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FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMER LOYALTY: A STUDY ON ORGANISED FOOD & GROCERY OUTLETS

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ABSTRACT

Indian retail industry is witnessing a tremendous change with a growing middle class and rapidly increasing consumer spending, India overtakes China for the number one spot in this year’s Global Retail Development Index (GRDI). The conditions for retailers in India are favourable and will continue to provide strong fundamentals. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is to grow by 7.4 percent in 2017 and 7.6 percent in 2018, which will help to boost the middle class and increase consumer spending beyond the essentials. These trends are expected to help organised retail double in size by 2020. Food & Grocery holds a major portion of Indian household consumption that is dominated by unorganised retailers. Despite stiff competition, customers are influenced by many factors, which drive them towards organised retail stores. A sample of 260 customers was selected from Coimbatore District by using convenience-sampling technique. Hence, this study set out to find the factors by applying factor analysis that influences customer loyalty towards organised food and grocery stores. Finding revealed that four factors, namely, personalised service and location, Price and quality policy, store atmosphere and facilities and attractive offers influenced customer loyalty towards organised Food and Grocery stores.

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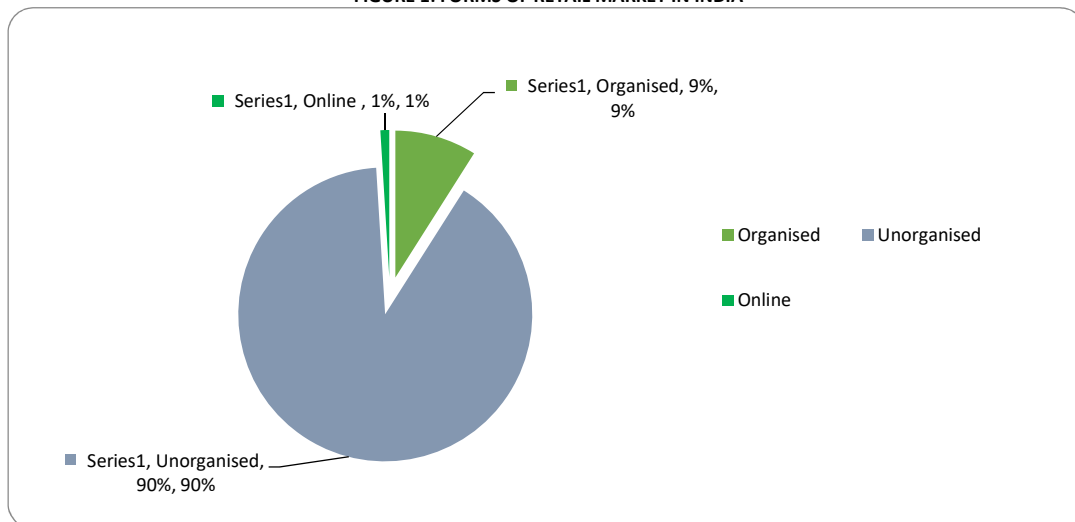
customer loyalty, food and grocery, organised retail, factors analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Indian retail industry is large among all the industries, and it has emerged as one of the most dynamic and fast – paced industries due to the entry of several new players. With a growing middle class and rapidly increasing consumer spending, India overtakes China for the number one spot in this year’s Global Retail Development Index (GRDI). The conditions for retailers in India are favourable and will continue to provide strong fundamentals. The GDP is forecast to grow 7.4 per cent in 2017 and 7.6 per cent in 2018, which is helping boost the middle class and increase consumer spending beyond the essentials. These trends are expected to help organised retail double in size by 2020 (GRD Index, 2017).

Retail industry can be broadly classified into two categories namely- organised and unorganised retail. Organised retailers are licensed for trading activities and registered to pay taxes to the government. Unorganised retail consists of unauthorised small shops - conventional Kirana shops, general stores, corner shops among various other small retail outlets - but remain as the radiating force of Indian retail industry (Anasua, 2013).

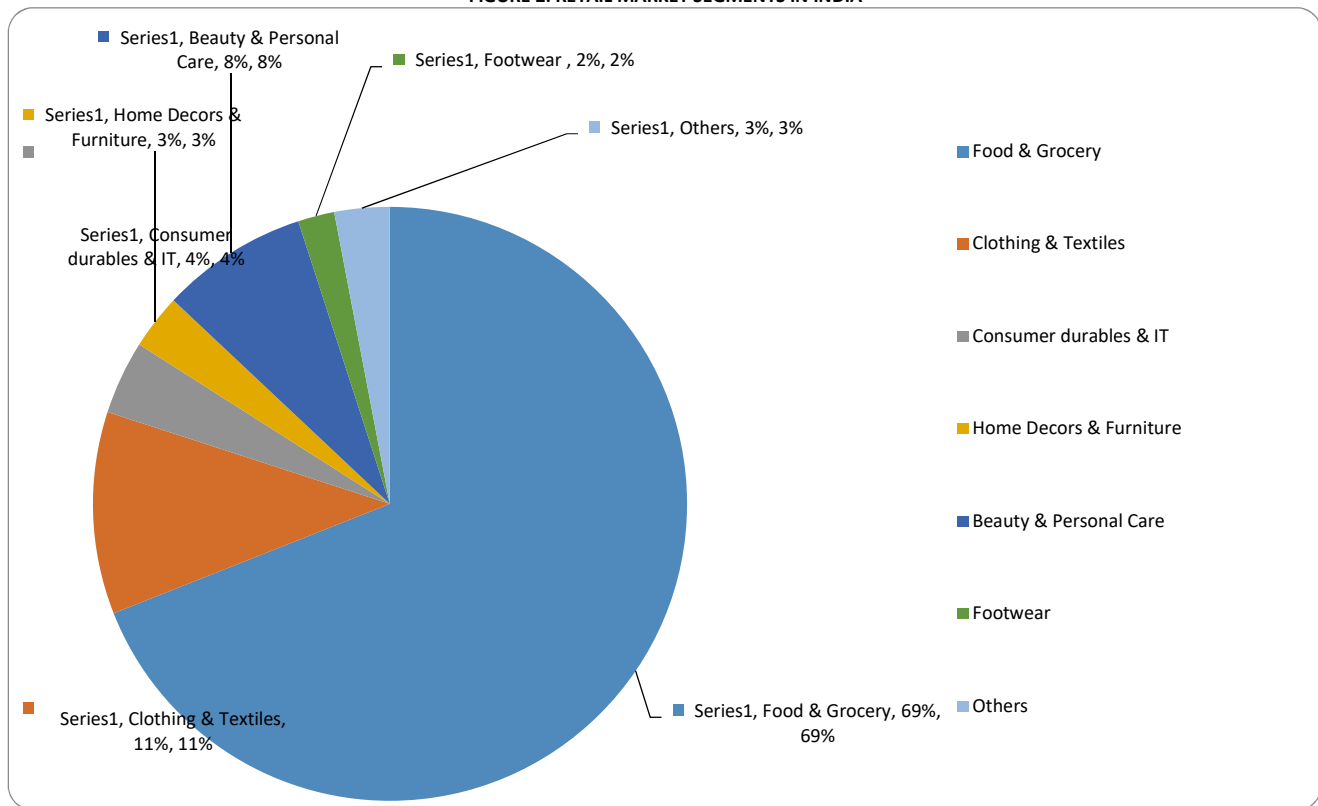
FIGURE 1: FORMS OF RETAIL MARKET IN INDIA



Source: IBEF.org

The retail industry in India is dominated by unorganised retail, accounting for more than (85%) of the total retail value, out of which (60-65%) comprises of Food and grocery business. Traditional retailers will continue to dominate the market even in 2025. Whereas, (15%) accounted for organised retail includes Food and Grocery retail business. Organised sector is growing at a faster rate, and penetrate the markets deeper, and by 2025, it is expected to capture at least 3.2 per cent of the food and grocery market and be worth INR 340,000 crore, growing at a CAGR of 22.5 per cent from current levels to be competitive in the market.(Image Retail, 2016).

FIGURE 2: RETAIL MARKET SEGMENTS IN INDIA



Source: IBEF.org

Food and Grocery (F&G) forms the backbone of the Indian retail sector. With present market size at estimated US\$ 455 billion (Rs 30,464 billion), the category will continue to grow at about 15 per cent per annum over the next decade. As a result, for the foreseeable future, food & grocery retail is expected to dominate the market with more than (50%) share of the overall retail market.

India's Food and Grocery retail market offers one of the largest opportunity areas for business. It will continue to grow at about 15 per cent per annum over the next five years and will dominate the overall retail market. As per the findings of the 2016 edition of the India Food Report, the food and grocery retail market is expected to reach Rs 109,00,000 crore by 2025, with a growth rate of 15 per cent per annum. (India Food Report, 2016).

The retailer today faces a knowledgeable and demanding consumer. The customer demands convenience and a certain level of comfort while shopping. The time required to shop and to travel to a particular location, product variety, accessibility, offers and so on the important factors that lead to customer satisfaction and loyalty. Hence, this study has been conducted to identify the key factors, which determines customer loyalty towards organised food and grocery retail stores.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bharat and Bhusan (2011) in their research paper entitled 'Factors Affecting Consumer Preferences of Shopping at Organised Retail Stores in Punjab', focus on the major attributes of the retail stores as perceived by the consumers of Punjab. 50 organised retail stores were selected in five selected cities for data collection. One-hundred consumers were interviewed from sampled organised outlets adopting the systematic random sampling procedure in each selected urban city of Punjab. Over 500 consumers were interviewed at the selected stores in five selected cities. Four-hundred and seventy-five usable questionnaires were analysed using factor analysis. The study reveals that there are six major factors preferred by consumers are availability and variety, service, ambience, discount & price, quality of product and promotion.

Shishma and Mohender (2011), in their research paper entitled 'Customer Perception in Indian Retail Industry (A Comparative Study of Organised and Unorganised Retail Industry)', aims at finding out the factors influencing customer perception in organised and unorganised retail industry in Delhi. Primary data were collected from 300 customers using convenient sampling method and statistical tools such as factor analysis, One-sample t-test and correlation was applied to test the hypothesis. The study concludes that customers perception on the organised retail sector was better when compared to the unorganised retail sector, but there are certain factors which are not letting the organised retail sector to be catering the maximum share of unorganised retail stores in India.

Aniali (2013) in her research work entitled 'Customer Patronage towards Food and Grocery Retail- A Case Study', attempts to find out the decision variables which influence the selection of a traditional outlet or a new store for the purchase of food and grocery items. 387 customers of organised and unorganised retail stores were interviewed, and paired sample t-test was applied to test the hypothesis. This study concludes that an important factor which can lead to increased patronage at the new retailers is customer relationship management activities such as loyalty bonus/discounts, special customer cards, free parking facility and so on.

Dharmesh (2013) in his study entitled 'An Empirical Study of Customer Expectation and Perception in Organised Retail Sector', attempts to identify the difference between expectation and perception of customers of organised retail stores. The study was carried out with a sample of 120 respondents, and convenient sampling method was used to select the sample size. Arithmetic means z-test and SERVQUAL model was applied to find out the gap between customers' expectation and perception. This study identifies the gap between customers' expectation and perception was identified, which revealed dissatisfaction among customers.

Satendra, Rajeev and Jyoti (2011) in their article entitled 'Perception of Consumers towards Shopping Mall - A Case Study With Reference to Aligarh and Mathura City', attempts to find customers perception towards shopping malls and to suggest the way by which the shopping mall can improve their market share. For the study, data was collected from 50 customers of Aligarh and Mathura using non-probability sampling. This study concludes that by way of excellent customer service a retailer can make their clients as regular customers and also refer their retailers to others.

Hemraj and Pankaj (2011) in an article entitled 'Factors Analysing the Store Attributes to Identify Key Attributes of Store Image. (A Study on some selected Apparel Stores in India)', tries to understand the key store attributes that affect perceived image of apparel stores and also to find how customers perception vary by type of apparel stores. Systematic Sampling technique was used to select 345 respondents, 15 each from 23 apparel stores of three cities. Frequencies, Percentages, Arithmetic Averages, Standard Deviations, Correlation, Regression, One-way ANOVA and Factor Analysis were used to analyse the data. This study finds that store's product and operational quality was the most significant factor in creating high store image.

Phansawat (2015) in his article entitled 'Factors Affecting Traditional Retail Stores Competitiveness in Chiang Mai, Thailand', attempts to study the way traditional retail stores in Chiang Mai operate the businesses and to find out what factors affecting traditional retail stores competitiveness. Data were collected from 400 retail store customers using accidental sampling and ten retail store owners by using purposive sampling. ANOVA, t-test and multiple regressions were applied to the collected data to test the hypothesis. This study finds that traditional retail stores in Chiang Mai are preferred by the majority of the customers due to service of employees, characteristics of goods, location and layout of stores and arrangement of goods. In addition, the study concludes that the traditional retailers should develop certain strategies that can fully meet the expectation of their customers.

Anne-Sophie (2008) in her research article entitled 'Exploring the Relationships between Retail Brands and Consumer Store Loyalty', tries to explore the relationship between retail brands and store loyalty. This study reveals that increase in retail brand satisfaction and loyalty influences store loyalty and the study also highlight the value of consumer retail brand satisfaction and loyalty, and provide suitable suggestion to the managers to develop marketing insights to enhance the loyalty-building capacity of their brands.

Mithilesh and Rajesh (2015) in their research work entitled 'Factors Influencing The Buying Behaviour of Consumers Towards Organised Retail Stores in Jalandhar, Punjab', try to assess the critical factors that affect the consumers buying decision towards organised retail stores in Jalandhar. The direct survey method was used to collect the data, and the data were analysed with the help of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, Friedman test and Kandall's-W test. This study finding reveals that store and environment are the two factors which significantly influence the consumer buying behaviour.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

India is termed as a nation of shopkeepers with about 15 million retail outlets of all kinds, but it is dominated by small neighbourhood grocery stores termed as Kirana stores (Aniali, 2013). The customers prefer traditional retailers such as Kirana stores regarding location, personalised service, the supply of goods on credit, which results in stiff competition among organised and unorganised retailers. In this competitive world, with increasing number of retail stores, the retailers need to be more customer oriented and need to be more updated about changing needs of the consumer. Understanding customer and knowing their preference is not an easy task because consumer today is more conscious, confident and much more demanding (Aamir and Subash, 2015). In this context, organised retailers should understand why customer prefers the particular store and what customers are expecting from the retailers. This will help the retailers to come out with more innovative ideas and services, which in turn will wean away a customer from another store, and in the same way, it contributes to retail the customers. Considering the above this study aimed to find the factors that influence the customers to shop at a particular retail store.

OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the socio-economic profile of the customers of organised food and grocery stores.
2. To analyse the factors influencing customer loyalty towards organised food and grocery stores.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study covers organised food and grocery stores in Coimbatore District. The respondents were customers of organised food and grocery stores. This study includes both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected from a sample of 260 customers by adopting convenience-sampling technique. Statistical tools such as Simple percentage and factor analysis applied to analyse the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE CUSTOMERS

| S. No. | Demographics | Group | Frequency (N=260) | Percentage |
|--------|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------|
| I | Gender | Male | 138 | 53.1 |
| | | Female | 122 | 46.9 |
| II | Marital Status | Married | 202 | 77.7 |
| | | Unmarried | 57 | 21.9 |
| | | Others | 1 | .4 |
| | | | | |
| III | Age | Below 25 | 48 | 18.5 |
| | | 26 - 35 | 71 | 27.3 |
| | | 36 - 45 | 71 | 27.3 |
| | | 46 -55 | 60 | 23.1 |
| | | 56 & Above | 10 | 3.8 |
| V | Educational Qualification | No formal education | 27 | 10.4 |
| | | School level | 81 | 31.2 |
| | | Under Graduation | 85 | 32.7 |
| | | Post-Graduation | 53 | 20.4 |
| | | Professional | 14 | 5.4 |
| VI | Occupational Status | Agriculture | 45 | 17.3 |
| | | Business | 31 | 11.9 |
| | | Employed | 109 | 41.9 |
| | | Professional | 22 | 8.5 |
| | | Home Makers | 53 | 20.4 |
| VII | Monthly Family Income | Below Rs 10,000 | 64 | 24.6 |
| | | Rs 10,001 -20,000 | 83 | 31.9 |
| | | Rs 20,001 - 30,000 | 47 | 18.1 |
| | | Rs 30,001 - 40,000 | 35 | 13.5 |
| | | Above Rs 40,001 | 31 | 11.9 |

Table 1 presents demographic characteristics of the customers. Of the 260 customers, 138 (53%) are male, and the rest 122 (47%) are female. Marital status of the customers shows that 202 (78%) are married. Age distribution of the sample indicates that 71 (27%) majority of the customers' falls under the age group between 26-35 Years and 36-45 years respectively. About 85 (33%) of the customers are undergraduate. Occupational status of the customers reveals that 109 (42%) of the customers are employed, and majority 83 (32%) of the customers earns income ranging from Rs.10,001-20,000.

FACTOR ANALYSIS

Factor Analysis is applied to reduce the complexity of data. When there are more variables on a phenomenon under study, then identifying one, two or few variables that influence the phenomenon under study is complex. There the variables are to be reduced into few factors (Latent Variables) which can be taken as constructs (factors) that influence the phenomenon under study.

Using SPSS software, these factors can be obtained. The following tables explain the steps to get the factors.

KMO – Bartlett measure of sampling adequacy is an index used to test the appropriateness of the factor analysis. The KMO is 0.821, and the chi-square statistics is significant (<0.05). This means the factor analysis is appropriate for this data.

TABLE 2: KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST

| | | |
|--|--------------------|---------|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. | | .821 |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 694.230 |
| | df | 78 |
| | Sig. | .000 |

Extraction communalities are estimates of the variance in each variable accounted for by the components. The communalities in the following table are all high, which indicates that the extracted components represent the variables as well.

TABLE 3: EXTRACTION COMMUNALITIES

| | Initial | Extraction |
|--|---------|------------|
| Reasonable price | 1.000 | .358 |
| Availability of all branded merchandise | 1.000 | .442 |
| Extended parking area | 1.000 | .581 |
| High quality of the Merchandise | 1.000 | .706 |
| Convenient location of the store | 1.000 | .611 |
| Customer loyalty program | 1.000 | .483 |
| Personalised attention /friendliness of sales | 1.000 | .658 |
| Frequent promotional offers | 1.000 | .677 |
| Accessibility (Self Service) | 1.000 | .578 |
| Store Ambiance & Cleanliness | 1.000 | .610 |
| Availability of refreshments and entertainments facility | 1.000 | .583 |
| Handling complaints /Queries | 1.000 | .632 |
| Information about new arrivals | 1.000 | .661 |

The percentage of total variance contributed by the components is given in the following table. The percentage of total variance contributed by the first components is 32.479%, by the second component is 10.246%, by the third component is 7.852% and by the fourth component is 7.718%. Thus there are four components for the given set of variables.

TABLE 4: TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED

| Component | Initial Eigen values | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | | Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings | | |
|-----------|----------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 4.222 | 32.479 | 32.479 | 4.222 | 32.479 | 32.479 | 2.236 | 17.202 | 17.202 |
| 2 | 1.332 | 10.246 | 42.725 | 1.332 | 10.246 | 42.725 | 1.929 | 14.838 | 32.040 |
| 3 | 1.021 | 7.852 | 50.576 | 1.021 | 7.852 | 50.576 | 1.744 | 13.416 | 45.457 |
| 4 | 1.003 | 7.718 | 58.295 | 1.003 | 7.718 | 58.295 | 1.669 | 12.838 | 58.295 |
| 5 | .917 | 7.055 | 65.350 | | | | | | |
| 6 | .870 | 6.692 | 72.042 | | | | | | |
| 7 | .758 | 5.830 | 77.872 | | | | | | |
| 8 | .657 | 5.055 | 82.927 | | | | | | |
| 9 | .530 | 4.080 | 87.007 | | | | | | |
| 10 | .518 | 3.984 | 90.992 | | | | | | |
| 11 | .422 | 3.249 | 94.241 | | | | | | |
| 12 | .391 | 3.010 | 97.250 | | | | | | |
| 13 | .357 | 2.750 | 100.000 | | | | | | |

The rotated component matrix gives the variables belonging to each component. The maximum of each row (ignoring –ve sign) indicates that the respective variable belongs to the respective component.

TABLE 5: ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX

| | Component | | | |
|--|-----------|------|-------|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Information about new arrivals | .761 | .016 | .170 | .229 |
| Handling complaints /Queries | .691 | .165 | .350 | .062 |
| Personalised attention /friendliness of sales | .647 | .043 | -.042 | .486 |
| Convenient location of the store | .553 | .455 | .065 | -.307 |
| Customer loyalty program | .486 | .413 | .058 | .269 |
| High quality of the Merchandise | .156 | .808 | .027 | .167 |
| Extended parking area | .001 | .689 | .321 | .058 |
| Reasonable price | .127 | .450 | .187 | .323 |
| Store Ambiance & Cleanliness | .051 | .077 | .775 | -.012 |
| Availability of refreshment and entertainment facility | .162 | .127 | .708 | .200 |
| Availability of all branded merchandise | .224 | .351 | .514 | .061 |
| Accessibility (Self Service) | .075 | .157 | .016 | .740 |
| Frequent promotional offers | .307 | .151 | -.278 | .695 |

Based on the rotated component matrix four factors and its underlying items are summarised as follows:

TABLE 6: FACTORS EXTRACTED FROM FACTOR ANALYSIS

| S.No | Factor Name | Variable Included |
|------|---------------------------------|---|
| F1 | Personalised service & Location | Information about new arrivals |
| | | Handling Complaints /Queries |
| | | Personalised attention /friendliness of sales |
| | | Convenient location of the store |
| | | Customer loyalty program |
| F2 | Price and Quality policy | 1. High quality of the Merchandise |
| | | 2. Extended parking area |
| | | 3. Reasonable price |
| F3 | Store atmosphere & Facilities | 1. Store Ambience & Cleanliness |
| | | 2. Availability of refreshments and entertainments facility |
| | | 3. Availability of all branded merchandise |
| F4 | Attractive offers | Accessibility (Self Service) |
| | | Frequent promotional offers |

FINDINGS

- Majority (47%) of the customers are male.
- Majority (78%) of the customers selected are married.
- Majority (27%) of the customers selected are in the age group of 26-45 years.
- Majority (33%) of the customers are undergraduates.
- Majority (42%) of the customers selected are employed.
- Majority (32%) of the customers selected earn income between Rs.10000 to Rs.20000 per month in a family.
- The result of factor analysis reveals that among 13 variables, only four factors; personalised services and location, price and quality policy, store atmosphere and facilities and attractive offers are extracted as the key factors influencing customer loyalty towards organised food and grocery retail stores.

SUGGESTIONS

- The store should continue to provide personalised services to their customers such as informing about new arrivals, handling complaints and queries with the help of well-trained sales personnel.
- The store management should concentrate on in-store promotion such as contest, lucky draw and surprise discount to attract new customers and also to retain the existing customer.
- The store should offer customer loyalty program to their regular customer such as the point system, membership card and referral program to motivate the existing customers.
- Location of the store is one of the factors preferred by the customer. Therefore, the store should adopt some strategies like free home delivery, phone order facility and so on to the customer who resides far away from stores.
- The retailer should never compromise on their price and quality policy which in turn will make the customers shift to another store.
- Retailers should focus on refreshment and entertainment facilities such as play area for kids, babysitting, a modern and hygienic food court to bring out delight in customers.

CONCLUSION

This study attempts to identify the key factors influencing customer loyalty towards organised food and grocery retail stores. For the purpose, 260 respondents were surveyed and factor analysis was applied, and it was helpful to identify the underlying factors that determine customer loyalty, and the result reveals four factors which influence the customer to visit the particular store often and also continue to shop in future. This paper concludes that personalised service and location, price and quality policy, store atmosphere and facilities and attractive offers are the four factors that influence customer loyalty. Therefore these are the areas where the retailer needs to concentrate, and in addition to this, he has to come out with a lot of innovative ideas to meet out the changing requirements of the customer.

LIMITATIONS

- This study was conducted in Coimbatore District. Therefore, the results of the study may or may not be applied to other areas.
- Survey method which was adopted for collecting the data has its limitations.

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