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## Impact of Gender on Customer Satisfaction for Service Quality: A Case Study of Hyper Stores

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### Abstract

Satisfaction of customers is an integral part for the success of the business. Customer satisfaction is based on perceived service quality. Service quality is a comparison of expectations with performance. Customer satisfaction is based on perceived service quality. Service quality is a crucial factor for the triumph of the business firm. This study is an attempt to examine the impact of gender on satisfaction level of customers for service quality in hyper stores. All the relevant data has been collected through a sample survey of 70 customers purchasing goods from hyper stores in South West Delhi. Sample was drawn by convenient sampling. Retail Service Quality Scale was used as measurement instrument. It was developed by Dabholkar, Thrope and Rentz (1996). Likert's five point scale was used to rate all the variables. A survey was conducted to verify the hypothesis and research framework. Statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation and t- test were used. Major Findings exhibit that there is no significant difference between male and female customers for different variables of service quality in hyper stores.

**Keywords:** *Customer satisfaction, service quality, hyper stores, business.*

### Introduction

#### Customer Satisfaction

Satisfaction means the contentment one feels when he/she fulfills a desire, need or expectation. Furthermore, Customer satisfaction can be a measured by how happy customers are with the services and products of the store. Satisfaction of customers is an integral part for the success of the business. Satisfied customers bring tremendous benefit to companies. Satisfied customers are more likely to stay loyal, consume more and are more likely to recommend their friends to the business.

Oliver (1980) defined that customer satisfaction is the evaluation process of pre purchase expectation of the customer and the actual experience after the consumption.

La Barbera and Mazarsky (1983) found that satisfaction influences repurchase intentions whereas dissatisfaction is seen as a primary reason for customer defection or discontinuation of purchase.

Atkinson (1988) described that cleanliness, security, value for money and courtesy of staff determine customer satisfaction.

Satisfaction according to Hokanson (1995) is affected by many factors which include friendly employees, courteous employees, knowledgeable employees, and helpful employees, accuracy of billing, competitive pricing, service quality, good value and quick service.

Kotler (1996) defined customer satisfaction as "the level of a person felt state resulting from comparing a product's perceived performance or outcome in a violation to his/her own expectations."

According to Gunderson, Heide and Olsson (1996) Customer Satisfaction is an evaluative judgment about a product or service which is done after the consumption of the product or using the service.

Zairi (2000) quoted "Impact of customer satisfaction on repeat purchase, loyalty and retention and they have all echoed concern that customers who are satisfied are most likely to share their experiences with other people with regards to about five to six people."

Sharma and Stafford (2000) suggested that the behavior of the service staff is important because of the intangible elements of services, and emphasizes the dependence customers feel on the service staff to solve their problems.

Hoyer and MacInnis (2001) quoted "Dissatisfied customers can choose to discontinue purchasing the goods or services and engage in negative word of mouth."

Fornell (2001) conducted a study and concluded that "satisfied customers may be the most

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consequential of all economic assets; indeed, they may be proxies for all other economic assets combined.”

Post, Preston and Sachs (2002) revealed that customers are basic factor which affects the firm’s legitimacy and long-term survival.

Ciavolino and Dahlgaard (2007) research efforts focused that “customer satisfaction can be defined as the overall evaluation of the service performances or utilization.”

Prayukvong, Sophon, Hongpukdee and Chaarupas (2007) asserted in his contribution that a satisfied customer might become a repeat buyer, and this overall satisfaction has a strong positive effect on customer loyalty intentions.

### Hyper Stores

According to the Webster dictionary (1993) a hyper market is a superstore which combines a supermarket and a department store (where usually are sold products like apparel, furniture, appliances, electronics, and additionally select other lines of products such as paint, hardware, toiletries, cosmetics, photographic equipment, jewelry, toys, and sporting goods), being the result a very large retail facility which carries an enormous range of products under one roof, including full lines of groceries and general merchandise.

### Service Quality

Service quality is a comparison of expectations with performance. Customer satisfaction is based on perceived service quality. Improved service quality will increase the economic competitiveness. Service quality is a crucial factor for the success of the business firm; if the service provider is rightly aware about the different dimensions of the service quality then it is easy to make the customers satisfied.

Westbrook (1981) divided the experiences of customers into two categories, First is store experience and second is related to merchandise. In store experience include interaction with store employees and the ease of walking around the store. Experience related to merchandise includes quality and availability of merchandise.

Gronroos (1984) defines perceived service quality as a consumption process in which the customer is part of the service process that leads to an outcome or result. The way the customer perceives the service process at the time of the service is more important than the outcome of the service.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) service quality means the customer’s overall judgment of the excellence of the service or the difference between one’s expectation and the actual service performed.

Lewis and Mitchell (1990) asserted in his contribution that service quality is the extent to which a service meets customers’ needs or expectations.

Hokanson (1995) found that satisfaction is affected by many factors which include friendly employees, courteous employees, knowledgeable employees, and helpful employees, accuracy of billing, competitive pricing, service quality, good value and quick service.

According to Palmer (2008) there is a clear correlation between improving service quality and higher profit. Improving service quality was found to have a positive effect on the company’s stock value.

Brito, Pedro (2009) revealed that image plays an important role and it infuses sense of excitement.

### Objective of the Study

The objective of the paper was to measure the impact of gender on satisfaction level for different variable of service quality in hyper stores.

### Hypotheses of the Study

**H01:** There is no significant difference in customer satisfaction for different variables of service quality for males and females.

**H11:** There is significant difference in customer satisfaction for different variables of service quality for males and females.

### Research Methodology

The present study is an exploratory research work that focused on the impact of gender on satisfaction level for different dimensions of service quality in hyper stores. Participants were asked to fill out the survey and return as per their convenience. The questionnaire was also e-mailed to few respondents. Due to shortage of time 100 questionnaires were sent out of which 80 were returned (20 were not reverted by the respondents).10 of the filled questionnaire was incomplete and therefore rejected.70 questionnaires were used for data interpretation. There were 30 males and 40 females respondents. The study was conducted on customers who have yearly income between 5 lakh-10 lakh. Random convenient sampling was used in the present research. The study was confined to South-West Delhi only. Retail Service Quality Scale was used as measurement instrument. Retail Service Quality Scale (RSQS) is a scale to measure the quality in service sector. It was developed by Dabholkar, Thrope and Rentz (1996). It is multi item scale which was developed to access customer perception of service quality in service and retail businesses. Likert’s five point scale was used to rate all the variables.

This scale divides the service quality in five dimensions. The five dimensions are as follows:

- (1) Physical aspects
- (2) Reliability
- (3) Personal interaction
- (4) Problem-solving
- (5) Policy

The details of these dimensions are given below:

- **Physical Aspects:** Physical aspects include fixture and equipment, physical facilities, material associated with store’s service, convenience of physical facilities and layouts. It also includes the appearance of the facilities and the convenience offered to the customer by the layout of physical facilities.
- **Reliability:** Reliability means promises to do something, providing right service, available merchandise and error-free sales transactions and records.
- **Personal interaction:** Personal interaction dimension of retailers includes employees having knowledge to answer questions, inspiring confidence, providing prompt service, willing to respond to customer’s requests, giving customers individual attention, showing consistent courteously with customers and even treat customers properly on the phone.
- **Problem-solving:** Problem solving includes handling of returns, exchanges and complaints. The problem solving dimension of retailers includes: willingness of retailers to handle returns and exchanges, sincere interest in problem and handling customer complaints directly and immediately.
- **General policy:** This dimension includes that aspects service quality that is directly influenced by retailers’ policy. It includes high quality merchandise, convenience of parking and operating hours as well as accepting major

credit cards. Intangibles can also reflect the specific norms and values of a company, e.g. its codes of conduct and corporate narratives.

**Analysis and Interpretation**

**Table 1:** Number of male and female customers

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	30	42.85%
Female	40	57.15%
Total	70	100%

**Table 2:** Comparison between male and female customers on service quality

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	t-value
Male	30	189.02	16.05	0.33
Female	40	187.16	31.32	

The mean score of male customers is 189.02 whereas the mean score for female customers is 187.16. Male customers have shown high value of mean scores than female customers. The ‘t’ value is not significant at any level of significance.(0.01 and 0.05 level of significance) So our null hypothesis (H01) is accepted that there is no impact of gender for customer satisfaction in hyper stores. We can conclude that “There is no significant difference in customer satisfaction for different variables of service quality for males and females.”

**Conclusion**

The concept of Hyper Stores has become more and more common in business circles and customers. This concept is now well received by the customers. Better service quality provides an upper hand to these stores. ‘All under one roof’ concept provides better solution of shopping. Festival sale, bundling offer, gift vouchers made the shopping lucrative. While much has been done in recent years for the growth of organized retail grocery stores as a business imperative, Hyper stores in India has yet to achieve critical mass.

**Limitations of the Study**

The present study has following limitations:

- The sample of the customers taken for the study is relatively small.
- Lack of willingness to fill up the questionnaire by the respondents, because of their busy schedule, posed the greatest challenge.
- Statistical tools used in the study too have their inherent limitations.

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