

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION TOWARDS RETAIL STORES IN TIRUCHIRAPPALLI CITY

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Abstract

India is one of the fastest growing economic systems in the world and one of the largest sectors in terms of consumer purchasing power. India is moving towards growth and retail is amongst the fastest growing sectors in the country. Retail industry plays a significant role in increasing productivity across a wide range of consumer goods and services as it is a big business in developing countries. Logistical challenges, constant changes in consumer preferences and patterns, crowded market places, efficient customer responsiveness and swiftly evolving retail quality products are the hallmarks of today's retail environment in India. In modern days most Indian retail players are under serious pressure to make their shops more efficient in order to deliver the quality service to the consumers. Quality improvement and adherence to accepted norms of quality are central to the modern concept of marketing of services. The quality of service delivery results in customer satisfaction and their retention implies that the value of service received is greater than the price paid for it. Among the different types of retail outlets, Supermarket occupies an important position in the marketing field. Because it provides an extensive range of

individual and housing durable goods, product needs and offering customers for multiple product lines at different prices. As organized retailers are considered as offering similar merchandise in the outlets, improving service quality is viewed as vital to ensure the consumer needs. The main objective of this paper is to assess quality service dimensions that are delivered to the customers. The study attempts to find inter relationship between various Retail Service Quality dimensions, which will serve the retailers to identify the steps required to ameliorate the overall calibre of service.

Keywords: Customer Satisfaction, Service Quality Dimensions, Quality of Service

I. INTRODUCTION

Retailing in India is the single largest employment sector and contributes directly to the quality of life of the people in India, Retail Sector is high ranked in terms of more investment and it contributes about 10 percent of total GDP of India and second largest sector which offers high employment to public next to agricultural sector. India is one of the highest retail densities in the world at 6% (12 million) retail shops for about 209 million households. India ranks 1st, ahead of Russia, in terms of emerging markets, potential in

retail and is deemed a “priority I” market for international retail.

The Indian Government is likely to spend USD 150 billion over the next few years to develop world class infrastructure thereby aiding growth for the retail sector. In modern days satisfying customers is a crucial and challenging task for the producers. As the Indian consumers lifestyle and profile is evolving rapidly, competition, globalization and increase in customer chum with a plethora of substitutes available at their doorstep make it imperative for the marketers to explore possibility for improving customer satisfaction.

In modern days consumers all over the world have become quality conscious. Therefore customer requirements for higher quality service should be recognized by the retailers. A service is any activity or benefit that one party can offer to another which is essentially intangible or does not result in the ownership of anything. i.e. services are some intangible activities provided by the servers to fulfil the customer needs. Quality can be defined as satisfying or exceeding customer requirements and expectations and consequently to some extent it is the customer who eventually judges the quality of a product.

Changing customers’ lifestyle and the competitive environment has made customers expectations grow more. The retailers were more conscious with satisfying their customer needs since the customer satisfaction will be the core point of improving the retailers products and services. Customer satisfaction is an important theoretical as well as practical issue for the marketers. Customer satisfaction is considered as the essence of success in today’s highly competitive world of business. The present study is mainly focused on service quality measurement in Supermarket.

Satisfying customers is one of the main objectives of every business. Businesses recognize that keeping current customers is more profitable than having to win new one. In order to know the details of service quality dimensions and the level of satisfaction of the customers the researchers selected Supermarkets in Tiruchirappalli City as the study area.

Review of Literature

Deepika Jhamb (2012, Punjab, India) studies the relationship between the choice of retail formats, based on product attributes, store attributes, consumers’ demography and retail marketing strategies. The outcomes reveal that customers choice for modern retail formats vary as their income level increase, customer prefer organised retail formats due to improved quality, brand variance and assortment of merchandise and store attributes like parking facility and trained sales personnel. The customer retention policies, promotional strategies, pricing schemes and competitive strategies are the major reasons for the development of organised retailing and play an important role in raising the sales volume of retail formats.

Shilpa Raghuvanshi (2013, Indore, India) compiled the primary data with the assistance of the standardised questionnaire of service quality which was administered to a convenience sample of 100 respondents accessing selection of retail stores in Indore, a city of Madhya Pradesh, a state in India. The data collected were analysed with the statistical tools of factor analysis and Z test. The factors influencing the customers perception are responsiveness, tangibles, empathy convenience and assurance.

Girish K Nair (2013 Kerala, India) analysis the various service quality variables and established the relationship between them. The study explores the factor that attracts the customers

towards the organized retail sector in Trivandrum. From the chi-square analysis of the different variables of the diverse dimensions of Retail Service Quality it was found that there is a relationship between modern looking equipment and fixtures in the case of physical aspect dimension. From the study it is found that there is no substantial relationship between Error free billing and Reliability in using credit cards. There is a substantial relationship between Returns and exchanges and sincerity in problem solving variables in the case of problem solving aspect dimension.

KasturiNaik and Srinivasan (2015) in their study highlight the assessments of the customer expectation and customer perception of the service effectiveness of the departmental stores. By applying t-test and factor analysis, it is found out that the customers' expectations are higher than their perceptions of delivered service. The study shows that customers expect the frontline sales personnel to be knowledgeable with respect to products and services rendered.

Nithyapriya, Haritha and Gomathi (2016) in their study highlight the importance of quality service in retail store. They point out that the retail store should accommodate changes in the business and invoke necessary measures to satisfy the customers. The main objective of the study is to measure the satisfaction level of the customers with regard to different dimensions of service quality. For this they collected information from 100 respondents and by applying chi-square test and Rank analysis, they found out reasonable price provision of large variety of goods, good store environment, convenient location and parking facility occupies the first, second, third, fourth and fifth rank. They conclude that customers are fully satisfied with the service quality of retail stores.

Statement of the Problem

Retailers today are confronted with stiff competition, aggressive entry of new players and if they want to stay in competitive world, they need to assess their current retail effort and look forward to innovate on a continuous basis by rendering of quality services. Customer service has become a distinct component of both product and service sectors and with the developments in information technology, many businesses find that companies must be customer oriented. Identification and satisfaction of customer needs lead to improved customer retention.

In changing business situation, the customers life style have changed and brought a drastic change on their shopping behaviour. The customer expects more of self service and wants different and enormous products, brands and services under single roof. Retail stores have now realized that customer can be satisfied and retained only through better quality service. The identification of the service quality dimensions enables the Supermarket owner/ manager to fulfil the gap between customers expectations and perceptions and thereby providing the customer satisfaction at the maximum level.

Significance of the Study

The Retail industry is very diverse with several sub-segments, each displaying its own unique character. The changes in economic and industrial policies in India, growth in the size of the middle income household, changes in consumer buying and consumption habits, technology and information access to consumers and the changing lifestyles are some of the prominent reasons for the retail sector boom in India. The retail players need to be excellent in every facet of operations as the market is highly competitive at every level and redefining itself every day.

Retailing is one of the most important sectors of the Indian economy. With the retail sector growing and expanding in the Indian Scenario, Service Quality is pivotal in achieving greater customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is multifaceted phenomenon and it consists of different dimensions and there is a close relationship exists between customer satisfaction and service quality. The current study is aimed at assessing the customer perceptions and satisfaction in the retail scenario.

Scope of the study

The customer perception of retail service quality is important for the emerging and existing retailers in the market place. The customers perception, preference and level of satisfaction on the various facilities provided by the Supermarkets are enumerated in this study. The present study concentrates on customer perceptions on tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy.

II. OBJECTIVES

1. To study the demographic profile of the customers.
2. To study the factors which greatly influence the customers to purchase goods.
3. To identify the relationship between service quality dimensions and customers satisfaction in the Supermarket.
4. To provide suggestions to improve the services provided by the Supermarkets to satisfy the customers.

Testing of Hypothesis

The following hypotheses have been taken for the study of customer satisfaction towards supermarket.

- There is no significant association between respondents' age and customer satisfaction towards service quality dimensions.
- There is no association between respondents income and customer satisfaction towards various dimensions of service quality.
- There is no association between respondents gender and customer satisfaction towards various dimensions of service quality.
- There is no association between respondents educational qualification and customer satisfaction towards various dimensions of service quality.

Methodology for the study

Research design

The study was carried out in the Tiruchirappalli city. A sample of 380 customers was chosen on a convenience sampling method. The area covered under the study is Thillainagar, Woraiyur, Cantonment, Junction, Crow ford, Edamalaipattipudur, Vayalur, and Somarasanpettai. Information regarding demographic profiles and customer satisfaction on retail stores were collected through structured questionnaire. Secondary data was collected from different sources like magazines, newspaper, books etc.,

Statistical tools used

- Percentage Analysis
- 'z'test
- One-way Anova
- Ranking based on mean values
- Chi-square test

Analysis

Table:1 Respondents' Demographic Profile

S.No.	Socio Demographic variables	No. of Respondents(N:380)	Percentage
1	Age		
	Below 30 years	61	16
	30 to 40 years	142	37
	41 to 50 years	98	26
	Above 50 years	79	21
2	Gender		
	Male	278	73
	Female	102	27
3	Occupation		
	Government	102	27
	Business	91	24
	Professional	82	22
	Private sector	50	13
	Household	35	9
	Self employed	20	5
4	Educational qualification		
	High school	39	10
	Higher secondary	58	15
	Under Graduate	171	45
	Post Graduate	105	28
	Diploma	7	2

Source: Primary data

It is inferred from the above table that one third (i.e.) 37% of the respondents fall between 31-40 years, followed by 41-50 years (26%), above 50 years (21%) and below 21 to 30 years (16%). From this it is clear that most of the respondents that is 63% fall in the age group of 31-50 years.

With respect to gender, 278 respondents (73%) are Male and 102 (27%) respondents are Female. It reveals that majority of the respondents 73% are Male.

As regards occupation, 102 (27%) respondents are Government Servants, 91(24%) are doing Business, 82(22%) are engaged in profession, 50 (13%) are in Private Sector and the rest of the respondents are Household and Self-Employed. It is evident from the table that 73% of the respondents are engaged in Business, Profession and Government sector.

From the table it is understood that 171(45%) of the respondents are graduates, 105 (28%) are Post Graduates 58(15%) have school level education and 10% are below school level.

So it can be inferred that majority of the respondents (73%) have graduation.

Delivering quality service is one of the major challenges in the retail sectors. Quality is the key to achieve customer satisfaction. Quality is a dynamic state associated with products, services, people and environments that meets or exceeds expectations. The following tables show the satisfaction level of the customers on various dimensions of service quality.

Table No:2 Satisfaction level on Tangibles

Tangibles	Mean Value	Rank
Attractiveness	3.86	4
Arrangement	3.49	7
One Stop Shopping	4.21	2
Parking facility	3.35	8
Comforts	3.58	6
Hygienic	3.82	5
Time allowed	4.08	3
Location	4.38	1

Source: Primary Data

The above Table reveals that among the different tangible factors, the customers gave first priority to Location, followed by One – stop shopping, Time allowed, Attractiveness and

Hygienic comforts, Arrangements and Parking facility got Sixth, Seventh and Eight Rank. It is clear from the table that Location, One stop shopping and Time allowed played an important role for the satisfaction of customers.

Table No: 3 Satisfaction level on Reliability

Reliability	Mean Value	Rank
Service	3.98	2
Door delivery	3.61	5
No hidden price	3.44	6
Less than MRP	3.92	3
Payment	3.77	4
Satisfied on availability of products	4.14	1

Source: Primary Data

The above Table 3 shows that the first rank given by the customer is Availability of products, the second rank for Service, the factors Less than MRP, Payment, Door delivery and No hidden price got third, fourth, fifth and sixth rank. From this it is clear that Availability of products and Service occupied a pre dominant role as compared to other factors in the service quality dimension of reliability.

Table No:4 Satisfaction level on Responsiveness

Responsiveness	Mean Value	Rank
Knowledge to answer customer question	3.82	6
Respond to customer	4.17	3
Individual attention towards customer	4.26	1
Answering over telephone	3.99	4
Proper instruction	4.23	2
Staff members are helpful and courteous	3.96	5

Source: Primary data

It is understood from the above table that Individual attention towards customer acquired first rank followed by Proper Instruction, Respond to customer obtained third rank and Answering over telephone got fourth rank. Courteous and Answering the customer questions ranks fifth and sixth respectively. It is clear from the table that Individual attention towards customer and Proper

Instruction factors played an important role for the customers in respect of service quality dimensions of Responsiveness.

Table No:5 Satisfaction level on Assurance

Assurance	Mean Value	Rank
Solving customers problem	3.67	6
Exchange for defective goods	3.66	7
Billing and checking	3.76	5
Freshness of products	4.10	3
Reasonable Price	4.46	1
Variety of Products	4.26	2
Innovative service	3.95	4

Source: Primary data

Table No.5 reveals that the customers gave first preference to Reasonable Price, second for Variety of products, third for Freshness of products, Innovative service obtained fourth rank, Billing and checking got fifth rank, solving customers problem and Exchange for defective goods obtained sixth and seventh rank respectively. From this it is clear that among the different factors, the customers preferred Reasonable price, Variety of products and Freshness of product more as compared to other factors.

Table No.6 Satisfaction level on Empathy

Empathy	Mean Value	Rank
Ensure quality goods	4.33	1
Items offered are same as catalogue	4.15	3
Provision of good quality bags and customer care	4.08	4
Operating hours	4.18	2
Offering special facilities during festival period	3.97	5

Source: Primary data

It is evident from the above table that Ensure quality goods got first rank followed by Operating hours. Items offered are same as catalogue got third rank Provision of good quality bags and customer care got fourth rank and Offering special facilities during festival period got fifth rank. From this it is clear that the factors Quality goods and Operating hours played a pre

dominant role while satisfying the customers as compared to other factors.

In order to know the association between the respondents' age and customer satisfaction towards service quality the following hypothesis is framed.

H₀: There is no significant association between respondents' age and customer satisfaction towards service quality dimensions.

Statistical tool: "Chi-square" test.

Table: 7 Association between Respondents' Age and Customer Satisfaction towards Service Quality Dimensions.

Customer Satisfaction towards Service Quality	Age				Statistical Inference
	Below 30 years (N:61)	30 to 40 years (N:142)	41 to 50 years (N:98)	Above 5 years (N:79)	
Tangibles					$X^2=364.4$ df=3 p<0.001 Significant
Low level	0	4	98	79	
High level	61	138	0	0	
Reliability					$X^2=346.3$ df=3 p<0.001 Significant
Low level	0	9	98	79	
High level	61	133	0	0	
Responsiveness					$X^2=294.1$ df=3 p<0.001 Significant
Low level	0	0	69	79	
High level	61	142	29	0	
Assurance					$X^2=349.8$ df=3 p<0.001 Significant
Low level	0	8	98	79	
High level	61	134	0	0	
Empathy					$X^2=282.7$ df=3 p<0.001 Significant
Low level	0	0	27	79	
High level	61	142	71	0	

The above summary table reveals that there is a significant association between the various dimensions of service quality - Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy and customer satisfaction. With respect to Tangibles the value is ($x^2=364.4$, p<0.001), for Reliability ($x^2=346.3$, p<0.001), as regards responsiveness ($x^2=294.1$, p<0.001), for Assurance ($x^2=349.8$, p<0.001) and for Empathy ($x^2=282.7$, p<0.001) while analysing the satisfaction level of retail store with respect to age factor, the respondents gave first priority to Tangibles, followed by Assurance, Reliability, Responsiveness and Empathy.

H₁: It is found that there is a significant association between respondents age and customer satisfaction towards various dimension of service quality.

Hence null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted.

To know the association between respondents monthly income and customers' satisfaction towards service quality, the following hypothesis is framed.

H₀: There is no association between respondents income and customer satisfaction towards various dimensions of service quality

Statistical Tool: "Chi-square" Test.

Table-8 Association between Respondents Income and customer satisfaction towards service quality dimensions.

S. No	Customer Satisfaction towards Service Quality	Monthly income				Statistical Inference
		Up to Rs.20000 (N:86)	Rs.20001 to Rs.30000 (N:94)	Rs.30001 to Rs.40000 (N:84)	Above Rs.40000 (N:116)	
1	Tangibles					$X^2=321.1$ df=3 p<0.001 Significant
	Low level	0	0	65	116	
	High level	86	94	19	0	
	Reliability					$X^2=333.3$ df=3 p<0.001 Significant
Low level	0	0	70	116		
	High level	86	94	14	0	
	Responsiveness					$X^2=296.7$ df=3 p<0.001 Significant
Low level	0	0	32	116		
	High level	86	94	52	0	
	Assurance					$X^2=330.7$ df=3 p<0.001 Significant
Low level	0	0	69	116		
	High level	86	94	15	0	
	Empathy					$X^2=334.6$ df=3 p<0.001 Significant
Low level	0	0	0	106		
	High level	86	94	84	10	

The above table explains the customer satisfaction towards various service quality dimensions which are significantly associated with the income of the respondents. The result shows that in the case of Tangibles, the value is ($\chi^2=321.1$, $p<0.001$), with respect to Reliability ($\chi^2=333.3$, $p<0.001$), for Responsiveness ($\chi^2=296.7$, $p<0.001$), for Assurance ($\chi^2=330.7$, $p<0.001$) and for Empathy ($\chi^2=334.6$, $p<0.001$). The outcome which has been obtained from the analysis shows that all the service quality dimensions and income of the respondents are positively associated. With respect to Income variables, the level of satisfaction is more for Empathy, Reliability and Assurance as compared to other quality dimension.

H₁: It is found that there is a significant association between respondents monthly income and customer satisfaction towards various dimensions of service quality.

Hence null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted.

In order to know the relationship between Gender and customer satisfaction towards various service quality dimension. The following hypothesis is framed.

H₀: There is no significance difference between respondents' gender and customer satisfaction towards various dimensions of service quality.

Statistical Tool: "Z" test.

Table:9 'Z' test between the respondents gender and customer satisfaction towards various dimensions of service quality.

S.No	Customer Satisfaction towards Service Quality	\bar{X}	S.D	Statistical Inference
1.	Tangibles			z=27.776 p<0.001 Significant
	Male (N:278)	38.7446	5.39182	
	Female (N:102)	21.4216	5.37585	
	Reliability			z=29.209 p<0.001 Significant
Male (N:278)	26.2230	3.56283		
	Female (N:102)	13.6863	4.07839	
	Responsiveness			z=25.153 p<0.001 Significant
Male (N:278)	27.0612	3.08599		
	Female (N:102)	16.1373	5.15318	
	Assurance			z=27.496 p<0.001 Significant
Male (N:278)	31.3597	3.77242		
	Female (N:102)	18.2843	4.91185	
	Empathy			z=23.962 p<0.001 Significant
Male (N:278)	22.8921	2.38434		
	Female (N:102)	14.7941	4.03779	

From the above table it is evident that there is a highly significant difference between respondents' gender and Tangibles ($z=27.776$, $p<0.001$), mean score indicates that male possessed higher level (mean=38.7446) when compared to female (mean=21.4216) with respect to Tangibles. Similarly, there is a highly significant difference between respondents' gender and Reliability ($z=29.209$, $p<0.001$), mean score indicates that male possessed higher level (mean=26.2230) when compared to female (mean=13.6863) with respect to Reliability. Further, there is a highly significant difference between respondents' gender and Responsiveness ($z=25.153$, $p<0.001$), mean score indicates that male possessed higher level (mean=27.0612) when compared to female (mean=16.1373) with respect to Responsiveness. In addition, there is a highly significant difference between respondents' gender and Assurance ($z=27.496$, $p<0.001$), mean score indicates that male possessed higher level (mean=31.3597) when compared to female (mean=18.2843) with respect

to Assurance. Similarly, there is a highly significant difference between respondents' gender and Empathy ($z=23.962$, $p=0.001$), mean score indicates that male possessed higher level (mean=22.8921) when compared to female (mean=14.7941) with respect to Empathy.

H₁: It is found that there is a significant difference between respondents' gender and customer satisfaction towards various dimensions of service quality.

Hence null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted.

In order to know the relationship between Educational qualification and customer satisfaction towards various service quality dimension. The following hypothesis is framed.

H₀: There is no significance difference between respondents' Educational qualification and customer satisfaction towards various dimensions of service quality.

Statistical Tool: One way Anova test.

Table:10 One-way Anova test between the respondents educational qualification and customer satisfaction towards various dimensions of service quality.

S.No	Source	Df	SS	MS	\bar{X}	Statistical Inference
1.	Tangibles Between Groups Within Groups	4 375	31203.193 2161.396	7800.798 5.764	G1=15.8462 G2=24.6034 G3=42.6433 G4=32.6000 G5=28.0000	F=1353.0 P<0.001 Significant
2.	Reliability Between Groups Within Groups	4 375	15860.613 1063.713	3965.153 2.837	G1=9.1026 G2=16.2241 G3=28.7018 G4=22.3048 G5=20.0000	F=1398.0 P<0.001 Significant
3.	Responsiveness Between Groups Within Groups	4 375	13178.270 1046.412	3294.567 2.790	G1=10.6410 G2=19.3276 G3=29.3509 G4=23.4286 G5=22.0000	F=1181.0 P<0.001 Significant
4.	Assurance Between Groups Within Groups	4 375	17568.310 1568.140	4392.078 4.182	G1=13.3077 G2=21.0517 G3=34.0292 G4=27.1333 G5=25.0000	F=1050.0 P<0.001 Significant

5.	Empathy Between Groups Within Groups	4 375	7389.254 725.617	1847.314 1.935	G1=10.6410 G2=17.2241 G3=24.6608 G4=20.0857 G5=19.0000	F=954.695 P<0.001 Significant
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G1=High school, G2=Higher secondary, G3=Under Graduate, G4=Post Graduate, G5=Diploma

The above Table explains the customer satisfaction towards various service quality dimensions which are significantly associated with Educational qualification of the respondents. The result shows that in the case of tangibles, the value is (F=1353.0, P<0.001) with respect to reliability, (F=1398.0, P<0.001), for responsiveness (F=1181.0, P<0.001) for assurance (F=1050.0, P<0.001) and for empathy (F=954.695), P<0.001). The outcome which has been obtained from the analysis shows that all the service quality dimensions and Educational qualification of the respondents are positively associated.

H₁: It is found that there is a significant difference between respondents' Educational qualification and customers' satisfaction towards various dimensions of service quality. Hence null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted.

III. FINDINGS

- 63 percent of the respondents fall in the age group of 31-50 years.
- Majority of the respondents 73 percent are male.
- The study reveals that 73 percent of the respondents are engaged in Business, Profession and Government sector.
- It is revealed from the analysis that Location, Availability of Products, Individual Attention towards Customers, Reasonable Price and Good Quality Goods provide more satisfaction to the customers with regard to Service Quality dimensions Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy respectively.

- There is a significant association between Respondents' Age, Income, Gender and Educational Qualification and Customer Satisfaction towards Service Quality dimensions Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy.

IV. CONCLUSION

Retailing provides an important link between producers and consumers in modern economy. The Indian Retail Sector is presently experience exponential growth and it is one of the fastest growing sectors at global level. The study reveals that Location, Variety of products, Reasonable price, Individual attention to customers and one stop shopping played an important role in satisfying the customer needs. From the study it is found out that the retailers failed to provide sufficient space for parking facility, prompt door delivery and quickly solving the customer problems. In modern days satisfying the customer is the key element for the success of retailers. Customers are concerned not only with merchandise and promotional schemes but also with the provision of above facilities. To expand the customer base and customer loyalty, organised retailers should pay proper attention to the above factors to enhance customer satisfaction for long term existence and survival for organised retail shop.

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