

A Study on the Effectiveness of Services Offered by Supermarkets in Nagpur City

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Abstract

The current paper reviews the efficiency of services provided by the supermarkets within Nagpur City with reference to customer perception and satisfaction. Primary data was obtained based on the relevant secondary data provided by other journals and reports, and included 150 respondents using a structured questionnaire based on the descriptive research design. The dimensions of key areas of service quality that are assessed by the study include the cleanliness in the store, availability of products, staff behaviour, efficiency in billing, pricing, and the layout of the store. The results show that the supermarkets are doing well in ensuring the areas are clean, the products are in stock, and the shopping environment is satisfactory leading to a high customer satisfaction. There is need though on improvement in other areas like billing efficiency and responsiveness of staff. The paper also establishes product variety and pricing to be the most determinants when it comes to customer preference. On the whole, the study emphasizes that even though Nagpur supermarkets are effective in service delivery, operational and interpersonal aspects of operations should be improved on a continuing basis to increase customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

Keywords: Supermarkets, Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction, Retail Service Effectiveness, Consumer Behaviour, Organized Retail.

Introduction

In the recent years, the retail sector and especially the supermarket segment has been transformed greatly by the urbanization, shift in the lifestyles of the consumers and increasing competition. The supermarkets have become a prevalent format of organized retail as they provide a full range of goods, decent prices, and add to the shopping convenience in a single building. The supermarkets in such fast growing urban centers like Nagpur are very instrumental in establishing the consumer purchasing behavior like incorporating products with service efficiency.

Supermarket service is a multidimensional aspect which captures issues like store layout, employee behavior, efficiency of bills, availability of products and pricing strategies and integration of technology. Today consumers aside from good product quality

also demand the overall shopping experience and therefore service delivery is an important factor of customer satisfaction and loyalty. Research has shown that quality of services does play a major role in consumer perceptions and behavioral intentions such as repeat purchases and word-of-mouth.

Retail service quality (RSQ), which is based on SERVQUAL model has gained wide applications in evaluating customer perception in supermarket environment. Such important dimensions as reliability, responsiveness, physical features, and personal interaction individually determine the perceived value of services provided by supermarkets. The Indian market, on the one hand, has been rising steadily with the growth in the disposable income, migration to the cities and transformation of consumption pattern in the organized retail sector. This increase in scale

has made the competition between the supermarket chains tougher, and there is a need to have a more intensive attention to customer-centric service strategy.

Although supermarkets have increased in number in the tier-II cities such as Nagpur, there is yet need to systematically assess the effectiveness with which the store provides services as per the consumer opinion. These perceptions are also crucial to understand how their operations can be better than other retailers and customers in order to secure long-term sustainability. Thus, the current research paper is going to conduct a discussion of the effectiveness of services provided by supermarkets in Nagpur City by looking at consumer perceptions and determining the major dimensions of quality service.

Literature Review

The research of service effectiveness in supermarkets is based on three major constructs namely service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. The interaction of these variables in retail settings has been studied by a number of researchers.

Early research on the service quality in retailing considered customer perception as an important factor in gauging service efficiency. As it is argued by Vazquez et al. (2001), the nature of customer assessment is the subject of opinion, thus conceptualizing retail service quality as a multidimensional concept comprising physical, reliability, face-to-face contacts and store guidelines. On the same note, Siu and Chow (2003) determined the following important dimensions, which are trustworthiness, personal interaction and physical environment as key determinants of supermarket retailing service quality.

Customer satisfaction is one of the primary consequences of service quality and has been found to be consistent. Magi (1996) established that the level of customer

satisfaction and patronage behavior in grocery retail stores depend on customer perceptions of service quality. Additional empirical studies indicate that customer satisfaction has strong relationship with store performance and sales meaning that it is strategic to retailers.

Recent research has broadened this framework where the effects of particular dimensions of service quality were used to determine how they influence customer behavior. According to Slack, Singh, and Sharma (2020), empathy and customer-oriented behavior are important in improving the level of customer satisfaction, as the latter impact positively on the repurchase intention and word-of-mouth communication. Likewise, Chand (2025) found price, products quality and place as major aspects that would influence customer satisfaction, and the quality of the service offering also supports the retention strategies.

Mittal et al. (2013) noted that service quality is one of the main distinction variables in organized retail, and the store image and service provision have a significant impact on consumer intentions in the behavioral context of the Indian setting. Research on Indian supermarkets, including that carried out as part of Mysore and Chennai, has demonstrated the relevance of cleanliness, selection, price, and contact with the employees in influencing the levels of customer satisfaction.

The use of technology has also become part of service delivery to the supermarket. The available data on self-service technologies suggests the following: effective systems of checkouts and online payments will allow getting more customers and increasing their satisfaction. Also, contemporary retail is focused on customer experience enhancement by operation effective and service innovation.

Moreover, the current studies point out that the quality of services provided is not only a

determinant of satisfaction but also a controller of customer loyalty and their intention to behave. There is high customer retention, price insensitivity, and brand perception, which is as a result of high service quality. The use of structural equation modeling has validated that the value, perceived quality, and expectations all play a role in creating overall customer satisfaction in a supermarket environment.

Despite the existing extensive literature on the quality of service provided by the supermarket all over the world, there is a low amount of empirical literature involving the specific tier-II cities like Nagpur in India. There has been a majority of studies in urban or global locations, which are not bound to adequately capture local consumer behavior and expectation. Thus, the given work tries to fill this gap by examining the efficiency of supermarket services in Nagpur City and contains information about local consumer perceptions and practices of service delivery.

Objectives:

This paper seeks to determine how well services provided by supermarkets in Nagpur City have been received based on customer views, critical service quality area dimensions, the effect they have on customer satisfaction, and what affects customer preferences, loyalty, and shopping experience to offer the insights on how retail service delivery and performance may be enhanced.

Methodology

The research takes the descriptive type of research design to determine the effectiveness of the supermarket services in Nagpur City. The primary data will be collected using a structured questionnaire that will be used to collect data on the consumers who visit the selected supermarkets and secondary data will be obtained in the form of journals and reports. Convenience sampling technique will be used to select a sample of respondents of 150.

Results and Discussion

Internal analysis of the data consisting of 150 respondents was done by percentage analysis and mean score analysis to determine the perceptions of the customers on whether the supermarkets of Nagpur City are effective in providing their services.

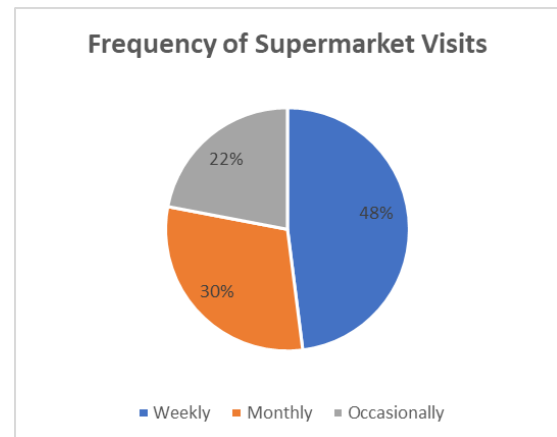


Fig. 1 Frequency of Visit to Supermarkets

Almost a quarter of the respondents (48 percent) shop in supermarkets once per week meaning that they heavily rely on supermarkets to fulfill daily and household requirements.

Table 1 Customer Perception on Service Quality Dimensions

Service Dimension	Mean Score
Store Cleanliness	4.3
Product Availability	4.1
Staff Behaviour	3.8
Billing Efficiency	3.6
Pricing & Offers	3.9
Store Layout	4.0

The highest score was on store cleanliness (4.3) and product availability (4.1), which implies a very high record of hygiene and stock availability. Efficiency in billing (3.6) was low in comparison, indicating that the area can be enhanced in terms of checkout procedures.



Fig. 2 Level of Satisfaction

Most of respondents (76.7) had satisfied or highly satisfied, so, overall attitude towards supermarket services in Nagpur City was positive.

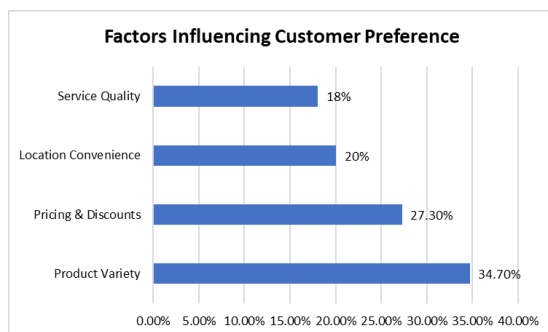


Fig. 3 Factors affecting preference of consumers

The most significant factor (34.7% intimate apparel) was product variety then there was pricing, and discounts (27.3 part). This means that assortment and value of money are dominant factors among the consumers in the process of selecting supermarkets.

Discussion

The paper contains the results of the research which point towards the fact that supermarkets in Nagpur City are generally successful in providing customers with high-level services, especially when it comes to cleanliness of the store, availability of the goods, and the attitude at the shopping site. The results are consistent with the existing literature that identifies the significance of physical aspects and merchandise assortment as crucial elements of

retail service quality that affect customer satisfaction. Supermarkets have done well in producing a convenient and clean shopping environment and this is reflected by the high mean scores of cleanliness and layout in the store, which is a major factor of consumer preference in structured retailing.

According to the study, also a high percentage of customers patronizes the supermarkets weekly which implies that the consumer buying pattern is changing towards a structured retail outlet. The trend is an indication of growing urbanization and change in lifestyles with consumers demanding places of shopping that are one-stop shops providing them with diversity and convenience. In addition, the fact that the middle-income group of the respondents is dominant indicates that the supermarkets are targeting this group well with competitive pricing and promotions.

The level of customer satisfaction was discovered to be generally high with over one-fourth of the respondents stating that they were satisfied with the services at the supermarkets. This demonstrates the relationship between quality of service and customer satisfaction which was put forward in models of retail service quality. Some of the dimensions like the efficiency of billing and the behaviour of the staff were however rated relatively lower. It means that there are inefficiencies in the operations of the checkout counters and that there is a need to train the employees to be more responsive to the customer and enhance the customer interaction training.

The research further establishes variety of products and the price as the most effective variables which influence customer choice. This observation aligns with the existing literature that postulates the high value-consciousness of consumers in the emerging market besides being highly likely to prioritize assortment and affordability. Although service

quality is a supportive factor, the joint influence of variety and price competitiveness is the contributing factor to the choice of the store and the repetitive visit.

All in all, it can be argued in the discussion that though the supermarkets in Nagpur are doing well in the major areas of the services, the areas of operational efficiency and human resource management can be improved. Customer satisfaction and loyalty can also be enhanced by increasing the speed of billing, waiting time, and responsiveness of the staff. These teachings offer useful implications to supermarket managers to perfect their service delivery methods and maintain competitive edge in a developing retail environment.

Conclusion

The research ends up concluding that in Nagpur City, supermarkets are largely successful in offering services that satisfy the expectation of the customers especially with regards to cleanliness of the stores, availability of products and ease with which customers shop. A substantial percentage of the customers have shown that they are satisfied with offered services which shows that organized retail formats are effectively serving the changing needs of customers. Nevertheless, there are some areas that need further work like efficiency associated with billing and responsiveness of staff. The paper also points out that the product differentiation and price takes a leading role in shaping customer preferences, which makes the value-based retailing tactic crucial. All in all, supermarkets are doing a good job, though constantly need to adjust their performance to increase customer experience and quality of services.

Recommendations

The Nagpur supermarkets need to be concerned with the enhancement of operational efficiency specifically in the

streamlining of the billing operations by introducing new digital technologies like self-checkout queues and online payments to minimize the waiting time as much as possible. The employees training programs needs to be reinforced in order to achieve improved customer interaction, responsiveness, and orientation of services. Retailers also may not stop raising product diversity and providing customers with competitive pricing strategies, such as discounts and reward programs to gain and keep customers. Also, regular customer feedback systems are expected to be adopted to detect any service gaps and to maintain the ever-enhancement of service delivery to customers, which contributes to the improvement of customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

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