To: Dr. Erika Paterson

From: Shujun Peng

Date: Oct 14,2020

Subject: Propose to increase the use of Wheelchair Attachable Shopping Carts at DaRunFa Grocery store in Shanghai.

**Introduction:**

As International Day of Persons with Disabilities approaches (December 3rd), we need to again raise awareness to improve handicapped people’s living experience, starting with the very essential things, such as purchasing daily necessities at the grocery store. Although most grocery stores in Shanghai provided wheelchair access and the staff were trained to help the handicapped people when shopping, not enough space and privacy were given to handicapped customers while they are shopping for goods. There’s an enormous pressure of going inside a store, and knowing that people are waiting to assist and helping to find the goods on the list. As customers, we sometimes need assistance, but other times we just want to shop without interference because we don’t know exactly what we want to buy. This is a feeling we all share, and handicapped people might not get such freedom due to one reason: not enough wheelchair attachable shopping carts, so that they need other people’s assistance.

**Statement of the problem:**

Handicapped customers in grocery stores are always deemed as a group of customers that need special assistance. This perception takes away their privacy and freedom to shop mindlessly, and pressuring them to have a list of daily necessities they want to purchase. This is a very different shopping experience compared to non-handicapped customers, and it is also an issue that grocery stores tend to overlook. The amount of shopping carts and the amount of wheelchair shopping carts in the store were not evenly distributed, which almost pressured handicapped customers to seek special help when there’s an absence of shopping carts that can fit their needs.

**Proposed Solution:**

In order to protect the handicapped customers’ personal space and their privacy, the grocery store should accommodate them using all resources they could, which includes increasing the use of wheelchair attachable shopping carts is one way to solve the issue. Improving handicapped customers’ shopping experience is not equivalent to giving them assistance every step of the way but also means to give them the experience that every customer wants to have.

**Scope:**

To increase the wheelchair attachable shopping carts, this project plans to pursue five areas of inquiry:

What kind of assistance do handicapped customers need?

What kind of shopping carts do they prefer?

Do staff’s assistance give handicapped customers pressure?

What do they think when they are entering the grocery store?

How do they perceive privacy and personal space in grocery stores?

My intended audience is the managers of DaRunFa grocery stores, because they can act on my recommendations if they agree with my proposed solution.

**Methods:**

The study will be based on customer surveys aimed at the handicapped customers. In order to protect their privacy, this survey will be conducted online. Another reason to conduct the survey online is to decrease person-to-person contact, due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation. My secondary data will be gathered during the interviews with the manager of DaRunFa grocery stores.

**My Qualifications:**

I was once a part-time employee in Da Run Fa grocery store. I went to work at Da Run Fa in the summer of 2018, and I noticed that I seldom see handicapped customers shopping alone. I was also one of the trained staff that called to assist handicapped customers whenever they entered the store. I have received complaints about following them too closely, and that is how the issue of handicapped customers’ privacy and personal space occured to me.

**Conclusion:**

As a student of UBC, who were trained to respect others, and as a former staff of Da Run Fa grocery store who know about the lesser satisfying shopping experience of handicapped customers, I aim to create a project that might benefit the handicapped customers who will shop at Da Run Fa in the future. This proposal analyzed the problem regards to handicapped customers’ shopping experience that is still very much present in this day, and propose a solution which is to increase wheelchair attachable shopping carts, hopefully this solution is an effective way to protect handicapped customers’ privacy and personal space.