

“A STUDY ON THE CUSTOMERS’ SATISFACTION TOWARDS THE SERVICES OF RETAIL STORES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE CITY”**M.Nithya**assistant Professor, Department of Commerce,
PSG College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore-641014.**Abstract:**

A marketplace is a location where goods and services are exchanged. Retail is the sale of goods and services from individuals or businesses to the end-user. Customer is the one who uses the products and services and judges the quality of those products and services. Customer satisfaction is defined as "the number of customers, or percentage of total customers, whose reported experience with a firm, its products, or its services (ratings) exceeds specified satisfaction goals." This study emphasis retailer can use different retail mix to satisfy their customers. A good format will lend a hand to display products well and entice the target customers to spawn sales. When a retailer does not live up to the customers’ expectations, customers perceive a gap between the firm and the customers leading to customer dissatisfaction. The effects can be dramatic for a company. Companies can lose loyal customers, forcing companies to expensively acquire new customers and decreasing profitability.

Introduction

Marketing is the process by which companies determine what products or services may be of interest to customers, and the strategy to use in sales, communications and business development. A retailer purchases goods or products in large quantities from manufacturers or directly through a wholesaler, and then sells smaller quantities to the consumer for a profit. Customer is the one who uses the products and services and judges the quality of those products and services. Customer satisfaction is defined as "the number of customers, or percentage of total customers, whose reported experience with a firm, its products, or its services (ratings) exceeds specified satisfaction goals." "Customer satisfaction provides a leading indicator of consumer purchase intentions and loyalty."

Scope Of The Study

Though the main objective of this study to analyze the customer satisfaction, the scope of the study extends to the following related aspects viz., sources of awareness, level of awareness, factors influenced level of satisfaction regarding services rendered by retailers, problems faced by customer during and after purchase.

Area Of The Study

The researcher has taken efforts to cover all the parts of the Coimbatore city for the collection of the primary data so that the result is not biased. Since the population size is infinite, the researcher had to limit the sample size. The sample has to be evenly distributed and unbiased. The whole city of Coimbatore is divided into 4 geographical zones for this purpose. It was ensured that the samples are evenly distributed in each of this zone. The following table shows the pattern of the samples taken zone- wise.

Objectives Of The Study

1. To analyze the sources of information and awareness of the customers about retail stores.
2. To analyze the customers preference and buying behavior.
3. To analyze the influential factors for purchase of product from particular retail stores.
4. To find out the level of satisfaction of the customers on retail stores.
5. To find out the problems faced by customers and to offer suggestions based on findings.

Research Methodology

DATA SOURCE: Primary data and Secondary data.

SAMPLE SIZE : 200 respondents

Sampling Method: Simple convenient sampling.

Statistical Tools

a. SIMPLE PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

b. t-TEST

c. ANOVA

d. POST HOC TESTS

e. GARRETT'S RANKING METHOD

Review of Literature

Zameer, Asif (2011), the study reveals that the first major value which the customers perceive very important for the modern food and grocery retailers to provide is the product choice. With large merchandise assortment available under one-roof, the urban customer can fulfill most of their monthly requirement in one shopping trip and avoid making frequent trips to various kirana stores. This value will overcome their increased cost in the acquisition of products from the modern retailer. It is this factor which is likely to make hypermarkets or large supermarkets likely to be more successful in food and grocery category in urban India. Additionally, the factor and discriminant analysis indicates that modern retail outlets have to strengthen their store management skills to foster the customer's preference for them. Proper ambience, neat visual merchandizing, regular product availability, complimentary product layout and efficient check-out process will enhance the shopping experience for the customer's. Another value-enhancer for the modern retailers can be extended value-added services (like phone-order and home delivery), goods exchange or return policy, packaging services, carry bags, etc., Finally, an important factor which can lead to increased patronage at the modern retailer is customer relationship management activities like loyalty bonus / discounts, special customer cards, free-parking facility and so on.

Zameer, Asif, Mukherjee and Deepankar, "Food and Grocery Retail: Patronage Behaviour of Indian Urban Consumer",

South Asian Journal of Management, Vol. 18, Issue. 1, pp. 119 – 148, January – March 2011.

Suresh Chandar. G.S., Chandrasekharan Rajendran and R.N.Anantharaman, (2012) in their study on "The relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction factor specific approach" observed that the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction has received considerable academic attention in the past few years. But the nature of the exact relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction is still shrouded with uncertainty. The results have indicated that the two constructs are indeed independent but are closely related, implying that an increase in one is likely to lead to an increase in another.

Suresh Chandar. G.S., Chandrasekharan Rajendran and R.N. Anantharaman , Faculty, Indian Institute of Technology, Chennai "The relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction factor specific approach" ,www.emerald insight.com.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

T-test

Independent sample test – ‘z’ test

S.NO	GENDER	MEAN	Z	Significant (p)
1	MALE	40.6164	1.406	0.161
2	FEMALE	42.5827	1.377	0.171

Source: Primary data

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05%.

Significance (p) >0.05 is the level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. It is concluded that both male and female have same level of opinion on customer satisfaction.

Anova

In this study also overall satisfaction is to be compared on the basis of respondents, education qualification, occupation, no. of earning members in a family. Therefore ANOVA technique is to be applied.

TEST: TABLE OF MEANS

S.NO	INCOME LEVEL	MEAN
1	Below 10,000	44.4545
2	10,000 to 20,000	44.1525
3	20,001 to 30,000	38.7872
4	30,001 to 40,000	41.7179
5	Above 40,000	38.6818
	TOTAL	41.8650

Source: Primary data

ANOVA (ONE-WAY)

S.NO	PARTICULARS	SUM OF SQUARES	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Between groups	1199.004	4	299.751	3.452	0.009
2	Within groups	16932.351	195	86.833		
	TOTAL	18131.355	199			

Since significance (p) >0.05 is the level of significance. Here, significance (p) < 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis (h0) is rejected. It is concluded that respondents belonging to various income levels have different level of opinion on overall satisfaction. So, POST HOC TEST is to be applied.

Post Hoc Tests

Since we reject null hypothesis (h0), to identify which group differ significantly, Post hoc test has been done.

Source: Primary data

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

S.N O	Family Monthly Income		Meandifference (i-j)	Significance
	i	J		
1	10,000 – 20,000	20,001 – 30,000	5.36531	0.029

From the Post hoc test table, it is found that 10,000 – 20,000 income groups have higher satisfaction than 20,001 – 30,000 income group respondents.

Garrett’s Ranking

Respondents were asked to rate (rank) several (items) attributes on satisfaction. The objective is to find out which attribute or item influenced them to get more satisfaction. To find out this, Garrett’s ranking method is used.

From the above table, it observed that comfort and availability of all products are ranked I by respondents and branded products are ranked II , variety ranked as III, availability of all products ranked as IV, reasonable price ranked as V, nearest store ranked as VI, location ranked as VII, spacious ranked as VIII, parking facility ranked as IX, prestigious ranked as X, lighting facility ranked as XI, free air facility ranked as XII, effective advertisement ranked as XIII, which influences the respondents towards satisfaction.

It is inferred that the factors comfort and availability of all products are ranked I and advertisement ranked last (XIII).

Findings, Suggestions & Conclusion

Findings

The following are the major findings of the study:

1. Most (49.5%) of the respondents get awareness on the retail stored from friends and relatives.
2. Most (22.5%) of the respondents have come to know the retail stores through TV advertisement.
3. Majority (50.5%) of the respondents are aware about the retail stores in more than two years.
4. Majority (52.5%) of the respondents are buying their products from departmental stores.
5. Majority (66.5%) of the respondents have the habit of visiting the retail stores at evening.
6. Majority (58%) of the respondents purchase the products on monthly basis.
7. Majority (more than 50%) of the respondents has been inferred that cosmetics, fancy, and gift items, dairy products, fresh vegetables and fruits, groceries and other cooking

items and stationery items constitutes a major item of purchase for the respondents in retail stores.

8. Majority (59.5%) of the customers are not accepting the door delivery service.
 9. Most (33.0%) of the respondents are not required the door delivery service.
 10. Majority (52.5%) of the respondents are prefer to buy the own labeled products of the retail stores.
 11. Most (25.5%) of the respondents highly preferred own label products.
 12. Most (45.5%) of the respondents are accepting the discounts which help them to save their money.
 13. Majority of 64.5% respondents feel that the prices of the products are moderate in retail stores.
 14. Majority 78.0% of the respondents make their payment by cash to the retail stores.
 15. Majority (55.5%) of the respondents have no idea to change their present retail store.
 16. Majority (57.0%) are influenced by self to purchase products from particular retail store.
 17. Most (more than 30%) of the respondents are satisfied in quality, package, availability of products, varieties, delivery, store appearance, providing information, attracting and attending the customers, convincing the customers and behavior of salesmen.
 18. Majority (54.0%) of the respondents feel good in customer treatment in retail stores.
 19. Majority (91.5%) of the respondents faced problems at the time purchasing the products.
 20. Majority (more than 50%) of the respondents are not faced any problems while purchasing the products in retail stores.
 21. The results of the t-test revealed both male and female have same level of opinion on customer satisfaction.
- The following results are derived through the ANOVA method.
22. There is significant difference between the mean agreeability opinion scores on retail stores and the level of education of the respondents.
 23. There is significant difference between the mean agreeability opinion scores on retail stores and the occupation of the respondents.
 24. From the Post hoc test table, it is found that 10,000 – 20,000 income groups have higher satisfaction than 20,001 – 30,000 income group respondents.

Suggestions

Based on the findings given above, the following suggestions are provided for the retailers.

1. Retail stores should provide effective advertisement through TV which will easily reach majority of the customers.
2. Majority of the respondents are not accepting the door delivery service due to the fear of safety and timeliness. So, the retail stores should give better conscious on their customers which make them from their service as an efficient satisfaction.
3. Majority of the respondents are preferred to buy the own labeled products from the retail stores. So, the retail stores must produce their own labeled products with good quality at fair price.
4. Most of the respondents are accepting the discounts which help them to save their money. The retail stores can provide discounts to increase their sales and the level of satisfaction of the customers.
5. Retail stores have to concentrate price determination on the products, which help their sales increase.
6. Retailers should concentrate on regular availability of products to attract the customers to avoid their ideas to switch over to other stores.
7. Customers are just satisfied at the time of purchasing in retail stores. For their highly satisfaction, retailers must improve their service.

8. Most of the respondents faced the problems like non-availability of products, no proper response in the shop, improper arrangements, long waiting for payment, difficult to exchange products after purchase. Retail stores should take proper care on above mentioned problems.
9. According to the study, reasonable price ranked as fifth, after comfort, branded products, variety and availability of all products. So, the retail stores should concentrate on fixing the reasonable price.
10. Concentrate the spacious allocation on products and walking space.
11. Provide better parking facility to avoid tension of their vehicle.
12. Lighting and free air facility should make their customers feel better to purchase.
13. Advertisement ranked last(XIII), so the retail stores should concentrate to provide frequent and attractive advertisements in most popular media television, to attract the customers. It will sure to increase their sales.

Conclusion

While India presents a large market opportunity given the number and increasing purchasing power of consumers, there are significant challenges as well given that over 90% of trade is conducted through independent local stores. Retailers are the closest to the point of purchase and have access to a wealth of information on customer shopping behavior. Retailers can opt for a format as each provides different retail mix to its customers based on their customer demographics, lifestyle and purchase behavior. A good format will lend a hand to display products well and entice the target customers to spawn sales. When a retailer does not live up to the customers' expectations, customers perceive a gap between the firm and the customers leading to customer dissatisfaction. The effects can be dramatic for a company. Companies can lose loyal customers, forcing companies to expensively acquire new customers and decreasing profitability. As the world relating has moved on from the age of customer satisfaction to the age of customer delight, the organizations are remodeling their strategies around the consumer needs with the aim of bringing him back and keeping him for life. Understanding their evolving needs, aspirations and life styles with the underlying they to success for any retailer. Then the retailers should concentrate of researching customer preference, developing value proposition, establishing retail networks and supply chain. Also, the retailers has to take adequate steps to go for collaborate advertising and sales promotion.

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