CONSUMERS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS FACTORS FAVORING CASHLESS TRANSACTIONS

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Abstract
Cashless transactions have been accepted and encouraged in most of the countries across the world. In India also, the consumers have become accustomed with the usage of cashless transactions. Tamil Nadu is one of the major states contributing to the Gross Domestic Product of the country. In Tamil Nadu, Salem District is one of the largest industrial districts. Cashless transactions have become mandatory for making major payments. However, there are certain other factors favoring cashless transactions. The present study has aimed at understanding the perception towards factors favoring cashless transactions among the selected consumers. In this regard, 300 consumers from Salem District have been selected under convenience sampling method. The data required for the study have been obtained from the sample respondents and analyzed using percentage analysis, analysis of variance and students' t test. The results revealed that young age consumers (aged between 20 and 30 years) have been the major users of cashless transactions. However, age has no significant influence on the factors favoring cashless transactions. Freebies and discounts are provided, Elimination of fear of counterfeit currency and no necessity of bulky wallets were the major factors favoring cashless transactions.

Keywords: Consumers; Perception; Cashless Transactions; Factors.

Introduction
Currency notes have been widely used for making all kinds of payments towards agricultural, commercial, medical, personal and all other activities. Both literate and illiterate consumers have been quite familiar with the use of currency notes. However, the handling of currency notes differs from one person to another. When the currency notes are not handled properly, they are torn.The Government needs to print fresh currency notes frequently. The cost of printing currency notes increases from time to time. The anti-social activists print and circulate fake and counterfeit currencies among the public which could not be easily identified by the consumers. Another menace with regard to the currency notes is black money. The currency circulation among the public is reduced by hoarding currency notes by certain people. Thanks to the advancement of science and technology, paper currency has been replaced by plastic currency and gradually cashless transactions have emerged as the appropriate alternative for paper currency. Having realized the need for cashless transactions, the Government has started providing adequate infrastructure. By and large, the consumers have also realized the benefits of cashless transactions and started using cashless transactions.

Statement of the Problem
Cashless transactions have been the best solution for facing the challenges of black money, counterfeit currency, undue hoarding of currency notes and corruption. The Government has been taking various initiatives to encounter these challenges. As a part of these measures, cashless transactions have been encouraged by the Government. There are several factors favoring cashless transactions. Adequate literature has not been found regarding the perception of consumers towards cashless transactions.

Hence, the present study has focused on exploring the consumers' perception towards cashless transactions in the study area.

Objectives of the Study
The following are the objectives of the present study:
1. To understand the demographic profile of the consumers using cashless transactions.
2. To examine the consumers' perception towards the factors favoring cashless transactions and
3. To analyze the relationship between demographic profile and the factors favoring cashless transactions.

Research Methodology
The present study is a descriptive study using survey method. In this regard, 300 consumers using cashless transactions have been selected using convenient sampling method from among the residents of Salem District. The data required for the study have been collected through primary sources, i.e., from the sample respondents. The data so collected have been analyzed using percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, analysis of variance and students' t test.

Limitations of the Study
The present study is subject to the following limitations:
1. The sample size has been restricted to 300 consumers using cashless transactions in Salem District.
2. The respondents have given the responses on the basis of the represent state of mind and experience which may vary from time to time.

Analysis and interpretation
An attempt has been made in this study to examine the consumers' perception towards factors favoring cashless transactions. The primary data collected from the sample respondents have been analyzed in this study in three parts. The demographic variables such as age, gender and monthly income of the respondents have been analyzed in the first part. The perceptions of consumers towards factors favoring cashless transactions have been analyzed in the second part. The relationship between demographic variables and factors favoring cashless transactions has been examined in the third part of the study.

Table1: Demographic Profile

Demographic Profile	Groups	No.of Respondents	Percentage
Age	20to 30years	116	38.67
	30to 40years	108	36.00
	40to 50years	48	16.00
	Above50years	28	9.33
Gender	Female	143	47.67
	Male	157	52.33
Monthly Income	Up to Rs. 20000	79	26.33
	Rs. 20001 to Rs. 40000	121	40.33
	Rs. 40001 to Rs. 60000	50	16.67
	AboveRs. 60000	50	16.67
Total		**300**	**100**

According to the Table 1, out of the total respondents, 38.67 percent of them belonged to the age group of '20 to 30 years' while 36 percent of the total respondents were pertaining to the age group of '30 to 40 years'. There were 16 percent of the sample respondents in the age group of '40 to 50years'andtheproportionoftherespondentsintheagegroupof'Above50years'wasfoundtobe9.33 percent. It denotes that the major proportion of the respondents belonged to the age group of'20 to 30 years'. Among the total respondents, 47.67 per cent of them were female respondents whereas 52.33 percent of them were found to be male respondents. It implies that female consumers have also been using cashless transactions almost at par with the male consumers.

It could be realized that 26.33 percent of the sample respondents were earning a monthly income of 'Up to Rs.20000' while the monthly income of 40.33 percent of the respondents was found to be 'Rs.20001 to Rs.40000' and that of 16.67 percent of the total respondents was 'Rs.40001 to Rs.60000'.There were 16.67 percent of the respondents earning a monthly income of 'Above Rs.60000'.It reveals that the consumers having a monthly income of Rs.20001 to Rs.40000 were using cashless transactions more than any other group of consumers.

Factors Favoring Cashless Transactions
For the purpose of the present study, the following factors have been considered as the factors favoring cashless transactions:
1. It avoids black money transactions.
2. No more bulky wallets are required are required.
3. It is easy to perform transactions.
4. Freebies and discounts are provided are provided.
5. It is easy to track the spending and.
6. Fear of counter feitcurrencyis eliminated.

Table2: Factors Favoring Cashless Transactions

Factors Favoring Cashless Transactions	SA		A		N		DA		SDA	
	NR	%	NR	%	NR	%	NR	%	NR	%
It avoids black money transactions	78	26	62	20.7	86	28.7	51	17	23	7.7
No more bulky Wallets	36	12	135	45	39	13	62	20.7	28	9.3
Ease of transactions	33	11	28	9.3	28	9.3	107	35.7	104	34.7
Freebies and Discounts	117	39	78	26	37	12.3	37	12.3	31	10.3
Easy way to track Spending	62	20.7	63	21	25	8.3	53	17.7	97	32.3
No fear of counterfeit Currency	53	17.7	149	49.7	21	7	34	11.3	43	14.3

Table 2 explores that the highest proportion of 28.7 percent of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that cashless transactions avoid black money transactions. It indicates that the consumers have no clear understanding that whether the cashless transactions could avoid black money transactions or not. However, it should be noted that as a single majority, most of the respondents

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have neither agreed nor disagreed while the combined majority of agreed respondents was higher (Strongly agreed and Agreed respondents).The greatest proportion of 45 percent of the total respondents has agreed to this statement 'No more bulky wallets are required'. It implies that the consumers are of the opinion that they need not carry bulky wallets when they are using cashless transactions. The majority of the respondents (35.7 percent) have expressed their disagreement towards 'Ease of transaction'.

It reveals that the consumers have not yet realized the easiness of cashless transactions.' Freebies and discounts are provided' have been strongly agreed by the most of the respondents (39 percent).It denotes that 'Freebies and discounts are provided' have attracted the consumers more than any other factors favoring cashless transactions. It is found that the majority of the respondents (32.3 percent) have disagreed that cashless transaction is an It is easy to track spending. It signifies that the consumers did not track their spending. The greatest majority of 49.7percent of the respondents have agreed that the cashless transactions lead to 'Fear of counterfeit currency is eliminated'. It proclaims that cashless transactions give a great relief to the consumers from the fear of counterfeit currency.

The level of agreement expressed by the respondents towards each of the selected factors favoring cashless transactions has been assigned scores as 5 for strongly agree; 4 for agree; 3 for neutral; 2 for disagree and 1 for strongly disagree. The total scores obtained by each of the respondents for all the selected factors favoring cashless transactions have been obtained by summing up the individuals cores. On the basis of the total scores, the relationship between demographic profile of the respondents and the factors favoring cashless transactions has been examined.

Age and factors favoring cashless transactions
With a view to understand the relationship between age and factors favoring cashless transactions, the following hypotheses have been formulated and tested using analysis of variance:
NullHypothesisH_0: There is no significant relationship between age of the respondents and the factors favoring cashless transactions.
Alternative Hypothesis H_1: There is a significant relationship between age of the respondents and the factors favoring cashless transactions.

Table3: Age and factors favoring cashless transactions

Source of variation	SS	DF	MS	F value	P value	Result
Between Groups	93.17	3	31.06	2.232	0.085	Not Significant
Within Groups	4118.07	296	13.91			
Total	**4211.24**	**299**				

From the Table 3, it is evinced that the F value indicating the relationship between age and factorsfavoringcashlesstransactionswas2.232whilethepvaluewas0.085.Thepvalueexceeding0.05 results in the acceptance of null hypothesis. The decision to accept the null hypothesis implies that there is no significant relationship between age of the consumers and the factors favoring cashless transactions.

Gender and Factors favoring cashless transactions
In order to examine the significance of relationship between gender of the respondents and the factors favoring cashless transactions, the below mentioned hypotheses have been tested:

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Null HypothesisH_0: There is no significant relationship between gender of the respondents and the factors favoring cashless transactions.

Alternative Hypothesis H_1: There is a significant relationship between gender of the respondents and the factors favoring cashless transactions.

Table4: Gender and factors favoring cashless transactions

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t value	Pvalue	Result
Male	143	19.52	3.182	2.675	0.008	Significant@1%
Female	157	18.38	4.143			

It is divulged from the Table that the male consumers have obtained the mean score of 19.52 with the standard deviation of 3.182 while the female consumers have obtained the mean score and standard deviation of 157 and 18.38 respectively. The t test used for examining the relationship between gender and factors favoring cashless transactions revealed that the t value was 2.675 and the p value was 0.008.The null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted since the p value is less than 0.01.It implies that the relationship between gender of the consumers and the factors favoring cashless transactions is significant at 1 per cent level.

Monthly income and factors favoring cashless transactions
With a view to test the significance of relationship between gender of the respondents and the factors favoring cashless transactions, the below mentioned hypotheses have been formulated:

Null Hypothesis H_0: There is no significant relationship between monthly income of the respondents and the factors favoring cashless transactions.

AlternativeHypothesisH_1: There is a significant relationship between monthly income of the respondents and the factors favoring cashless transactions.

Table5: Monthly income and factors favoring cashless Transactions

Source of variation	SS	DF	MS	F value	P value	Result
Between Groups	300.52	3	100.18	7.582	0.000	Significant@1%
Within Groups	3910.71	296	13.21			
Total	**4211.24**	**299**				

Table 5 portrays that the F value stating the relationship between monthly income of the respondents and the factorsfavoringcashless transaction was found to be7.582 whilethepvaluewas0.000.Since the p value is less than 0.01, it falls in the rejection region. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. It is concluded that there is a significant relationship between monthly income and the factors favoring cashless transactions at 1 per cent level of significance.

Findings of the study
\The present study has examined the demographic profile of the respondents with the variables age, gender and monthly income. The analysis of demographic profile indicates that the consumers in the age group of '20 to 30 years' were the dominant users of cashless transactions. Male consumers have been using cashless transactions that the female consumers. The cashless transactions have been widely used by the consumers earning a monthly income of 'Rs.20001 to Rs.40000'.

It was found that 'Freebies and discounts are provided'; 'Fear of counterfeit currency is eliminated'; and 'No more bulky wallets are required' have been the most favoring factors of cashless transactions. The factors not so favoring cashless transactions include 'It is easy to perform transactions' and 'It is easy to track spending'. The consumers were not able to conclude whether cashless transactions avoid black money transactions or not.

The results of the study reveal that the age of the consumers has not made any significant impact on the opinion of the consumers towards the factors favoring cashless transactions while gender of the consumers has influenced the perception of the consumers on the factors favoring cashless transactions significantly. A positive and significant influence of monthly income was found on the opinion of the consumers about the factors favoring cashless transactions.

Suggestions
On the basis of the findings, it is suggested that the consumers above the age of 40 years shall be encouraged to use cashless transactions more by providing additional security factors and simplifying the processes of cashless transactions.

It is recommended that the cashless transactions shall be provided at affordable charges to draw the attention of consumers earning a monthly income up to Rs.20000.

The consumers shall be made aware of the way of tracking their spending and it is suggested that the consumers should be educated to understand the easiness of cashless transactions and they should be brought out of the traditional cash transactions.

Conclusion
Cashless transactions have become popular among the consumers in India particularly after the demonetization. The study has aimed at examining the perception of the consumers towards the factors favoring cashless transactions. The opinion of the consumers on the selected factors favoring cashless transaction revealed that consumers are acknowledging that Freebies and discounts are provided have been the most favoring factors for cashless transactions. The consumers have realized that cashless transactions eliminate the fear of counterfeit currency and they have also accepted that they need not carry cash or bulky wallets for making payments.

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