

Retail Service Quality Dimensions In Food And Grocery Segment: A Review

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Abstract: This paper aims at reviewing the retail service quality dimensions in food and grocery segment. They can be broadly classified into physical (materialistic attributes) and non-physical (materialistic attributes). The non-physical aspects can be improvised by scheduling quality training for sales personnel, appropriate complaint handling and customer friendly strategies. The physical aspects can be strengthened by developing infrastructure, provision of basic amenities and comfortable store environment. Marketing mix variables viz. Price attributes, Product attributes and Promotional strategies can be considered. Review concludes by discussion Managerial implications.

Keywords: Organized retail, Retail Service Quality, Service Quality Dimensions, Unorganised Retail.

1. Introduction

1.1 RSQS : A Service Quality Scale

Dabholkar, Thorpe and Rentz (1996) found out that retail service quality follows a hierarchical factor structure. According to this model, retail service quality can be represented at three levels i.e a dimensional level, a sub-dimensional level and an overall level. The Retail Service Quality Scale (RSQS) proposed by Dabholkar, Thrope and Rentz (1996) measured retail service quality rendered to the customers and suggested the means to understand the customers level of perceptions on various dimensions of service quality and identified five dimensions of (RSQS)

1. Physical aspects
2. Reliability
3. Personal interactions

4. Problem solving
5. Policy

They also segregated each dimension into sub- dimensions to combine related attributes into sub- groups.

- The first dimension – physical aspects – is related with the appearance of the physical facilities and the ease provided to the customer by the layout of these physical facilities.
- The second dimension is reliability which has two sub – dimensions and other variations. Customers view reliability as a combination of keeping promises and doing it right(Dabholkar, Thorpe and Rentz 1996).
- The third dimension is personal interaction which has two sub- dimensions – service employees inspiring confidence and being courteous/ helpful. These sub- dimensions are very closely related and interpret as to how the customer is treated by the employee.
- The fourth dimension is problem solving which addresses the problems related with the handling of goods returned and exchanges as well as complaints.
- The fifth dimension is policy pertains to those factors which are directly influenced by storepolicy.

Thus, concluding all aspects the proposed measurement tool by Dabholkar, Thrope and Rentz (1996) may be apt for studying retail businesses that offer a mix of services and goods, such as department or speciality stores.

2. Objectives

1. To understand the customer perception of service quality in organized and unorganized retail through review study of the Indian and Foreign researches done in the past to enable retailers adjust their retail settings in accordance with the required service quality dimensions.

2. To identify the bridging variables of the customer perceptions and customer expectations from organized and unorganized retailers with respect to service quality.
3. To add inputs for improvement of the services provided by the organized and unorganised retailers in order to maximise the customer satisfaction.
4. To analyse the common outcomes of the studies to aid the retailers in enhanced understanding of consumer attributes.

3. Research Methodology

Previous Literature on Service quality in retail has been thoroughly reviewed from secondary sources like Indian and International Journals of repute, books, reports, company websites etc. The sources are compiled and in-depth study followed by a thorough analysis was performed. Finally on the basis of review of literature, some innovative factors (Table 1) were found to be considerably significant with regard to service quality of the retail sector.

Table 1 : Factorial Division of Service Quality Variables

Service Quality Dimensions	Sub Dimensions of Service Quality	Factors of Sub Dimensions
Physical Aspect	Appearance	Cool Ambience, Store Lay out
	Convenience	Parking Facility, Travel Distance, Toilets, Drinking Water Facility, Power Supply, Store Timing, Multiple Payment Options, One stop solution
	Salesman Appearance	Look of Salesperson
Reliability	Process Related Security Related	Error Free Billing Fire Fighting Measures, Surveillance

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	Salesperson Related	Product knowledge, Honest Feedback of Products
Personal Interaction	Empathy	Friendly Behaviour, Helpful Nature
	Responsiveness	Quick Payment
Problem Solving	Product Related	Shelf Assortment, Display Boards
	Salesperson Related	Quick problem solving
Policy		Home Delivery, Sales on Credit
Product Attributes		Exchange of Product, Product Quality, Product Range, Product Packaging, Warrantees
Price Attributes		Competitive Price, Price Bundling Offers
Promotional and Retention Strategies	Product Related	Discount Offers.
	Customer Related	Free Gifts on festivals, Special Privileges to old customers.

4. Scope of the Study

1. The Study provides suggestions to the organized retailers for the improvement of their service quality.
2. The study helps the researcher to know how the aspects of customer perception are linked with organised retailing.

3. The study throws light on various service quality dimensions of organised and unorganised retail.

5. Literature Review

Goldman A (2001) explained that retail format has the ability to make the company to earn on investments and recognizes the ability of the sellers. It acts as a driver, which attracts the shoppers.

Turley L Wet al. (2002) concluded that the retail environment created by retail managers is a critical strategic variable. The present paper concentrated on the managerial dimensions of store atmosphere by linking retail strategies and atmospheric design with consumer behaviours and events. The emphasis is about the requirement for retail managers to have specific goals for the store atmosphere in mind before creating a store design.

Bradford Kevin et al. (2004) had written that the retailers desire to connect with networks made of multiple firms so that they can perform business activities such as supply chain management. This research tests a framework showing the effects of conflict in networks and how conflict management can mitigate. A study of 81 simulated networks has been done, which tells that interpersonal and task conflict have a negative effect on network member satisfaction and the desire to be a member of the network.

MoischettD et al. (2006) concluded after a thorough study that build up a system for focused techniques in food retailing Managers of sustenance retail diverts were overviewed to determine the fundamental measurements of game changers that organizations endeavour to accomplish in this industry segment. In a moment study in light of buyers, the focal measurements of retail location observation were examined. Both studies uncover that three fundamental sorts of game changer appear to win in nourishment retailing: (1) value, (2) quality (with an extensive arrangement of value orientated instruments, including client benefit), (3) comfort. We discover quality leadership to be autonomous components which can be accomplished without clashing with each other.

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Gentile C et al. (2007) studied that nowadays the experience factors plays an increasingly significant part in defining the success of a company's offering. This work sheds more or less light on the concept of Customer Experience, and on how the right surroundings and setting for the desired Customer Experience should be produced in such a manner as to conduce to the value creation for customers and the company itself.

Teller C et al. (2008) prepared a report that seeks to lead to a more thorough understanding of the on-site (in vivo) evaluation of retail agglomerations once shoppers have already reached their destination options. To come up with this topic, a modification of more formal concepts of retail attractiveness that considers situational contexts is proposed and empirically examined. The survey contained more than 2,000 on-site interviews of customers of an inner city shopping street and a competing peripheral shopping mall. The results indicate that the tenant mix and the atmosphere exert a major impact on distinct dimensions of perceived attractiveness, unlike parking and accessibility. Furthermore, the findings provide evidence that factors characterizing aspects of the individual shopping situation significantly affect evaluation on-site.

Anand et al. (2009) explained that in spite of the great change in Indian retail format still only 5 percent of the retail market is covered by the organized retail. Unorganized retail formats like open market, Kirana shops and Weekly Bazaars are the major sections of the retail securities industry in India. The priorities and preferences of the customers are also changed according to the retail formats. Therefore, it is hard to predict the attitude of the customers. For an instance, the customers may visit grocery shop either for mass or small purchase.

Sivaraman (2010) examined the impact of organized retailing on unorganized retailing. Granting to the author there are a few important elements which are valued by customers while shopping from any retail outlet like assortment of the products shop proximity, brand choices, price, store ambience, credit availability, store image, and compliments.

Gupta et al. (2012) concluded that Unorganized vicinity of organized retailers have been adversely affected in terms of their volume of commercial enterprise and earnings. Unorganized retail has maintained employment levels, perhaps as a result of competitive reaction. The adverse

unorganized retailers taper off over time. The major components that attract unorganized retailers to consumers are proximity, home delivery, credit sales, loose items, price bargaining, convenient timings and goodwill. Consumers have generally acquired with the emergence of organized outlets through the availability of more dependable quality products, lower prices, one choice of additional marks and products, and new stores. Lower income consumers have saved more from purchases at organized outlets.

Manocha et al. (2012) studied that organized retailing is not a threat to unorganized retail for most of the consumers are loyal towards them and shall never stop to go to conventional Kirana shops. Organized retailing is beneficial for India because it is not alarming to produce conflict with unorganized stores, but restructuring unorganized stores into nascent organized stores. The author has identified the slow pace of development of organized retail in India because it is not alarming to produce conflict with unorganized stores, but restructuring unorganized stores into nascent organized stores. The author has identified the slow pace of development of organized retail in India.

Unnisa (2013) explained that consumer psychology towards supermarkets has focused how people's thoughts, beliefs and perception influence consumer behaviour. The use of consumer psychology is discussed this paper that how it affects a consumer towards buying from any issue.

Shweta et al. (2014) studied that Indian customers are most of the time emotionally driven to any product & it has paved the way for retailers to conduct on various promotional tactics for drawing in general mass & converting them into clients. Impulsive buying can be cited as a deeply rooted phenomenon in the individual trait of the consumers.

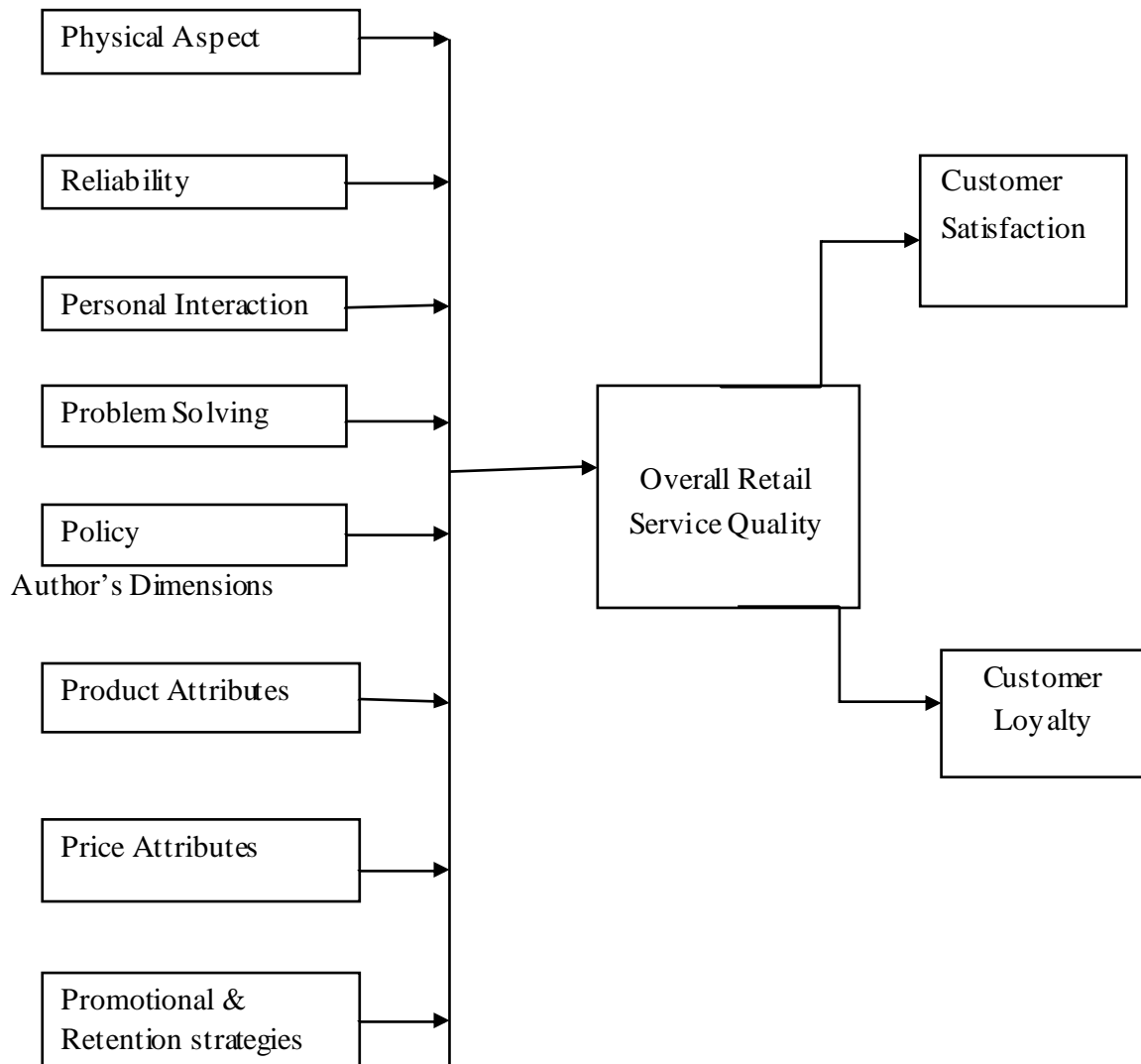
Bansal et al.(2015) indicated that service quality and satisfaction are indeed distinct constructs and that quality is an antecedent to satisfaction. In addition, quality was found to be the key driver of switching intentions. No evidence of an interaction between quality and satisfaction in their influence on switching intentions were found.

Singh et a. (2015) studied that the percentage of organized retail has gone up from 3.5% in 2005 through 5% in 2008 to 10% in 2013. This is majority attributed to increased facilities and options

under one roof for the customers. Infrastructure development has cut travel times and good parking facilities, entertainment options and parks attract people to places of organized retail.

6. Discussion

The literature review shows studies conducted for retail service dimensions. The paper provides insights into the various dependent variables of perceived service quality. The retail service quality research sensitizes marketers to the fact that consumers are drawing satisfaction not only from the service quality provided by the retailer at the retail format but also product attributes, price attributes and promotional and retention strategies. Thus, the consumer comes to the retail store with the set of expectations that extend till the type of promotions (buy one get one free, price off etc.), good product quality and reasonable product price. During their stay in the store, they are analysing the nature services provided by the retailer, the store ambience, management of the entire, POP displays, effectiveness of announcements, behaviour of the staff and complaint handling. On the one hand, they are deriving satisfaction from the sale. However, on the other hand, there is a marked gap between the customer expectations and perceptions. Hence it is impending on retailers not only to provide the expected service quality but also offer best price with best product quality along with the customer friendly Promotional and Retention Policies (Fig. 1). Thus, broadly stating, service quality dimensions can be divided into physical and non-physical.



7. Managerial Implications

The customer perception of retail service quality is an important in the existing retailers in the marketplace. As the review study discuss that perception of service quality is influenced by various variables among different types of customers, for the general factors like personal interaction, the physical aspects are the dimensions on which customer's perception remains

constant and common to the entire customer in majority basis. So the retail outlets have to frame own strategies to attract the customers for a long term. The non- physical aspects of service quality can be improvised by scheduling quality training to the sales personnel at a regular interval, skill development modules and appropriate complaint handling policies for customers and customer friendly strategies. On the other side physical aspects like remodelling of infrastructure, provision for basic amenities, health and safe store environment. Hence, the retailers are supposed to upgrade their service quality dimension so that the gap between expected and perceived service quality dimension are minimized to satisfy the customers for a long term basis and survival of organized retail outlets.

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