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Marketing Segmentation of the Department Store Industry in Taiwan _A Survey for Taichung City

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Abstract

In recent years, with the rapid economic development in Taiwan, the industry of department store has become very prosperous and this also accelerated the change of customer requirements. Under such circumstance, the competition between department stores became more and more intense and forced companies to attract consumers through a variety of marketing strategies to gain competitive advantage. This paper focus on the marketing segmentation of consumer group of department stores at Taichung city. The data are collected from the consumers of Shin Kong Mitsukoshi department store and Chung Yu department store. The questionnaire is formed by expert interviews which includes the part of lifestyle, buying behavior, satisfaction and population statistics and a total of 432 valid questionnaires are collected. According to the result, there are four factors can be used to distinguish the lifestyle of consumers of department stores and by applying the cluster analysis, the consumers can be separated as three groups crossing geographical segmentation: Distinction Explorers, Enjoyment Consumers and Economic Hunters. This study also explored whether different characteristics of consumers cause significant differences among these three groups.

Keywords: Department Store, Cluster Analysis, Lifestyle, Marketing segmentation.

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1. Introduction

Many scholars have explored market segmentation from different perspectives (Söllner and Rese, 2001; Pires, Stanton and Stanton, 2011), but Özer et al. (2012) believe that the influencing factors of the same industry in different countries will also be different. Therefore, it is difficult to apply it to Taiwan's industries when the culture and lifestyle vary greatly from place to place.

In terms of research on Taiwan's department store industry, most studies on market segmentation focus on analyzing businesses in Taipei (Chen, Ja-shen; Yen, Hsiu Ju; Leu, Shang-nan; Hsu, Tsui-ku, 2003) and Kaohsiung (Yang and Chang, 2011; Chung and Hsu, 2012). With the opening of Far Eastern Department Store in Taichung at the end of 2011, it came into direct competition with the adjacent Shin Kong Mitsukoshi Department Store and the Taichung area has become another major battlefield besides Taipei and Kaohsiung. Therefore, the market segmentation and marketing strategies of department stores in Taipei and Kaohsiung may not necessarily be applied to the new battlefield of Taichung.

This study aims to understand the new market segmentation formed by department stores in Taichung after Far Eastern Department Store, a new variable, joined the battle. In order to make the analysis results comparable with the past and reduce the bias of the analysis, this study distributed questionnaires to existing department stores in Taichung (i.e., Chungyo Department Store and Shin Kong Mitsukoshi Department Store); this was also the main consideration for not selecting customers who would go to Far Eastern Department Store as samples. The research hypothesis was then formed using the market segmentation perspective, so that the research results could further explain the marketing strategies that department stores in Taichung should adopt. Based on this, the main purpose of this study is to explore the market segmentation of department stores in Taichung, and to explore whether there are groups of different natures in different regions, and to help companies identify and target market segments.

It is worth mentioning that most of the questionnaires used in previous studies were based on references to previous literature, and may not have had an in-depth understanding of the market situation of the research topic. Therefore, the reliability and validity of the measurements are indeed questionable. Even for similar industries or factors, the results may not necessarily be the same. If the questionnaire constructed by qualitative interviews (Dabholkar et al., 1996) is used, unnecessary sources of error can be eliminated and the reliability and validity of the research results can be improved. Therefore, this study adopted expert opinions and formulated a questionnaire based on the recent decision-making direction of department stores.

In addition, according to the analysis report of the Taiwan Institute of Economics and Management (TIE, 2013), the annual turnover of department stores in 2012 was approximately NT$280 billion in Taiwan, with an annual growth rate of 4.32%, indicating that the domestic department store industry is still an industry with positive growth. The data sources for this study are questionnaires filled out by customers of Chungyo Department Store and Shin Kong Mitsukoshi Department Store. Chungyo Department Store is a local department store in Taichung and one of the famous local features. Shin Kong Mitsukoshi Department Store has been the top department store in the domestic department store market from 2007 to 2012, with a market share of 28%. Therefore, these two major department stores were selected for the distribution of questionnaires.

2. Literature Study

The literature on market segmentation is increasingly focusing on the discussion of global marketing strategies. With the advent of the global village era, multinational companies will naturally focus their marketing strategies on this. However, in terms of the layout of international enterprises, in addition to global layout, they should also pay attention to local characteristics, otherwise their research results will be difficult to apply to markets in various places.

Market segmentation is the process of distinguishing homogeneous groups in the market (Foedermayr and Diamantopoulos, 2008); traditionally, market segmentation is based on geographical location, but in recent years, the issue of distance has long ceased to exist, replaced by consumption atmosphere, convenience or service quality (Yang and Chang, 2011). Özer et al. (2012) believe that the influencing factors of the same industry in different countries may also be different. From the perspective of urban development, the concept of market segmentation becomes even more important. When formulating marketing strategies, the conditions of the environment should be considered (Wang and Hong, 2011), and even the competition between cities (Zenker, 2013).

Therefore, the current development of the department store industry in Taichung must focus on local characteristics and understand the demographic factors of consumers going to Taichung department stores, such as gender, occupation, family income and spending, as well as consumer purchasing behavior and satisfaction. On the other hand, the theory of national competitive advantage proposed by Porter (1990) also believes that the development environment required for industries in different countries is not the same, so the target markets that domestic department stores must target are also different. Therefore, this theoretical framework will be able to determine the existence of market segments in the domestic department store industry.

A department store is primarily a departmental organization that sells a wide variety of merchandise and provides high-quality services. The early department stores began to emerge in Taipei City around 1965. Between 1971 and 1978, a large number of domestic department stores were established and management techniques were introduced from abroad. Between 1979 and 1983, the department store industry adopted unhealthy discount wars in order to compete for sales performance of each store, causing chaos in market prices at the time.

Since 2009, my country’s economic growth has slowed down due to the severe impact of the financial crisis, followed by factors such as rising international crude oil prices and employment wages. The overall turnover of the department store industry in 2012 was approximately 280 billion yuan, a growth rate of 4.32%, compared to the turnover of 270.186 billion yuan in 2011, a growth rate of 7.60%, indicating a downward trend in the department store industry (TIE, 2013). Therefore, the main motivation of this study is to rigorously segment the market so that department stores can effectively use their resources and achieve maximum benefits. It is hoped that this study can provide suggestions for the store operators when formulating marketing strategies.

3. Research Hypothesis

Consumers will react differently to specific products and services based on their needs and characteristics, forming segments. Kotler (1997) believes that companies should adopt different products and marketing strategies when facing different customer groups. Therefore, based on external factors, companies will think about how to effectively segment the overall market in order to attract consumers.

These needs and characteristics include consumers' lifestyles, demographic variables, purchasing behaviors, and their own satisfaction with products. The characteristics of demographic variables will help understand the differences in consumers’ socioeconomic status in market segments (Malhotra, 2008; Jarboe and McDaniel, 1987).

In addition, some scholars have proposed the concepts of consumer motivation (Karande and Ganesh, 2000) or shopping orientation (Williams et al., 1985) based on the characteristics of consumers. The former believes that consumers with different income levels (high, middle and low income) and consumption amounts (high, middle and low consumption) in the Indian market have significant differences in shopping orientation. Therefore, in order to discover useful management implications and find marketing strategies suitable for department stores in central Taiwan, it is necessary to understand the heterogeneity between different groups and the homogeneity within the groups. Based on the above analysis, the research hypotheses of this study include:

H1: The department store industry in Taichung, consumers in different geographical areas have different lifestyle segments.

H2: The department store industry in Taichung, there are different lifestyle segments based on the differences in demographic variables.

H3: The department store industry in Taichung, the average single-time consumption amount varies according to lifestyle segmentation.

H4: The department store industry in Taichung, there are different lifestyle segments with different purchase frequencies.

H5: The department store industry in Taichung, there are different lifestyle segments based on different consumption purposes.

4. Research Methods

Since the department store industry is easily affected by anniversary celebrations, festivals or long holidays, the research results may be biased. Therefore, the sample of this study is targeted at customers who go to department stores to shop on weekdays (not festivals or holidays), and the questionnaires are mainly distributed on-site at Chungyo Department Store and Shin Kong Mitsukoshi Department Store using convenience sampling.

Although the number of people who normally go to department stores for shopping is relatively small, this is the only way to eliminate the interference of non-human factors and analyze which factors are indeed influential. After eliminating invalid questionnaires, a total of 432 valid questionnaires were obtained. The questionnaire content included lifestyle variables, purchasing behavior, satisfaction and demographic variables.

The lifestyle measurement method was discussed with a senior department store executive. A questionnaire was developed based on the department store's recent decision-making direction (e.g., specialty restaurants, themed toilets). A total of 23 questions were asked and scored using a five-point Likert scale. Items were scored 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 points respectively from “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “no opinion”, “agree”, and “strongly agree”. Demographic variables include gender, age, occupation, household income and department store expenditure. Both content validity and face validity were evaluated by another senior manager in the department store industry.

To achieve the above objectives, the research methods adopted in this study include descriptive statistics, chi-square test, factor analysis, cluster analysis, discriminant analysis, one-way analysis of variance and Duncan's test.

Table 1: Characteristics of sample demographic variables

Demographic variables	Description	Chungyo Department Store (N=218)	Shin Kong Mitsukoshi Department Store (N=214)
Gender	Male	88(40.4)	84(39.3)
	Female	130(59.6)	130(60.7)
Age	15 years and under	4(1.8)	4(1.9)
	16–20	36(16.5)	34(15.9)
	21–30	106(48.6)	106(49.5)
	31–40	42(19.3)	40(18.7)
	41–50	22(10.0)	26(12.1)
	51–60	6(2.8)	2(0.9)
	61 years and above	2(0.9)	2(0.9)
Profession	Student	68(31.2)	62(29.0)
	Office Workers	128(58.7)	114(53.3)
	Housekeeping	0(0.0)	14(6.5)
	Unemployed	6(2.8)	10(4.7)
	Other	16(7.3)	14(6.5)
Household income	$20000 and below	40(18.3)	40(18.7)
	$20001–$40000	52(23.9)	50(23.4)
	$40001–$60000	46(21.1)	44(20.6)
	$60001–$80000	38(17.4)	36(16.8)
	$80001 and above	42(19.3)	44(20.6)
Department store expenses	$1000 and below	58(26.6)	56(26.2)
	$1001–$3000	78(35.8)	74(34.6)
	$3001–$5000	46(21.1)	44(20.6)
	$5001–$10000	20(9.2)	24(11.2)
	$10001–$20000	10(4.6)	12(5.6)
	$20001 and above	6(2.8)	4(1.9)

Note: Sample number (percentage)

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Sample characteristics

A total of 432 valid questionnaires were obtained from two department stores located in Taichung: Chungyo Department Store (N=218) and Shin Kong Mitsukoshi Department Store (N=214). There are many more female customers (60.2%) than male customers (39.8%). Nearly half of the customers are between 21 and 30 years old (49.1%), followed by 31 to 40 years old (19.0%). The majority of the respondents were office workers (56.0%), followed by students (30.1%). In terms of income, the proportions of each item are not much different, with 20,001 to 40,000 yuan (23.6%) being slightly higher, and the spending in department stores is highest at 1,001 to 3,000 yuan (35.2%). Table 1 is classified according to the data obtained from the two department stores.

5.2 Lifestyle Segmentation

First, factor analysis used principal component analysis and varimax rotation to define and analyze the factors of lifestyle in the sample. As shown in Table 2, the analysis results obtained a total of five factors, as well as individual factor loadings and reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha coefficients), and the five factors can explain a total of 59.4% of the total variance.

In addition, Guieford (1965) believed that Cronbach’s alpha greater than 0.7 was considered highly reliable, and if it was less than 0.35, it should be rejected. In this study, the reliability coefficients of the five factors extracted were all greater than 0.35, and four of the factors were greater than 0.8, indicating that the scores measured by this questionnaire are highly reliable.

Based on the scores obtained from the questionnaire, k-mean cluster analysis was performed to generate three different groups, and this process enabled us to understand the results of the detailed segmentation of the department store market in Taichung. Table 3 presents the results of cluster analysis and analysis of variance (ANOVA) of lifestyle and reveals differences among the three groups on the five factors. The three groups were also verified through multi-group discriminant analysis, and the results showed that 99.5% of them were correctly classified under the original classification. Therefore, H1 states that consumers in different geographical areas have different lifestyle segments, and these three groups are named according to their characteristics.

Table 2: Factor loading of lifestyle

Factor	Factor loading	Eigen value	% of variance	Cronbach's alpha
Factor 1: Service Quality		3.168	13.773	0.804
The elevator lady and gentleman are friendly	0.686			
Complete basic services	0.655			
Additional thoughtful services	0.721			
The rest area provides a good rest space	0.578			
Provide a perfect baby care environment	0.679			
Factor 2: Uniqueness		3.013	13.098	0.815
Provide convenient shopping services	0.519			
The unique theme restaurant introduced meets the current needs	0.556			
Exclusive counter	0.675			
Each wave of promotional spokespersons is attractive	0.646			
VIP services increase consumption willingness	0.568			
Provide exquisite gifts	0.451			
Overall decoration design	0.422			
The activities held irregularly are attractive	0.530			
Factor 3: Incentives/Promotions		2.895	12.589	0.809
Keep the toilet clean and tidy	0.533			
Regularly changing stylish windows can attract attention	0.419			
Proximity to shopping districts can increase willingness to patronize	0.621			
Few restrictions on merchandise vouchers	0.665			
Family cards provide customers with sufficient benefits	0.707			
Factor 4: Satisfaction		2.573	11.187	0.804
Department stores are my first choice when I want to go shopping.	0.754			
Overall, I am satisfied with the services provided by department stores	0.840			
I am very happy to introduce my relatives and friends to shop at the department store	0.794			
Factor 5: Transportation convenience		2.012	8.76	0.586
Accessibility to transportation	0.477			
Sufficient parking spaces for cars and motorcycles are provided	0.770			

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of cluster analysis

Lifestyle factors	**Lifestyle segmentation**			**F**
	Distinction Explorers (N=134)	Enjoyment Consumers (N=214)	Economic Hunters (N=84)	
Service Quality	-.12(.89) B	.56(.58) A	-1.24(.82) C	90.492***
Uniqueness	.13(.70) A	.18(.87) A	-.25(1.51) B	3.783*
Incentives/Promotions	-.87(.81) C	-.22(.75) B	.82(.81) A	69.201***
Satisfaction	-.38(1.15) B	.24(.87) A	-.01(.89) A	8.321***
Transportation convenience	-.71(.91) B	.36(.74) A	.21(1.14) A	31.682***

Note: A, B, C = Duncan test for significant difference in means。
***p<.001, *p<.05

The first group (31.0%) pointed out that consumers attach great importance to uniqueness and do not take discounts and service quality into consideration. The age of this group of consumers is generally between 21 and 40 years old, which shows that this group of consumers cares about the public's view of themselves and likes to try new things. Therefore, this group is named "Distinction Explorers".
The second group (49.5%) attaches great importance to service quality and satisfaction, but ignores incentives or discounts, indicating that they expect high-quality products and are less sensitive to price. As long as the product quality is good enough and can satisfy customers, they are willing to spend money to buy it. Therefore, this group is named "Enjoyment Consumers".
The third group (19.4%) tends to participate in high-value social activities. This group of consumers is highly responsive to incentives or discounts, and will consider transportation issues and always think about budgeting. They will focus on any discounts, discounts or low prices. Therefore, this group is named "Economic Hunters".

5.3 Lifestyle segmentation based on demographic variables

In order to verify H2, chi-square test and ANOVA test were performed. As can be seen from Table 4, there are significant differences in occupation ($\chi 2$ =19.754, p<.01) and family income ($\chi 2$=23.466, p<.01), but no significant differences in gender and age. Therefore, H2 is partially established, indicating that there are indeed some demographic variables that lead to significant differences in lifestyle.

5.4 Lifestyle segmentation in terms of consumption patterns

Table 5 shows that consumers' spending in department stores (χ 2=18.682, p< .05) shows significant differences in different lifestyle segments, so H3 is established. In addition, the amount of consumption is mostly less than NT$5,000, indicating that customers who usually shop in department stores mainly make small purchases. In terms of purchase frequency, there is no significant difference among different lifestyle segments, and the frequency is mainly measured in months, followed by quarters. This reveals that consumers as whole tend to shop in department stores at fixed times such as months or quarters, so H4 does not hold. In terms of differences in consumption purposes, different lifestyle segments also showed no significant differences, indicating that department stores are positioned mainly as shopping destinations in the minds of consumers, so H5 does not hold true.

Table 4: Lifestyle segmentation based on demographic characteristics

Variable	Description	Total (N=432)	Distinction Explorers (N=134)	Enjoyment Consumers (N=214)	Economic Hunters (N=84)	$\chi 2$
Gender	Male	172(40.0)	62(46.3)	80(37.4)	30(35.7)	1.723
	Female	260(60.0)	72(53.7)	134(62.6)	54(64.3)	
Age	15 years and under	8(1.9)	4(3.0)	4(1.9)	0(0.0)	20.639
	16–20	70(16.2)	14(10.4)	46(21.5)	10(11.9)	
	21–30	212(49.1)	68(50.7)	106(49.5)	38(45.2)	
	31–40	82(19.0)	28(20.1)	36(16.8)	18(21.4)	
	41–50	48(11.1)	20(14.9)	10(4.7)	18(21.4)	
	51–60	8(1.9)	0(0.0)	8(3.7)	0(0.0)	
	61 years and above	4(0.9)	0(0.0)	4(1.9)	0(0.0)	
Profession	Student	130(30.1)	34(25.4)	76(35.5)	20(23.8)	19.754**
	Office Workers	242(56.0)	68(50.7)	126(58.9)	48(57.1)	
	Housekeeping	14(3.2)	10(7.5)	0(0.0)	4(4.8)	
	Unemployed	16(3.7)	12(9.0)	2(0.9)	2(2.4)	
	Other	30(6.9)	10(7.5)	10(4.7)	10(11.9)	
Household income	$20000 and below	80(18.5)	22(16.4)	40(18.7)	18(21.4)	23.466**
	$20001–$40000	102(23.6)	32(23.9)	62(29.0)	8(9.5)	
	$40001–$60000	90(20.8)	30(22.4)	48(22.4)	12(14.3)	
	$60001–$80000	74(17.1)	22(16.4)	42(19.6)	10(11.9)	
	$80001 and above	86(19.9)	28(20.9)	22(10.3)	36(42.9)	

Note: Number of samples (percentage)
**p<.01, *p<.05.

Table 5: Lifestyle segmentation based on purchasing behavior

Variable	Description	Total (N=432)	Distinction Explorers (N=134)	Enjoyment Consumers (N=214)	Economic Hunters (N=84)	χ2
Average spending per visit to department stores	$1000 and below	114(26.4)	38(28.4)	64(29.9)	12(14.3)	18.682*
	$1001–$3000	152(35.2)	36(26.9)	88(41.1)	28(33.3)	
	$3001–$5000	90(20.8)	34(25.4)	38(17.8)	18(21.4)	
	$5001–$10000	44(10.2)	18(13.4)	16(7.5)	10(11.9)	
	$10001–$20000	22(5.1)	6(4.5)	4(1.9)	12(14.3)	
	$20001 and above	10(2.3)	2(1.5)	4(1.9)	4(4.8)	
Purchase frequency	Weekly	54(12.5)	24(17.9)	24(11.2)	6(7.1)	5.168
	Monthly	204(47.2)	62(46.3)	98(45.8)	44(52.4)	
	Quarterly	102(23.6)	32(23.9)	48(22.4)	22(26.2)	
	Annual	72(16.7)	16(11.9)	44(20.6)	12(14.3)	
Purpose of consumption	Dinner	46(10.6)	10(7.5)	28(13.1)	8(9.5)	7.068
	Dating	44(10.2)	10(7.5)	24(11.2)	10(11.9)	
	Planned Shopping	112(25.9)	34(25.4)	54(25.2)	24(28.6)	
	Shopping	202(46.8)	66(49.3)	102(47.7)	34(40.5)	
	Other	28(6.5)	14(10.4)	6(2.8)	8(9.5)	

Note: Number of samples (percentage)
*p<.05.

6. Conclusion and Suggestions

6.1 Research Conclusions and Recommendations

This study uses cluster analysis to divide the market into three different consumer groups based on consumers' perception of the recent marketing strategies set by department stores, and there are significant differences in the five extracted factors. This represents the characteristics of local consumers and forms different market segments. In addition, Özer et al. (2012) mentioned that the influencing factors of the same industry in different countries may be different; this concept is also confirmed here.

This study named consumers according to their different characteristics, namely " Distinction Explorers " with 134 people, accounting for 31.0% of the total sample; "Enjoyment Consumers" with 214 people, accounting for 49.5% of the total sample; and "Economy Hunters" with 84 people, accounting for 19.4% of the total sample.

Previous studies have shown that consumers' shopping behaviors in shopping malls show significant differences in demographic variables and shopping orientation (Kuruvilla and Joshi, 2010). However, the purpose of this study is to focus on exploring the key influencing factors of department stores in Taichung. The analysis shows that there are five factors that can significantly distinguish the three groups of consumers, namely "service quality", "uniqueness", "incentives/benefits", "satisfaction" and "transportation convenience". Each different group also represents different personal and behavioral factors of consumers, so different marketing strategies should be formulated for different groups.

6.2 Management Implications

Distinction Explorers care the least about incentives or discounts, but are most interested in uniqueness. They say they like new products and are willing to try different experiences. They are willing to try new things regardless of whether there are promotional discounts or other discounts.

Enjoyment consumers have no obvious reaction to inducements or discounts, but they pay great attention to service quality. They are also the group that cares most about satisfaction, which shows that they have high requirements for product quality and enjoy the entire shopping process, which also implies a high degree of loyalty.

Economic Hunters, although the smallest group, also show a strong influence of incentives or offers on their behavior, so price-related discounts will be a useful marketing strategy for this type of consumer.

Among them, unique thing explorers and enjoyment consumers should adopt a differentiation strategy; economic hunters must adopt a cost leadership strategy. If an operator is able to grasp three different groups of people at the same time, it means that the company is implementing both the cost leadership strategy and the differentiation strategy at the same time. This will help the company to create its own blue ocean strategy in the fiercely competitive red ocean of the department store industry.

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