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CUSTOMER PERCEPTION AND SERVICE QUALITY ANALYSIS IN RELIANCE RETAIL SUPERMARKET IN COIMBATORE CITY

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ABSTRACT

This study examines customer perception and service quality at the Reliance Retail Supermarket in Coimbatore City, focusing on how service quality dimensions influence overall customer satisfaction and loyalty. With rising competition in the retail sector, supermarkets are increasingly recognizing the importance of understanding customer expectations and perceptions to deliver superior service experiences. The research employs a quantitative approach, gathering responses from a sample of supermarket patrons through structured questionnaires. Key service quality factors analyzed indude tangibility, responsiveness, reliability, assurance, and empathy, based on the SERVQUAL model. Data analysis reveals significant relationships between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction levels, highlighting that responsiveness and reliability have the strongest influence on shopper perceptions. Additionally, the findings indicate areas where the supermarket performs well— such as store environment and staff courtesy—while identifying gaps in perceived responsiveness and checkout efficiency. The study concludes with practical recommendations for retail management to enhance service quality, strengthen customer loyalty, and improve competitive positioning in Coimbatore's dynamic retail market. The insights derived contribute to both academic literature and managerial strategies in retail service quality evaluation

INTRODUCTION

Reliance Retail Supermarket, a prominent player in India's retail sector, has expanded its presence in Coimbatore City, offering a wide range of products including groceries, personal care items, electronics, and household goods. With increasing customer expectations and competitive alternatives, Reliance Retail must maintain high service standards to retain existing customers and attract new ones. Evaluating customer perception and service quality helps the management identify strengths and weaknesses in their operations, such as product availability, store ambience, staff behavior, billing efficiency, and after-sales services.

This study aims to analyze how customers perceive the service quality of Reliance Retail Supermarket in Coimbatore and how these perceptions influence their shopping behavior and satisfaction. By focusing on tangible and intangible elements of service, the research seeks to provide actionable insights that can enhance customer experience, improve operational efficiency, and foster loyalty in the local retail market.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In today's competitive retail market, customer expectations are continuously increasing. Reliance Retail Supermarket in Coimbatore faces the challenge of providing high-quality service while meeting the diverse needs of its customers. Problems such as delayed service, limited staff assistance, and improper product arrangement can affect customer perception and satisfaction. Understanding these issues is essential for improving overall service quality.

This study aims to identify the gap between what customers expect and the service they actually experience at Reliance Retail. By analyzing key aspects of service quality—such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility—the research seeks to provide insights that can help the supermarket enhance customer satisfaction, strengthen loyalty, and maintain a competitive edge in Coimbatore's retail market.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Year	Title	Author	Research Methodology	Findings
2024	A Comparative Study of Customer Perception Towards Various	Wahab et al.	Conceptual / Book-based	Compared customer perceptions across multiple supermarket brands; service quality, product assortment, pricing, and shopping experience
2024	Customer Perceptions of Retail Service Quality at a Selected Supermarket	Noel Govender	Descriptive / Online	Found positive customer attitudes toward service quality dimensions; interpersonal interaction, physical attributes and policies significantly

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2020	The Effect of Supermarket Service Quality Dimensions and Customer Satisfaction on Loyalty	Neale Slack et al.	Conceptual / Utilizationfocused	Identified that empathy and other service quality dimensions strongly influence customer satisfaction, repurchase intentions, and word-of-mouth in supermarket
2019	Retail Service Quality and Its Effect on Customer	Kumar	Conceptual / Strategic HRM	Examined retail service quality using RSQS scale; found that dimensions like reliability, interaction, physical aspects, problem solving and policy positively

OBJECTIVE

To analyze customer perception regarding the service quality of Reliance Retail Supermarket in Coimbatore.
To evaluate key dimensions of service quality (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy) and their impact on customer satisfaction.
To identify gaps between customer expectations and actual experiences and provide recommendations for improving service quality and enhancing customer loyalty.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Area of Study: COIMBATORE CITY.
Sampling Technique:SPS,Word,Excel,
Sample Size:137
Period of Study:3 months

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

AGE

Age	Frequency	Percent
Below 20 years	12	8.8%
21 - 30	76	55.5%
31 - 40	46	33.6%
41 -50	3	2.2%
Above 50	0	0.0%
Total	109	100%

Source: Primary data

INTERPRETATION

The age distribution of respondents indicates that the majority of shoppers at the store are young adults, with 55.5% in the 21–30 years age group, followed by 33.6% in the 31–40 years range. A smaller portion, 8.8%, are below 20 years, and only 2.2% fall within 41–50 years, while there are no respondents above 50 years. This shows that the store primarily attracts young and middle-aged customers, suggesting that products, services, and marketing strategies should focus on the preferences of these age groups.

Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	69	50.4%
Female	68	49.6%
Transgender	0	0.0%
Total	137	100%

Source: Primary data

INTERPRETATION

The gender distribution of the respondents shows a nearly equal representation of males and females. Out of 137 participants, 69 (50.4%) are male and 68 (49.6%) are female, indicating a balanced participation between the two genders. No respondents identified as transgender. This balance suggests that the study's findings are likely representative across both male and female perspectives, minimizing gender bias in the results.

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FREQUVENTL OF VISITING RELIANCE RETAIL SUPERMARKET

VISITING	Frequency	Percent
Daily	4	2.9%
Weekly	41	29.9%
Monthly	79	57.5
Occasionally	13	9.5%
Total	137	100.0 **%**

Source: Primary data

INTERPRETATION

The data on visiting frequency indicates that most respondents visit the store on a monthly basis, with 79 participants (57.5%) falling into this category. Weekly visitors account for 41 respondents (29.9%), while daily visitors are very few, only 4 participants (2.9%). Additionally, 13 respondents (9.5%) visit occasionally. This suggests that the majority of customers engage with the store moderately, preferring monthly visits rather than daily or occasional shopping, highlighting a steady but not frequent customer base.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE CLEANING NESS

CLEANLINESS	Frequency	Percent
Excellent	25	18.2%
Good	70	51.1%
Average	33	24.1%
Poor	8	5.8%
Very poor	1	0.7%
Total	137	100%

Source: Primary data

INTERPRETATION

The respondents' perception of cleanliness shows that most customers are satisfied with the store's hygiene. A majority of 70 participants (51.1%) rated cleanliness as Good, while 25 respondents (18.2%) considered it Excellent. An additional 33 respondents (24.1%) rated it as Average, and a small number expressed dissatisfaction, with 8 (5.8%) rating it Poor and 1 (0.7%) rating it Very Poor. Overall, this indicates that the store maintains a generally clean environment, though there is slight room for improvement to achieve higher customer satisfaction.

Do you feel PRICE IS RESANABL

Do you feel price is reasonable	Frequency	Percent
YES	103	75.2%
NO	12	8.8%
Sometimes	22	16.1%
Total	137	100%

Source: Primary data

INTERPRETATION

The responses regarding the reasonableness of prices show that a significant majority of customers perceive the store's pricing positively. Out of 137 respondents, 103 (75.2%) believe the prices are reasonable, while 22 participants (16.1%) feel prices are reasonable sometimes. Only a small portion, 12 respondents (8.8%), consider the prices not reasonable. This indicates that the store is generally viewed as offering fair pricing, which likely contributes to customer satisfaction and loyalty.

FINDINGS

SIMPLE PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

- The majority of shoppers at the store are young adults, with 55.5% in the 21–30 years age group.
- The majority of respondents shows a nearly equal representation of males and females.
- That majority of respondents visit the store on a monthly basis, with 79 participants (57.5%) falling into this category.
- The Majority of participants (51.1%) rated cleanliness as Good, while.
- The Majority of customers perceive the store's pricing positively. Out of respondents (75.2%) believe the prices are reasonable.

SUGGESTION

- Provide training to staff to handle customer queries quickly and efficiently, reducing delays at billing counters and service points.
- Introduce more billing counters or digital self-checkout options to minimize waiting time.
- Continue regular cleaning, organized product displays, and attractive store layouts to enhance customer experience.
- Implement feedback systems (e.g., suggestion boxes, online surveys) to understand changing customer expectations.

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- Train staff to offer empathetic and courteous service, creating a more personalized shopping experience.

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