

“Customer Evaluation of Retail Outlets in Ambala District”

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Abstract- The Indian retailing industry is becoming intensely competitive, as more and more players are fighting to win the same set of customers. The cut throat competition and increased expectations of customers has resulted in increased awareness of organized retail outlets. The research titled with special referenced to reliance fresh and Big Bazar (Food Bazar Section) of Ambala District has been selected on seeing today's age of retail/ revolution. The present study has been undertaken to examine the significance of organized retail/ services in customer's mind to assess how customer's evaluate them, how they perceive different retail outlets services and what are their expectations about service quality in retail outlet services. To meet the objectives primary research was undertaken. The instrument used for data collection is observation and questionnaire.

Keywords: Customer Satisfaction, Organized Retail Outlets, Service Quality.

I. INTRODUCTION

Retailing in India is gradually inching its way towards becoming the next boom industry. The whole concept of shopping has changed in terms of format and consumer buying behavior, so retailing is the final stage of any economic activity. Retail outlets are the end of supply chain. Retail outlet is any business enterprise whose sales volume comes primarily from retailing. Any organization that sells to final consumers, whether a manufacture, wholesaler or retailer is engaged in retailing. The present study entitled “customer satisfaction of Retail Outlets in Ambala District” with special reference to Reliance Fresh and Big Bazaar has been selected on seeing today's age of retail revolution.

II. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION, RETAILING AND ORGANIZED RETAIL OUTLETS

customer satisfaction is the key to the profitability and it implies the retention of customers for the long term, which is cheaper than attracting the new customers. So, Customer satisfaction is a key influence in the formation of consumers. Retailing is the final stage of any economic activity. By virtue of this fact, retailing is defined as the first point of customer contact. Organized retail outlets are characterized by large professionally managed format outlets. There are different forms of retail outlets but in my present study focus is on **FOOD RETAIL SECTOR OF BIG BAZAAR AND RELIANCE FRESH** respectively located in Ambala District on seeing today's emerging trend of organized retailing.

BIG BAZAAR: Big Bazaar is the hypermarket chain, which was introduced in 2001; the object was to provide value for money proposition for the Indian consumer. Big Bazaar represents allocation where a customer can shop for anything that he needs, for which he would normally visit a bazaar or the market. In the present study, food bazaar section of Big Bazaar is covered. Food bazaar is a chain of large supermarkets where one find unseen blend of typical Indian Bazaar and International supermarket atmosphere. The punch line of food bazaar is

“Ab Ghar Chalaana Kitna Aassan”

In Ambala District Big bazaar is located at

Rai Market, Ambala Cantt.

Reliance Fresh: Reliance fresh is on the convenience store format, which forms part of the retail business of Reliance Industries of India. Which is headed by Mr. Mukesh

Ambani, Reliance plans to invest in excess of 25000 crores in the next four years in their retail division. The company has in excess of 560 Reliance Fresh Outlets across the country. These stores sell fresh fruits and vegetables, staples groceries, fresh juice bars and dairy products. A typical reliance fresh is approximately 10000-15000 sq. ft. and caters to a catchments area of 1-2 k.m. the first Reliance Fresh store was opened in oct. 2007.

Reliance Fresh is located at:

Mahesh Nagar, Ambala Cantt.

Hissar Road, Ambala City.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- A. To make an in depth study of customer's perception regarding the services of organized retail outlets with special reference to Reliance Fresh and Big Bazaar (food bazaar section) of Ambala District.
- B. To check the satisfaction level of customers with regard to the services provided by the selected retail outlets.
- C. To differentiate best retail outlet in terms of awareness and satisfaction level of customers.
- D. To identify the impediments involved in the retailing services.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research is an art of scientific investigation. It is also systematic design, collection, analysis and reporting the findings and solutions for the problem. The methodology adopted the following steps:

- A. The sample: A representative sample of 100 customers has been taken into consideration i.e. 50 each from Reliance Fresh and Big Bazaar respectively. Convenience sampling has been used for the present study.
- B. Data collection: The present study is based on primary as well as secondary data.
- C. Secondary Data: The websites of Reliance fresh and Big Bazaar were surfed to get information. Secondary data has also been collected by looking into the company profile and

product profile of the selected organized retail outlets. Data has also been collected from various magazines, newspapers and books and journals etc.

- D. Primary Data: Primary data has been gathered to judge the satisfaction level of customers regarding organized retail outlets services. The entire research is customer data based; the methodology includes customer's opinion by means of self administered structured questionnaire.
- E. Construction of Questionnaire: To achieve the objectives of study, a structured questionnaire including yes/no questions and five point scale questions relating to general information, usage, service quality and customer satisfaction.
- F. Questions 1 to 5 was asked to know the profile of the customers in terms of age, sex, occupation and income.
- G. A question 6 was based to know the retail outlet preference for reliance fresh and Big Bazaar.
- H. Questions 7 to 8 was asked to know the customer's preferences of shopping at Karana's or other neighborhood stores and if yes then why?
- I. Questions 9 to 14 were asked to know the usage of retail services by customers and their frequency of visits.
- J. Question 15 was asked to find out the factors influencing customer's choice of retail outlets.
- K. Question 16 to 20 was asked to know the five service quality dimensions i.e. tangibility, reliability, problem solving, personal interactions and policy which customers use in evaluating the services of retail outlets.
- L. Question 21 was asked to know the customer orientation and satisfaction in using retail outlet services.
- M. Question 22 was asked to identify the impediments involved in using retail outlet services.
- N. Question 23 was asked to give suggestions by customers to improve the service of retail outlets.

V. FINDINGS

- A. The research, which is, carried out with general public under the title “customer satisfaction and organized Retail outlets in Ambala District” consisted 38% male and 62% female. Occupations of the respondents include in sample are Business, Service, students and housewives which consists of 15%, 39%, 20% and 26% respectively. In the sample 58% belong to upper class 30% belong to middle class and 12% belong to lower class. Thus indicating that retail markets are the destination for middle and upper class.
- B. It is evident from the study that most of the respondents i.e. 50% prefer buying at both Reliance Fresh and Big Bazaar. But still 34% talked about a marked preference for Big Bazaar only, while only 16% prefer Reliance Fresh.
- C. It is found that generally customers prefer from their friendly neighborhood kariana stores. As 60% of the respondents say that shopping at malls does not affected their relationship with their Kariana shopkeepers. The reasons are: convenient location, personalized attention and easy availability of credit in kariana stores.
- D. It has been found that majority of respondents i.e. 62% visit their retail outlets on weekends, 16% monthly, 21% on special occasion and 1% visit daily.
- E. It has been found that the main reasons for preferring kariana or neighborhood stores is location as 72 % customers respond in favor of it. But personal attention, easy exchange of goods and credit facility also affect the customers’ preference to some extent.
- F. The study shows that retail malls are the destination for shopping of relatively more of groceries, fruits and vegetables and ready to eat products with respondents voting for 30%, 27% and 21% respectively while it is only 7% for pharmacy products and 15% for personal care.
- G. The research study shows that 80% of the respondents admitted that they tend to overspend in retail marts.
- The major reason found was wide variety of products with wide variety of brand selection as 55% respondents vote for it.
- H. The recorded response of respondents shows that equipments and clean environment of retail marts are up to the expectation of respondents with mean scores are 3.76 and 3.96 respectively and S.D. of 0.9224 and 0.7335 respectively.
- I. The recorded response of respondents’ perception on service quality component-Reliability shows that customers find large retail formats reliable. Customers feel that stores keep their promises with Mean Score of 3.65 and S.D. of 0.8333 while error free sales transactions record is reported relatively less with the mean score of 3.62 and S.D. of 0.8620.
- J. The service qualities of dimension of problem solving shows that service personnel shows interest and are able to solve customer complaints with mean score of 3.39 and 3.48 respectively and S.D. of 1.1182 and 1.0755 respectively.
- K. The research study shows that respondents are satisfied with presentation of merchandise and convenient operating hours with mean scores of 3.96 and S.D. of 0.7335 and 0.9224 respectively. However customers are comparatively less satisfied with individual attention paid to them with the mean score of 3.33 and S.D. of 0.9853.
- L. The research study shows that performance of retail mart is up to the expectation of customers with Mean Score of 4.35 and S.D. of 0.6526.

VI. SUGGESTIONS

- A. In Big Bazaar, there is a great rush at billing centers during peak hours in comparison to Reliance Fresh. This creates a great mess and many times transactions get delayed. To tackle this situation more billing counters should be opened in Big Bazaar.
- B. Customer Service Desk is available in Big Bazaar for easy exchange of

good and also helps in listening problems and gives reliable suggestions to customer. This facility need to be strengthened in Reliance Fresh.

- C. It may be further suggested that variety of frozen foods and dairy products should be increased in Big Bazaar.
- D. There is a problem of parking facility in all the Reliance Fresh outlets as compared to Big Bazaar. So Reliance Fresh outlets should provide parking facilities, which may attract more and more customers.
- E. In Big Bazaar, various services are provided regularly like home delivery, gift wrapping, help line, baggage counter but in Reliance Fresh only one facility of home delivery is provided on special occasions. So Reliance Fresh outlet needs to provide other services also to attract large number of customers.
- F. The retail outlets should offer variety of goods and should also have wide selection of popular brands so as to attract all levels of customers.
- G. The retail outlets should offer low price offers to delight customers.
- H. Employees should be courteous and friendly with customers. They should be always willing to answer the query of the customers.
- I. Wide spread use of customer relationship management, with the growing use of plastic money

retailers should use various loyalty programmed to grab the larger share of customer wallet.

VII. CONCLUSION

Consistent, strenuous and sincere efforts and by establishing a healthy rapport and liaison with the customers, both the retail outlets should make efforts to revamp their approach towards customers, so as to perform better and derive competitive advantage in the long run.

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