



Measurement of Pharmacy Retail Service Quality An Empirical Study in Indian Context

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ABSTRACT

Service quality is considered as important determinant of consumer satisfaction. Very little research has carried out on service quality perception in India. Retail sector is witnessing dramatic changes in India and so as expected in pharmacy retail. Given the relatively mature markets where the service quality scales have been developed, it seems unlikely that these measures would be applicable in the Indian context without adaptation. The study is conducted in two phases. In first phase, exploratory research is carried out in order to generate ideas and understand the current practices in pharmaceutical retailing and purchase of medicine by customers. The second phase is descriptive in nature, in this stage of research tool to measure service quality expectation in retail pharmacy context is developed.

Keywords : Service, Quality, Retail, Pharmacy

Introduction

Service quality is perceived as a tool to increase value for the consumer, as a means of positioning in a competitive environment (Mehta, Lalwani and Han, 2000) and to ensure consumer satisfaction (Sivadas and Baker-Prewitt, 2000), retention and patronage (Yavas, Bilgin and Shemwell, 1997). With greater choice and increasing awareness, Indian consumers are more demanding of quality service (Angur, Natarajan and Jahera, 1999) and players can no longer afford to neglect customer service issues (Firoz and Maghrabi, 1994, Kassem, 1989).

India is known about service quality perceptions in India (Join and Gupta, 2004) because research focus has primarily been in developed countries (Herbig and Genestro, 1996). We have seen remarkable changes in grocery retailing. In similar fashion, we are going to experience changes in pharmacy trade (Rao 2006). In this context, it becomes more relevant to study pharmacy retail service quality expectations and perceptions of customers. This study aims to measure expectations and perceptions of medicine shoppers with respect to retail pharmacy.

Literature Review

Given the relatively mature markets where the service quality scales have been developed, it seems unlikely that these measures would be applicable in the Indian context without adaptation. Angur, Natarajan and Jahera (1999) examined the SERVQUAL (Service Quality in Banking Industry, Angur, Natarajan and Jahera, 1999) scale/model in the retail banking industry and reported a poor fit of the scale to the empirical data. Despite this, several researchers (Sharma and Mehta, 2004; Bhat 2005) have used the SERVQUAL scale in similar settings with no assessment of the psychometric soundness of the scale.

Service quality in retailing is different from any other product/service environment (Finn and Lamb, 1991; Gagliano and Hetrncato, 1994). For this reason, Dabholkar, Thorpe and Rentz (1996) developed the Retail Service Quality Scale (RSQS) for measuring retail service quality.

SERVQUAL Instrument: A Concept

Parasuraman et al. (1985) proposed that service quality is a function of the difference between expectation and performance along the quality dimensions. They built up a service quality model on gap analysis.

The exploratory research was refined with their subsequent scale named 'SERVQUAL' for measuring customers' perceptions of service quality (Sassar, Olsen and Wyckoff 1992). At this instant, the original ten dimensions of service quality amalgamated into five dimensions namely reliability, responsiveness, tangibles, assurance and empathy.

Dabholkar, Thorpe and Rentz (1996) proposed an instrument based on SERVQUAL which measures service quality in a retailing environment. This instrument also captures, apart from the common dimensions that are likely to be shared by pure service environments and retail environments, additional dimensions of retail service quality relevant to the retail environment service quality has a hierarchical factor structure. While consumers think of retail service quality at three levels, a dimensional level, an overall level and a sub-dimensional level, Dabholkar et al. (1996) proposed five dimensions physical aspects, reliability, personal interaction, problem solving, and policy. They also gave sub-dimensions of each dimension to combine related attributes into sub-groups.

Objective of the research

1. To Develop and Validate a tool to Measure Pharmacy Retail Service Quality Scale

