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A Study on Consumer Perception and Satisfaction on the Products and Services in D-Mart

Dr. Princy K, Shruthi K

Assistant Professor, Department of B.Com A&F / M.Com (IB), Sri Krishna Arts and Science College, Coimbatore,
Tamil Nadu, India

UG Student, Department of B.Com A&F / M.Com (IB), Sri Krishna Arts and Science College, Coimbatore, Tamil
Nadu, India

ABSTRACT: In the rapidly growing organised retail sector, understanding consumer perception and customer satisfaction has become essential for sustaining competitive advantage. Discount retail chains like D-Mart play a significant role in offering affordable products with value-based services. This study examines consumer perception and satisfaction towards the products and services offered by D-Mart in Coimbatore city. The research adopts a descriptive research design and primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire from 109 respondents using convenience sampling technique. Statistical tools such as Percentage Analysis, Chi-Square Test and Correlation Analysis were used for data interpretation. The findings reveal that competitive pricing, product quality, availability of essential goods and efficient service significantly influence customer satisfaction. The study concludes that positive consumer perception has a strong relationship with overall satisfaction and loyalty towards D-Mart.

KEYWORDS: Consumer Perception, Customer Satisfaction, Organised Retail, Discount Retailing, Service Quality, Pricing Strategy.

I. INTRODUCTION

The organised retail sector in India has witnessed significant transformation over the past decade. Supermarkets and discount retail chains have changed the shopping behaviour of consumers by providing convenience, variety and competitive pricing under one roof. Among the leading discount retail chains, D-Mart has gained popularity due to its value-for-money pricing strategy and wide range of essential products. Consumer perception refers to the way customers interpret and evaluate a brand's products and services. Customer satisfaction, on the other hand, reflects the degree to which customer expectations are met. In the context of retailing, factors such as product quality, price, store ambience, staff behaviour, checkout efficiency and product availability influence overall satisfaction.

This study focuses on analysing how consumers perceive the products and services of D-Mart and how these perceptions affect their satisfaction levels and shopping behaviour in Coimbatore city.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A number of studies have highlighted that consumer perception plays a significant role in determining customer satisfaction in the retail sector. Kotler (2017) stated that customer satisfaction is largely influenced by perceived value, pricing strategy and service quality offered by retail stores. On the same note, Gupta and Singh (2018) observed that competitive pricing and product availability are the primary factors influencing consumer preference towards discount retail chains. Their study emphasized that customers tend to revisit stores that consistently provide value for money.

According to Ramesh (2019), store ambience, staff behaviour and billing efficiency significantly affect the overall shopping experience and satisfaction level of customers in supermarkets. Similarly, Devi (2021) found that product quality and variety strongly influence brand perception and customer loyalty in organised retail outlets. Karthika (2022) highlighted that demographic factors such as age, income and occupation also influence consumer expectations and satisfaction levels in retail formats. Customers belonging to middle-income groups were found to be more price-sensitive and value-conscious.



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However, most of the existing studies focus broadly on organised retailing and supermarket chains. There is relatively limited research specifically analysing consumer perception and satisfaction towards discount retail chains like D-Mart at the regional level. This gap indicates the need for further research focusing on customer perception and satisfaction towards the products and services offered by D-Mart in Coimbatore city.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this study is **descriptive research design**, as it aims to describe and analyse consumer perception and satisfaction levels.

Area of Study: Coimbatore City

Population of the Study: Customers shopping at D-Mart outlets in Coimbatore.

Sample Size: 109 respondents

Sampling Technique: Convenience Sampling

Data Source: Primary data collected using a structured questionnaire through Google Forms.

The questionnaire was divided into five sections:

- Demographic details
- Consumer perception towards products
- Satisfaction with services
- Factors influencing satisfaction
- Issues and suggestions

The statistical tools used for analysis include:

- Percentage Analysis
- Chi-Square Test
- Correlation Analysis

A pilot study was conducted to ensure clarity and reliability of the questionnaire. Participation was voluntary and responses were kept confidential for academic purposes.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Profile

The demographic analysis shows that respondents belong to different age groups, income levels and occupations. A majority of respondents fall under the young and middle-income category, indicating active participation of working individuals and students in organised retail shopping.

This diverse demographic composition makes the sample suitable for analysing consumer perception and satisfaction levels.

CHART 4.1.1: Analysis of monthly spending on groceries

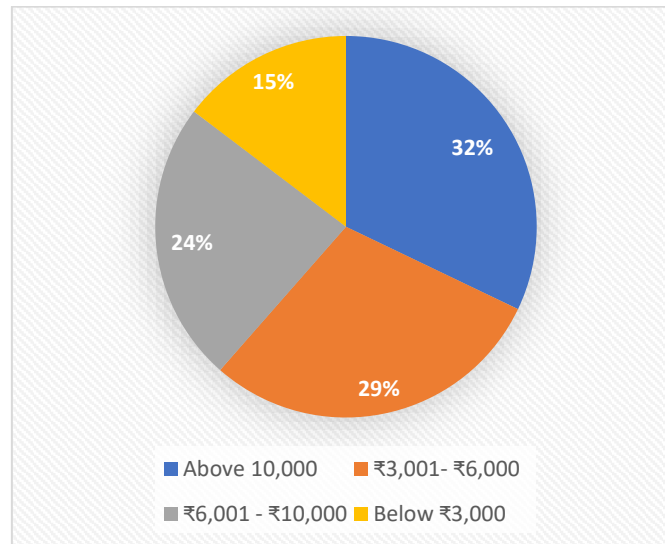
RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
₹3,001 - ₹6,000	32	29.36%
₹6,001 - ₹10,000	26	23.85%
Above 10,000	35	32.11%
Below ₹3,000	16	14.68%
GRAND TOTAL	109	100.00%



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Chart 4.1.1: Analysis of monthly spending on groceries



4.2 Consumer Perception towards Products

Percentage analysis reveals that most respondents agree that:

- D-Mart offers products at competitive and affordable prices.
- Essential goods are consistently available.
- Product quality is satisfactory.
- There is a wide variety of products under one roof.

These findings indicate that pricing strategy and availability of essential goods are major strengths of D-Mart. Consumers perceive D-Mart as a value-oriented retail chain.

4.3 Customer Satisfaction with Services

The analysis of service-related factors shows that:

- Customers are generally satisfied with billing efficiency.
- Store layout and product arrangement are convenient.
- Staff behaviour is satisfactory.
- Checkout waiting time moderately influences satisfaction.

While overall service satisfaction is positive, certain operational improvements such as reducing billing time during peak hours could further enhance customer experience.

4.4 Chi-Square Analysis

The Chi-Square test was applied to examine the relationship between demographic variables and customer satisfaction. The results indicate a significant association between certain demographic factors (such as income and age) and satisfaction levels. This implies that customer expectations and satisfaction differ across demographic groups.

Table 4.4.1: Observed frequency table:

Age group	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Below 18	0	0	3	4	2	9
18 - 25	2	0	14	31	14	61
26 – 35	1	1	5	8	5	20
36 – 45	0	0	1	4	2	7
Above 45	0	0	4	3	5	12
Total	3	1	27	50	28	109



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Table 4.4.2: Expected frequency table:

Age group	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Below 18	0.25	0.08	2.23	4.13	2.31	9
18 - 25	1.68	0.56	15.11	27.98	15.67	61
26 – 35	0.55	0.18	4.95	9.17	5.14	20
36 – 45	0.19	0.06	1.73	3.21	1.80	7
Above 45	0.33	0.11	2.97	5.50	3.08	12
Total	3	1	27	50	28	109

Results: $\chi^2 = 9.92$, $df = 16$, $p\text{-value} = 0.8710$

Interpretation

Since the p-value (0.8710) is greater than 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. There is no statistically significant association between age group and overall satisfaction level. This indicates that customer satisfaction with D-Mart services is fairly consistent across different age groups.

4.5 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was used to measure the relationship between consumer perception and overall satisfaction.

The results show a positive correlation between perception of pricing, product quality, service efficiency and overall customer satisfaction. This confirms that better perception leads to higher satisfaction and increased likelihood of repeat visits.

Table 4.5.1 Correlation Matrix Showing the Relationship Between Availability of Products, Overall Satisfaction Level, Perception of Pricing, and Frequency of Visit

Variables	Availability of Products	Overall Satisfaction	Perception of Pricing	Frequency of Visit
Availability of Products	1	0.642	0.518	0.433
Overall Satisfaction	0.642	1	0.556	0.472
Perception of Pricing	0.518	0.556	1	0.481
Frequency of Visit	0.433	0.472	0.481	1

N = 109 respondents

All correlations significant at 0.05 level, $p < 0.05$

INTERPRETATION

The correlation results show that product availability has the strongest positive relationship with overall satisfaction ($r = 0.642$). It also moderately influences pricing perception and visit frequency. Overall satisfaction is positively related to pricing perception and repeat visits, and pricing perception also affects visit frequency. All relationships are positive, indicating that better availability and competitive pricing increase satisfaction and customer visits at D-Mart.

V. LIMITATIONS

- The study is restricted to D-Mart customers in Coimbatore city.
- The sample size is limited to 109 respondents.
- Convenience sampling technique limits generalisation of findings.
- Responses are based on personal opinions and may involve subjective bias.
- Time constraints restricted deeper comparative analysis with other retail chains.



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VI. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

The study concludes that consumer perception plays a vital role in determining customer satisfaction at D-Mart. Competitive pricing, product availability and satisfactory service quality are the primary factors influencing positive perception.

There exists a strong relationship between consumer perception and overall satisfaction. Customers who perceive better value and quality are more likely to remain loyal and recommend the store to others.

For future research, comparative studies between different retail chains can be conducted. Further research may also focus on post-pandemic changes in shopping behaviour, digital payment preferences and the impact of online retail competition on physical discount stores.

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