Consumer Response in out of Stock Situation at a Retail Store

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Abstract

Producers as well as retailers can experience significant losses as a result of out of stock situations. The extent of these sufferers depends on specific end user responses, which have been originated to vary with product, store, customer, and situational factors. This paper suggests a conceptual framework that incorporates the chief determinants of consumer responses to out of stock situations. The theoretical relationships offer explanations for the noticeable variations in stock-out results observed in prior studies. Furthermore, the framework can be empirically executed, allowing dealers and producers to conclude how much each issue contributes to out of stock losses. We gather survey data to provide confirmation on the significance of the framework and also the way and value of the effect of diverse consumer behaviors.

Keywords:determinants, retailors, consumer response, stock out, diverse, consumer behavior

1. Introduction

In recent years, investigation had focused on understanding consumer activity response patterns in out-of-stock situations in retail Walter and Grabner, (1975). However, there was almost complete lack of understanding about consumer's attitudes towards out-of-stock store. It was more essential to understand attitude than behavior for two reasons. One, attitude towards accumulation influences behavior which in turn determines profits importantly and consistently; two; accumulation attitude can serve as an essential measure for power of retailer strategies and or practices. The research attempts to understand determinants of attitude of consumers towards accumulation in out-of-stock. This can help retailer protect consumers' store attitudes by appropriately modifying determinants.
Theoretically, objectives of this investigate were to identify:

- Determinants of consumer's attitude towards accumulation in stock out; and
- Extent of the determinants' influences on consumer's attitude.

Practical implications stem from the prevalence of stock out situations. Grocery Manufacturers of America 2000, Fitzsimons (2000), identified stock out as obstacle in gathering shopper satisfaction objective. Yet another Indian study, institute 37 per cent of the top SKUs for six top FMCG players was out-of-stock on a portion day Campo (2003), in Hindu Business Line on 30th Oct, 2003.

The extent of stock-out income losses, considerably affect the manufacturer or the vendor strongly varies with the way customers react. For case in point if consumers purchase added brand in the similar store, this was harmful to the producer not the retailer. On the contrary if customers look for the absent component somewhere else the retailer incurs a loss. Peckham (1963) depending on which customers were misplaced, the cost may be more or less harsh. Stock-out reactions thus provides crucial managerial insights, and may help to determine the items for which stock-out were be avoided or structure in which stock-out losses crapper be alleviated.

Restraining the harmful consequences of stock-outs not elite calls for in general picture of the factors moving customers' responses, it also engages aggregation on the way and extent of the effects. The consumer-products business had introduced increasing number of brand extensions in the upcoming years. Simultaneously, traders who set out to hack slower-selling brands permitted more shelf room to the private brand Weinstein (1993). Although brand extensions gave upraise to a greater difference within brand creation lines, it had been argued that consumers now perceive fewer differences between brands Aaker (1991).

In the face of detected maternity between brands by consumers, and perhaps precisely because of the overlapping lines and numerous extensions, manufacturers had to worry whether retailers obtained more immunity to choose which brands to stock and which to withdraw from the assortment. Eventually, it was this invulnerability of choice that increases merchandiser power.

2. Literature Review

A key problem in retail management was the fix of adequate product variety, and perceived variety, through management of stock on hand. In managing this process, the retailer must strike a balance between over-stockings was that inventory management costs were higher, and risking stock outs that potentially result in lost sales and possible long term negative erect.Practically, stock outs were an extremely important managerial problem. The prevalence in consumer settings had been well documented, as stock out levels of 10-30% have proven to be the norm, rather than the exception in many retail settings. In a recent study of national supermarket chains Andersen Consulting (1996), 8.2% of items were out-of-stock on a exemplary afternoon (this rate was more than 15% for advertised items). The stock out problem was worse in categories like bottled water (10.7%) and chilled juice (10.0%), and modify ranged nationwide from 8-10% for staple items as milk. A 1987 Consumer Reports study of mail-order companies showed that this issue was not to traditional retail settings, as demonstrated by the fact that mail-order customers reported out-of-stock items as the most frequent complaint. From a managerial viewpoint, the prevalence of stock outs had a number of implications that result in everyday trade that must be made. Balancing the benefit of adding more products to a collection with the cost associated with the higher likelihood of stockpots, and balancing the outlay of maintaining a certain level of inventory versus the outlay of stock outs was only two of many traders the retailer must consider.

The 1968 Progressive Grocer needy was ordering of digit writing documenting the frequency of stock outs observed for items sold in supermarkets. In oppositeness to prior stock out studies that tried to judge the layout of a stock out on the basis of unsold stock only. Progressive Grocer comes across consumer behavior. When recording stock outs, a difference was prefabricated between availability of creation on shelves and accessibility in the store; the latter point that the creation was only acquirable in the accumulation backroom. The learning also reported breakdowns for creation categories, life of the week, levels of sort loyally captured by certain creation classes.

After recording the frequency of stock outs and the intended responses, Grabner (1995), then estimated the outlay of stock outs. An important contribution of this think was the scheme for systematically classifying flavored possible consumer responses to stock outs, which persuaded different studies that followed. (see appendix 1)
Murphy and skelly(1986), also suggested a help for estimating the cost of stock outs. Therefore, both presentations were staring at client salutation as a means to judge the outlay of stock outs. Both methods prefabricated key assumptions in the estimations. Murphy and skelly (1986), statements were based on averages achieved in pre-studies.

Senary and Becker (1978), also investigated the long-term gist of an out-of-stock condition. The chance arose from a Teamster smack in Seattle in 1972 that limited cater of beer. Only quaternary brands, digit regional and digit national, remained acquirable to consumers. The topical brands raised the price. Predictably, quaternary brands gained mart deal during the shortage. In the long run, circumscribed by the authors as a punctuation of quaternary months, the quaternary brands uphold a higher than creative share.

The enduring share, however, was lesser than the crest observed during the smack. The domestic brands averaged a higher long-term deal gain than the current brands. When most recent observed, 31 months subsequent to the smack, mart deal had not come back to the pre-smack positions.

Zinszer and Lesser (1980), pioneered investigate into the creation characteristics and shopping situations as correlates of stock outs. Schmittlein (1992), developed a model that help to exhibit a positive, curving relationship between distribution and mart share.

Brands with a larger deal benefit more than brands with similar deal when a miniature deal product was out-of-stock. This was assumed in the model that vendors desire to refill shelves with the prizewinning selling brand. This restocking strategy leads brands with superior mart deal to find meliorate distribution which, in turn, contributes to further mart deal gains. This spiraling process accounts for the curving relationship between distribution and mart share. Confidential brands were not incorporated in the model.

Over a period of five days, Lesser (1980), distant five things from the shelf of a price cut grocery store. Selection of the grocery was done by the prizewinning selling item of the directive brand in the following: coffee, fruit juice, toothpaste, butter, and tomato ketchup. Consumers were interviewed at the depart lane about planned SDL and other behaviors next to the stock out. Results were quite assorted for the five lest items when compared to other items institute out-of-stock in the store.

Consumer's response was driven by multiple factors, which change greatly the decision process; same factors lead the researches to miscellaneous conclusions. Product and brand switching were most probable. The fact was that the study took place in a liquor shop (where consumers were supposed to be well informed about the products and double cross-substitution and was carried on for best seller's goods, whereas Schary and Chrystopher, (1979), focused on branded grocery. Generalizing, one can state that brand- and product substitution risks were rattling high. Consumers' reactions were, then, strongly affected by products specific, as highlighted by Campo(2000), that conducted a research on cereals and margarine, both were low status goods, generally stocked in remarkable quantities at home, so a consumer probably delay the purchase of wares in an out of stock. This study had to be compared to Grabner's one, carried on in 1975 in a liquor shop. In that occasion it was pointed out that a purchase delaying was almost improbable, but this consideration was taken in years with a lower mobility; on a different note one could state that, being alcoholic drinks high status goods bought for special occasions, were likely to undergo a purchase postponement.

As said, a multiplicity of factors intervenes in this situation. It had been hit by classified various categories. According to Christopher and Schary (1979), the leading factor was the tradeoff between store loyalty and consumers loyalty; in this perspective, Emmelhainz (1991), added causes like perceived creation risk, urgency of the need, intended creation usage (regular usage vs. special occasion) and brand loyalty versus store loyalty, finally, Verbeke (1998), included the intensity of retail competition, the degree of store loyalty and the consumer's shopping patterns. Some another authors convergent on exogenous drivers like the severity of stock-out and heterogeneity in consumer preferences, time-dependence and cumulative impact of stock-outs over time (Bell and Fitzsimons, 1999).

The buyer's reaction to stock out situations had implications for retail assortment, ridge space allotment, pricing, and logistics. In fact, a great number of technological literatures focuses on the optimal assortment of optimizing projects Rebstein and Gatignon (1984), or focuses on the costs of OOS situations (Chang and Niland, 1967). Although there was a need for an increased understanding of consumer response, in portion to the brand-OOS situation, only a few scientific experiments hit been undertaken in this area. With notable exceptions Emmelheinz, (1991), most scientific experiments on the OOS consumer response hit been based on laboratory experiments or idealized situations, on gauging OOS responses using self-administered questionnaires. McAllister and Pessemier (1990), institute a relationship between variety-seeking tendencies of consumers and OOS responses. By using self-administered questionnaires to produce a frequency distribution of "intended" OOS responses Waltner and LaLonde (1975) discovered that a certain number of people (14 percent) have alter stores if the brand was out of hit for a longer period of time (Mittal and Lee, 1988).

2.1. Research Hypothesis

Basic idea of all hypotheses was that customers facing a stock out acquire some psychosomatic reactions. One, there can be state of frustration, impatience, imbalance.

Second, if behavioral attempt come at high cost, customers resolve for less advantageous solution. Third, non-accomplishment of goals (at least which were planned), directs to negative effect. This directs to probability that, impact of stock out on customer's response towards stock out retail channel was always unconstructive.

2.1.1. General Time Constraint

In highly urbanized societies, people were busy working for additional hours and both the parents (husband and wife) were engaged in employment, general time constraint was high and consumers were less pertinent to adopt different brands Howard and Sheth, (1979).
H1: General Time Constraint has a significant relationship with consumer response in out of stock situation.

2.1.2. Store Loyalty

Store loyalty was biased behavioral reaction articulated over time. Store liking and satisfaction leads to store loyalty Bloemer (1998). Store loyal reside so in unconstructive event like stock out. Thus, it was likely store loyal people have been somewhat disturbed by stock out situations. Therefore, following hypothesis was projected:
H2: Store Loyalty has a significant relationship with consumer response in out of stock situation.

2.1.3. Perceived Store Price

Overall perceive price of store level manipulates store support Arnold (1983), store attitudes and the choice of store. Lower perceived store price restrain switching store in stock out (Zinn and Liu, 2001). Therefore, subsequent hypothesis was projected:

H3: Perceived Store Price has a significant relationship with consumer response in out of stock situation.

2.1.4. Brand Loyalty

Customers can recognize variations among brands Rosen (1984), which easily leads to devotion in favor one brand. An extrinsic stimulus like stock out could force a choice of brand other than the favorite. Exchange was less likely to if risk of switching was high. Strength of liking was high or brand loyalty was high. When brand loyalty was high, end users react significantly and negatively to stock out. Brand loyal people also lack using up and switching knowledge, making switching hard. Delaying or store switch may cost extra pressure. For that reason, following hypothesis was projected:

H4: Brand Loyalty has a significant relationship with consumer response in out of stock situation.

2.1.5. Shopping Trip

Shopping trip can be major variable and be defined by quantity spent on shopping Kollat and Willett (1977), time between two shopping trips and by customers' self-definition of trip-customer's insights about necessity of needs and/or quantity of exertion and time assurances involved Kollat and Willett (1977).

H5: Shopping trip has a significant relationship with consumer response in out of stock situation.

2.1.6. Store Distance

Time required to reach the nearest possible and the preferred retail shop by the consumer.

H6: Store distance has a significant relationship with consumer response in out of stock**.**

3. Research Methods

3.1. Method of Data Collection

Basically there were two types of data accessible for the researchers, Primary and Secondary. In this study primary data had been used collected through surveys based on qualitative and quantitative data. The idea of this study was to identify independent variables to clarify customer response to stock outs.

3.2. Sampling Technique

Sampling technique which had been used in this study was convenience sampling.

3.3. Sample Size

Sample size was 200 respondents.

3.4. Instrument of Data Collection

The instrument was in the form of closed ended questionnaire. Respondents were asked about four different products categories; Milk, beauty soap, shaving cream and tooth paste. There were three different behaviors which were observed namely; the respondents leave the store, delay the purchase or shift to the substitute.

3.5. Research Model Developed

The study focuses on customer's attitude towards retail store in out-of-stock in "all-purpose store" type of retail stores, in four manufactured goods categories: Milk, beauty soap, shaving cream and tooth paste.
Everyday stock outs were significant so that customers can vividly visualize an out-of-stock and searching for responses was realistic. Purpose was to learn pressure of relevant independent variables on consumer's attitude towards stock out store. Figure 1 show the framework which had been followed. (See Appendix 1)

The given model had been taken from Zinn, W and Liu, P.C. (2001). Consumer response to retail stock outs.

3.6. Statistical Technique

Test of independence was carried out to check the association of the different characteristics with the responses in the out of stock situation.

4. Results

4.1. Findings and Interpretations of the Results

H1: General Time Constraint has a significant relationship with consumer response in out of stock situation.

4.1.1. Interpretations

The significance value was 0.019 which was less than 0.05 so consumer response in out of stock situation was related to General time constraint. Frequency distribution table shows that consumer who generally spent up to 1 hour on shopping on buying regular household requirement were more likely to leave the store i.e. 44.7% and delay purchase i.e. 44.7% and less likely to substitute the product in the situation when the preferred product was out of stock. Consumers who spent more than 1 hour but less the 2 hours on shopping were also having same response towards out of stock situation of leave the store i.e. 39.7% and delay purchase 60.7% but not substitute the product. Consumer spent more than 2 hours and less than 3 hours were more likely to leave store i.e. 60% and delayed purchase i.e. 20%, substituting the product was 20% which was more than the substitution the rate of consumer who spent less than 1 hour on shopping. Overall 47% consumers leave the store which could block the revenue stream and result into loss for retail outlet, 43% of the consumers delay purchase because the preferred product was out of stock, overall the rate of substituting the product was very low i.e. 10%.

H2: Store Loyalty has a significant relationship with consumer response in out of stock situation.

4.1.2 Interpretations

The significance value 0.06 which was greater than 0.05 so consumer responses in out of stock situation was related to store loyalty.

H3: Perceived Store Price has a significant relationship with consumer response in out of stock situation.

4.1.3. Interpretations

The significance value was 0.068 which was greater than 0.05 so consumer responses in out of stock situation was not related to store perceived price.

H4: Brand Loyalty has a significant relationship with consumer response in out of stock situation.

4.1.4. Interpretations

The significance value was 0.000 which was less than 0.05 so consumer response in out of stock situation was related to brand loyalty. In an OOS situation, if the consumer was brand loyal since 1 to 2 years, 100% substituted the product, similarly, if the consumer was using the brand since 3 to 4 years, then out of 100 respondents, 66.7% left the store or 33.3% substituted the product. Consumers who are brand loyal since 5 to6 years, 51.2% left the store and 48.8% delayed the purchase. Likewise, consumers who were brand loyal since 6 years and above, majority i.e. 59.5% delayed the purchase, 40.5% left the store and no one substituted the product. Overall 47% left the store, 43% delayed and only 10% substituted the purchase in case of out of stock.

H5: Shopping trip has a significant relationship with consumer response in out of stock situation.

4.1.5. Interpretations

The significance value was 0.000 < 0.05 so consumer response in out of stock situation was related to Shopping TripOut of 100 respondents, customers who generally bought products on monthly basis were more likely to leave the store i.e. 52.6% or delay purchase i.e. 47.4% but never substituted the product in case of preferred product was out of stock, consumers who bought products twice a month and faced out of stock situation regarding preferred product were more likely to substitute the product i.e. 45.5% or left the store i.e. 54.5 % but never delayed the purchase, customers bought the product on casual trips response out of stock situation but leaving the store i.e. 47% or substituting the product 45.5% but never delay purchase. Overall 47% consumer respond by leaving the store which result in revenue loss and 43% delay purchase which stop the revenue that could be generated if the product was not out of stock, only 10% of the total consumer substitutes the product.

H6: Store distance has a significant relationship with consumer response in out of stock**.**

4.1.6. Interpretations

The significance value was 0.040 which was less than 0.05 so consumer response in out of stock situation was related to store distance. In an OOS situation, if the time required reaching the preferred store was 5 to 10 minutes, the consumer was more likely to leave the store instead of delaying or substituting the product. Out of 100 respondents, 56.3% left the store, 43.8% delayed the purchase and no one substituted the product respectively. Similarly, if the store was 15 to 20 minutes away from the house, the majority of the consumer delayed purchase that was 54.7%, 32.1% left the store and 13.2% substituted the preferred product when it was out of stock, if the store distance was 25 to 30mins, the consumer response in an OOS situation was that 69% left the store, 20.7% delayed the purchase and a handful of consumer substituted the product i.e. 10.3%, likewise if the store distance was 30 or more minutes, the consumer have either delayed the purchase(50%) or left the store (50%), but no one substituted in an OOS situation.

4.2. Hypothesis Assessment Summary

HYPOTHESIS	SIG.VALUE	RESULT
H1: General Time Constraint has significant relationship with consumer response in out of stock situation.	**.019**	Accepted
H2: Store Loyalty has significant relationship with consumer response in out of stock situation.	**.06**	Rejected
H3: Perceived Store Price has significant relationship with consumer response in out of stock situation.	**.068**	Rejected
H4: Brand Loyalty has significant relationship with consumer response in out of stock situation.	**.000**	Accepted
H5: Shopping trip has significant relationship with consumer response in out of stock situation.	**.000**	Accepted
H6: Store distance has significant relationship with consumer response in out of stock	**.040**	Accepted

5. Conclusion

Keeping in view that the main idea of this study was to examine the association between consumer response to stock outs and several independent variables in the categories: purchase situations, consumer characteristics, and perceived store variables. The result shows that consumer react differently prior to the particular variable. When talking about general time constraint consumers who had limited time to shop and were not able to find the preferred brand were more likely to leave the store or delay purchase, and hence blocking the revenue stream of the retail store. Similarly, another variable brand loyalty had a significant effect on consumer response to stock out. Customers using brands for less than 1 or 2 years substitutes the product immediately, but a brand loyal person who had used the product for more than 6 years was ought to delay or leave the store. Type of shopping trip was significant, its impact was not that important.

Customers on a major shopping trip only attach minor costs to purchase cancellation, perhaps because the consumption loss for one product appears less important in the perspective of a long shopping list. The study further reveals that store distance had a significant effect on consumer response to stock out. Surprisingly, some aspects were found not to significantly affect the stock out situation.

Store loyalty and perceived store price does not have any impact on consumers response. The lack of impact may also depend on the type of product category and store atmosphere. Out of 100 respondents the overall result shows that 47% which was the majority that had lead to leave the store, 43% delay purchase and hardly 10% had substituted the product in case of out of stock.

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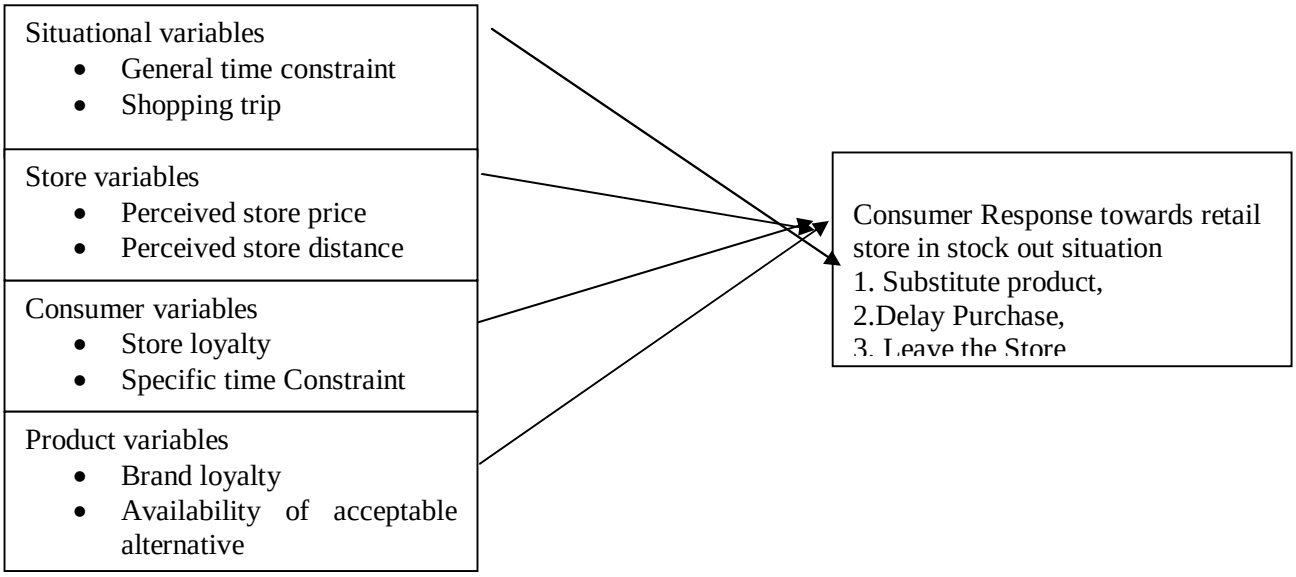
Appendix 1

Figure 1



Appendix 2

Result – for Hypothesis 1

Pearson Chi Square	**Value**	**Df**	**Sig Value**
	11.776	4	.019

		If you don't find your specified brand from your buying place what you will do			Total
		leave the store	delay purchase	substitute the product	
How much time you generally spend on buying regular household requirement?	up to 1 hr	44.7%	44.7%	10.6%	100.0%
	more than one less then 2hrs	39.3%	60.7%		100.0%
	more than 2 less than 3 hrs	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	100.0%
Total		47.0%	43.0%	10.0%	100.0%

Results – Hypothesis 2

Pearson Chi Square	**Value**	**Df**	**Sig Value**
	10.691(a)	2	.06

		If you don't find your specified brand from your buying place what you will do		Total
		leave the store	delay purchase	
Since how long you are buying from specified store	1 to 2	100.0%		100.0%
	3 to 4	23.8%	76.2%	100.0%
	6 and above	29.4%	70.6%	100.0%
Total		34.9%	65.1%	100.0%

Results –Hypothesis 3

Pearson Chi Square	**Value**	**Df**	**Sig Value**
	8.734	4	.068

		If you don't find your specified brand from your buying place what you will do			Total
		leave the store	delay purchase	substitute the product	
perceived store price	high	30.0%	40.0%	30.0%	100.0%
	moderate	46.5%	47.9%	5.6%	100.0%
	low	57.9%	26.3%	15.8%	100.0%
Total		47.0%	43.0%	10.0%	100.0%

Results – Hypothesis 4

Pearson Chi Square	**Value**	**Df**	**Sig Value**
	72.010	6	.000

		If you don't find your specified brand from your buying place what you will do			Total
		leave the store	delay purchase	substitute the product	
Since how long you are using your favorite brand	1 to 2			100.0%	100.0%
	3 to 4	66.7%		33.3%	100.0%
	5 to 6	51.2%	48.8%		100.0%
	6 and above	40.5%	59.5%		100.0%
Total		47.0%	43.0%	10.0%	100.0%

Results – Hypothesis 5

Pearson Chi Square	**Value**	**df**	**Sig Value**
	46.700	5	.000

		If you don't find your specified brand from your buying place what you will do			Total
		leave the store	delay purchase	substitute the product	
Generally when do you prefer to buy	monthly regular buying	52.6%	47.4%		100.0%
	twice a month		54.5%	45.5%	100.0%
	casual trip	54.5%		45.5%	100.0%
Total		47.0%	43.0%	10.0%	100.0%

Results – Hypothesis 6

Pearson Chi Square	**Value**	**df**	**Sig Value**
	13.207	6	.040

		If you don't find your specified brand from your buying place what you will do			Total
		leave the store	delay purchase	substitute the product	
Timerequired	5-10mins	56.3%	43.8%		100.0%
	15-20mins	32.1%	54.7%	13.2%	100.0%
	25-30mins	69.0%	20.7%	10.3%	100.0%
	35 or more	50.0%	50.0%		100.0%
Total		47.0%	43.0%	10.0%	100.0%