The Optimal Allocation of Shelf Space in Distribution Industry

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ABSTRACT

To promote the sales of a retail store in the distribution industry, we used to focus on all kinds of promotion methods but ignore the value brought by display techniques. According to past experiences, the way the products displayed on the shelves affects sales volume. An appropriate display technique may create a selling place that the customers can watch, select, and purchase products easily, and may prevent product shortage in the stores. There are varieties of products along with large volumes in a shop. However, the shelf space is limited. If the methods adopted to classify and display products is inappropriate, the customers can hardly buy what they want. Even with hundreds and thousands of products, it is absolutely useless for sales increase. Therefore, to fully utilize the sales space, it is very important to find an efficient method to allocate products onto shelf space. In this research, we first investigated factors such as consumer behaviors, facility equipment, and cost structure that affect shelf space allocation behavior. From the results, we constructed a mathematical model by defining the decision variables, the objective function, main factors and their corresponding constraints. Through proper solution procedures, we then determined the best shelf space allocation plan. In order to verify the correctness and the applicability of the model, we apply a set of real data as the test basis. Through the sensitivity analysis, we conducted further analysis about factors of the shelf space allocation model and tried to find their effects. The results derived from the research can truly offer the distribution industry a reference tool to allocate the shelf space for different products.

Keywords: Distribution Industry; Shelf Space; Allocation

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