

**CHRIST**(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)
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Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Mr Pradeep Alex, Registration Number: 1980176, PhD Scholar at the School of Business and Management, CHRIST (Deemed to be University) will defend his PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Wednesday, 10 June 2026 at 02.00 pm in Seminar Hall, Room No. 2208, Management Block, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Pune Lavasa Off-Campus, Pune - 412112, Maharashtra, India.

Title of the Thesis	:	Reimagining Kirana Shops in Urban and Rural Settlements Based on Attachment Theory and Identifying Key Differentiators for Its Growth: A Study in Pune Division of Maharashtra, India
Discipline	:	Management
External Examiner - I	:	Dr B Rajeswari Professor Department of Management Studies Pondicherry University R V Nagar, Kalapet Puducherry - 605014
External Examiner - II	:	Dr Rajanala Nirmala Associate Professor Department of Management Studies Goa Business School Goa University Goa - 403004
Supervisor	:	Dr Danish Hussain Assistant Professor School of Business and Management CHRIST (Deemed to be University) Pune Lavasa Off-Campus Pune - 412112 Maharashtra

The members of the Research Advisory Committee of the Scholar, the faculty members of the Department and the School, interested experts and research scholars of all the branches of research are cordially invited to attend this open viva-voce examination.

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 03 June 2026

Registrar (Academics)

ABSTRACT

Evolving ecommerce economies continue to affect where consumers purchase daily necessities from. The rise of chain-stores and digital platforms make it challenging for local stores to survive because they haven't optimized convenience and value like competing marketplaces. Kiranas or Indian mom-and-pop stores have been selling items, especially groceries, that cater to basic needs of customers, and in doing so, have established a personal and meaningful interaction with the customer. Kiranas are situated in residential locality, and customers visit these shops frequently. This interaction occurs through retailing, the last level in the entire supply chain, which ends in buying the product for consumption. The thesis looks at Kiranas as crucial entities of the retail ecosystem, and focuses on customer attachment as a differentiator of such stores. It develops a scale to measure customer attachment. It discusses how customers develop a bond with a local store, and identifies factors like the atmosphere of the store and the staff that influence purchase intent. In this way, it looks at some sub-dimensions of customer attachment. Along with attachment, there is another factor that influences buying behaviour, which is availability. The thesis also assesses this factor, especially in terms of the presence of specialty products. These factors may have an impact at different levels across sub-segments; hence a multi-group moderation analysis helps in assessing gender, town class, frequency of visits to the store and income. The social connection and customer attachment are focal points in the thesis since they can become differentiators in a saturated market.

The creation of a 3C-3A framework with functional and emotional drivers was initiated to provide insights to shop owners. The four drivers are convenience, availability, attachment, and affordability. The thesis makes suggestions to improve the growth of Kirana stores and recommends becoming connected by sharing information, and collective by teaming up with others for scaling and bargaining power. The grocery retail space in India consists of several distributors, wholesalers and over ten million retail points. The Covid-19 pandemic shifted the dependence of the consumer on digital platforms. The shift indicates the need for Kiranas to not be defensive and move towards adaptation. Developing a digital platform or infrastructure for the management of such store can further their impact and safeguard their sustenance. The thesis also suggests that this platform should be operated by personnel appointed by the government for fairness in competition and avoidance of monopoly. The findings showed that attachment significantly influences purchase intent. When Kiranas integrate strategies to improve customer attachment they differentiate themselves in appeal compared to other retail formats and platforms.

Keywords: Retail, Digitalization, Attachment, Kiranas, Loyalty.

Publications:

1. **Alex, P.**, Hussain, D., & Jain, P. (2024, March). Empowering Kirana Shops through digital ecosystem and physical infrastructure for unprecedented efficiency and elevated customer experience. In 2024 International Conference on Trends in Quantum Computing and Emerging Business Technologies (pp. 1-5). IEEE.
2. **Alex, P.**, Hussain, D., & Kirmani, M. D. (2025). Boosting Competitiveness Through Data: How Online Procurement Drives. Data Science and Security: Proceedings of IDSCS 2024, Volume 2, 2, 203. Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore
3. **Alex, P.**, Hussain, D., & Kirmani, M. D. (2023). Customer Attachment as the Key Factor for the Sustainability and Growth of Unorganized Indian Kirana Shops. SGS- Engineering & Sciences, 2(02).
4. **Alex, P.**, Agrawal, A., & Hussain, D. (2023). Prophesying the Future Retailing Model of Emerging Markets with Special Focus on India. In Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Sustainable Development (pp. 98-101). CRC Press.