

A Study of Service Quality Towards and Its Impact on Customer Satisfaction at Pratipa Cashews, Panruti

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ABSTRACT

Service quality and customer satisfaction have been widely recognized as fundamental drivers in the formation of purchase intentions. The concepts are important for companies to gain long-term competitive advantage and retain customers. Several scholar articles suggests there is a critical relationship between these two variables, which is also a critical determination of brand equity and customer loyalty. This study will clarify its nature by empirically assessing on the effects of service quality on customer's perceptions and satisfaction. According to research, customers are not satisfied with unprofessional service providers, unorganized schedule, and pricing that do not meet expectations. Results of the research will be backed up with statistical evidence and discussed comprehensively. Moreover, further research should be considered to gather more information that were not accessible due to the limitations of this study.

1.1 INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

Customer satisfaction is the central goal of any service-driven business model, and in the food industry, it serves as the primary parameter for measuring organizational success. Unlike manufacturing industries where the product is tangible, in the food service sector the predominant offering is a mix of product and service.

This means that apart from the food itself, elements such as service speed, staff behavior, ambiance, cleanliness, and digital convenience together shape the customer's perception. The level of satisfaction achieved determines whether a customer returns, recommends the service to others, or switches to competitors. In the highly competitive food industry, where substitutes are readily available, sustaining customer loyalty through high service quality is crucial for long-term survival and profitability.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The food industry is characterized by high consumer expectations, where quality alone is not sufficient without satisfactory service. Many businesses face challenges in meeting consumer demands for timely delivery, hygiene, personalized service, and courteous behaviour. While restaurants and food outlets continuously attempt to improve, gaps still exist between customer expectations and the service delivered. Poor service quality often results in dissatisfaction, complaints, and negative brand perception despite having quality food. Therefore, there is a pressing need to analyse how service quality dimensions contribute towards satisfaction and loyalty in the food industry. This problem forms the foundation of the present study.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

To assess the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction in Pratipa Cashews industry at Panruti

SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

- To identify the key factors influencing customer perception towards service delivery.
- To examine the relationship between service efficiency and customer loyalty.
- To evaluate customer expectations versus actual service experiences in selected food outlets.
- To provide recommendations for improving service strategies to enhance customer satisfaction.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on analyzing the direct and indirect relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in the food service sector. It covers various service attributes such as timeliness, hygiene standards, payment convenience, and digital facilities. The scope is confined to food outlets, restaurants, and delivery services in urban areas, particularly in Tamil Nadu. The study is limited to customers who experience dining and delivery services regularly. It emphasizes how service quality impacts repeat purchases and loyalty. The findings will be useful for food businesses, managers, and service providers in designing customer-centric approaches.

1.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study is confined to a specific region and may not represent the entire industry nationally.
- Customer responses may be biased based on personal preferences.
- Limited sample size restricts generalization across different segments.
- The study focuses primarily on service quality and does not extensively cover product quality.
- Time and resource constraints restricted in-depth analysis of all types of food businesses.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Lee and Kim (2021) explored how food presentation, ambiance, and staff behavior influence customer perceptions of service quality in casual dining restaurants. They found that physical evidence such as decor, music, and uniformed staff added to customer experience and created favorable emotional responses. Customers also responded positively to well-trained staff who handled complaints efficiently. The research stressed that training and ambiance play critical roles in building service quality perception.

Latha & Noor (2023) investigated customer satisfaction in organic and health-focused food outlets. They discovered that customers expected not only quality ingredients but also transparency in sourcing and nutritional information. Providing clear menus, staff awareness about ingredients, and offering health-based alternatives significantly increased satisfaction. The study noted that the service quality in this niche is judged more by authenticity and staff knowledge than speed or price.

Al-Saleh & Khan (2024) examined the impact of food safety and hygiene certification on customer satisfaction in mid-tier restaurants. The research found that certifications such as FSSAI, HACCP, and ISO not only enhanced consumer trust but also positively influenced brand image and loyalty. Customers considered certified establishments more reliable, and they were more likely to return to or recommend those outlets. The study advocated for visible hygiene practices as a core component of service quality.

Jackson & Meera (2025) explored the link between supply chain efficiency and perceived service quality in the food retail sector. Their findings indicated that delays in ingredient sourcing, packaging inefficiencies or poor vendor coordination can directly affect service delivery time and product freshness—impacting customer satisfaction. They recommended integrating supply chain analytics with customer service dashboards to forecast and address service disruptions.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem by applying various research techniques along with the logic behind problem. Research methodology is done to solve the research problems involving a study of various step that are adopted by the researcher in studying his problem

RESEARCH DESIGN

The first step is to select an appropriate research design that will help you to achieve your research objectives. For this study, a descriptive research design may be appropriate as it allows for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data

SAMPLING METHOD

The next step is to select a sampling technique. It can use a probability sampling technique such as simple random sampling to ensure that the sample is representative of the population. Alternatively, you can use non-probability sampling techniques such as convenience sampling or purposive sampling to select participants who are easily accessible or have specific characteristics.

SAMPLE SIZE

A total of 170 samples have been selected for the study.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

As for sampling design, the researcher relied on 'Convenience Sampling' method for data collection.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

i) Primary data

Primary data has been the data originated by the researcher for the specific purpose of addressing the research problem. A questionnaire was used to obtain the information from the respondent.

ii) Secondary data

The books were referred to obtain related theoretical concepts.

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

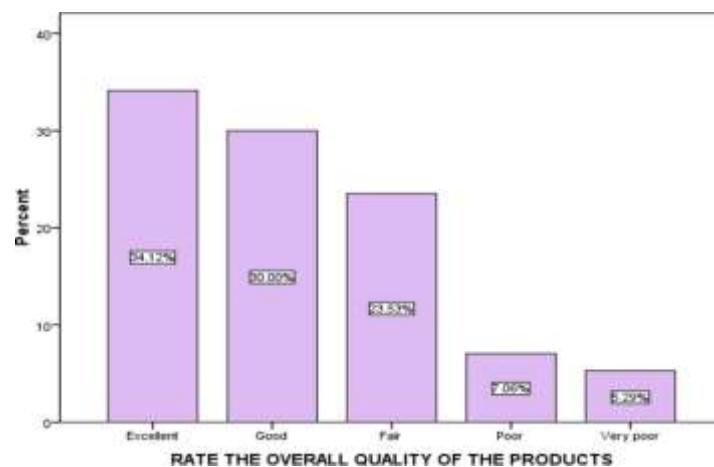
- Simple percentage analysis
- Chi-square analysis
- Correlation
- Anova

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION TABLE 4.1

RATE THE OVERALL QUALITY OF THE PRODUCTS

OVERALL QUALITY	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Excellent	58	34.1%
Good	51	30.0%
Fair	40	23.5%
Poor	12	7.1%
Very poor	9	5.3%
TOTAL	170	100.0%

Source: Primary data

CHART 4.1 RATE THE OVERALL QUALITY OF THE PRODUCTS**INTERPRETATION**

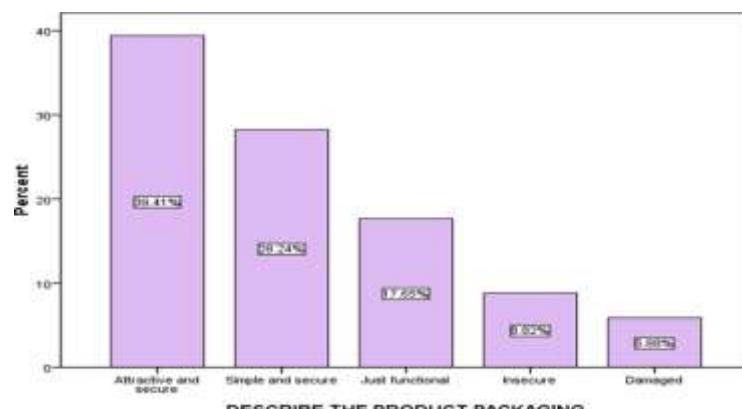
The above table shows that, 34.1% of the respondents are feeling excellent, 30.0% of the respondents are feeling good, 23.5% of the respondents are feeling fair, 7.1% of the respondents are feeling poor and remaining 5.3% of the respondents are feeling very poor

Majority 34.1% of the respondents are feeling excellent about overall quality of the products

TABLE 4.2 DESCRIBE THE PRODUCT PACKAGING

PRODUCT PACKAGING	PERCENTAGE
Attractive and secure	39.4%
Simple and secure	28.2%
Just functional	17.6%
Insecure	8.8%
Damaged	5.9%
TOTAL	100.0%

Source: Primary data

CHART 4.2 DESCRIBE THE PRODUCT PACKAGING

INTERPRETATION

The above table shows that, 39.4% of the respondents said product packaging is attractive and secure, 28.2% of the respondents said product packaging is simple and secure, 17.6% of the respondents said product packaging is just functional, 8.8% of the respondents said product packaging is insecure and remaining 5.9% of the respondents said product packaging is damaged

Majority 39.4% of the respondents said product packaging is attractive and secure

STATISTICAL TOOLS CHI-SQUARE TEST

NULL HYPOTHESIS

H_0 : There is no significance relationship between income of the respondents and rate the quality for the price.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS

H_1 : There is no significance relationship between income of the respondents and rate the quality for the price.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.709a	16	.764
Likelihood Ratio	13.258	16	.654
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.124	1	.289
N of Valid Cases	170		

a. 10 cells (40.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.62.

RESULT

Based on these results, we can conclude that there is no statistically significant association between the income of the respondents and their rating of the quality for the price. This is because the p-value (0.76) is much greater than the common significance level of

0.05. Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis that the two variables are independent.

CORRELATION

The table shows that the relationship between education qualification of the respondents and easy to reach customer service.

Correlations			
		Education qualification of the respondents	Easy to reach customer service
Education qualification of the respondents	Pearson Correlation	1	.068
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.380
	N	170	170

Easy to reach customer service	Pearson Correlation	.068	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.380	
	N	170	170

RESULT

There is a weak, non-significant positive correlation ($r=0.068$, $p=0.380$) between education qualification and the perceived ease of reaching customer service. This indicates that these two variables are not statistically related.

ANOVA

NULL HYPOTHESIS

H₀: There is no significant relationship between age of the respondents and safe and hygienic of the products.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS

H₁: There is a significant relationship between age of the respondents and safe and hygienic of the products.

ANOVA					
AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.707	4	1.677	1.051	.383
Within Groups	263.346	165	1.596		
Total	270.053	169			

RESULT

The ANOVA results show an F-statistic of 1.051 with a significance (p-value) of

0.383. As the p-value is greater than 0.05, there is no statistically significant difference in the mean age of the respondents across the different groups.

V. FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 FINDINGS

1. Majority 34.1% of the respondents are feeling excellent about overall quality of the products
2. Majority 39.4% of the respondents said product packaging is attractive and secure

5.2 SUGGESTIONS

- Organizations are recommended to view the studies when needing to improve service quality and marketing strategies.
- Customer's attitudes drive satisfaction and behavior, which will gradually develop into loyalty.
- Companies should be aware of environmental differences in ideology and cultural value, thereby providing customized services instead of standard.
- Another recommendation is to schedule the workload rather to traditional schedules, meaning to be responsive and flexible when there are high demands.

- Majority of customers shared that prolonged waiting periods and disordered personnel are the common irritations. Results from the study had led to a revised theoretical framework.
- Food outlets should introduce personalized recommendations and special offers based on customer preferences to improve loyalty.
- Maintaining excellent cleanliness and food safety practices will significantly enhance trust among customers.

5.3 CONCLUSION

The study reveals that service quality is a significant determinant of customer satisfaction in the food industry. Even when food quality meets expectations, customer dissatisfaction can occur due to delays, poor hospitality, or unhygienic conditions. Conversely, superior service often results in repeat visits, positive recommendations, and long-term loyalty. Therefore, effective service management becomes essential for food outlets in building strong customer relationships and achieving business sustainability.

In conclusion, customer satisfaction is not a one-time achievement but an ongoing process. Food industry organizations should continuously monitor service quality, adopt modern technologies, and implement customer-centric practices to stay competitive. By aligning service delivery with customer expectations, businesses can achieve a sustainable edge, strengthen brand position, and ensure consistent growth in a highly competitive market.

BIBLIOGRAPHY BOOKS

- Delivering Quality Service by Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry (1990) introduces the foundational SERVQUAL and gap models for service quality.
- Marketing Management by Philip Kotler (various editions) is a classic textbook that covers core principles of customer satisfaction and loyalty.
- Amaze Every Customer Every Time by Shep Hyken (2013) provides practical tools for creating consistently excellent customer service experiences.
- The Customer of the Future by Blake Morgan (2019) explores how technology and data are reshaping customer expectations and modern service delivery.

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