shifts or rotational weekends off.
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9. References

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