



## The role of customer experience on retail management and customer loyalty

K Vinayagam<sup>1</sup>, G Saravanakumar<sup>2</sup>, A Gokulakrishnan<sup>3</sup>, S Deepa<sup>4</sup>, V Kalaiselvan<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor, Department of Business Administration, School of Management Studies, Vels Institute of Science, Technology and Advanced Studies, Pallavaram, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration, Government Arts College, Trichy, Tamil Nadu, India

<sup>3</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration, School of Management Studies, Vels Institute of Science, Technology and Advanced Studies, Pallavaram, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

<sup>4</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration, Stella Maris College, Cathedral Rd, Poes Garden, Gopalapuram, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

<sup>5</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Business Studies, Hindustan College of Arts and Science, Padur, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

### Abstract

This study explored the role of customer experience on retail management and customer loyalty in supermarkets. The research focused on understanding how factors such as product quality, pricing strategy, store atmosphere, staff behavior, inventory availability, and customer service and support contribute to creating a positive customer experience. A comprehensive review of literature from various authors and years showed that these factors play a crucial role in shaping customers' perceptions and influencing their decision-making process. Customers value high-quality products that meet their needs and expectations while considering competitive pricing strategies. The store atmosphere is another crucial element that enhances or diminishes the shopping experience. Friendly staff behavior further contributes to making customers feel valued and appreciated. The availability of a well-managed inventory system ensures that customers find what they need when they visit the supermarket. Additionally, exceptional customer service and support are essential for promptly resolving any issues or concerns. All these factors collectively create an enjoyable shopping experience for customers. Furthermore, this study found that a positive customer experience significantly impacts retail management practices. Customers who have positive experiences with a particular supermarket brand are more likely to develop loyalty towards it over time. This loyalty leads to repeat purchases and word-of-mouth recommendations from satisfied customers.

**Keywords:** Product quality, pricing strategy, store atmosphere, staff behavior, inventory availability, customer service and support, customer experience, retail management and customer loyalty

### Introduction

In today's fast-paced digital age, where consumers have countless options, retailers have become more critical than ever to provide exceptional customer experiences. In this article, we will explore the crucial role that customer experience plays in retail management and how it directly impacts customer loyalty. We'll delve into various aspects such as product quality, pricing strategy, store atmosphere, staff behavior, inventory availability, and customer service and support. This study aims to delve deeper into these aspects by examining existing literature on the topic and identifying any research gaps. By conducting thorough research in this area, we can uncover new strategies or best practices that retailers can implement to enhance their overall customer experience. This study will provide valuable insights for retailers looking to improve their retail management practices and foster long-term customer loyalty. With a comprehensive understanding of how various elements impact the overall customer experience journey from start to finish, businesses can make informed decisions that align with consumer expectations while gaining a competitive edge in an ever-evolving marketplace. This research aims to bridge this gap by investigating the relationship between various elements of customer experience and its influence on retail management strategies and customer loyalty (Bilgihan *et al.* (2016) <sup>[1]</sup>. By

identifying which specific aspects are most influential in driving repeat business and building solid customer relationships, retailers can make informed decisions about where to allocate resources for maximum impact. The findings from this study will contribute to academic literature and provide practical insights for retail managers looking to enhance their strategies based on an improved understanding of what truly matters to their customers. This knowledge can help drive better decision-making regarding product assortment planning, marketing campaign development, employee training program implementation, and overall store operations optimization.

### Retail management in supermarket

Retail management in a supermarket is a complex and dynamic process that involves overseeing various aspects of the business to ensure smooth operations and customer satisfaction. It encompasses inventory management, pricing strategies, store layout, staff behavior, and customer service. One key aspect of retail management in a supermarket is maintaining adequate inventory availability. This involves keeping track of stock levels, anticipating demand patterns, and ensuring that shelves are always stocked with the right products. A well-managed supermarket will have an efficient system for promptly restocking items to avoid any inconvenience for customers. Another crucial factor in

successful retail management is having a pricing strategy that strikes the right balance between profitability and affordability. Supermarkets must carefully analyze market trends, competitor prices, and their costs to determine optimal product price points. Store atmosphere also plays a significant role in retail management. Supermarkets must create an inviting environment that encourages customers to spend more time browsing aisles and making purchases. Factors such as lighting, music, cleanliness, and overall ambiance greatly enhance the shopping experience. Staff behavior is another critical element of successful supermarket retail management. Friendly and knowledgeable employees who provide excellent customer service can significantly impact customer loyalty. Well-trained staff members should be readily available to assist shoppers with inquiries or offer recommendations when needed.

Customer service and support are paramount in ensuring customer satisfaction within supermarkets. Quick responses to customer complaints or issues demonstrate professionalism and dedication toward resolving problems promptly. Last but not most importantly comes product quality - one of the primary factors influencing retail management success and customer loyalty within supermarkets. The quality standards maintained across different product categories directly impact consumer trust-building efforts within this industry.

### **Customer experience in the supermarket**

Customer experience plays a crucial role in the success of any supermarket. It goes beyond just providing products to customers; it is about creating a positive and memorable interaction at every touchpoint. When customers enter the store, their experience should be seamless and enjoyable. One key aspect of customer experience in a supermarket is the layout and organization of the store. A well-designed layout can make it easy for customers to navigate different sections, find what they need quickly, and make their shopping trip efficient.

Additionally, clear signage and helpful staff members contribute to a positive experience. Another critical factor that affects customer experience is product availability. Customers expect supermarkets to have a wide range of products in stock so they can conveniently purchase everything on their shopping list. When items are out of stock or unavailable, it can lead to frustration and dissatisfaction.

Moreover, customer service plays a significant role in shaping customer experiences. Friendly staff knowledgeable about their products can assist customers with any queries or concerns during their shopping journey.

Furthermore, technology integration has become increasingly crucial for enhancing supermarket customer experiences. Self-checkout options, mobile payment solutions, and personalized promotions based on previous purchases make shopping more convenient and tailored to individual needs. Ensuring a positive customer experience is vital for supermarkets as it directly impacts retail management and customer loyalty. By focusing on factors such as store atmosphere, staff behavior, inventory availability, customer service/support, and integrating technology seamlessly into operations, supermarkets can cultivate strong relationships with customers, leading to

increased satisfaction levels and repeat business opportunities.

### **Customer loyalty to the supermarket**

Customer loyalty is a vital aspect of any successful supermarket business. It refers to the tendency of customers to choose and support a particular supermarket over its competitors consistently. Building customer loyalty is crucial as it can lead to repeat purchases, increased revenues, and positive word-of-mouth recommendations. One key factor influencing customer loyalty in supermarkets is the overall shopping experience. Customers who have a positive experience at a supermarket are likelier to become loyal patrons. This includes product quality, pricing strategy, store atmosphere, staff behavior, inventory availability, customer service and support. Customers value high-quality products that meet their needs and expectations. A well-curated selection of fresh produce, groceries, and other items can make all the difference in retaining loyal customers.

Competitive pricing strategies that offer good value for money also contribute to customer loyalty. The atmosphere within a supermarket plays an essential role in shaping the overall experience for customers. Cleanliness, organization of shelves and aisles, pleasant lighting, and appealing displays can create an inviting environment that encourages repeat visits. Staff behavior also significantly impacts customer loyalty. Friendly and helpful employees who provide knowledgeable assistance make a positive impression on shoppers.

On the other hand, rude or unhelpful staff members can drive customers away from a supermarket. Inventory availability is another crucial factor affecting customer loyalty in supermarkets. Customers expect their desired items to be readily available when they visit the store. Constant out-of-stock situations or long wait times for restocking can frustrate shoppers and push them towards alternative options. Good customer service goes beyond just having friendly staff members; it involves promptly addressing any customer issues or concerns while providing personalized attention whenever possible. Supermarkets with efficient complaint resolution processes foster greater trust among their clientele.

### **The Effect of Customer Experience on Retail Management**

The effect of customer experience on retail management and customer loyalty cannot be overstated. In today's competitive market, providing a positive and memorable customer experience is crucial for the success of any retail business. Customers who have a great experience in a retail store are likelier to become loyal and repeat customers. They will continue to shop at that particular store and recommend it to their friends and family. This word-of-mouth marketing can significantly benefit the business and lead to increased sales.

Additionally, customer experience plays a significant role in shaping brand perception. A positive experience creates trust and confidence in the brand, making customers more inclined to choose it over competitors. On the other hand, hostile or unsatisfactory expertise can result in negative reviews and damage the business's reputation. Moreover, customer experience directly impacts retail management strategies. Retailers can make informed decisions that

enhance these areas by understanding what aspects of the shopping process contribute to positive experiences (such as product quality, pricing strategy, store atmosphere, and staff behavior). This includes training employees to provide excellent customer service and support or ensuring inventory availability.

### Need and scope of the study

The need and scope of the study on the role of customer experience in retail management and customer loyalty must be considered. In today's competitive market, businesses constantly look for ways to differentiate themselves and attract and retain customers. Understanding how customer experience impacts retail management and customer loyalty is crucial for the success of any business. Businesses can gain valuable insights into what drives consumer satisfaction by analyzing factors such as product quality, pricing strategy, store atmosphere, staff behavior, inventory availability, customer service, and support. Furthermore, with the rise of e-commerce and online shopping platforms, providing a positive customer experience has become even more critical. Consumers have endless options and will quickly move on if they do not feel satisfied or valued.

### Research gap of the study

A critical aspect of any research study is identifying the existing gap in the literature that needs to be addressed. In the case of examining the role of customer experience on retail management and customer loyalty, it becomes crucial to understand what previous studies have already explored and where gaps require further investigation. Several studies have been conducted on factors influencing customer loyalty, such as product quality, pricing strategy, store atmosphere, staff behavior, inventory availability, and customer service and support. However, more research is needed, specifically focusing on how these factors interact with customer experience in the context of supermarket retail management. While some studies touch upon aspects of customer experience within specific industries or types of stores, there is still a need for comprehensive research that examines the overall impact of customer experience on retail management strategies and subsequent effects on customer loyalty within supermarkets. Valuable insights can be gained for academics and practitioners by addressing this research gap through a detailed study specifically targeting supermarkets' retail management practices and their impact on enhancing customers' experiences while promoting loyalty. This will fill an essential void in the current literature surrounding this topic.

### Statement of the Problem

One critical challenge retail management faces today is ensuring customer loyalty in a highly competitive market. With numerous options available to consumers, it becomes imperative for retailers to understand and address the factors that influence customer loyalty. However, there needs to be more comprehensive research on how customer experience impacts retail management and ultimately affects customer loyalty. Existing studies have primarily focused on individual aspects such as product quality, pricing strategy, store atmosphere, staff behavior, inventory availability, and customer service and support. While these factors significantly shape the overall customer experience, there needs to be more understanding of their combined effect on

retail management and its impact on fostering long-term loyalty. Understanding the criticality of addressing these issues holds immense potential for improving short-term sales performance and long-term profitability through increased customer retention rates. Acknowledging the importance of enhancing the overall shopping experience can lead businesses toward sustainable success in today's dynamic retail landscape.

### Review of literature

A review literature review is a crucial aspect of any research study as it provides a foundation for the study and helps identify gaps that must be addressed. This section will explore reviews from different authors that shed light on the role of customer experience in retail management and customer loyalty. CH. Nandini Kishore Babu, V Vetrivel (2022) <sup>[3]</sup> conducted a comprehensive survey among supermarket shoppers and found that product quality was the most critical factor influencing their shopping experience. Vetrivel V and Solayappan AN (2015) <sup>[18, 19]</sup> examined pricing strategies adopted by retailers and highlighted how competitive pricing can enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty. Gentile, N. Spiller, and G. Noci (2017) analyzed the impact of store atmosphere on consumer behavior and discovered that creating an inviting ambiance significantly increased sales. Vetrivel V (2017) <sup>[15, 19]</sup> investigated staff behavior as a determinant of customer satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of well-trained employees who provide personalized assistance. Patel (2019) explored inventory availability and its influence on customer loyalty, revealing that customers are likelier to return to stores with well-stocked shelves. Vetrivel V (2019) studied the significance of effective customer service and support in building strong customer relationships, leading to higher levels of loyalty. CH. Nandini Kishore Babu and V Vetrivel (2023) <sup>[4]</sup> examined various aspects contributing to positive customer experiences, including fast checkout processes, hassle-free returns, and convenient online ordering options. Vetrivel *et al.* (2023) <sup>[20]</sup> focused on understanding how exceptional customer experiences contribute to word-of-mouth recommendations, which are vital in driving new customers to retail stores. Clark (2023) investigated how technology integration can enhance overall shopping experiences by providing personalized recommendations based on individual preferences. Vetrivel V (2018) <sup>[16]</sup>, through his research, emphasized the importance for retailers to go beyond satisfying basic expectations by delivering memorable experiences that exceed consumers' desires. These diverse studies highlight factors such as product quality, pricing strategy, store atmosphere, staff behavior, inventory availability, customer service, and support- all contributing to the overall customer experience in retail settings. By considering these factors and their

### Research Methodology

When studying the role of customer experience in retail management and customer loyalty, it is crucial to have a well-defined research methodology in place. This ensures that the study is conducted systematically and produces reliable results. The first step in the research methodology is clearly defining the study's objectives. This study explored the role of customer experience on retail management and customer loyalty in supermarkets. This helps to guide the

entire research process and ensure that it stays focused. Next, it is important to determine the appropriate research design for the study. It is used in the descriptive research design. This could involve using qualitative or quantitative methods or a combination of both, depending on the Nature of the research question. Once the structure has been determined, data collection will be chosen. It is involved in conducting surveys through structured questionnaires. 217 data collected, After collecting data, it will be analyzed

using appropriate statistical techniques such as Descriptive statistics and ANOVA. The findings are then interpreted, and conclusions are drawn based on these findings. Finally, recommendations can be made based on these conclusions for retail managers looking to improve customer experience and increase customer loyalty.

**Data Analysis and Tabulation**

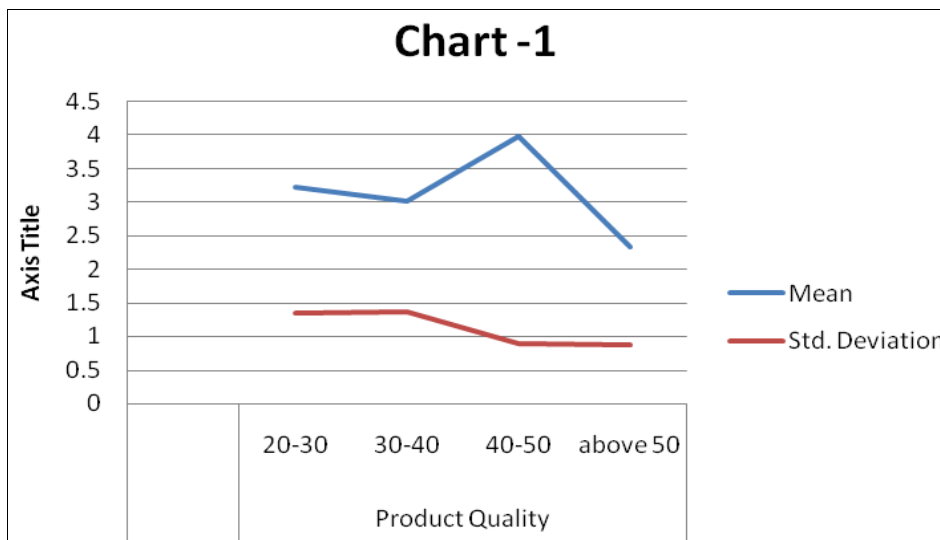
**Table 1: Opinion Towards Customer Experience on Retail Management and Customer Loyalty**

Customer experience	Age group	Mean	Std. Deviation	Anova Result		Post HOC Test
				F-value	P-value	
Product Quality	20-30	3.22	1.35	11.314	0.001	4 VS 1,2,3
	30-40	3.01	1.36			
	40-50	3.99	0.89			
	above 50	2.33	0.87			
Pricing Strategy	20-30	3.32	1.3	9.221	0.001	4 VS 1,2,3
	30-40	3.43	1.18			
	40-50	4.13	0.96			
	above 50	3.23	0.88			
Store Atmosphere	20-30	3.54	1.24	18.262	0.001	4 VS 1,2,3
	30-40	3.51	1.13			
	40-50	4.19	0.81			
	above 50	1.51	0.86			
Staff Behavior	20-30	3.35	1.3	13.987	0.001	4 VS 1,2,3
	30-40	3.37	1.23			
	40-50	3.73	1.15			
	above 50	1.23	0.87			
Inventory Availability	20-30	2.91	1.54	11.559	0.001	4 VS 1,2,3
	30-40	3.42	1.1			
	40-50	3.49	1.4			
	above 50	1.33	0.87			
Customer Service and Support	20-30	3.47	1.31	9.424	0.001	4 VS 1,2,3
	30-40	3.45	1.04			
	40-50	4.13	0.75			
	above 50	2.51	0.89			

Source: Primary data computed; \* Significant @ 1% level.

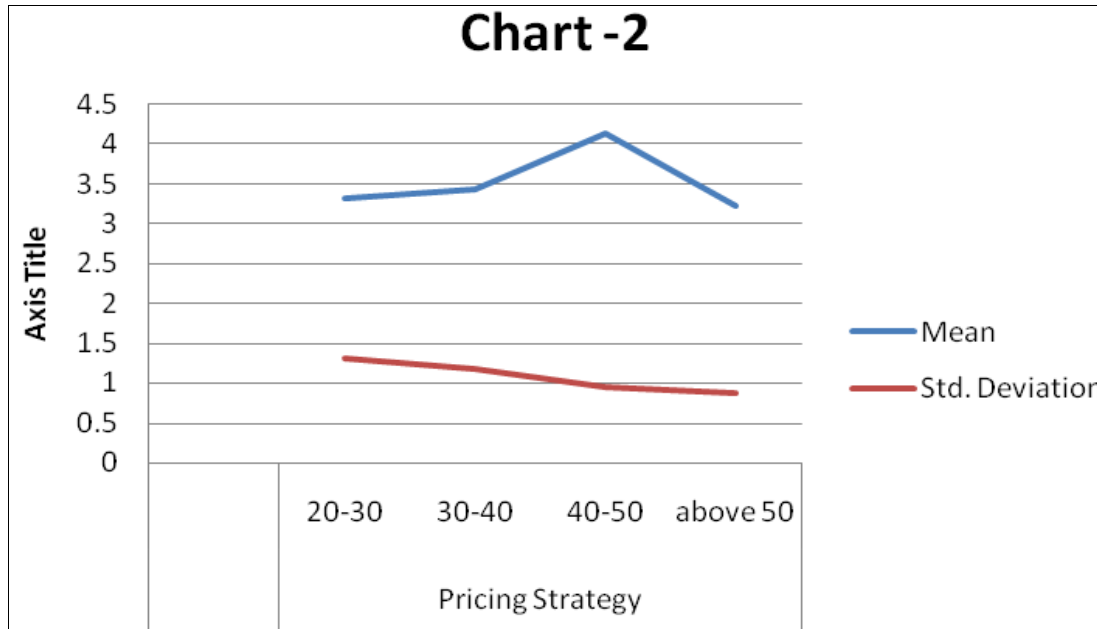
In the case of product quality, the 40-50 years age group of customers secured the mean value of 3.99, the 20-30 years age group customers secured the mean value of 3.20, followed by the 30-40 years age group customers secured 3.01, and above 50 years age group customers secured 2.33. It is noted that there is a difference of opinion towards customers' product quality. The calculated F-value is

11.3149, and the P-value is 0.001, significant at a one percent level. Hence, there is a significant difference in customer opinion towards product quality based on age. It is found that customers in the 40-50 age group have a higher level of product quality than customers in other age groups. This is followed by those above 50 who have lower product quality than customers of different ages.



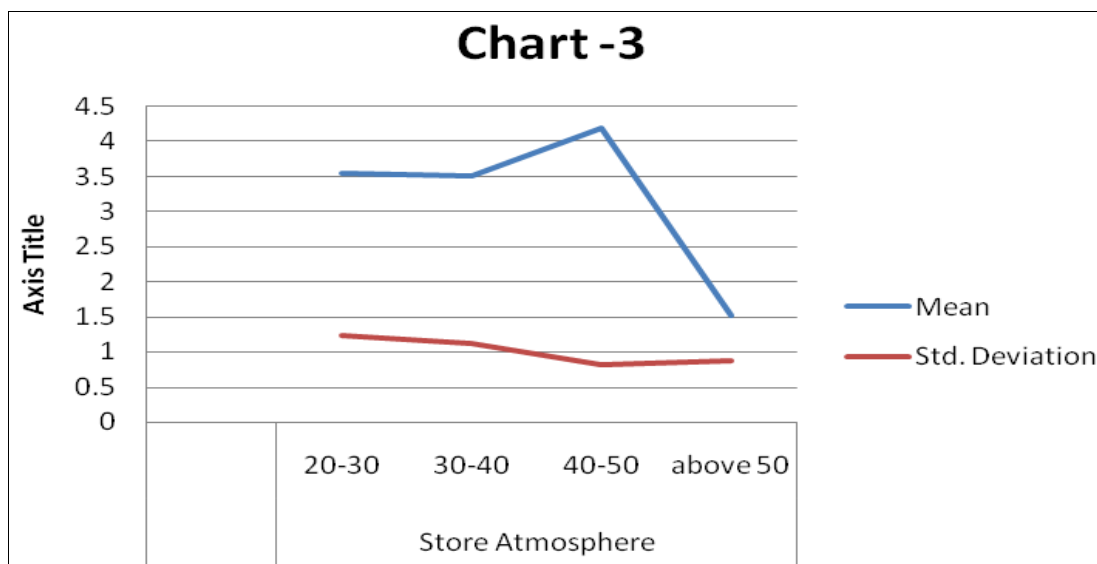
Regarding pricing strategy, the 40-50 age group customers secured a mean score of 4.13, followed by the 30-40 age group customers with a mean score of 3.43. The 20-30 age group customers had a mean score of 3.32, and above 50 years age group customers had a mean score of 3.00. It is noted that the age group has different opinions towards the pricing strategy of customers. The calculated F-value is

9.2211, and the P-value is 0.001, significant at a one percent level. Hence, there is a significant difference of opinion regarding the pricing strategy of customers based on the age group. It is noted that 40-50-year-old customers have a higher pricing strategy in the shop. Followed by the above 50-year-old age group, customers have a low level of pricing strategy.



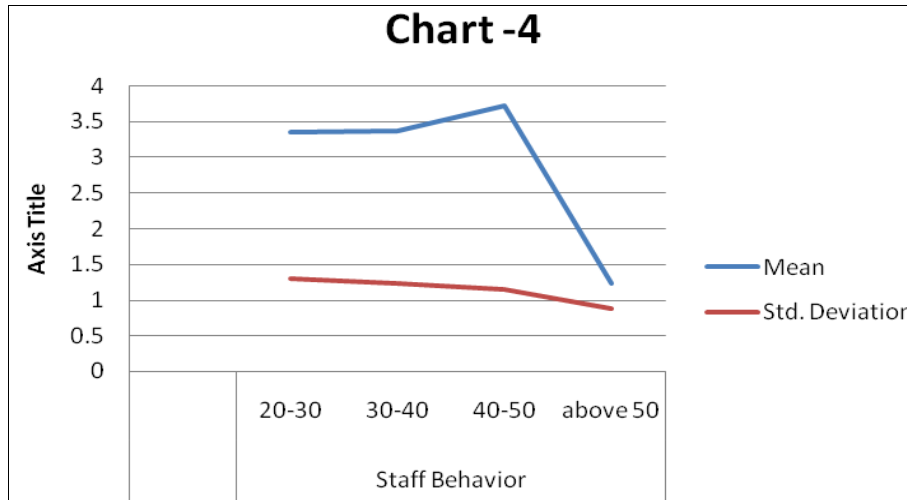
Regarding store atmosphere, customers 40-50 years old secured a mean value of 4.19. Followed by 20-30 age group customers secured 3.54, 30-40 age group customers secured 3.51, and above 50 age group customers secured 1.50. It is noted that the age group has different opinions towards the store atmosphere of customers. The calculated F-value is 18.2629, and the P-value is 0.001, significant at a one

percent level. Hence, there is a significant difference in opinion towards store atmosphere based on age group. It is found that 40-50 years age group customers have a higher level of store atmosphere followed by above 50 years age group customers have a lower level of store atmosphere than other age group customers.



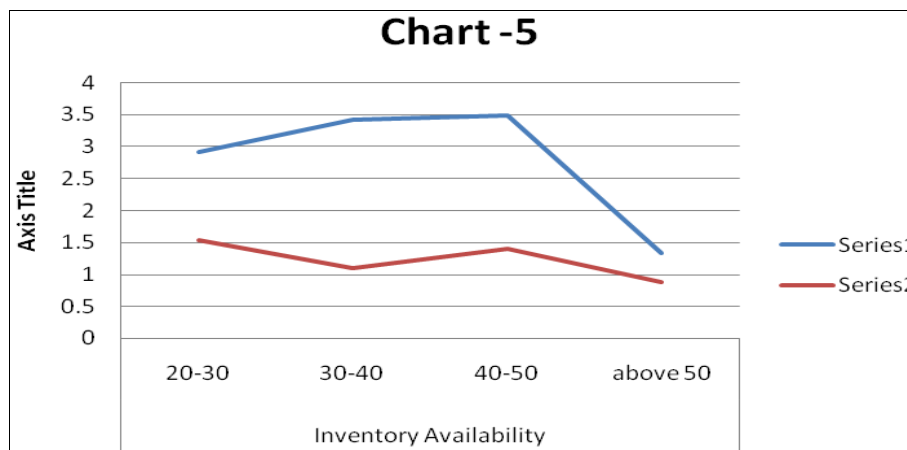
In the case of staff behavior, 40-50 years age group customers had the mean score of 3.73, followed by 30-40 age group customers scored 3.37; 20-30 age group customers scored 3.35; and above 50 age group customers scored 1.00; it is noted that the age group has the difference of opinion towards staff behavior of customers. The calculated F-value is 13.9870, and the P-value is 0.001,

significant at a one percent level. Hence, there is a significant difference of opinion towards staff behavior based on age. It is found that 40-50-year-old customers have a higher level of staff behavior, but above 50-year-old customers have a lower level of staff behavior than other age groups.



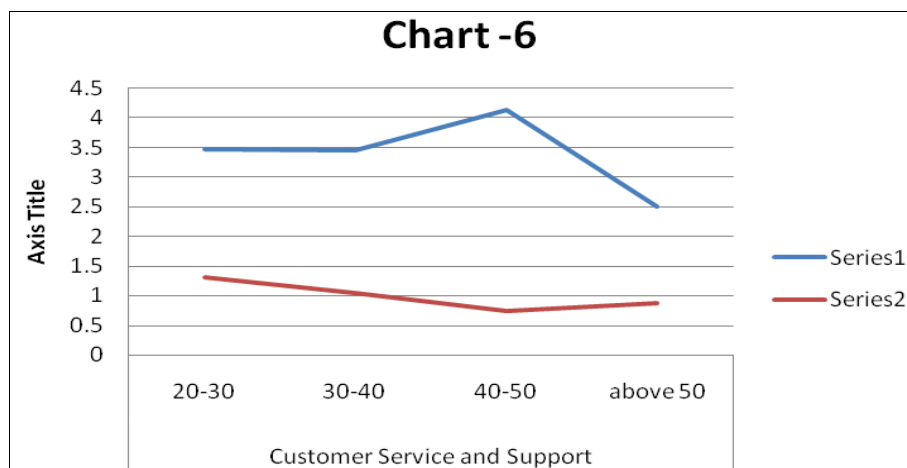
For Inventory availability, 40-50 age group customers secured the mean value of 3.49, followed by 30-40 age group customers secured 3.42, 20-30 age group customers secured 2.91, and age above 50 group customers confirmed 1.33. It is observed that the age groups have different opinions towards inventory availability of customers. The calculated F-value is 11.5590, and the P-value is 0.001,

significant at a one percent level. Hence, there is a significant difference of opinion towards Inventory availability based on the age group. It is noted that 40-50-year-old customers have higher inventory availability. However, customers above 50 have a lower inventory availability than customers of other age groups.



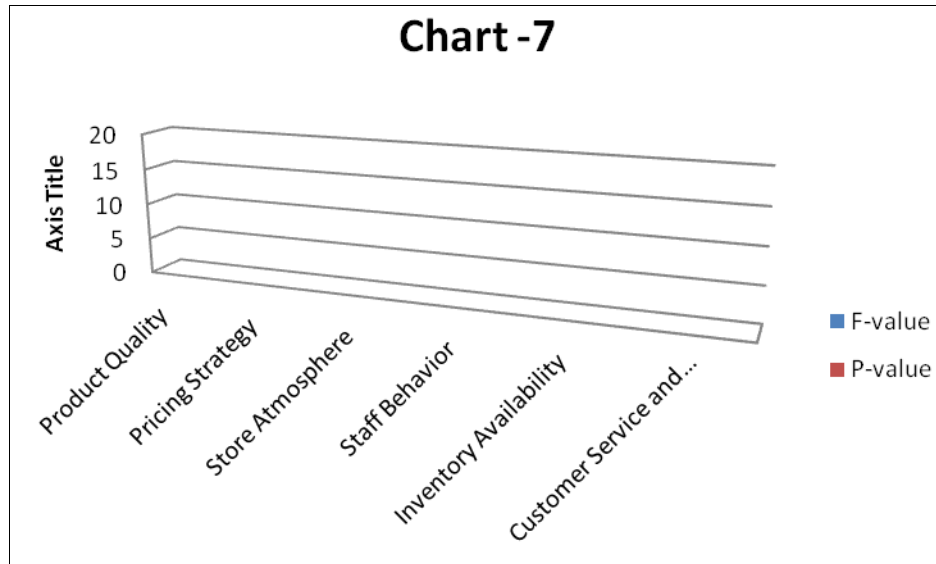
Regarding customer service and support, the 40-50 old customers had a mean score of 4.13. Followed by 20-30 age group customers secured 3.47, and 30-40 age group customers scored a mean value of 3.45. Customers in the above 50 age group achieved a mean value of 2.50. It is noted that the age group has different opinions towards customer service and the support of customers. The calculated F-value is 9.4243, and the P-value is 0.001,

significant at a one percent level. Hence, there is a significant difference of opinion towards customer service and support based on the age group of customers. It is found that 40-50-year-old customers have a higher level of customer service and support, but above 50-year-old customers have a lower level of customer service and support than other age group customers.



While going through the P-values, it is found to be significant at a one percent level. Hence, based on age, there is a significant difference of opinion towards customer experience. Further, the Bonferroni post-hoc test is applied to determine the difference between the age group and the customer experience on retail management and customer loyalty. The post-hoc test result shows that the above 50 age

group of customers differ from other age groups regarding the customer experience regarding product quality, store atmosphere, inventory availabilities, pricing strategy, and customer service and support. Meanwhile, the 20 to 30, 30 to 40, and 40 to 50 age groups of customers differ from the age group above 40 regarding customer experience variables.



### Findings and Recommendations

The study on the role of customer experience in retail management and customer loyalty has yielded some interesting findings. It was found that product quality plays a crucial role in shaping the overall customer experience. Customers value high-quality products that meet their expectations and provide value for their money. Additionally, pricing strategy was identified as another important factor influencing customer experience. Customers appreciate competitive pricing that offers them affordability without compromising on quality. Retailers should carefully consider their pricing strategies to attract and retain customers.

Furthermore, store atmosphere was found to impact customer experience significantly. A pleasant and inviting environment with appealing visual merchandising can create a positive impression on customers, increasing satisfaction and loyalty. Staff behavior also emerged as a critical determinant of customer experience. Friendly, knowledgeable, and helpful staff members contribute to a positive interaction with customers, fostering trust and loyalty. Inventory availability is another critical aspect affecting customer experience. Customers expect stores to have sufficient stock of desired items so they can easily find what they need without any inconvenience or disappointment. Moreover, excellent customer service and support were highlighted as essential to a positive retail experience. Prompt resolution of queries or issues enhances the overall shopping journey for customers.

### Conclusion

In the ever-evolving world of retail management, customer experience is pivotal in driving success and fostering customer loyalty. Creating a positive and memorable experience for shoppers has become imperative from supermarkets to specialty stores. By focusing on factors such as product quality, pricing strategy, store atmosphere,

staff behavior, inventory availability, and customer service and support, retailers can enhance the overall customer experience. Through extensive research and analysis of various studies conducted by experts in the field, it is evident that there is a strong correlation between customer experience and retail management outcomes. Studies have shown that customers are more likely to be loyal to a brand or store when they have had consistently positive experiences. This highlights the importance of prioritizing customer satisfaction at every touch point along their shopping journey. However, it is crucial for retailers to continually assess and adapt their strategies based on changing consumer preferences and expectations. Investing in technology-driven solutions like personalized recommendations or seamless online integration can significantly improve the overall shopping experience.

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