



Services Provided by Retails Outlets and Their Influence on Customer Satisfaction in Case of Home Appliances and Electronic Products

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

Received: December 10, 2021
Revised: July 02, 2022
Accepted: October 01, 2022
Published Online: October 30, 2022

Keywords:

Services provided, Retails outlets, Influence, Customer satisfaction

ABSTRACT

Background: This study shows how significantly the retail sector impacts customer satisfaction through service quality.

Purpose: This study delves into the influential factors within the realm of service quality dimensions offered by electronic retail outlets and their consequential impact on customer satisfaction.

Method: The research employs standardized regression weights to identify the critical service quality dimensions impacting customer satisfaction. Key dimensions include tangibility, responsiveness, reliability, and empathy, with reliability emerging as the most influential factor.

Result: Findings underscore the significance of several service quality dimensions, including tangibility, responsiveness, reliability, and empathy, within the context of a retail outlet. Each of these dimensions plays a vital role in shaping the customer's experience and satisfaction. Notably, reliability emerges as the linchpin, signifying that customers place a premium on the predictability and trustworthiness of services provided by electronic retail outlets.

Conclusion: Retail businesses should prioritize enhancing tangibility, responsiveness, reliability, and empathy as part of their customer-centric strategies. These improvements have the potential to exert a substantial and positive influence on customer satisfaction. By acknowledging the pivotal role of these dimensions and incorporating them into their operations, retailers can design strategies that lead to heightened customer experiences and, ultimately, elevated levels of customer satisfaction.



DOI: [10.15415/jtmge.2022.132005](https://doi.org/10.15415/jtmge.2022.132005)

1. Introduction

Ishmeet Kaur, a lead analyst at Technavio specialising in product lifecycle management research, asserts that the expansion of the market is being propelled by the heightened need for superior embedded software technology, which is a direct result of technical advancements in the electronics industry. The market expansion during the projection period will be driven by the telecom, automotive, and industrial sectors, which serve as significant end-user segments. The utilisation of electronic devices has experienced a significant surge in both domestic and professional settings, including both communal and personal contexts. In contemporary society, the widespread integration of technology and the passage of time have led to the ubiquity of electronic items. These devices have become increasingly prevalent throughout various societal domains, particularly among individuals seeking convenience and enhanced comfort

in their daily lives. This trend is particularly noticeable within the working families, where both partners are engaged in employment or self-employment. In order to meet the demands of consumers, electronic manufacturing companies have undertaken the development of a wide range of household appliances including air-conditioners, televisions, refrigerators, washing machines, ovens, microwave ovens, water heaters, kitchen appliances, kitchen exhaust fans, cutters, blenders, juice makers, coffee makers, and auto-ignition stoves. The cost of these things is high, and clients desire the appropriate product at a fair price. Prior to making a purchase, consumers rely on their prior experiences, seek advice from acquaintances and relatives, and consider advertisements across different media platforms. The factors taken into consideration include the durability of the product, its qualities such as colour, size, and shape, the quality of after-sales support, as well as the company's historical performance and brand image. Customers form

perceptions of a brand (business) by rationalising these concerns. In the context of purchase decisions, individuals such as friends, family members, and coworkers play a significant role as influencers, particularly when it comes to technological products. Individuals frequently engage with various social media platforms such as Facebook, Imo, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, and others as an integral part of their everyday existence. The utilisation and influence of social media are progressively changing individuals' purchase intentions and buying behaviours.

The retail landscape for home appliances and electronic products has undergone a profound transformation in recent years, driven by technological advancements, evolving consumer preferences, and the increasing significance of customer satisfaction. In this dynamic and competitive market, the role of retail outlets extends beyond merely offering products; it encompasses a wide array of services designed to enhance the overall customer experience. These services range from pre-sale consultations and product demonstrations to post-sale support and aftercare services. The quality and effectiveness of these services have a direct impact on customer satisfaction, which, in turn, influences customer loyalty, repeat purchase behavior, and brand advocacy.

As consumers today have more choices than ever before, they are not only seeking high-quality products but also a seamless and satisfying shopping experience. In this context, retailers play a pivotal role in shaping customer perceptions and building lasting relationships. Therefore, it becomes imperative to delve deeper into the services provided by retail outlets within the home appliances and electronic products sector and examine how these services contribute to customer satisfaction.

This research aims to address this critical issue by investigating the various services offered by retail outlets and their direct influence on customer satisfaction within the home appliances and electronic products industry. Through a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, we intend to explore the specific aspects of retail services that most significantly impact customer satisfaction.

The research is carried out to fulfill the objective of identifying different services provided by related outlets to the electric item consumer and to study their influence on customer satisfaction in the case of home appliances and electronic products.

In the following sections, we will delve into the methodology, data collection, analysis, and findings of this study. By the end, we hope to shed light on the crucial role of retail services in influencing customer satisfaction within the home appliances and electronic products sector,

thus contributing to the continued growth and success of businesses operating in this dynamic industry.

2. Background of the Study and Hypothesis Development

The background of this study is deeply rooted in the ever-evolving landscape of the electronic retail industry, which has been shaped by a multitude of factors. Technological advancements have not only expanded the range of electronic products but have also created opportunities for retailers to integrate innovative services and technology into their customer interactions. Concurrently, changing consumer expectations have raised the bar for retail experiences, demanding seamless and enriching encounters beyond the mere purchase of products. The association between brand image and consumer response significantly influences customer loyalty and perceptions, as highlighted by Belén del Río *et al.* (2001). The proliferation of e-commerce and omnichannel retailing has introduced fierce competition, prompting traditional brick-and-mortar stores to differentiate themselves through superior service quality. This shift towards a customer-centric approach has made it increasingly evident that customer satisfaction is not only contingent upon product quality but also on the excellence of service throughout the entire shopping journey. Service quality perceptions can differ based on cultural contexts, as demonstrated by Hui *et al.* (2011). Furthermore, globalization and diversification have necessitated adaptable service strategies to cater to diverse markets and demographics. In this fiercely competitive landscape, where gaining an edge is paramount, this study bridges a research gap by investigating the nuanced relationships between various service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction within electronic retail, offering actionable insights to navigate and excel in this dynamic environment.

According to Brar and Kumar (2017) customer satisfaction can be defined as the extent to which the expectations of consumers are fulfilled. It was established that people who frequent both the budget stores and upmarket retailers, and place a high emphasis on both quality and pricing, are more likely to experience increased satisfaction. According to Robinson *et al.* (1992) study, it was discovered that customer satisfaction has a positive impact on various aspects of business performance. Specifically, it was found that customer satisfaction contributes to increased customer loyalty, Relationship quality significantly mediates loyalty intentions, as supported by Kim and Han (2008). This leads to reduced customer churn, decreased costs associated with unsuccessful marketing efforts, indication of customer price sensitivity, acquisition of new customers, amplification of the effectiveness of advertising, decreased operational costs,

and ultimately, improvement of the company's reputation. According to the findings of Brar and Kumar (2017) the assessment of customer satisfaction with different merchants cannot just rely on the alignment of expectations with the quality of products and services. It is also crucial to consider the cognitive rationale of the consumer. The study conducted by Koschate *et al.* (2004) examined the impact of perceived fairness and customer satisfaction on the intention to repurchase following a price rise. The study's findings indicate that the perception of fairness has a favourable influence on the intention to repurchase, with satisfaction serving as a moderator of this relationship. In a study conducted by Martenson (2007), the impact of the corporate store image on customer satisfaction and store loyalty in the context of grocery retailing was examined. The findings of the study indicated that the brand image of the store plays a significant role in determining consumer contentment. When retailers possess an understanding of and effectively respond to the needs of their customers, it results in customer satisfaction. The study conducted by Sánchez-Fernández *et al.* (2009) examined the correlation between consumer satisfaction and economic value. The authors proposed the implementation of a practical instrument for assessing the economic worth of formulating and implementing effective strategies aimed at generating and delivering value to customers within the retail industry.

Comprehending consumer behaviour presents a formidable challenge, as it is a task of considerable difficulty and intricacy (Bristow *et al.*, 2002). The complexity of this phenomenon arises from the multitude of variables that have influence, often exhibiting interdependencies. Nevertheless, if this feat can be accomplished, a corporation engaged in the production of goods and services would have the potential to achieve significantly higher profits relative to its rivals. This is due to the fact that by comprehending consumer behaviour, the company may effectively enhance consumer pleasure (Macdonald & Sharp, 2000).

The key factor that influences a consumer's choice of a product or service is the consideration of service quality, sometimes referred to as quality of service, as adopted in this study. Numerous firms implement service quality, strategically plan it, and consistently uphold it in order to attract clients and leverage their competitive advantage. In their study, Hu *et al.* (2009) provided an analysis of service quality from the perspective of the client. They emphasised that service quality is considered an essential and non-negotiable aspect of the service promise. The concept of service quality extends beyond a single measure and encompasses multiple dimensions. Many scholars have devised a methodology to establish a tangible representation of service quality. The 22-item scale created by Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) is commonly referred to as service quality

(SERVQUAL) in academic literature. The model consists of five characteristics, namely tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, which are utilised to evaluate customers' perception of service quality. The research employed a unidimensional approach to measure service quality. In recent years, a number of notable scholars have focused their attention on the topic of service quality. Noteworthy academics such as Kant and Jaiswal (2017), Kaura *et al.* (2015), Keshavarz and Jamshidi (2018), and Kim *et al.* (2017) have made significant contributions to this field of study.

According to Abu (2004), an effective store layout is characterised by its ability to minimise the amount of time customers spend searching for items and enhance the overall shopping experience. Conversely, a subpar store layout might impede customers' ability to locate the products they need. The study conducted by Yan *et al.* (2011), Dholakia and Zhao (2010), and Bitner (1990) suggests that store layout is indicative of service quality. Additionally, Dabholkar *et al.* (1996) emphasise the significance of the physical aspect of the store as a crucial component of the shopping experience. The physical component of a retail store is a significant factor in the supply of services (Keillor *et al.*, 2004). Additionally, the cleanliness and design of the store also have an impact on customer satisfaction and product search (Vazquez *et al.*, 2001). Customers also tend to prioritise retail stores that offer ample parking facilities for vehicles (Oliver, 1981).

The reliability component encompasses the store's capacity to fulfill commitments and execute tasks accurately (Dabholkar *et al.*, 1996). The concept of reliability pertains to the store's capacity to provide the service exactly as promised to clients, without any deviation or error (Vazquez *et al.*, 2001). This suggests that the retail business should adhere to a systematic approach of executing appropriate actions at the appropriate moments, while also ensuring the fulfilment of its obligations towards its clients (Roe *et al.*, 2001).

Salespeople are crucial in ensuring service quality, with the most significant factors being the attitude of store workers and their ability to handle clients effectively (Gounaris, 2008). The level of information possessed by sales people regarding new products, pricing, and other aspects of shop services has considerable importance (Darian *et al.*, 2001). In addition, sales personnel assist clients in navigating the store and selecting products as needed (Jamal & Adelwore, 2008). According to Dabholkar *et al.* (1996), customers have an expectation that retailers will provide help and a service system that demonstrates sympathy and empathetic support.

- H1: Tangibility of electronic products provided by retail outlets influences customer satisfaction.

- H2: Responsiveness of electronic products provided by retail outlets influences customer satisfaction.
- H3: Reliability of electronic products provided by retail outlets influences customer satisfaction.
- H4: Empathy of electronic products provided by retail outlets influences customer satisfaction.

3. Research Methodology

The research is exploratory in nature, and the purposive sampling method is used for the selection of samples. A questionnaire has been developed on a 5-point Likert scale and distributed to 300 respondents who have purchased electric home appliances, out of which 274 were filtered and selected as samples. The consumer of Chennai city has been chosen for the study. The several service quality dimensions, including tangibility, responsiveness, reliability, and empathy, within the context of a retail outlet have been chosen to study their impact on consumer satisfaction.

The data provided in Table 1 represents the distribution of various demographic factors and consumer behavior preferences. When looking at gender, it's evident that there is a slight male majority, with 61% of respondents being male and 39% female. Age distribution shows that the majority of respondents fall within the 31-45 age group (48%), followed by those aged 21-30 (27%), while those below 20 and above 45 make up smaller percentages, at 11% and 14%, respectively.

In terms of education, the data shows that the highest proportion of respondents have completed undergraduate studies (44%), followed by postgraduates (26%), while 13% have achieved higher secondary education, and 17% fall into the 'Any other' category, indicating diverse educational backgrounds.

When it comes to annual income, nearly half of the respondents (48%) earn an income between 3,00,000 and 7,00,000 while 33% report an income above 7,00,000 and 19% earn below 3,00,000 annually.

Lastly, the data reveals consumer habits regarding the purchase of home appliances. The majority of respondents (44%) make such purchases on a yearly basis, 39% opt for a more moderate approach, buying once every six months, and 17% prefer a more frequent monthly purchase routine.

Table 1: Demographics (N=274)

Items		Percentage
Gender	Male	61
	Female	39

Age (years)	Below 20	11
	21-30	27
	31-45	48
	Above 45	14
Education	Higher secondary	13
	Undergraduate	44
	Post-graduate	26
	Any other	17
Annual Income	Below 3,00,000	19
	3,00,000-7,00,000	48
	Above 7,00,000	33
Purchase of home appliances	Monthly once	17
	Once in six months	39
	Yearly once	44

Source: Primary Survey

The data presented in Table 2 here provides valuable insights into customers' perceptions of service quality dimensions within the electronic retail store environment. The mean values indicate an overall positive sentiment in various aspects of the shopping experience. Notably, customers find the store's physical appearance, cleanliness, and overall presentation to be satisfactory, with mean scores above 3 on a 5-point scale. This suggests that the visual aspects of the store are generally well-received. Similarly, customers perceive staff members as efficient in addressing their concerns and providing assistance, as evidenced by mean scores above 3. Notably, customers seem to have a high level of satisfaction with the accuracy and reliability of information provided about electronic products.

However, it's essential to note that some dimensions exhibit lower mean scores, indicating areas with potential for improvement. For instance, the mean scores for tailoring recommendations to specific requirements, personalizing the shopping experience, and demonstrating empathy are somewhat lower than other dimensions. This suggests that customers may

desire a more personalized and empathetic approach from staff members. Additionally, while satisfaction with the availability of specific electronic products, knowledge, and courtesy of staff, and variety and selection of products remains relatively positive, there is room for enhancing these aspects to achieve even higher customer satisfaction levels.

The skewness and kurtosis values, for the most part, indicate a distribution that is relatively close to normal, with some skewness and kurtosis values falling within acceptable ranges. However, negative skewness in some items, such as satisfaction with warranties and guarantees and personalizing the shopping experience, suggests that there might be a slight tendency towards lower satisfaction scores in these dimensions.

Table 2: Descriptives

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
q1: The physical appearance and cleanliness of the store are satisfactory	3.11	1.020	-.276	-.868
q2: The store's atmosphere is welcoming and appealing	3.13	.967	-.144	-.772
q3: The overall physical presentation of the store is aesthetically pleasing	3.20	1.013	-.305	-.755
q4: Staff members address my concerns and questions efficiently	3.26	.961	-.332	-.664
q5: I receive prompt assistance when I need help with a product	3.27	.911	-.306	-.508
q6: The store is quick to resolve any issues or problems I encounter.	3.35	.882	-.457	-.208
q7: The information provided about electronic products is accurate and reliable	3.67	.911	-.755	.318
q8: Products are readily available as promised	3.58	.874	-.596	.135
q9: The store keeps its promises regarding product warranties and guarantees	3.57	.884	-.922	.879
q10: The store tailors its recommendations to match my specific requirements	3.34	.884	-.230	-.537
q11: The staff members make an effort to personalize my shopping experience	3.51	.865	-.774	.177
q12: Overall, the store demonstrates empathy towards its customers	3.52	.919	-.593	-.002
q13: Satisfaction with the availability of the specific electronic product	3.54	.934	-.256	-.472
q14: Satisfaction with the knowledge and courtesy of outlet staff	3.57	.936	-.408	-.301
q15: Satisfaction with the variety and selection of electronic products available in store	3.54	.942	-.501	-.233

Source: Primary survey

The correlation Table 3 reveals significant relationships between various service quality dimensions (tangibility, responsiveness, reliability, and empathy) and customer satisfaction within the electronic retail context. These correlations provide valuable insights into how different aspects of service quality influence overall customer satisfaction.

- **Tangibility:** There is a positive and moderately strong correlation between tangibility and customer satisfaction ($r = 0.556, p < 0.05$). This suggests that customers who perceive the physical aspects of the store, such as its appearance and cleanliness, as favorable are more likely to report higher levels of satisfaction.
- **Responsiveness:** Responsiveness also exhibits a positive and strong correlation with customer satisfaction ($r = 0.631, p < 0.05$). This indicates that customers

who feel they receive prompt assistance and efficient support from the staff are more likely to be highly satisfied with their overall shopping experience.

- **Reliability:** Reliability demonstrates a positive and moderately strong correlation with customer satisfaction ($r = 0.623, p < 0.05$). This implies that customers who perceive the store as consistently meeting its promises, whether regarding product availability, warranties, or guarantees, tend to report higher levels of satisfaction.
- **Empathy:** Empathy, reflecting the store's efforts to personalize the shopping experience and demonstrate empathy towards customers, also exhibits a positive and significant correlation with customer satisfaction ($r = 0.601, p < 0.05$). This suggests that customers who feel that their individual needs and concerns are acknowledged and addressed are more likely to be satisfied.

Table 3: Correlation

Correlation					
	Tangibility	Responsiveness	Reliability	Empathy	Customer satisfaction
Tangibility	1	.490**	.355**	.313**	.556**
Responsiveness	.490**	1	.425**	.410**	.631**
Reliability	.355**	.425**	1	.496**	.623**
Empathy	.313**	.410**	.496**	1	.601**
Customer satisfaction	.556**	.631**	.623**	.601**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary survey

The study considered the services provided by retail outlets in the form of tangibility, reliability, responsive, and empathy as independent variables and customer satisfaction

as dependent variable. The impact of service quality dimensions on satisfaction is examined through SEM using Maximum likelihood estimation method (Table 4).

Table 4: Standardized Regression Weights for Hypothesis Test

		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
H1	Tangibility ----> Customer satisfaction	0.264	.047	4.196	0.000
H2	Responsiveness ----> Customer satisfaction	0.325	.056	5.068	0.000
H3	Reliability ----> Customer satisfaction	0.328	.056	5.091	0.000
H4	Empathy ----> Customer satisfaction	0.297	.060	4.472	0.000

The results of Table 4 were used for hypothesis testing. The path for influence of independent variable to dependent variable is considered significant when critical ratio (CR) value for that path above 1.96 and p value less than 0.05.

As the findings of casual structure confirmed that all the services have significant impact on customer satisfaction, since p value is less than 0.05. Therefore, providing sufficient evidence to accept research hypothesis. (Figure 1)

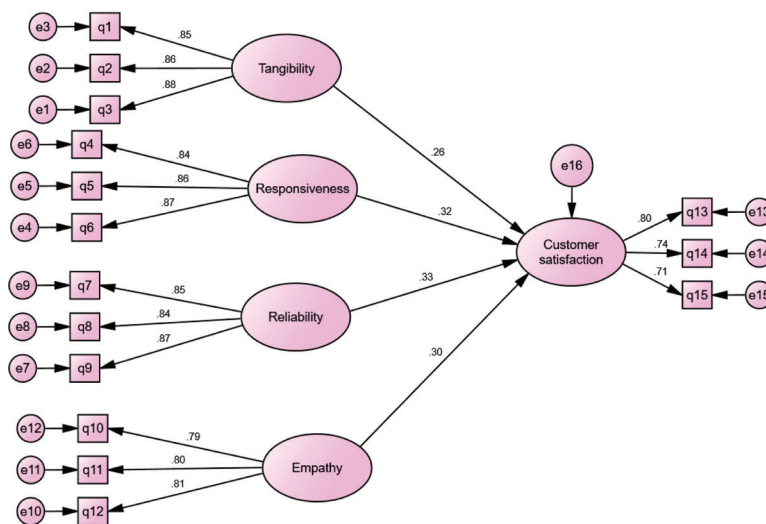


Figure 1: Casual Structure Model

The standardized regression weight (β value) for tangibility is 0.264 with $p=0.000$ and $CR = 4.196$, indicating positive and significant influence on customer satisfaction. Similarly, influence of responsiveness ($\beta= 0.325$, $p= 0.000$), reliability ($\beta= 0.328$, $p= 0.000$) and empathy ($\beta= 0.297$, $p= 0.000$) on customer satisfaction for electric products outlets is significant and positive.

The determination of coefficient value is 0.47, indicating 47% of variations in customer satisfaction explained by four service qualities.

4. Discussion and Implications

The current study examined impact of various service quality dimensions provided by electronic retail outlets on customer satisfaction is significant. The standardized regression weights revealed that influence of reliability is highest among other services on satisfaction. Consistency and dependability in service delivery are key. Maintaining high standards of reliability can lead to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty. Relationship quality significantly mediates loyalty intentions, as supported by Kim and Han (2008). The results of this analysis suggest that improving tangibility, responsiveness, reliability, and empathy in a retail outlet can have a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction. Retailers should consider these findings when designing their strategies for improving customer experiences and ultimately increasing customer satisfaction.

It is suggested for retailers to pay attention to the physical appearance and attributes of their service environments. Investing in store aesthetics, cleanliness, and organization can positively influence customer satisfaction. The study findings proved that timely and helpful customer service is crucial. Retailers should focus on reducing response times, addressing customer inquiries efficiently, and providing assistance when needed. It is advisable that retailers should train their staff to better understand and address customer needs, as empathy in customer interactions can lead to more satisfied and loyal customers.

The implications derived from this research are far-reaching and offer valuable guidance to both retail outlets and manufacturers operating in the home appliances and electronic products sector. Firstly, retailers can leverage the insights to refine their strategies, channeling resources into the services that have the most profound impact on customer satisfaction. Prioritizing investments in areas such as pre-sale consultations, staff training in product knowledge, and post-sale support can result in a more satisfying shopping experience and foster customer loyalty. Furthermore, this study underscores the importance of closer collaboration between manufacturers and retailers. By aligning their efforts with the key service elements identified, manufacturers can

tailor their product development and marketing strategies to better meet customer expectations and enhance overall customer satisfaction.

Moreover, the research highlights the critical role of customer relationship building for retailers. By focusing on the identified service aspects that matter most to customers, such as personalization, problem-solving, and loyalty programs, retailers can cultivate stronger, long-lasting customer relationships. These relationships can, in turn, drive customer retention and positive word-of-mouth, invaluable assets in a highly competitive market. "Customer satisfaction mechanisms differ between online and offline environments, as noted by Shankar *et al.* (2003)." Additionally, investing in employee training and development emerges as a vital implication. Well-trained staff who are equipped with the knowledge and skills to provide exceptional customer service not only contribute to higher customer satisfaction but also bolster employee satisfaction, creating a virtuous cycle of service improvement.

The findings of this research underscore the multifaceted nature of customer satisfaction within electronic retail outlets. While reliability takes precedence, it is by no means a singular determinant. The dimensions of tangibility, responsiveness, and empathy each contribute to shaping the overall customer experience and play indispensable roles in customer satisfaction.

Furthermore, technology integration is key for staying competitive. Retailers should explore opportunities to employ digital tools for disseminating product information, facilitating virtual consultations, and delivering post-purchase support. The adoption of technology not only enhances service quality but also provides data for continuous improvement. Lastly, differentiating through superior customer service can be a potent competitive advantage in a marketplace where products can become commoditized. Businesses that excel in service quality can secure higher customer loyalty and potentially command premium prices. Thus, the implications of this study extend beyond individual businesses, offering insights that can shape the broader landscape of the home appliances and electronic products industry, fostering growth and sustainability in an ever-evolving and competitive market.

5. Conclusion

In a rapidly evolving electronic retail landscape, this study has provided essential insights into the critical relationship between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction. Our analysis, based on standardized regression weights, has unequivocally highlighted the paramount importance of reliability among these dimensions. The consistent and dependable provision of services emerges

as the cornerstone of customer satisfaction, reaffirming the significance of trustworthiness in retail operations. As businesses continue to adapt to the evolving demands and expectations of consumers, the implications of this study are clear. Retailers must prioritize improving the tangibility of their services, ensuring they are readily perceivable and aligned with customer preferences. Responsiveness, too, is pivotal; swift and effective responses to customer needs can significantly enhance satisfaction. Additionally, empathy, in understanding and addressing customer concerns, fosters a sense of trust and connection. Ultimately, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how service quality dimensions influence customer satisfaction, offering valuable insights that can guide businesses in their pursuit of customer-centricity. By prioritizing reliability while improving tangibility, responsiveness, and empathy, electronic retail outlets can thrive in the dynamic and competitive landscape, fostering enduring customer relationships and sustainable growth. In this evolving retail paradigm, the consistent delivery of exceptional service remains the key to success, and this study provides the roadmap to achieving it.

Acknowledgements

Authors would like to express heartfelt gratitude to all individuals and organizations that have supported this research. Special thanks to the colleagues, research assistants, and participants who contributed their valuable insights and time to make this study successful. Additionally, Authors acknowledge the support and encouragement of family and friends during the preparation of this manuscript.

Authorship Contribution

The authors confirm contribution to the paper as follows: Dr. G. Manoj: conceptualizing the study, conducting the research, analyzing the data, and drafting the manuscript; Ravishankar Krishnan, Jenifer Lawrence: data collection; Nitika Sharma: review, editing, and revisions. All authors reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Ethical Approval

This research was conducted in compliance with ethical guidelines and standards. No human or animal subjects were harmed in the course of this study. Ethical approval was not applicable, as the data collected did not involve personal or sensitive information and was strictly anonymized.

Funding

This study did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Conflict of Interest

Authors declare no conflicts of interest related to this study.

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Journal of Technology Management for Growing Economies

Chitkara University, Saraswati Kendra, SCO 160-161, Sector 9-C,
Chandigarh, 160009, India

Volume 13, Issue 2

October 2022

ISSN 2456-3226

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