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CUSTOMER SATISFACTION, LOYALTY AND COMMITMENT IN ORGANISED RETAIL OUTLETS IN CHENNAI - AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Shopping in India has witnessed a revolution with the change in the consumer buying behavior and the whole format of shopping also altering. Organized retail sector draws more attention in the current scenario and the retail industry faces huge competition in the recent years. In order to meet the changing customer expectation, the retail industry changes its strategies quite often and the study was conducted to analyze the customer satisfaction which in turn will lead to customer loyalty and commitment. Retail outlets, in the current scenario take special measures in delighting customers for which customer satisfaction is considered to be the base. Some retail outlets have even started resorting to the strategy of customer delight. These two attributes customer satisfaction and delight in turn will lead to loyalty and commitment of customers in the long run. It is in this competitive scenario the study focuses its attention on having an understanding of the influence of demographic factors in the retailing sector and to identify the effect of store image on consumer purchasing behavior. Special focus is also given to identify the factors contributing towards competitive advantage of retail outlets and in studying the influence of sales promotional activities on enhancing the frequency of visits. The research design that is used for the study is descriptive. A sample size of 140 respondents is taken for the study. About seven organized retail outlets are taken for the study. Convenience sampling which is a non-probability sampling method is used for the study. The study is based on the opinion of the retail customers in Chennai. Since Chennai is one of the main metros, the findings can be considered to be the reflection of the opinion of the customers in other major cities also. As per the study, out of all the influencing factors price is found to have a dominant role in attracting customers to retail outlets. Influence of sales promotional activities is also found to have a major impact. Scope for having tremendous growth in retail industry is also more and organized retail outlets may take more measures in enhancing their position as well as in attracting and retaining customers by developing loyalty and commitment.

KEYWORDS

organized retail, customer satisfaction, loyalty, commitment.

INTRODUCTION

Retailing is emerging as a sunrise industry in India and is presently the largest employer after agriculture. Industry of retail in India which has become modern can be seen from the fact that there are multi-stored malls, huge shopping centers, and sprawling complexes which offer food, shopping, and entertainment all under the same roof. India retail industry is expanding itself most aggressively. Indian Retail Industry is the largest industry in India, with an employment of around 8% and contributing to over 10% of the country's GDP. Retail industry in India is expected to rise 25% yearly being driven by string income growth, changing lifestyles, and favorable demographic patterns. It is expected that by 2016 modern retail industry in India will be worth US\$ 175-200 billion. A further increase of 7-8% is expected in the industry of retail in India by growth in consumerism in urban areas, rising incomes, and a steep rise in rural consumption.

In this competitive scenario, retail industry is in a need to understand the customer satisfaction level in order to meet with the changing customer expectation. The study therefore has special attention in understanding the loyalty and commitment of customers towards the retail outlets and the reason for customer being loyal towards the retailers. As a result a great demand for real estate is being created. Indian retailers preferred means of expansion is to expand to other regions and to increase the number of their outlets in a city. Retailing in its present form started in the latter half of 20th Century in USA and Europe and today constitutes 20% of US GDP. It is the 3rd largest employer segment in USA. The contribution of organized retail is expected to rise from 3% to 9% by the end of the decade. In India, it has been found out that the top 6 cities contribute for 66% of total organized retailing. With the metros already been exploited, the focus has now been shifted towards the tier-II cities. The 'retail boom', 85% of which has so far been concentrated in the metros is beginning to percolate down to these smaller cities and towns. The contribution of these tier-II cities to total organized retailing sales is expected to grow to 20-25%. In the year 2004, Rs 28,000 Crores organized retail industry had Clothing, Textiles & fashion accessories as the highest contributor (39%), whereas health & beauty had a contribution of 2%. Food & Grocery contributed to 18% whereas Pharma Retail had a contribution of 2%. Pantaloon Retail (India) Limited, is India's leading retailer that operates multiple retail formats, the company operates over 5 million square feet of retail space, has over 450 stores across 40 cities in India and employs over 18,000 people.

In such a big industry whose base mainly depends on customers, customer satisfaction draws special attention. Retail outlets, in the current scenario take special measures in delighting customers for which customer satisfaction is considered to be a base. Some retail outlets have even started resorting to the strategy of customer delight. These two attributes customer satisfaction and delight in turn will lead to loyalty and commitment of customers in the long run. This paper throws light on customer satisfaction in retail industry and have chosen certain predominant players in the retail industry like Big Bazaar, Reliance Retail Ltd, Shopper's Stop, Spencer's, More, Nilgiris, Mega Mart etc.

Customer loyalty is all about attracting the right customer, getting them to buy, buy often, buy in higher quantities and bring you even more customers. Customer loyalty is one of the most important factor or the issues faced by the business today. Unless the companies can retain the loyalty of their customer, they will lose their customer for repeat purchase and the long term future of that business will be uncertain. Customer loyalty has been defined as the strength of the relationship between the individual's relative attitude and repeat patronage. However in business, benefits associated with customer loyalty are widely recognized. These include capturing of low cost related existing customers rather than capturing the new customers especially within mature, competitive markets. It is known that increasing the long term relationship with the consumers is more beneficial so that the reward for this group of consumers will be long term and increasing.

RETAILING FORMATS IN INDIA

MALLS - The largest form of organized retailing today. Located mainly in metro cities, in proximity to urban outskirts. They lend an ideal shopping experience with an amalgamation of product, service and entertainment, all under a common roof. Examples include Shoppers Stop, Pyramid, Pantaloons Retail Ltd, The Shopper's Stop,

SPECIALITY STORES - Chains such as the Bangalore based Kids Kemp, the Mumbai books retailer Crossword, RPG's Music World and the Times Group's music chain Planet M, are focusing on specific market segment and have established themselves strongly in their sectors.

DISCOUNT STORES - the name suggests, discount stores or factory outlets, offer discounts on the MRP through selling in bulk reaching economies of scale or excess stock left over at the season. The product category can range from a variety of perishable/ non-perishable goods.

DEPARTMENT STORES - It classified into localized departments such as clothing, toys, home, groceries, etc. Departmental Stores are expected to take over the apparel business from exclusive brand showrooms.

HYPER MARTS/SUPER MARKETS - Large self-service outlets, catering to varied shopper needs are termed as Supermarkets. These are located in or near residential high streets. These stores today contribute to 30% of all food & grocery organized retail sales.

CONVENIENCE STORES - These are relatively small stores located near residential areas. They stock a limited range of high-turnover convenience products and are usually open for extended periods during the day, seven days a week. Prices are slightly higher due to the convenience premium.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- ❖ **SohailRana.S , Abdullah Osman (2014)** in their attempt to identify customer satisfaction of retail chain stores in Bangladesh determined through the results of the study that retail chain store owners and managers should focus on four major elements – responsiveness, product quality, physical design and pricing policies if customer satisfaction is to be treated as a strategic variable. Moreover the study also identified that responsiveness and product quality were most important to customers followed by price and physical design. Location didn't have a significant effect on customer satisfaction although the exploratory analysis and the secondary research supported it.
- ❖ **Leena Jenefa(2014)** in her study on customer satisfaction towards the service features and quality of goods in the textile showroom in Chennai made an unique and holistic assessment of the benefits and challenges by experiential innovation and found that customer satisfaction is vital for successful retaining of the existing customers. This in turn will lead to customer delight. Since it is very difficult to fulfill the customer expectations every organisation needs to delight the customer in order to retain them. Thus customer retention is directly influenced by customer satisfaction. This paper attempted to explore level of satisfaction towards service features and quality of goods and services in the textile show room.
- ❖ **Silvia Faria, VitorCarvalho, Pedro Ferreira, JaelAssunção (2013)** in their effort to identify the satisfaction, commitment and loyalty in online and offline retail in Portugal found that good shopping experiences, both on and offline stores, lead to Satisfaction which, in turn, leads to Commitment and, therefore, increases the possibility for the client to become Loyal (and recommend the on and offline store to their closest friends). Thus, offering the two possibilities is, in fact, the best option; the actual crisis situation created a very rational consumer, totally aware of the need to save money because his/her income has been reduced due to political and economic measures adopted.
- ❖ **Richard Chinomona , Maxwell Sandada (2013)** in their study on customer satisfaction, trust and loyalty in South African Retailing Industry identified that the relationship between customer satisfaction and their trust, customer satisfaction and their loyalty, customer trust and their loyalty, customer loyalty and their repurchase intention are positive in a significant way.
- ❖ **Manish Madan, SimaKumari (2012)** analysed the determinants of retail customer satisfaction examined the growing awareness and brand consciousness among people across different socio-economic classes in India, and how the urban and semi-urban retail markets are witnessing significant growth. The paper concluded with the likely impact of the entry of global players into the retail industry in India. It also highlights the challenges faced by the industry in near future.
- ❖ **SatnamKourUbeja and D.D. Bedia(2012)** in their study on customer satisfaction from organized retailing analyzed the customer satisfaction in shopping malls with respect to product, price, place and promotion in Indore city. The study also focused to identify the variations in customer satisfaction due to different demographic variables. The study will help the managers of shopping malls to understand the factors that are related to shopping malls and may help in analyzing the customer satisfaction to the shoppers in the malls.
- ❖ **SeiedehNasrinDanesh, SaiedAhmadiNasab(2012)** examined the direct relationship of customer satisfaction, customer trust and switching barriers on customer retention as well as the relationship between customer satisfaction and trust. The descriptive research was conducted within the context of the hypermarkets in Kuala Lumpur, the capital city of Malaysia. The research confirmed the significant positive relationship of customer satisfaction, trust and switching barriers on overall customer retention in Malaysia hypermarkets. It is also confirmed that customer satisfaction has a direct relationship with customer trust in Malaysia hypermarkets.
- ❖ **Ajitabh Dash (2012)** in his empirical study on Online shopping and customer satisfaction identified the key factors influencing customers satisfaction through online shopping. Multiple regression analysis is used to anticipate the impact of these independent variables, viz privacy, trust, complexity, product variety, risk, time utility and reliability. He concluded that there is a relation between customer satisfaction in online shopping and privacy, trust, complexity, product variety, risk and reliability except time factor.
- ❖ **Tarsis Souza Silva, Janaina de MouraEngraciaGiraldi(2010)** in their effort to identify the influence of store image on customer satisfaction found out that Knowledge of customers' image of a store is an essential factor in the management of retail outlets. The results indicated that the factor that most affects customer satisfaction in the store studied is service, and that atmosphere and layout have no effect in this respect. The results provide a better understanding of the role store image plays in customer satisfaction and loyalty.
- ❖ **Robin T. Peterson(2004)** in their effort to identify the role of switching costs on customer perceived value, satisfaction and loyalty assessed the influence of perceived value on customer loyalty and the mediating role of satisfaction in the value-loyalty relationship. The study addressed the issue of the ambiguous effect of switching costs on loyalty suggested by previous work but also examined the moderating effect of switching costs on the satisfaction-loyalty and value-loyalty relationships. The overall moderating effects of switching costs upon customer loyalty have been found to be insignificant.
- ❖ **J. Joseph Cronin, Jr., Michael K. Brady, G. Tomas M. Hult (2000)** conceptualized the effects of quality, satisfaction, and value on consumers' behavioral intentions. A number of notable findings are reported including the empirical verification that service quality, service value, and satisfaction may all be directly related to behavioral intentions when all of these variables are considered collectively. The results further suggest that the indirect effects of the service quality and value constructs enhanced their impact on behavioral intentions.

NEED\IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

In a competitive environment, retail industry is in a need to understand the customer satisfaction level in order to meet with the changing customer expectation. Organized retail sector draws more attention in the current scenario and the retail industry faces huge competition in the recent years. In order to meet the changing customer expectation, the retail industry changes its strategies and the study was conducted to analyze the customer satisfaction. The study therefore has special attention in understanding the loyalty and commitment of customers towards the retail outlets and the reason for customer being loyal towards the retailers. In short the study focuses special attention on the loyalty and commitment of the customers towards the organized retail outlets which in turn largely depends on Customer Satisfaction.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To have an understanding of the influence of demographic factors in the retailing sector
- To study the effect of store image on consumer purchase behaviour.
- To identify the factors contributing towards competitive advantage of retail outlets.
- To study the influence of sales promotional activities and the sources that contribute towards enhancing the frequency of visits towards retail outlets

HYPOTHESES

H01: There is no significant relationship between the physical facilities and customer satisfaction level

H02: There is no significant difference in the customer's perception towards the store ambience of retail outlets

H03: Gender does not have a significant influence on the purpose of visit to retail outlets.

H04: There is no significant difference in the promotional activities carried out by various retail outlets.

H05: There is no significant difference among the various sources in providing information about retail outlets

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design is an arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure.

TYPE OF RESEARCH DESIGN: The type of research design adopted in this study is Descriptive Research. Descriptive research includes surveys and fact finding enquiries of different kinds and it can report only what has happened. The purpose of the research is description of the state of affairs as it exists at present. Descriptive research, also known as statistical research, describes data and characteristics about the population or phenomenon being studied. Descriptive research answers the questions who, what, when, where and how.

SAMPLING METHOD: The sampling method used in this study is Convenience Sampling which is a non - probability Sampling method.

SAMPLE SIZE: Sample size determination is the act of choosing the number of observations or replicates to include in a statistical sample. The sample size is an important feature of any empirical study in which the goal is to make inferences about a population from a sample. The sample size for the study is 140 which is finalized through a pilot study.

DATA COLLECTION: Data collection is a systematic approach to gathering information from a variety of sources to get a complete and accurate picture of an area of interest. In this study responses are collected through two different sources. The sources of data collection are Primary data collection and Secondary data collection. Primary data are collected through a structured questionnaire and schedules. Secondary data are collected through journals, magazines etc.

ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

TABLE 1.1: DEMOGRAPHIC SEGMENTATION

	Demographic Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
AGE (in years)	< 25	6	4
	26-30	26	19
	31-35	36	26
	36-40	42	30
	<40	30	21
GENDER	Male	54	39
	Female	86	61
OCCUPATION	Salaried	27	19
	Business	12	9
	Professional	58	41
	Home Maker	36	26
	Retired	7	5
INCOME (per month)	10000-25000	32	23
	25000-50000	52	37
	50000-75000	38	27
	>75000	18	13
FREQUENCY OF VISITS	Once in a week	8	6
	Once in 15 days	27	19
	Once in a month	85	61
	Once in 2 or 3 months	15	11
	Once in 6 months	5	3

Findings based on demographic segmentation of respondents project the following facts:

- ✓ Majority of the respondents visiting hypermarket are found to be in the age group of 36-40 years.
- ✓ Women are found to be more influenced when compared to that of male respondents
- ✓ Professionals and home makers are found to be influenced much by hypermarkets
- ✓ Income Distribution of majority of the customers taken for study are found to be in the range of 25000 – 50000
- ✓ Majority of the customers are found to be visiting the outlet once in a month

TABLE 1.2: CORRELATION BETWEEN OCCUPATION OF CUSTOMERS AND FREQUENCY OF THEIR VISITS

Occupation(x)	27	12	58	36	7
Frequency of visit(y)	8	27	85	15	5
x	y	x ²	y ²	xy	
27	8	729	64	216	
12	27	144	729	324	
58	85	3364	7225	4930	
36	15	1296	225	540	
7	5	49	25	35	
140	140	5582	8268	6045	

$r = 0.79$

It can therefore be inferred that there is a high degree of correlation between the occupation of the customers and the frequency of their visits as both the variables show a high degree of correlation which is implied from the fact that value of 'r' is positive and it is nearer to 1.

TABLE 1.3: CUSTOMER'S FREQUENCY OF VISITS TOWARDS VARIOUS RETAIL OUTLETS – WEIGHTED AVERAGE METHOD

Retail Outlets	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	Total	Ranks
Big Bazaar	28	24	45	14	13	9	7	24.46	2
Reliance	46	39	18	13	11	7	6	26.82	1
Shoppers stop	16	28	34	39	13	4	6	23.53	3
Spencers	3	12	19	42	38	19	7	18.39	6
More	6	3	17	36	28	36	14	16.39	7
Nilgiris	8	12	22	27	41	17	13	18.42	5
Mega Mart	33	24	17	29	12	8	17	23.03	4

It is identified from the above table that the frequency of visit of customers is more for Reliance since it is ranked I followed by Big Bazaar which is ranked II. Shopper's Stop, Mega Mart, Nilgiris are ranked III, IV and V respectively. Spencers and More are found to have a least preference.

Physical Facilities	Very Good	Good	Moderate	Poor	Very Poor
Observed Frequency	12	67	52	7	2
Expected Frequency	15	53	45	21	6

TABLE 2.1: TABLE SHOWING SATISFACTION LEVEL OF CUSTOMERS WITH RESPECT TO PHYSICAL FACILITIES

Observed Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Relative Frequency(q)	Expected Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Relative Frequency(p)	KS= p-q
12	15	12/140=0.085	15	15	15/140=0.107	0.022
67	79	79/140=0.564	53	68	68/140=0.485	0.079
52	131	131/140=0.935	45	113	113/140=0.807	0.128
7	138	138/140=0.985	21	134	134/140=0.957	0.028
2	140	140/140=1	6	140	140/140=1	0

H01: There is no significant relationship between the physical facilities and consumer purchasing behavior.

Test Statistic: $KS = \max |p-q|$

$KS = 0.128$ = Calculated Value

Level of Significance: $\alpha = 0.05$

Table Value: $n = 5$

Table Value = 0.565

Conclusion: Calculated Value < Table Value

$0.128 < 0.565$

H0 is therefore accepted. Hence it can be concluded that there is no significant difference among the customer satisfaction level towards physical facilities.

The various factors that contributes towards store ambience are Music, Temperature, Lighting Cleanliness etc. Based on the data that is being obtained lighting is found to have a major influence on customer preference. In order to find out whether the other three factors (i.e) Music, Cleanliness, Temperature have a significant difference in influencing the purchasing behavior of consumers Kruskal Wallis or H test is applied.

H02: There is no significant difference on the perception of customers towards store ambience.

TABLE 2.2: TABLE SHOWING THE INFLUENCE OF STORE AMBIENCE ON CUSTOMER PREFERENCE

Music (A)	5	30	54	42	9
Temperature (B)	15	57	45	18	5
Cleanliness (C)	33	54	28	19	6

$k = 3$ $n_1 = 5$, $n_2 = 5$, $n_3 = 5$

$R_1 = 41$, $R_2 = 40.5$, $R_3 = 38.5$

Null Hypothesis:

$H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3$

There is no significant difference among customer perception on store ambience.

$H_\chi^2 = 0.05 [336.2 + 328.05 + 296.45] - 48$

$H_\chi^2 = 0.035$ = Calculated Value

Table value:

Degree of freedom = $K - 1 = 2$

Table Value = 5.991

Conclusion: Calculated Value < Table Value

$0.035 < 5.991$

H0 is therefore accepted. Hence it can be concluded that there is no significant difference among customer perception on store ambience.

TABLE 3.1: TABLE SHOWING FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TOWARDS THE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE OF RETAIL OUTLETS

Reason for Customer Visit	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Price	64	46
Product Variety	8	6
Product Quality	48	17
Convenience of Outlet	24	9
Service	32	23
Total	140	100

It is therefore evident from the table above that Price is one of the key factor that contributes towards the competitive advantage of retail outlets. Service and Product quality occupy the 2nd and 3rd position respectively. Product variety is supposed to have a least influence.

H03: Gender does not have a significant influence on the purpose of visit to retail outlets

TABLE 3.2: TABLE SHOWING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PURPOSE OF VISIT TO RETAIL OUTLETS AND GENDER

Gender\Influencing Factors	Price	Service	Variety	Quality	Convenience	Total(R _i)
Male	19	5	9	6	15	54
Female	45	3	15	6	17	86
C _j	64	8	24	12	32	140

Test Statistic: $\chi^2 = \sum (O_{ij} - E_{ij})^2 / E_{ij}$

$\chi^2 = 6.495$ = Calculated Value

Level of Significance: $\alpha = 0.05$

Table Value: Degree of freedom = $(c-1)(r-1) = 4$

Table Value = 9.488

Conclusion: Calculated Value < Table Value

$6.495 < 9.488$

Accept H₀. Hence it can be concluded that gender does not have a significant influence on the purpose of visit to retail outlets.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference among the promotional activities attracting customers.

TABLE 4.1 : TABLE SHOWING THE INFLUENCE OF PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES TOWARDS ATTRACTING CUSTOMERS

	Discounts	Extra Offers	Bulk Offers	Advertisement	Membership Cards
Observed Frequency	57	22	17	7	37
Expected Frequency	45	32	24	15	24

Observed Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Relative Frequency (q)	Expected Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Relative Frequency(p)	KS= p-q
57	57	0.438	45	45	0.346	0.092
22	79	0.608	32	77	0.592	0.016
17	96	0.738	24	101	0.777	0.039
7	103	0.792	15	116	0.892	0.1
37	140	1	24	140	1	0

KS = Max | p – q |

KS = 0.1 = Calculated Value

Level of significance: $\alpha = 0.05$

Table Value: n = 5

Table Value = 0.565

Conclusion: Calculate Value < Table Value

0.1 < 0.565

Accept H₀

There is no significant difference among the promotional activities carried out by the retail outlets in attracting customers.

TABLE 4.2: SOURCES PROVIDING INFORMATION ABOUT RETAIL OUTLETS

S NO	SOURCES OF INFORMATION	NO OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	Magazine	2	1
2	Newspaper	5	4
3	Internet & TV	15	11
4	Word of Mouth	33	24
5	Sales Personnel	85	60
TOTAL		140	100

From the above table, it is found that 60% of customers say that they receive information from sales personnel, 24% say that they receive from word of mouth, 11% from Internet & TV, 1% and 4% get the information from magazine and newspaper respectively.

It is therefore interpreted that customers receive the information mostly from sales personnel.

Null Hypothesis:

H₀: There is no significant difference among the various sources that provide information to retail customers.

TABLE 4.3: KOLMOGOROV SMIRNOV TEST

	Magazine	Newspaper	Internet & TV	Word of Mouth	Sales personnel
Observed Frequency	2	5	15	33	85
Expected Frequency	15	23	32	38	32

Observed Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Relative Frequency(q)	Expected Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Relative Frequency(p)	KS= p-q
2	2	2/140=0.014	15	15	15/140=0.107	0.093
5	7	7/140=0.05	23	38	38/140=0.271	0.221
15	22	22/140=0.157	32	70	70/140=0.5	0.343
33	55	55/140=0.39	38	108	108/140=0.771	0.378
85	140	140/140=1	32	140	140/140=1	0

Test Statistic: KS = Max | p – q |

KS = 0.378 = Calculated Value

Level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$

Table Value = 0.565

Conclusion: Calculated Value < Table Value

0.378 < 0.56

Accept H₀. Hence there is no significant difference among the sources of information about loyalty card facilities

SUGGESTIONS

Retail business is successful only when they have a good customer services. Customer loyalty can only be gained by providing good and satisfied services to the customers. Most respondents take on a spot decision of buying difficult products because of various attractive product displays. So pretty combination with good services should be done to retain customers. Quality plays a major role because more respondents said that they want a quality product and that also the one of the reason for most of the respondents sticking to particular brand. Customer service may still more be enhanced in order to increase the level of highly satisfied customers. Highly satisfaction in the customer service will lead to loyal customers. Productive measures may also be taken to ensure that the salespersons are attending the customers in the right time. This will be helpful for attracting the customers who are moving for branded showrooms for their purchase

CONCLUSION

Customer satisfaction, loyalty and commitment have a serious impact on the growth and market potential of retail outlets. It is evident from the study that the customers are satisfied with the physical facilities, visual merchandising, and store ambience in various retail outlets. Price is also a factor that satisfies and retains the customers. Promotional activities are the strategy that attracts more customers towards the store. Service quality of various outlets are not found to be satisfactory and this area needs to have special attention. Since there is a greater scope in the retail industry, many outlets have started to concentrate on the motivational factors to attract and retain customers, then it can overcome its competitors and obtain the premium rank in retail industry.

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