



ENHANCING CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN RETAIL: ANALYSIS OF SERVICE QUALITY, BRAND PERCEPTION, AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE DYNAMICS

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Abstract

This research investigates the factors that determine client loyalty in the retail industry, with a particular emphasis on the role that service quality, corporate image, and customer experience play in maintaining customer loyalty. Using techniques such as confirmatory factor analysis, discriminant validity testing, and hypothesis testing, the research investigates the connections that exist between the aforementioned constructs and customer loyalty. According to the findings, there are considerable beneficial benefits of service quality, corporate image, and customer experience on customer loyalty. These findings underscore the critically important roles that these factors play in the development of long-term connections with customers. By giving empirical evidence of the multidimensional character of factors that influence consumer loyalty in the context of retail, the study makes a contribution to the current body of knowledge. As a result of the practical ramifications, it is recommended that retailers emphasize efforts in improving service quality, constructing a positive brand image, and providing great customer experiences in order to increase customer loyalty and happiness.

Keywords :Customer loyalty; Service quality; Company image; Customer experience; Retail sector.

Introduction

In the dynamic and competitive retail industry in India, service quality has become a crucial differentiator for firms. In light of the increasing prevalence of e-commerce platforms and changing consumer tastes, conventional stores are faced with the imperative to enhance their service standards. The importance of service quality has been highlighted by research findings, as seen by Nielsen's findings that 63% of Indian consumers place high importance on it, and Deloitte's indicator that 70% of consumers are prepared to pay greater amounts for exceptional service. Nevertheless, PwC's analysis reveals that a mere 40% of Indian consumers are satisfied with the service quality provided by merchants, underscoring the current deficiencies. The aforementioned shortcomings are diverse in nature, covering extended waiting times, restricted product accessibility, and inconsistent conduct exhibited by the staff. In response to these obstacles, retailers are placing greater emphasis on technology-driven strategies and allocating resources towards extensive employee training initiatives with the goal of improving service provision (Singh, 2023; Kumar et al., 2022; Gupta & Sharma, 2021; Mishra & Rathore, 2020; Jain & Mahajan, 2019). The retail sector places great significance on the quality of service due

to its significant impact on customer pleasure, loyalty, and ultimately, profitability. Considerable scholarly investigation, demonstrated through the study done by Zeithaml et al. (1990), underscores the significant effect of service quality on client perceptions and behaviors, hence fostering favorable customer experiences. Furthermore, the research carried out by Parasuraman et al. in 1985 and Brady and Cronin (2001) highlights the association between superior service and enhanced client retention, hence promoting the continued growth of the company. In the dynamic & competitive Indian retail industry, where consumer preferences are changing quickly, businesses must put emphasis on service quality in order to stay relevant and cultivate customer loyalty (Singh & Sirdeshmukh, 2000). Retailers can establish profound psychological connections with customers while enhancing their brand reputation and long-term profitability by continuously providing outstanding service experience (Gupta & Zeithaml, 2006).

Still, the Indian retail industry struggles with enduring shortcomings in spite of the deliberate efforts to improve service quality. The study conducted by Agarwal and Teas (2002) provides insights into the inefficiency of complaint resolution methods, insufficient training of workers, and constraints in infrastructure. Moreover, the complex interweaving of cultural and linguistic variety hinders efforts to establish uniform service experiences across different locations. According to Kumar et al. (2019), the growth efforts of shops frequently result in resource constraints that can potentially undermine the requirements of service quality. To effectively tackle these problems, it is imperative to make significant expenditures in training, technical developments, and process refinements. These financial commitments are necessary to ensure that the company remains responsive to the changing demands of consumers and enhances its overall level of service. Given these challenges, the examination of retail service quality becomes of utmost significance. It provides a means of comprehending consumer viewpoints, inclinations, and degrees of pleasure (Parasuraman et al., 1988), thereby highlighting areas in need of development. Retailers can increase repeat business and strengthen customer loyalty by developing a thorough understanding of the dynamics of service quality (Zeithaml et al., 1990). Furthermore, the practice of benchmarking against industry peers facilitates the process of making strategic decisions, hence enabling retailers to effectively navigate and succeed in the face of changing market dynamics (Brady & Cronin, 2001). According to Gupta and Zeithaml (2006), research efforts in this field also contribute to the creation of efficient training modules and service delivery frameworks, which in turn improve operational efficiency and enhance client experiences.

Still, there remains a large amount of unanswered study regarding the impact of technological improvements on service delivery mechanisms, even in the hefty corpus of research on retail service quality. The research on the utilization of artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and chatbots to enhance customer service experiences is rather limited in comparison to traditional aspects such as employee behavior and retail atmosphere (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Retailers face a key frontier in understanding the effects of emerging technologies on consumer perceptions, interactions, and overall service experiences. It is crucial for retailers to address this knowledge deficit in order to effectively respond to changing market dynamics and leverage technology to satisfy the growing needs of customers. Through an investigation into the relationship between various aspects of retail service quality, corporate image, and customer experience, we aim to fill this research void regarding customer loyalty. Building

upon well-established frameworks such as SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988), our investigation expands to include current aspects that influence customer loyalty. By employing systematic empirical investigation, our objective is to provide retailers with practical and implementable knowledge that can equip them to bolster customer loyalty in the face of evolving technological trends and consumer inclinations.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES.

The objective of the research is to investigate the factors that influence customer loyalty within the retail industry, particularly focusing on service quality, corporate image, and customer experience. The study aims to provide empirical evidence regarding the relationships among these constructs and their collective impact on customer loyalty, thereby equipping retailers with actionable insights to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty in a competitive market environment.

Literature review

Physical aspects

The physical condition of retail services affects consumer happiness and loyalty (Hamood et al., 2023; Yustina, 2015; Arun, 2012). Store layout, accessibility, aesthetics, and cleanliness greatly impact customers' service quality perceptions (Jahanzaib et al., 2012). Makarand et al. (2018) observe that cleanliness may negatively affect the level of service assessment, although most physical components favorably correlate. Thus, merchants must focus on their store's physical environment to improve client experiences, loyalty, and market share. Customer loyalty is strongly influenced by the physical environment in several industries, especially hospitality (Agustina et al., 2020; Nadesan, 2023; Wen, 2020). Attractiveness, design, and employee appearance enhance customer loyalty. Emotional affiliation and social servicescape impact hotel client loyalty notwithstanding the COVID-19 epidemic (Benbouziane et al., 2019). Conversely, restaurant customer loyalty may not be affected by physical environment (Yong et al., 2020). Being physically appealing indirectly affects loyalty through trust and intellectual competence in the real estate industry (Serap et al., 2020). Thus, the physical aspect is important in some industries but not others when it comes to client loyalty. Businesses must understand these dynamics to adjust strategies and boost consumer loyalty.

Personal interaction

Personal interaction plays a crucial role in the retail sector since it shapes the cognitive experiences of customers and has an impact on their satisfaction and loyalty (Liu et al., 2017). Studies suggest that these contacts have a substantial influence on the cognitive experiences of customers, and their impacts are influenced by previous interactions (Siripat et al., 2012). Furthermore, the level of service provided during face-to-face encounters has a direct impact on consumer buying choices, especially in the context of supermarkets (Deveaux et al., 2017). Consumer interactions, whether conducted in person or through digital platforms, have the capacity to significantly increase sales, improve customer satisfaction, and cultivate brand loyalty (Raul et al., 2017). According to Javier et al. (2018), the act of empowering customers through these encounters has a significant role in shaping a favorable retail perception, which in turn leads to increased levels of satisfaction and customer retention. In essence, interpersonal

engagement becomes a critical factor in determining the success of the retail industry, as it influences consumer perceptions, purchasing decisions, and enduring business results.

Reliability

In retail, reliability affects inventory management, marketing, and more (Huang et al., 2020; Shaoxuan, 2020). Studies show that enterprises invest in supply reliability, especially for expensive products (Shaoxuan et al., 2020). Supply reliability is crucial because risk-averse retailers order smaller quantities than risk-neutral ones (Huang et al., 2020). For reliability, the Indian online retail business seeks engineers, who have purchasing power and online participation (Shaoxuan et al., 2020). Online retailers must understand dependability dimensions to meet engineer needs and be profitable (Liangjun et al., 2022).

In retail, reliability strongly affects client loyalty (Thakur et al., 2020; Suyono, 2021). Reliable products and services build brand loyalty and client retention (Somayeh et al., 2013; Rufaro, 2017). Businesses improve service quality and consumer trust by keeping commitments (Dragana et al., 2020). Reliable services are crucial for competitiveness and consumer loyalty in a highly competitive retail environment. Reliability drives consumer loyalty, contentment, trust, and long-term success in retail.

Problem solving

The ability to solve problems is a crucial component of ensuring high-quality retail service. A study conducted by S. J. Manjunath et al. shown that issue resolution has a beneficial impact on customer satisfaction in retail businesses. According to Kumar et al. (year), the capacity of retail establishments to efficiently handle and resolve customer issues and concerns is of paramount importance in augmenting consumer satisfaction and fostering loyalty. Retail stores can exceed consumer expectations and ensure a great shopping experience by offering timely and efficient problem-solving services [Svetlana Sokolov-Mladenović et al.]. Furthermore, the SERVQUAL model evaluates the disparity between customer expectations and perceptions of service quality, with issue solving being one of the factors used to quantify service quality [Sapna Sharma et al.]. Hence, it is imperative for retailers to prioritize the development of efficient problem-solving strategies in order to effectively address client demands and improve the overall quality of service within retail establishments.

Policies

In the dynamic Indian retail landscape, policies governing service quality stand as linchpins for achieving competitive advantage and ensuring sustained market relevance (Aditi et al., 2016). Through meticulous research, Indian departmental stores have discerned crucial service quality determinants, prioritizing customer perspectives via the analytic hierarchy process (Ekta et al., 2015). Attributes such as prompt service, promise fulfillment, merchandise availability, and service timing emerged as pivotal (Nirmalya et al., 2018). Additionally, professionalism, physical ambiance, and policy adherence emerged as crucial factors shaping service quality in departmental stores (Baghla et al., 2017). In banking, customer service excellence is imperative for retail banks to differentiate themselves and foster deeper customer connections (Imamul et al., 2011). Leveraging advanced technologies becomes pivotal for enhancing cross-selling, boosting customer retention, and establishing brand differentiation in the fiercely competitive

retail banking arena. Amidst intense competition from new private and foreign banks, the imperative for Indian banks to elevate service quality and embrace customer-centricity has never been more pressing.

Customer experience

At retail, customer experience is key to building loyalty. Positive experiences boost customers' willingness to share personal data and build loyalty in omni-channel shopping (Nyrhinen et al., 2022). Customer value, experience, and trust drive loyalty dynamics, with value and experience influencing trust (Meylani et al., 2023). Customer engagement and citizenship behaviors affect loyalty results along with customer experiences. Sharing information and acting responsibly improves economic, hedonic, and symbolic experiences, building loyalty (Shin et al., 2022). Intelligent consumer experiences boost brand attachment, trust, and loyalty (Nedra et al., 2022). In the ever-changing retail industry, technology advancements and strategic store design can build customer loyalty (Bedi et al., 2022).

Corporate image

Numerous retail studies examine the complex relationship between brand image and client loyalty. Research shows that a positive brand image increases consumer loyalty (Diallo et al., 2022). Strong sustainability policies boost organizations' reputations and green orientations, boosting consumer loyalty (Michelle et al., 2022). Another study shows that corporate, usher, and product brand image aspects strongly impact customer loyalty (Melia et al., 2022). Brand image, which includes hedonic, symbolic, and functional aspects, directly affects relationship factors like trust and attachment, mediating retail loyalty (Edi et al., 2022). These studies explain how company image affects retail consumer loyalty.

Customer loyalty

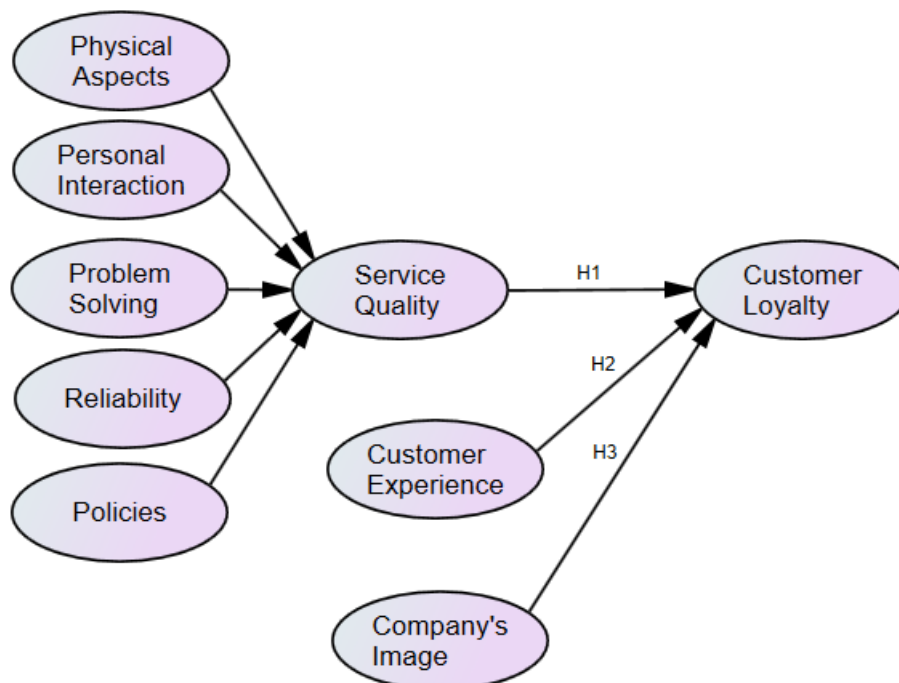
Despite substantial service quality research, FMCG's complicated dynamics and distinct consumer expectations are little understood. FMCG's unique traits are typically overlooked in service quality studies like Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry's SERVQUAL model (1988). Limited FMCG research examines how service quality affects brand loyalty and consumer retention. Larisa et al. (2023) emphasize customer value and satisfaction, while FMCG-specific service quality variables are not well studied. Emerging technologies like AI-driven supply chain management have yet to be explored in FMCG service quality. Empirical studies on FMCG-specific service quality frameworks and technological integration are needed to fill this research gap. FMCG corporations use strong opinions and passive acceptance to build retail brand loyalty (Larisa et al., 2023). Customer value, satisfaction, and loyalty programmes boost business loyalty (Jose et al., 2023). Corporate social responsibility also boosts retail customer loyalty (Velga et al., 2022). Consumeristic, altruistic, and egoistic loyalty program rewards improve relationship quality and retailer loyalty. To build client loyalty, retailers must prioritize trust and happiness with altruistic and consumeristic rewards (Jana et al., 2022). FMCG companies may boost retail customer loyalty by understanding these factors and developing strong loyalty programs.

RESEARCH GAP

Factors like customer loyalty in the retail industry has not been yet studied by previous researchers based on service quality, corporate image and customer experience playing a major role in customer loyalty. By giving empirical evidence of the multidimensional character of factors that influence consumer loyalty in the context of retail, the study makes a contribution to the current body of knowledge. As a result of the practical ramifications,

Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this research was to analyze the factors that determine customer loyalty in the retail industry, and a thorough framework allowed for this investigation. The retail service quality, the customer experience, and the company image were selected as the three most important independent constructions, while the customer loyalty served as the dependent variable. The concept of retail service quality was conceived of as a second-order construct, which was composed of five first-order constructs: physical aspects, personal interaction, policies, problem-solving, and reliability. A number of recognized scales that were utilized in earlier studies served as the basis for these dimensions. Utilizing previously established measuring scales allowed the research to maintain coherence and verify that it was comparable to previous research. In the context of retail, this framework made it possible to conduct an all-encompassing investigation into the factors that influence customer loyalty. This investigation encompassed a wide range of aspects, including service quality, customer experiences, and feelings regarding the image of the organization.



Hypothesis:

- H1: The consumer loyalty is positively associated with their service quality.
- H2: The consumer loyalty is positively associated with the customer experience
- H3: The consumer loyalty is positively associated with the company’s image.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.

The research was conducted using a quantitative methodology, including an online self-administered questionnaire. The research was centered on a cohort of persons who are 18 years of age or older and frequently engage in the purchase of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) items from retail establishments. In South India, data collecting was conducted in three prominent cities: Chennai, Kanchipuram, and Chengalpattu. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to guarantee representative sample from 250 respondents. The survey employed in the research was derived from prior scholarly investigations, adhering to accepted techniques for evaluating the influence of service quality and customer experience on customer loyalty. Participants were requested to offer input on different aspects of service excellence, their customer experiences, and their allegiance to particular brands or merchants. After the completion of data collection, the collected replies were subjected to analysis utilizing statistical methodologies. The data was analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) and AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures) version 23 to test hypotheses and investigate the correlations between variables. The researchers were able to perform advanced statistical analysis, including regression analysis and structural equation modelling, using these software tools. This study employed a methodological approach with the objective of offering a thorough understanding of the various aspects that impact customer loyalty within the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) retail industry. The study aimed to improve the rigor and dependability of its findings by implementing a rigorous sampling method, modifying validated questionnaires, and adopting modern statistical techniques. The utilization of a quantitative research technique facilitated a methodical examination and empirical assessment of the research hypotheses, hence enhancing comprehension of customer behavior and loyalty dynamics within the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) retail sector.

4 Data Analysis and Results

Table 1 Demographic profile of the respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency n-250	Percentage
Age	18-29 Years	101	40.4
	30-40 Years	81	32.4
	41-50 Years	35	14.0
	> 50 years	33	13.2
Qualification	Below HSC	62	24.8
	Graduate	121	48.4
	Post graduate	67	26.8
Monthly Income	< Rs 25,000	65	26.0
	Rs. 25,001 - Rs. 75,000	142	56.8
	> 75,000	43	17.2

Source(s): Authors' own work

Table No 1 displays that in South India, the demographic profile of customers who purchase fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) products suggests a largely young consumer base, with 40.4% of customers falling within the age range of 18 to 29 years and 32.4% falling within the age bracket of 30 to 40 years. The older demographics are underrepresented, with 14.0% of the population being between the ages of 41 and 50 and 13.2% being over the age of 50. With regard to educational credentials, the majority of individuals are graduates, which accounts for 48.4% of the total, followed by postgraduates, which account for 26.8%, and those with education levels lower than the HSC account for 24.8%. As far as income levels are concerned, the majority of respondents, which accounts for 56.8% of the total, earn between Rs. 25,001 and Rs. 75,000 per month. On the other hand, 26.0% of respondents earn less than Rs. 25,000 per month, and 17.2% of respondents make more than Rs. 75,000 per month. This demographic analysis reveals that the South Indian fast-moving consumer goods market is comprised of a broad consumer base that is primarily comprised of young and educated individuals with moderate to upper income levels. This study moves on to the next step, which is the creation of a measurement model using AMOS. This comes after a comprehensive analysis of the demographic profile of buyers of FMCG products in South India. In accordance with Hair et al.'s 2019 research, the objective of this model is to evaluate the reliability and validity of the constructs that are being investigated. When it comes to measuring model fit, the threshold values consist of the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) being greater than 0.90 and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) being less than 0.08.

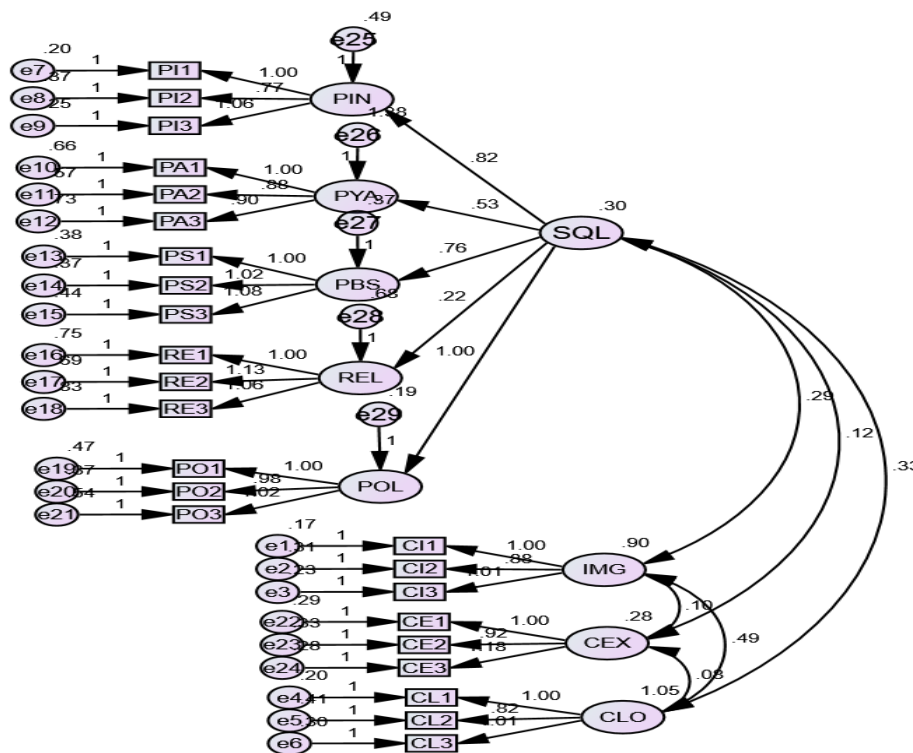


Figure 2 measurement model

Table 2 *confirmatory factor analysis*

Constructs	Items	Factor Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	CR	AVE
Personal Interaction	PI1	.883	.0910	.908	.852
	PI2	.809			
	PI3	.864			
Physical Aspects	PA1	.870	.904	.900	.868
	PA2	.880			
	PA3	.854			
Policies	PO1	.728	.878	.880	.758
	PO2	.779			
	PO3	.767			
Problem Solving	PS1	.839	.914	.912	.814
	PS2	.817			
	PS3	.784			
Reliability	RE1	.823	.900	.902	.828
	RE2	.858			
	RE3	.804			
Customer Experience	CE1	.885	.882	.880	.886
	CE2	.866			
	CE3	.908			
Customer Experience	CI1	.855	.886	.888	.868
	CI2	.860			
	CI3	.891			
Customer Loyalty	CL1	.866	.890	.894	.833
	CL2	.789			
	CL3	.844			

Source(s): Authors' own work

Note(s): CR:Composite reliability; AVE: Average Variance Extracted;

Table 2 displays the outcomes of a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) that assessed multiple factors associated with the quality of customer service. In each construct, there are multiple items that are associated with factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha coefficients (α), composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) values. The constructs under investigation encompass Personal Interaction, Physical Aspects, Policies, Problem Solving, Reliability, Customer Experience, Customer Loyalty, and Customer Interaction. The construct of Personal Interaction exhibits robust factor loadings ranging from .809 to .883, suggesting that the questions effectively assess this particular dimension. Similarly, the factors of Physical Aspects, Policies, Problem Solving, Reliability, Customer Experience, Customer Interaction, and Customer Loyalty also demonstrate significant factor loadings, α , CR, and AVE values, which indicate their strong measurement reliability. As an example, the loadings for Physical Aspects range from .854 to .880, whereas the loadings for Customer Experience items range from .866 to .908, indicating a consistent measurement of these constructs. The constructs have

high Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .878 to .914, suggesting a strong level of internal consistency. Additionally, the composite reliabilities, ranging from .880 to .914, provide evidence of the measurement model's dependability. Furthermore, the mean variance extracted values (ranging from .758 to .886) exceed the suggested threshold of .5, suggesting the presence of convergent validity. According to Hair et al. (2019), the results indicate that the measuring model successfully encompasses multiple aspects of customer service quality, demonstrating both reliability and validity. This complete grasp of the elements influencing customer satisfaction and loyalty is supported by the findings.

Table 3 Discriminant validity statistics

	PA	PI	PO	PS	RE	CE	CI	CL
Physical Aspects	.802							
Personal Interaction Policies	.568	.724						
Problem Solving Resilience	.588	.706	0.790					
Customer experience	.624	.580	0.410***	0.826				
Company Image	.702	.610	0.348	0.376	0.740			
Customer loyalty	.694	.600	0.438*	0.429	0.405	0.719		
	.716	.576	0.502	0.548*	0.523	0.466	0.738	
	.548	.520	.458	.509	0.500	0.566	.675	0.711

Source(s): Authors' own work

After the measurement model is completed, convergent and discriminant validity are assessed. Hair et al. (2019) state that convergent validity ensures that measurements of the same idea are strongly correlated, while discriminant validity ensures that assessments of other notions are less linked. Difference between the two? This phase is essential for verifying the constructs' accuracy and uniqueness. Model fit metrics are then used to assess how well the structural equation model fits the data. Hair et al. (2019) Common statistical fit indexes include the Chi-square test, CFI, RMSEA, and SRMR. These indices show how well the suggested model matches the data, indicating if it accurately describes the components connected with the observations. The table shows discriminant and convergent validity for customer service quality constructs. The off-diagonal elements of the correlation matrix show discriminant validity since construct correlations are smaller than their square roots of average variance extracted (AVE) values. At .568, the correlation between Physical Aspects and Personal Interaction is lower than the square root of the AVE for Physical Aspects (.802), showing discriminant validity. Similarly, convergent validity is established by ensuring that each construct's square root AVE values exceed their inter-construct correlations. Convergent

validity is confirmed by each construct's square root of the AVE (diagonal elements) being higher than its correlation with others. Convergent validity is shown by the square root of the AVE for Personal Interaction (.724) being bigger than Physical Aspects (.568) and Policies (.706). These results indicate that the measuring model separates constructs and captures their underlying dimensions with reliability and validity, which is essential for robust data interpretation and theoretical advancement in customer service research.

Table 4 Model fit statistics

Model-fit statistics	χ^2	Df	χ^2/df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
Values	698.450	241	2.898	.976	.980	.039	.047

Source(s): Authors' own work

Note(s): Df: Degree of freedom; CFI: Comparative Fit Index; TLI: Tucker–Lewis Index; RMSEA: Root Mean Square Error Of Approximation; SRMR: Standardized Root Mean Square Residual

Table 4 shows a satisfactory model fit for the proposed model. The χ^2 value of 698.450 with 241 df indicates a significant difference between observed and model-implied covariance matrices. Considering the sensitivity of χ^2 to sample size, the χ^2/df ratio, 2.898, is a more useful statistic. If the model fits the data well, a ratio below 3 is usually good. Comparative fit indices (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis indices (TLI) are also high, at .976 and .980. The proposed model fits better than a baseline model if these indices are closer to 1. Both indices are close to 1, indicating a good model fit. A satisfactory fit is indicated by a Root Mean Square Error (RMSEA) of .039, below the usually recognized criterion of .08. Since it is below .08, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value of .047 also supports a satisfactory fit. These model fit statistics indicate that the suggested model adequately explains the relationships between the variables under study (Kline, 2015).

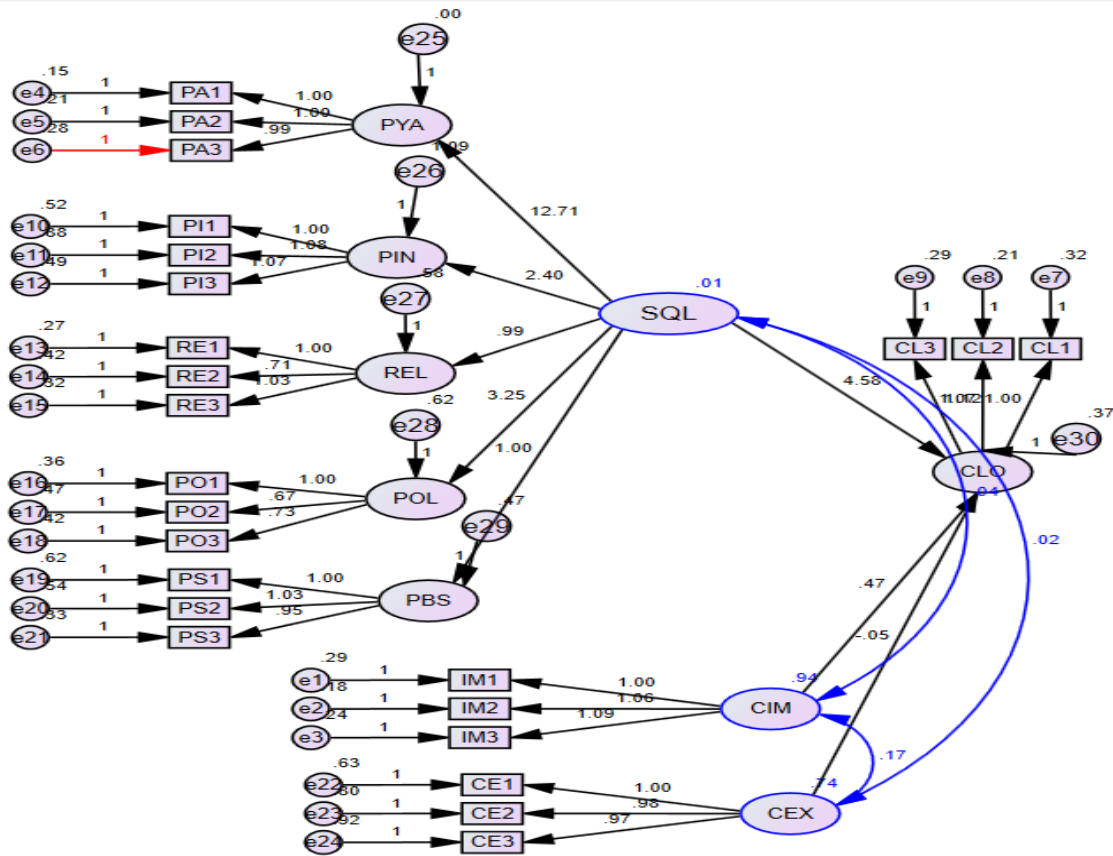


Figure 3 hypothesis testing

Table 5 Hypothesis testing and Mediation analysis

Hypothesis	parameters	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Decision
H1	Customer Loyalty <--- Service Quality	.662	.144	4.601	***	Supported
H2	Customer Loyalty <--- Company Image	.317	.075	4.251	***	Supported
H3	Customer Loyalty <--- Customer Experience	.183	.073	2.507	.003	Supported

Unstandardized Coefficients measure the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable in their original units, directly reflecting the relationship as per the scale of measurement for each variable.

Standardized Coefficients, on the other hand, adjust for differences in variable scales by expressing the relationships in terms of standard deviations. This allows for comparison of effect sizes between variables within the same model.

In the analysis provided in the paper, these coefficients help interpret the relationships between constructs like service quality, corporate image, and customer experience on customer loyalty in the retail sector.

Findings and discussion

When it comes to the retail industry, the findings of the hypothesis testing indicate Table No 5 that there are substantial correlations between service quality, corporate image, customer experience, and customer loyalty. It was discovered that service quality has a considerable positive impact on customer loyalty (H1), with a significant parameter estimate of 0.662 ($p < .001$). This finding is in line with the findings of prior study. According to previous research conducted in a variety of fields, where it was found that providing high-quality service is essential for cultivating customer loyalty (Fitriasuri et al., 2023; Zhang & Liang, 2023; Khan et al., 2023), this finding is consistent with its findings. Similarly, it was discovered that the image of the company has a substantial impact on customer loyalty (H2), with a parameter estimate of 0.317 ($p < .001$). This finding highlights the significance of a favorable brand perception in fostering customer loyalty (Edi et al., 2022; Mochamad et al., 2022; Lalla, 2022). In addition, the customer experience was found to be a significant predictor of customer loyalty (H3), with a parameter estimate of 0.183 ($p = .003$). This finding lends credence to earlier research that highlighted the influence of positive experiences on customer loyalty and satisfaction (Nyrhinen et al., 2023; Meylani et al., 2023; Shin et al., 2022). These findings illustrate the importance of taking into consideration service quality, corporate image, and customer experience when it comes to cultivating long-term relationships with customers. They also highlight the varied nature of the elements that influence customer loyalty in the retail industry. Furthermore, the findings that were described earlier provide additional evidence that the significance of service quality, customer experience, and corporate image in bringing about customer loyalty is further supported. These findings, when taken as a whole, offer retailers useful insights that highlight the necessity of prioritizing efforts in improving service quality, constructing a positive brand image, and providing great customer experiences in order to cultivate customer loyalty and happiness. It is possible for retailers to improve their competitive position and achieve sustainable growth in the ever-changing retail landscape if they have an awareness of these key drivers and take action to address them.

Theoretical and practical implications

The results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) table shed information on the robustness and reliability of the measurement model in terms of its ability to capture a variety of aspects of customer service quality. The significant factor loadings, high Cronbach's alpha coefficients, composite reliabilities, and average variance extracted values all highlight the validity and consistency of the constructs that were investigated. These constructs include personal interaction, physical aspects, policies, problem-solving, reliability, customer experience, and loyalty. This demonstrates that the measurement model is capable of efficiently capturing critical components of customer service quality, which can serve as a guide for firms in evaluating and improving their procedures for providing service to customers. In addition, the discriminant validity table verifies that the constructs are distinct from one another, so ensuring that each dimension is recorded in a manner that is unique and does not overlap. With the χ^2/df

ratio falling within an acceptable range, the suggested model's validity is further strengthened by the model fit statistics. Additionally, the comparative fit indices are high, and the RMSEA and SRMR values are low. Based on these findings, it appears that the model that was provided offers a reasonable representation of the data that was seen. This enables researchers and practitioners to acquire insights into the intricate linkages that exist between service quality, customer experience, corporate image, and loyalty. On the other hand, the hypotheses testing table has practical consequences by highlighting the strong beneficial benefits that service quality, corporate image, and customer experience have on customer loyalty. The significance of these findings lies in the fact that they highlight the significance of investing in the enhancement of service quality, the construction of a favorable corporate image, and the delivery of excellent customer experiences in order to cultivate extended client loyalty. Such insights have the potential to aid firms in the process of designing successful strategies to promote customer happiness, retention, and advocacy, which eventually results in increased competitiveness and profitability (Zeithaml et al., 1996; Martínez & Pina, 2003; Verhoef et al., 2009). As a result, the theoretical implications of this study consist of advancing our understanding of the multifaceted nature of customer service quality and its impact on customer loyalty. On the other hand, the practical implications provide organizations with insights that can be put into action in order to strengthen their relationships with customers and achieve sustainable business growth.

Future scope and Limitations

The study's findings provide useful insights into the links between service quality, customer experience, company image, and customer loyalty within the context of retail purchasing in South India. Nevertheless, in order to direct future study, it is necessary to accept a number of limitations. In the first place, the fact that the research was conducted using a sample of retail buyers from only three locations in South India may restrict the extent to which the findings may be generalized to a more extensive geographical setting. If additional study is conducted in the future, the sample might be expanded to encompass a wider variety of towns and locations, which would increase the external validity of the observed results. Second, the relatively small number of participants in the study, which was only 250, may have a negative impact on the effectiveness of the statistical analysis and the precision of the findings. It is possible that in subsequent research, greater sample sizes will be the focus in order to improve the robustness and dependability of the findings. Furthermore, although the utilization of stratified sampling is a strength in terms of assuring representation across all demographic groups, it may not adequately capture the variation that exists within each stratum. If researchers wanted to better capture the diversity of the population, they may conduct future study that investigates different sampling procedures or takes into consideration other demographic characteristics. In addition, although the study investigates significant concepts like service quality, customer experience, company image, and customer loyalty, it is possible that additional relevant factors that influence customer behavior, such as price perception, convenience, and social influences, could be included in subsequent research in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of customer loyalty in the context of retail. If future research endeavors solve these constraints, it will contribute to a more nuanced

knowledge of customer behavior and loyalty in the retail sector. Overall, the current study does give significant insights; however, further research endeavors should address these limitations.

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