SERVICE QUALITY IN FASHION RETAILING

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to determine the consumer satisfaction of service quality offered at fashion retailing in Mysore city. The data was collected from 149 respondents through structures questionnaire by using five point likert scale and was analyzed using one sample t test and multiple regression. The dimensions such as tangibles, responsiveness, Reliability and assurance were taken for the study as independent dimension and one dependent dimension. The finding showed that the dimensions of service quality such as tangibles and responsiveness were positively related to customer satisfaction. The management should focus on competence dimensions to be ahead of the competitor. In India the vast middle class and its almost untapped retail industry are the key attractive forces for global retailers. In order to find success in the competitive environment the retail has to satisfy the customers.

Keywords- Customer Satisfaction, Fashion retailing, Mysore city, Service quality.

INTRODUCTION

Retailing in India is steadily inching its way toward becoming the next boom sector. The whole concept of shopping has changed in terms of format and consumer buying behavior, ushering in a revolution in shopping in India. The Indian population is witnessing a major change in its demographic characters. A large young working population with median age of 20 to 24 years, nuclear families in urban and rural areas, along with increasing population of working women and rising opportunities in the services sector are going to be the key expansion drivers of the retail sector in India. Service quality has been a regularly studied in the service marketing literature. Efforts to understand and identify service quality have been undertaken in the last three decades. A topic of particular interest in service quality research is the issue of measurement. Next the introduction of the SERVQUAL instrument by Parasuraman. Much of the research till the date has focused on measuring service quality. Subsequently, research on the instrument has been widely cited in the marketing literature and its use in industry has become quite widespread. The earlier work has advanced our understanding of service quality measurement. However, it is also true that there is no general conformity as to the nature of the service quality dimensions. Nevertheless, there is a general viewpoint that service quality is a multidimensional construct. That is, while the current studies on service quality apparently focused on the process of service delivery.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ghobadian et al. hypothesize that most of the service quality definitions fall within the "customer led" groups. Juran elaborates the definition of customer led quality as "features of products which meet customers' needs and thereby provide customer satisfaction." As service quality relates to meeting customers' needs, we will be looking at "perceived service quality" in order to understand consumers (Arnauld et al., 2002). Grönroos (1984) and Parasuraman et al., (1985) looks at perceived quality of service as the difference between customers' expectation and their perceptions of the actual service received. Other researchers look at perceived service quality as an approach. Arnauld et al., defined perceived quality "whether in reference to a product or service" as "the consumers' evaluative decision about an entity's overall superiority in providing preferred benefits". Hoffman & Bateson defines service quality as an attitude "formed by a long-term, overall evaluation of a performance". Attitude is defined as "a consumer's overall, lasting assessment of a concept or object, such as a person, brand and service." Service quality as "an attitude" is consistent with the views of Parasuraman, Cronin & Taylor (1992) & Sureshchandar et al., (2002). Basis of the view is elaborated by the latter: Competitiveness of a firm in the post-liberalized era is determined by the way it delivers customer service. Service quality is a concept that has aroused considerable attention and discuss in the research literature because of the difficulty in both defining it and measuring it with no overall agreement emerging on either. Firms with high service quality pose a challenge to other firms. Many scholars have explored consumers' cognitive and affective responses to the insight of service attributes in order to benefit by providing what consumers need in an effective and efficient manner. Organizations can business superiority through quality control in services. Again service quality considered as the difference between customer expectations and preciseness of service.

If expectations are greater than performance, then perceived quality is less than satisfactory and hence customer dissatisfaction occurs. There is general conformity that the aforementioned constructs are important aspects of service quality, but scholars have been cynical about whether these dimensions are valid when evaluating service quality in other service industries Cronin & Taylor, 1992). This has more explanatory power than measures that are based on the gap between expectation and performance. In addition, Kang argued that SERVQUAL focuses more on the service delivery process than on other attributes of service, such as service-encounter outcomes. In a competitive environment, service quality is critical for service firms to maintain a stranglehold position as it is an indicator of business performance. Based on superior service, smaller stores could compete with larger and more dominant stores as they could not compete on price factors. In addition, focusing on service quality is significant in markets where product offerings are similar, as typically found across grocery retail stores. Improvement of the quality of services requires recognition of the service quality dimensions that are important to retail consumers. Although the research into the dimensions used by consumers to measure service quality in the service sector is extensive, there is lack of empirical studies on factors of quality improvement strategies, especially the service quality dimensions (Dabholkar et al., 1996) for the retail sector. SERVQUAL by Parasuraman et al., the most famous and well discussed service quality model in the 1990s (Robinson, 1999) failed to be fully adopted and validated in a retail setting (Dabholkar et al.). Service quality measurement of the retail stores, unlike the pure service setups, should include the measure of service quality and product quality as retail stores offer a mix of services and products. In service literature, service quality is usually defined based on consumers' judgments. Parasuraman defined service quality as "a measure of how well the service level delivered matches customer expectations; delivering quality service means confirming to customer expectations on a consistent basis". Parasuraman has also defined perceived service quality as "a global judgment, or attitude, relating to the superiority of the service". Zeithaml defined service quality as "the consumer's judgment about a product's overall excellence or superiority". Through these definitions it is clear that defining service quality is one of the important steps toward the development of this study. Kotler and Armstrong (1996, p. G9) have defined service quality as "the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs".

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is to determine whether the dimensions of service quality significantly affect customer satisfaction in fashion retailing.

METHODOLOGY

The relevant data for the study has been collected from both primary and secondary sources. Research methodologies used in the study are descriptive methods. Simple random sampling used to collect the information regression analysis was used in this research the data was collected through structured questionnaire by using five point likert scale. A sample of 149 respondents was selected for the study.

HYPOTHESIS

1) Ho-The tangibles have significant positive impact on customer satisfaction
2) Ho-The reliability have significant positive relationship on customer satisfaction
3) Ho-The responsiveness have significant positive impact on customer satisfaction
4) Ho-The assurance have significant positive relationship on customer satisfaction

Independent variables-
1. Reliability- speed of service, accuracy of transaction, speed of service
2. Responsiveness- speed of response to complaint, concern of assisting, concern to customer
3. Assurance- staff attitude, security for transaction, patience of sales staff
4. Tangibles- cleanliness, promotional activities, parking facilities, convenience

Dependent variables- communication system, employer behavior, customer loyalty, advertisement, after sales service

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

1) Demographic

Analysis of demographic information revealed that 36 percent customers were young and aged between 19 years to 25 years and 34 percent of the respondents were males. Around 46percent of the sample respondents had graduation and 68 percent were employed; out of the total sample 46 percent of the respondent's annual income was in between 20000 to 25000;

2) One-Sample t test- table-1

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Tangibles	149	17.5638	1.44410	.11831
Reliability	149	12.9732	1.30977	.10730
Responsiveness	149	13.5973	1.27300	.10429
Assurance	149	11.6443	2.16256	.17716

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Tangibles	123.103	148	.000	14.56376	14.3300	14.7975
Reliability	92.946	148	.000	9.97315	9.7611	10.1852
Responsiveness	101.616	148	.000	10.59732	10.3912	10.8034
Assurance	48.793	148	.000	8.64430	8.2942	8.9944

3) Regression analysis

Table-2.1-Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.298[a]	.089	.064	1.99377

a. Predictors: (Constant), assurance, tangibles, responsiveness, reliability

Table-2.2 ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	55.560	4	13.890	3.494	.009[a]
	Residual	568.440	143	3.975		
	Total	624.000	147			

a. Predictors: (Constant), assurance, tangibles, responsiveness, reliability

b. Dependent Variable: Customer satisfaction

Table-2.3 Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	20.589	3.523		5.844	.000
	Tangibles	.302	.114	.212	2.651	.009
	Reliability	.110	.128	.070	.861	.390
	Responsiveness	-.299	.131	-.185	-2.279	.024
	Assurance	-.107	.078	-.113	-1.369	.173

a. Dependent Variable: customer satisfaction

First the one sample t test was conducted the result showed (table-1) that all the four dimensions were positively related. Later the regression analysis was done to analyse the coefficient of dependent and independent dimensions on customer satisfaction. The above results (table-2) indicate that p value is .000 hence the regression model was fit. The R square is .089. The adjusted R square shows the amount of variance explained by independent variable on dependent variable. From the coefficient table (table2.3) it was revealed that tangible of fashion retailing is (β-.212 and significance p-.009).Hence there is a significance difference between tangible and customer satisfaction. In terms of responsiveness the β value is .185 and the p value is .024 it shows that customer knowledge also positively influence overall satisfaction of fashion retailing Tangible, responsiveness have a significant impact on overall satisfaction of fashion retailing therefore we reject null hypothesis of all the three dimensions. Reliability and assurance does not have significant relationship with the overall customer satisfaction of fashion retailing.

CONCLUSION

The local fashion retail industry is evolving into an exceedingly competitive scene , with both foreign and local players fighting for a share in the customers' minds. Service quality has long been accepted as the most basic marketing tool for retailers to create competitive advantage. Maintaining excellent service quality within the stores is no simple task as it requires continual measurement from time to time to monitor and identify areas of activity that may be responsible for the standards of service quality. The study revealed that the management needs to improve service quality in areas of reliability and assurance. Improvement in customer satisfaction would mean that it is gaining competitive advantage

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