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A STUDY ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DHIRAJ SONS' SUPER MARKET, BARDOLI

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ABSTRACT

This research explores customer satisfaction levels at Dhiraj Sons Super Market, Bardoli, a prominent retail destination known for offering a wide range of consumer goods under one roof. In today's highly competitive retail environment, understanding customer satisfaction is crucial for maintaining loyalty and ensuring sustained growth. The study seeks to evaluate various factors that influence customer satisfaction, including product quality, pricing, staff behaviour, store ambience, promotional activities, and overall service experience.

A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from 100 respondents visiting the Bardoli branch of Dhiraj Sons. The study employed convenience sampling and applied descriptive statistical tools such as frequency analysis and percentage methods for interpreting the data. The findings indicate that most customers are generally satisfied with their shopping experience, particularly in terms of product variety, cleanliness of the store, and courteous staff. However, areas like billing speed, parking facility, and promotional visibility emerged as points of moderate concern.

The research concludes that while Dhiraj Sons enjoys a favourable level of customer satisfaction in Bardoli, there exists scope for improvement in operational efficiency and customer engagement strategies. This study provides actionable insights that can help Dhiraj Sons management enhance service delivery, optimize customer experience, and strengthen brand loyalty in semi-urban markets.

INTRODUCTION

Dhiraj Sons ADS Super Mart LLP is a well-established supermarket chain in South Gujarat, offering a wide range of products under one roof. It started its journey as a small grocery shop in Surat in 1947 by the Modi family and became a pioneer in Gujarat by introducing the self-service departmental store model in 1984. Over the years, the brand expanded across multiple locations, including Bardoli, which is the subject of this research.

The Bardoli branch was launched in 2007 and relocated in 2021 to the Surat-Bardoli highway due to space constraints. It serves the local and surrounding semi-urban population by providing groceries, personal care, electronics, lifestyle products, and more. Known for its customer-centric approach, it offers services like home delivery (for orders above ₹3500), in-store assistance, and seasonal discounts. It also engages in community events and promotions to build a stronger customer connection.

Now operating under Dhiraj Sons ADS Super Mart LLP (with 80% ownership by Ami Trade Link Pvt. Ltd.), the Bardoli branch continues to uphold the vision of delivering quality products at great value. With a staff of 36 employees, advanced technology integration, and commitment to excellence, it has become a significant retail destination in Bardoli, contributing to local employment and convenience.

Theoretical Framework

Customer satisfaction is a key marketing metric that reflects how well a company's products and services meet or exceed customer expectations. It boosts customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, revenue, and competitive advantage. Supermarkets, large self-service stores offering a wide range of goods, aim to enhance satisfaction through quality service, product variety, attractive offers, clean environments, and use of technology. Over time, supermarkets have evolved from basic grocery stores to tech-enabled retail spaces offering convenience and personalized experiences. However, they face challenges like supply chain disruptions, high operational costs, intense competition, changing consumer preferences, regulatory demands, waste management, and the need for continuous innovation in customer service and marketing.

Bardoli Demographics

Bardoli is a city and municipality in Bardoli Taluka of Surat district, Gujarat, with 3,146 households divided into 12 wards. As per the 2011 Census, the population is 15,610, comprising 8,642 males and 6,968 females. Children aged 0–6 make up 13.59% (2,121) of the population. The city has a sex ratio of 806, which is lower than the Gujarat state average of 919. The overall literacy rate is 65.41%, with male literacy at 71.43% and female literacy at 57.95%. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes constitute 12.12% and 14.48% of the population, respectively.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Customer satisfaction has been widely studied across different service sectors like healthcare, banking, education, salons, and retail. Researchers have emphasized that satisfaction is closely linked to how well a company meets customer expectations. Tools like SERVQUAL models, questionnaires, and various statistical methods (like ANOVA and correlation analysis) are commonly used to measure this satisfaction.

In industries like beauty salons and restaurants, factors such as quality of service, staff behaviour, pricing, taste, and overall experience play a major role in shaping customer satisfaction. Studies show that when customers are satisfied, they are more likely to return, recommend the service to others, and form a loyal connection with the brand. For instance, in the online eyewear market (like Lenskart), trust and after-sales service have been key in keeping customers happy.

When it comes to supermarkets specifically, customer satisfaction is deeply influenced by the availability of products, pricing, offers, and promotional activities. Research done on Indian retail giants like D-Mart and Big Bazaar shows that customers expect good quality, attractive offers, and a comfortable shopping experience. In-store promotions like discounts, combo offers, and loyalty rewards help attract and retain customers.

However, studies also show that there are some gaps between what customers expect and what they actually receive—especially in areas like billing, personalized service, and complaint handling. Improving these areas can boost customer satisfaction. Also, customer-friendly staff, digital payment options, and the use of online platforms to promote in-store deals can make a big difference in customer experience and loyalty.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains how the research was conducted to study customer satisfaction at Dhiraj Sons Supermarket, Bardoli. The main aim is to understand how satisfied customers are and what factors influence their shopping experience.

The study focuses on five key areas: service quality, product variety, pricing and promotions, staff behaviour, and store cleanliness. The main objectives are to measure satisfaction, identify key influencing factors, and suggest improvements.

Data was collected through questionnaires (primary data) and existing studies and company records (secondary data). A descriptive research design was used with a sample size of 100 customers, selected using convenience sampling.

Overall, the methodology helps in gaining useful insights to improve customer service and boost loyalty at Dhiraj Sons Supermarket.

DATA ANALYSIS

KMO and Bartlett's Test

- KMO Value: 0.630 → Acceptable for factor analysis.
- Bartlett's Test: Chi-square = 1954.284, df = 528, p = 0.000 → Significant correlation exists. Conclusion: Data is suitable for factor analysis. 4.2 Total Variance Explained
- 10 factors explain 73.27% of the total variance.
- After rotation:
  - Top 3 components explain: 11.01%, 10.71%, 8.77%.
  - Conclusion: A reduced number of components capture most of the data, ideal for simplification.

Rotated Component Matrix (Key Factors Identified)

1. Promotional Strategies – Lucky draws, return policy, scheme messages.
2. Product & Transaction Features – Packaging, labeling, payment options.
3. Service Quality – Staff friendliness, availability, lighting.
4. Store Layout – Signage clarity, public transport access.
5. Product Availability – Variety, consistency, alternatives.
6. Infrastructure – Location, parking, design.
7. Security & Display – CCTV, promotional display, billing.

8–10. Other specific items like online ordering and sampling.

Conclusion: Customers are influenced by promotional offers, product presentation, staff service, convenience, and security.

FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The findings of the research conducted at Dhiraj Sons Supermarket, Bardoli, provide detailed insights into customer satisfaction levels and the factors affecting them. Out of 100 respondents, a significant 81% reported satisfaction with the supermarket, indicating a generally positive experience. Demographically, the majority of customers are young (18–25 years), well-educated, and primarily students or working professionals, with income levels skewing towards lower and middle-income groups. This suggests that affordability and convenience are major considerations. The Principal Component Analysis (PCA) further identified ten major factors influencing satisfaction, such as promotional offers, staff behaviour, product variety, store cleanliness, infrastructure, digital service availability, and security. The data reveals that elements like seasonal discounts, proper packaging, knowledgeable staff, free trials, and online shopping options all contribute to enhancing customer engagement. The study concludes that while the supermarket performs well overall, there is scope for improvement in converting neutral customers into loyal, satisfied ones by focusing on store layout, marketing strategies, and online convenience.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the research highlights that Dhiraj Sons Supermarket has successfully built a loyal customer base, with 81% of customers expressing satisfaction and minimal dissatisfaction reported. The customer profile shows a youthful, educated, and value-conscious audience that prioritizes convenience, pricing, and quality service. Key satisfaction drivers, as revealed by PCA, include promotional schemes, staff efficiency, product availability, store design, and the rising importance of digital services. To sustain and grow this satisfaction, the supermarket must focus on continuous service improvement, better digital integration, and more personalized marketing approaches. By addressing the needs of neutral customers and enhancing aspects such as navigation, loyalty programs, and online shopping, Dhiraj Sons can strengthen its

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market position and cater more effectively to changing consumer expectations.

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