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CUSTOMER SATISFACTION OF SMALL SCALE RETAIL OUTLETS IN COIMBATORE CITY**J. SAMUEL CAESER PICKENS****ASST. PROFESSOR****DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE WITH C.A.****DR. SNS RAJALAKSHMI COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCE
COIMBATORE****P. STARMINI****RESEARCH SCHOLAR****DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE WITH C.A.****DR. SNS RAJALAKSHMI COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCE
COIMBATORE****ABSTRACT**

The project entitled "customer satisfaction of small scale retail outlets in coimbatore city" is carried out with an objective to determine the customer satisfaction. Retail is the sale of goods and services from individuals or businesses to the end -user. Now-a-days in the market the retailer faces the lot of competition due to the development of the departmental stores. The objective of this study is to find out the factors motivating the customer and the customer satisfaction of small scale retail sector in Coimbatore city. The secondary data was collected from related websites, books. The survey was conducted to 50 respondents by using direct questionnaire method. For distribution of questionnaire to the customer convenience sampling method was select. After collecting the data from the respondents it was analyzed using simple percentage method, Chi-Square and Weighted Average method. From the findings the researcher observed that the small scale retail store motivating the customer by the Quality, Fixed Price and Close to Residence and satisfied the customer by the Value for Money, Reasonable Price, Credit Facility, Convenient Location and Helpful. From the suggestion the researcher knew that the middle class people need variety of products with quality which are available in fixed and reasonable price. So the retailer has to concentrate on it and also they need to develop the small scale retail outlet convenient to the customer like meeting place and work place.

KEYWORDS

Customer Satisfaction, Retail Outlets, Competition, Reasonable Price, and Convenient Location.

INTRODUCTION

 Small-scale retailers are those retailers whose scale of operation is restricted to a small segment of the market and to a narrow range of products. They generally hold small stocks of the products of regular use. Such retailers are very large in number but account for a small portion of the total retail business. But, small-scale retailing is a very common, simple and flexible way of distributing the products to the end users. It incurs low operating costs and is usually owned and operated by a proprietor. The most important feature is that the small-scale retailers have a direct and personal contact with their customers. This form of retailing faces the problems of small capital, lack of professionalism and low purchasing power. Retail is the sale of goods and services from individuals or businesses to the end -user. Retailers are a part of an integrated system called the supply chain. A retailer purchases goods or products in large quantities from manufacturers directly or through a wholesale, and then sells smaller quantities to the consumer for a profit. Retailing can be done in either fixed locations like stores or markets, door-to-door or by delivery. In the 2000s, an increasing amount of retailing is done using on-line websites, electronic payment, and then delivery via a courier or via other services.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Nisha Rathore (2000)¹, the concept of retail is comparatively very old in Indian context. Before anybody knew about what retail is, we had kirana stores, medical stores and lot many other stores working surprisingly well all over the country. Recently with the entrance of big players like Wal-Mart or Reliance, people are getting idea of the traditional stores going to be vanished. But just to remind us, we should never forget how deep rooted is this old concept. The very modern organized stores have taken the idea of retailing nowhere else than from these old shops. The growth in the Indian organized retail market is mainly due to the change in the consumer's behavior. This change has come in the consumer due to increased income, changing lifestyles, and patterns of demography which are favorable. Now the consumer wants to shop at a place where he can get food, entertainment, and shopping all under one roof. This has given Indian organized retail market a major boost. Thus, in India it is quite sceptical that the organized retail will be ever able to overcome the unorganized retail completely. The values, cultures and beliefs of the customers prompt them to go the same retail shop where they can get the product required, at low price and with least waiting time for billing. No matter how lucrative is this sector and how bright is the market; the organized sector in retailing has to go a long way to understand the customer requirement.

According to Bloemer and Shroeder (2002)² store image is the sum of all the store's attributes, in the way perceived by the consumer, through his or her experience with the store.

Paulins and Geistfeld (2003)³ found that when a store had an appealing merchandise selection, it became a key reason why that store was considered desirable. Conventional grocery stores tend to be larger than specialty grocery stores and are likely to carry a wider variety of products in its assortment than a specialty store

Carpenter and Fairhurst,(2005)⁴ showed that utilitarian shopping benefits and hedonic shopping benefits had a positive impact on satisfaction.

Eroglu et al. (2005)⁵ looked at the relationship between perceived retail crowding, shopping value and satisfaction and found that perceived retail crowding had a negative effect on shopping value and, in turn, satisfaction. If the shopping experience provides qualities that are valued by the customer, satisfaction with the store is likely to result.

¹ Nisha Rathore, 2000, "A Study on Consumer Behavior towards Organized and Unorganized Retailing" Vol No: 1, Issue No.8. ISSN 2277-1166, pp- 65 – 69.

² Bloemer, J.M.M., Odekerken-Schroder, G., 2002. "Store Satisfaction and Store Loyalty Explained By Customer- and Store-Related Factors". Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Disatisfaction and Complaining Behaviour. 15, pp. 68-80.

³ Paulins, V.A. and Geistfeld, L.V. (2003), "The effect of consumer perceptions of store attributes on apparel store preference", Journal of Fashion Marketing & Management, Vol. 7 No. 4, pp. 371-85.

⁴ Carpenter, J.M. and Fairhurst, A. (2005), "Consumer shopping value, satisfaction, and loyalty for retail apparel brands", Journal of Fashion Marketing & Management, Vol. 9 No. 3, pp. 256-69.

Indian Council for Research in International Economic Relations (ICRIER) (2008)⁶, developed research report titled Impact of organized retail on the unorganized sector states that retail trade alone accounts for 41.83 percent job opportunities with 14.95 million employed in the sector. Establishments involved in retail trade claimed the highest percentage both in the rural (39.28 percent) and urban (45 percent) areas. It has been the most sought after activity amongst own account establishments with a share of 48.45 percent. In rural areas, 46.52 percent own account establishments were set up for retail trade while the percentage was 51.44 in agricultural activities giving the maximum number of jobs, with a share of more than 72 percent of the total establishments. Manufacturing establishments followed retail trade with 8.32 million people employed. Social and personal service activities employed 7.35 percent during review point.

NEED OR IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

The study was made to know about satisfaction level of the customers, because the retailer faces lot of the competition in the present scenerio. So, in order to help the retailers to carry on their business sucessfully, the study was made to know the factors that is to be enhanced and developed by the small scale retailers and create a close customer relationship to develop their business.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Now-a-days in the market the retailer faces the lots of competition due to the developement of the departmental stores. So, the study was made to know the problems faced by the customer in the small scale retail outlets, to find the factors motivating the customer and to get the valuable suggestions.

OBJECTIVES

- To know the satisfaction level of the customer of a small scale retail store.
- To find the relationship between Demographic variables of the customers and the factors that motivates the customer.
- To present the findings and offer valid suggestions.

HYPOTHESIS

GOODS AND SERVICES: Goods and Services of the retail store include the variety, quality, availability and prompt service.

H_0 : There is no significance relationship between gender / annual family income and motivating the customer.

PRICE: Price is the amount that a person has to pay for the products or services that he/she are purchase. Price factor include the fixed price, reasonable price and affordable price.

H_0 : There is no significance relationship gender / annual family income and motivating the customer.

H_0 : There is no significance relationship between occupation/ education and customer satisfaction.

LOCATION: Location is the convenient place of retail store for customers. Locations are close to residence, work place and meeting place.

H_0 : There is no significance relationship between gender / annual family income and motivating the customer.

PRODUCT: Products is available in the retail store for customer. Product must be value for money, unique and trendy, variety and quality.

H_0 : There is no significance relationship between occupation/ education and customer satisfaction.

PROMOTION: Promotion is a facility provide for customer to promote the products. Promotion includes the credit facility, free gifts and discounts.

H_0 : There is no significance relationship between occupation/ education and customer satisfaction.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS: It is a physical structure of a small scale retail store it includes the convenient location, parking space and shop atmosphere.

H_0 : There is no significance relationship between occupation/ education and customer satisfaction.

PERSONNEL INTERACTION: Personnel interaction are helpful to create a customer relationship it include the salesperson's attentiveness and helpful to customer.

H_0 : There is no significance relationship between occupation/ education and customer satisfaction.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of the collected data from the sample (size 50) respondents spread throughout the area of Coimbatore city. The focus of analysis is exploring the components of customer satisfaction.

TABLE 1: CLASSIFICATION OF THE RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO THEIR PROFILE

S. No	Factor	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	22	44
		Female	28	56
		Total	50	100
2	Age	Below 30 Years	24	48
		30-40 Years	14	28
		Above 41 Years	12	24
		Total	50	100
3	Education	School Level	20	40
		Graduate	10	20
		Post Graduate	20	40
		Total	50	100
4	Occupation	Business	20	40
		Service	04	08
		Profession	06	12
		Household	10	20
		Others	10	20
		Total	50	100
5	Annual Family Income	Below Rs.300000	40	80
		Rs.300000 – Rs.500000	10	20
		Above Rs.500000	-	-
		Total	50	100

Source: Primary Data

⁵ Eroglu, S.A., Machleit, K. and Barr, T.F. (2005), "Perceived retail crowding and shopping satisfaction: the role of shopping values", Journal of Business Research, Vol. 58 No. 8, pp. 1146-53.

⁶ Indian Council for Research in International Economic Relations (ICRIER) report on Indian Retail, New Delhi, 2008.

A brief profile of sample respondents is presented in Table 1. The Table 1 indicates that:

- ❖ 48 per cent of the respondents are male and 56 per cent of the respondents are female.
- ❖ 48 per cent of the respondents are falls under the age groups below 30 years, 28 per cent of the respondents were between the age groups of 30-40 years and 24 per cent of the respondents were above 40 years.
- ❖ 40 per cent of the respondents were school level, 20 per cent of the respondents were graduates and 40 per cent of the respondents were post graduate.
- ❖ 40 per cent of the respondents were engaged in business, 8 per cent of the respondents are belong to the service, 12 per cent of the respondents were profession, 20 per cent of the respondents were households and 20 per cent of the respondents were falls under the other category (Government employee or Private employee etc.,)
- ❖ 80 per cent of the respondents are belong to the income group of below Rs.300000, 20 per cent of the respondents were income group between Rs.300000-500000 and 0 per cent of the respondents were fell under the income group of above Rs.500000

From the above, it can be conclude that majority of the respondents were satisfied with the small scale retail outlets are female, most of the respondents were falls under the age group below 30 years, maximum of the respondents are school level and post graduate, most of the respondents were engaged in business and majority of the respondents were falls under the income group below Rs.300000.

TABLE 2: GOODS AND SERVICES AND LEVEL OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Goods & Services	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Total	Rank
Variety	18	30	02	-	-	216 (27.62)	II
Quality	20	28	02	-	-	218 (27.88)	I
Availability	06	28	14	02	-	192 (24.55)	III
Prompt Service	04	10	26	08	02	156 (19.95)	IV

Source: Primary Data

The result (Table 2) from chi - square test indicates that goods and services (Variety, Quality, Availability and Prompt Service) are not significantly related with the Gender and motivating the customer as the Calculate value (6.712, 3.35, 4.584 and 9.2), which is less than the table value (9.488) at the level of significance 0.5. Hence, the H_0 is accepted.

Chi - square test indicates that goods and services (Variety, Quality, Availability and Prompt Service) are not significantly related with the Annual family income and motivating the customer as the Calculate value (0.554, 2.314, 1.49 and 3.222), which is less than the table value (15.507) at the level of significance 0.5. Hence, the H_0 is accepted.

Table 2 gives an overall view of the customer satisfaction with the goods and services. Quality got the I rank, Variety got the II rank, Availability got the III rank and Prompt service got the IV rank.

TABLE 3: PRICE AND LEVEL OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Price	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Total	Rank
Fixed	20	26	02	02	-	214 (37.28)	I
Reasonable	16	24	10	-	-	206 (35.89)	II
Affordable	06	06	24	14	-	154 (26.83)	III

Source: Primary Data

The result (Table 3) from chi - square test indicates that price (Fixed, Reasonable and Affordable) are not significantly related with the Gender and motivating the customer as the Calculate value (5.882, 3.368 and 1.588), which is less than the table value (9.488) at the level of significance 0.5. Hence, the H_0 is accepted.

Chi - square test indicates that price (Fixed, Reasonable and Affordable) are not significantly related with the Annual family income and motivating the customer as the Calculate value (3.572, 7.418 and 5.212), which is less than the table value (15.507) at the level of significance 0.5. Hence, the H_0 is accepted.

Table 3 gives an overall view of the customer satisfaction with the price. Fixed got the I rank, Reasonable got the II rank and Affordable got the III rank.

TABLE 4: LOCATION AND LEVEL OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Location	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Total	Rank
Close to Residence	24	20	02	04	-	214 (44.77)	I
Close to Work Place	04	08	24	14	-	152 (31.80)	II
Close to Meeting Place	04	02	08	24	12	112 (23.43)	III

Source: Primary Data

The result (Table 4) from chi - square test indicates that location (Close to Residence, Close to Work Place and Close to Meeting Place) are not significantly related with the Gender and motivating the customer as the Calculate value (2.112, 7.678 and 5.834), which is less than the table value (9.488) at the level of significance 0.5. Hence, the H_0 is accepted.

Chi - square test indicates that product location (Close to Residence, Close to Work Place and Close to Meeting Place) are not significantly related with the Annual family income and motivating the customer as the Calculate value (1.71, 6.874 and 9.464), which is less than the table value (15.507) at the level of significance 0.5. Hence, the H_0 is accepted.

Table 4 gives an overall view of the customer satisfaction with the product. Close to Residence got the I rank, Close to Work Place got the II rank and Close to Meeting Place got the III rank.

TABLE 5: PRODUCT AND LEVEL OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Product	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Total	Rank
Value for Money	28	20	02	-	-	226 (26.71)	I
Unique and Trendy	18	26	04	02	-	210 (24.82)	III
Quality	22	24	04	-	-	218 (25.77)	II
Variety	14	16	18	02	-	192 (22.70)	IV

Source: Primary Data

The result (Table 5) from chi - square test indicates that product (Value for Money, Unique and Trendy, Quality and Variety) are not significantly related with the Education and customer satisfaction as the Calculate value (3.214, 13.076, 3.636 and 7.722), which is less than the table value (15.507) at the level of significance 0.5. Hence, the H_0 is accepted.

Chi - square test indicates that product (Value for Money, Unique and Trendy, Quality and Variety) are not significantly related with the occupation and customer satisfaction as the Calculate value (5.894, 11.536, 15.71 and 22.052), which is less than the table value (26.296) at the level of significance 0.5. Hence, the H_0 is accepted.

Table 5 gives an overall view of the customer satisfaction with the product. Value for Money got the I rank, Quality the II rank, Unique and Trendy got the III rank and Variety got the IV rank.

TABLE 6: PRICE AND LEVEL OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Price	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Total	Rank
Fixed	18	26	06	-	-	212 (40.15)	II
Reasonable	24	20	06	-	-	218 (41.29)	I
Affordable	06	02	16	06	-	98 (18.56)	III

Source: Primary Data

The result (Table 6) from chi - square test indicates that price (Fixed and Reasonable) are not significantly related with the Education and motivating the customer as the Calculate value (7.518 and 9.332), which is less than the table value (15.507) at the level of significance 0.5. Hence, the H₀ is accepted.

Chi - square test indicates that Affordable price are significantly related with the Education and customer satisfaction as the Calculate value (44.668), which is greater than the table value (15.507) at the level of significance 0.5. Hence, the H₀ is rejected.

Chi - square test indicates that price (Fixed and Reasonable) are not significantly related with the occupation and customer satisfaction as the Calculate value (7.246 and 8.04), which is less than the table value (26.296) at the level of significance 0.5. Hence, the H₀ is accepted.

Chi - square test indicates that Affordable price are significantly related with the occupation and customer satisfaction as the Calculate value (30.452), which is greater than the table value (26.296) at the level of significance 0.5. Hence, the H₀ is rejected.

Table 6 gives an overall view of the customer satisfaction with the price. Reasonable got the I rank, Fixed got the II rank and Affordable got the III rank.

TABLE 7: PROMOTION AND LEVEL OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Promotion	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Total	Rank
Credit Facility	22	26	-	-	02	216 (38.85)	I
Free Gifts	06	22	12	10	-	174 (31.29)	II
Discounts	08	14	18	06	04	166 (29.86)	III

Source: Primary Data

The result (Table 7) from chi - square test indicates that promotion (Credit Facility, Free Gifts and Discounts) are not significantly related with the Education and customer satisfaction as the Calculate value (5.17, 6.88 and 9.284), which is less than the table value (15.507) at the level of significance 0.5. Hence, the H₀ is accepted.

Chi - square test indicates that promotion (Credit Facility, Free Gifts and Discounts) are not significantly related with the occupation and customer satisfaction as the Calculate value (6.8, 22.99 and 22.856), which is less than the table value (26.296) at the level of significance 0.5. Hence, the H₀ is accepted.

Table 7 gives an overall view of the customer satisfaction with the promotion. Credit Facility got the I rank, Free Gifts got the II rank and Discounts got the III rank.

TABLE 8: PHYSICAL ASPECTS AND LEVEL OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Physical Aspects	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Total	Rank
Convenient Location	22	18	08	02	-	210 (42)	I
Parking Space	02	04	22	14	08	128 (25.6)	III
Shop Atmosphere	06	12	20	12	-	162 (32.4)	II

Source: Primary Data

The result (Table 8) from chi - square test indicates that physical aspects (Convenient Location, Parking Space and Shop Atmosphere) are not significantly related with the Education and customer satisfaction as the Calculate value (14.418, 9.354 and 1.666), which is less than the table value (15.507) at the level of significance 0.5. Hence, the H₀ is accepted.

Chi - square test indicates that convenient location are not significantly related with the occupation and customer satisfaction as the Calculate value (16.38), which is less than the table value (26.296) at the level of significance 0.5. Hence, the H₀ is accepted.

Chi - square test indicates that parking space and shop atmosphere are significantly related with the occupation and customer satisfaction as the Calculate value (46.478 and 38.058), which is greater than the table value (26.296) at the level of significance 0.5. Hence, the H₀ is rejected.

Table 8 gives an overall view of the customer satisfaction with the physical aspects. Convenient Location got the I rank, Parking Space got the II rank and Shop Atmosphere got the III rank.

TABLE 9: PERSONNEL INTERACTION AND LEVEL OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Personnel Interaction	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Total	Rank
Salesperson's Attentiveness	18	22	08	02	-	203 (49.76)	II
Helpful	18	24	06	02	-	208 (50.24)	I

Source: Primary Data

The result (Table 9) from chi - square test indicates that personnel interaction (Salesperson's Attentiveness and Helpful) are not significantly related with the Education and customer satisfaction as the Calculate value (6.172 and 14.582), which is less than the table value (15.507) at the level of significance 0.5. Hence, the H₀ is accepted.

Chi - square test indicates that salesperson's attentiveness are significantly related with the occupation and customer satisfaction as the Calculate value (35.47), which is greater than the table value (26.296) at the level of significance 0.5. Hence, the H₀ is rejected.

Chi - square test indicates that helpful are not significantly related with the occupation and customer satisfaction as the Calculate value (13.528), which is less than the table value (26.296) at the level of significance 0.5. Hence, the H₀ is accepted.

Table 9 gives an overall view of the customer satisfaction with the personnel interaction. Helpful to the customer got the I rank and salesperson's attentiveness got the II rank.

FINDINGS

- Majority of the respondents are female visiting the small scale retail stores.
- Maximum of the respondents are falls under the age groups below 30 years and the respondents were school level and post graduate.
- Majority of the customer visiting the small scale retail store are middle class people falls under the income groups below Rs.300000.
- The small scale retail store motivating the customer by:
 - ❖ Quality
 - ❖ Fixed Price
 - ❖ Close to Residence
- Majority of the customer satisfied by the:
 - Value for Money
 - Reasonable Price
 - Credit Facility
 - Convenient Location
 - Helpful

- Factors influence to motivating the customer like goods and service, price and location are not significant relationship with the Gender/ Annual family income and motivating the customer.
- Factors influencing the customer satisfaction like product, price (Fixed and Reasonable), promotion, Convenient Location and salesperson's attentiveness are not significantly related with the Education/Occupation and customer satisfaction.
- Affordable price are significantly related with the Education and customer satisfaction. Also the parking space, shop atmosphere and helpful are significantly related with the Education/occupation and customer satisfaction.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings, the following suggestions are recommended to the small scale retailer store. Majority of the respondents are belonging to the middle class group so they want to consider their needs. Small scale retailers want to attract the male respondents also by providing the parking space, new variety products in reasonable price, etc. The middle class people are need the variety of products with quality are available in fixed and reasonable price so concentrate on it. Develop the small scale retail outlet convenient to the customer like meeting place and work place. Increase the sales person's attractiveness to create a customer relationship.

CONCLUSION

The Customers of Coimbatore City are more concerned about, the convenience that is obtained while purchasing in a store, the quality of the product and the quality of the service. The procedures that are to be followed must be few in number. The study has spelled out the important factors that are needed for managing the customer and also how to satisfy them. First the Small scale retailers must ensure product quality and store convenience. Second, they must assure quality and availability of new products.

LIMITATION

- Sampled size is too small.
- Time period is limited.
- Customer did not provide real data.
- The survey covered only the limited area in Coimbatore city.

SCOPE FOR FUTURE STUDY

This study confined to customer satisfaction in small scale retail outlets. The study includes the demographic factors of the customer, factors motivating the customer and the characteristics influencing the customer satisfaction.

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