

## INVESTIGATION OF SATISFACTION LEVEL OF CUSTOMERS AND HIDDEN FACTORS FOR SELECTED RETAIL STORE SHOPPING

**Choudhury Abul Anam RASHED\***

**Jannatul RIFATH\*\***

**Rumena BEGUM\*\*\***

**Md. Shabbir Hossain BHUIYEA\*\*\*\***

**Abstract:** *Customer satisfaction can be a pivotal indicator of how well the retail stores are meeting the expectations of the customers. It is required to measure the satisfaction level of customers. For this purpose, two sets of questionnaires were prepared: one for the customers and another for the employees of the two selected outlets. Through Croanbach's Alpha reliability of the questionnaire was tested. Collected data was analyzed using SPSS version 20. Obtained results indicate that 5% customers are highly satisfied while 57% customers are satisfied with the overall services provided by the selected retail store. Through factor analysis seven hidden factors mostly contributing to customer satisfaction were identified named as: purchasing pattern of customers, marketing strategy, personnel service, and demographic factors, service facilities, competitive excellence and post purchase behavior of customers. From the comparative analysis from customer and employee point of view it was found that there is a mismatch. The probable reasons for this difference are explained. Through regression analysis, the contributions of*

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\* Department of Transportation and Logistics, Malaysia University of Science & Technology, Malaysia, Corresponding author: C.A.A. Rashed, E-mail: rashedsustbd@gmail.com.

\*\*Department of Industrial and Production Engineering, Shahjalal University of Science & Technology, Sylhet-3114, Bangladesh.

\*\*\*Department of Industrial and Production Engineering, Shahjalal University of Science & Technology, Sylhet-3114, Bangladesh.

\*\*\*\*Department of Statistics, Shahjalal University of Science & Technology, Sylhet-3114, Bangladesh.

*those seven hidden factors upon overall satisfaction of the customers were also determined. It was found that apart from demographic factor, the other six factors have significant contribution on overall satisfaction.*

**Keywords:** *Customer satisfaction; Retail chain store; Factor analysis; Regression analysis.*

**JEL Classification:** D4

## **1. Introduction**

The principal objective of any business is to maximize profit and minimize cost. Profit maximization can be achieved through increase in sales with less cost. One of the factors that can help to increase sales is customer satisfaction, because satisfaction leads to customer loyalty (Wilson et al., 2008), recommendation and repeat purchase. Loyalty is developed over a period from a consistent record of meeting, and sometimes even exceeding customer expectations (Teich, 1997). Kotler et al. (1999) claimed that the cost of attracting a new customer may be five times the cost of keeping a current customer happy. Therefore, in a competitive marketplace where businesses compete for customers, customer satisfaction is a key differentiator and increasingly has become a key element of business strategy. Before designing organizational structure and implementing strategies it is very important for any organization to find out the factors that mostly contribute to customer satisfaction.

Retailing involves selling products and services to consumers for their personal or family use. Retailing is the last stage in the distribution process. In order to ensure that retail exchange can take place, the retailer must offer products and services that are valued by customers. Retailers create value for customers by offering the right merchandise, creating a pleasant atmosphere, decreasing shopping risks, increasing shopping convenience and reducing price by controlling cost. With the passage of time retail chain stores including small and big ones have been expanded remarkably in Bangladesh as people are becoming time conscious and they do not wish to spend more time for shopping. In the large cities of Bangladesh like Dhaka, it is very difficult to move from one place to another solely for shopping purposes due to heavy traffic jam. For this reason majority people prefer to shop all kinds of required goods/services

from a departmental store at a time so that they can save their time, money and energy. Due to high level of awareness, most of the educated customers are quality and service conscious. So, they want to purchase the goods where they get the quality products, better personnel services and hassle-free environment. Therefore, it is very important for the retailers to listen to the customers and their perception about their services. In this regard, assessing customer satisfaction and identifying the factors affecting satisfaction is a must. The mismatch between the perception of employees about the satisfaction level of their customers and customers' actual perception may lead any organization adopting wrong policy or executing poor strategy which is threatening for any business. Since employees act as a link for the organization with its customers, listening to the voice of employees regarding customer satisfaction is also very important. Therefore, in addition to assessing customers' satisfaction about retail chain store and identifying latent factors, a comparative analysis between the voice of customers and that of employees regarding customer satisfaction is also made here for achieving more realistic and valid findings.

### *1.1 Research objectives*

The objectives of the current research are:

- To assess the satisfaction level of customers shopping in organized retail store.
- To identify the latent factors, contribute mostly to customer satisfaction.
- To make a comparative analysis between the voice of customers and that of employees regarding customer satisfaction.

### *1.2 Customer Satisfaction*

Customer satisfaction (often abbreviated as CSAT, more correctly CSat) is a term frequently used in marketing. It is a measure of how products and services supplied by a company meet or surpass customer expectation. David Jobber (1995) mentioned that expectations are formed through post-buying, experiences, and discussions with other people, and suppliers marketing activities. Kotler and Keller (2006) explained that if the performance falls short of expectations, the customer is dissatisfied. If the performance matches the expectations, the customer is satisfied. If the

performance exceeds expectations, the customer is highly satisfied or delighted. Customer satisfaction is the key factor in knowing the success of any retail store or business. Since a lot of research has been performed in the field of customer satisfaction, many definitions have been formulated as to what Customer satisfaction entails. However, for this paper while defining satisfaction, we refer to the customer's satisfaction with the stores which they visit often, with respect to our studied retail store. Customer satisfaction gives an indication of how much successfully the organization is meeting the demands of customers. All activities of the retail chain stores are directed towards customer satisfaction which leads to customer retention - a pivotal factor for business growth.

## ***2. Literature Review***

Customer satisfaction has been paid attention worldwide. Literature on customer satisfaction is voluminous and spans several areas; many different findings have come across analysis on as to what customer satisfaction entails and the factors influencing customer satisfaction. Sirohi et al. (1998) and Yuen and Chan (2010) mentioned that once a firm concentrates on existing customers, it could lead to satisfaction and through this process the firm stands to gain positively in terms of creation of customer loyalty, increased customer patronage, positive word of mouth which generates publicity and making references and referrals. In addition, researchers claim that the cost of serving one loyal and satisfied customer is much lower than attracting a new customer (Zairi 2000; Reicheld and Sasser 1990; Heskett et al. 1997). According to Singh (2006), considering the needs and wants of customers is one of the drivers of organizational successes. The author emphasizes on customer satisfaction studies that are related to retailing. Retail customer satisfaction has been defined differently by different researchers. Retail customer satisfaction is determined by customer service, brand variety, store environment, convenient location and shopping convenience (Ram, 2013). In a study (Manish and Sima, 2012) on factors influencing customer satisfaction of organized retail outlets in Delhi, the following cues were identified as the determinants of customer satisfaction in retail outlets, such as personnel interactions, physical aspects, promotional campaign, price, location and product quality. Lu (2011) conducted a research designed to study the levels of Customer's satisfaction at retailers at the three selected supermarkets.

The result showed that Customers like to pay more attention to location, additional services like membership card, baby area, freshness and category of product. Rajul (2011) attempted to measure the links between attribute perceptions and consumer satisfaction, and between consumer satisfaction and sales performance, in the food retail sector of India. The study relies upon an extensive data set of consumer satisfaction and sales information from approximately 180 consumers.

Not so significant work has been found in Bangladesh regarding retail chain store. Seiranevoda (2011) identified the factors that influence the consumer in choosing departmental store in Bangladesh. The author recognized six probable extrinsic cues such as brand image, perceived price, perceived quality, product availability and location of the store. Another study in 2012 (Abul Kashem, 2012) focused on customer satisfaction of super stores in Bangladesh which was confined to only Chittagong. Sohel et al. (2014) identified the factors that customers consider while shopping at retail chain stores in Bangladesh. Their research explains four major elements where at responsiveness and product quality were most important to customers followed by price and physical appearance. Sarwer and Ferdousi (2004) mentioned that Bangladesh's retail sector is dominated by traditional shops; nonetheless, it has shown growth and modernization, keeping pace with overall economic growth, the increase in middle-class consumers, and changes in consumption patterns. The organized retail sector, including supermarkets, remains relatively small but consumes increasing volumes of imported food products and exhibits the fastest growth.

### ***3. Research Methodology***

The study aims to assess customer satisfaction level at selected retail store in Sylhet city. Primary questionnaire was prepared both for customers and employees separately based on literature review. Necessary modifications were made with the help of the experts. Through Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis, the validity of the prepared questionnaires was tested, modified as needed and final questionnaires were prepared. The current study focuses on sixteen factors such as locations, variety and availability, membership card, number of counters, parking facilities, modes of payments, trolley and basket facilities, number of staffs, staff friendliness and helpfulness, offers and discounts, market promotion, product price, time

saving, display and arrangement, VAT (Value Added Tax), and freshness (of fish, meat and vegetables). There were some questions regarding demographic profile of the respondents. Few options were given asking their opinions, suggestions regarding the services provided by the stores. Survey was conducted among the customers at two outlets of 'Swapno' in Sylhet city. Random sampling was adopted in choosing respondents. 200 customers and 44 employees attended the survey session. After surveying few statistical analysis like principal component analysis and regression analysis were conducted. Also a comparison analysis between customer's point of view and employees' point of view regarding customer satisfaction was made.

#### 4. Analysis and Results

Two sets of questionnaire were prepared. Before proceeding for survey, Cronbach's alpha test is done for measuring the reliability of questionnaires.

##### 4.1 Cronbach's Alpha Test

Cronbach's alpha test is a measure used to assess the reliability or internal consistency of a set of scale or test items. In other words, the reliability of any given measurement refers to the extent to which it is a consistent measure of a concept, and Cronbach's alpha test is one way of measuring the strength of that consistency.

Table 1

*Cronbach's alpha test (questionnaire for customers)*

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
0.682	16

Table 2

*Cronbach's alpha test (questionnaire for employees)*

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
0.813	12

In table 1, the alpha coefficient for the sixteen variables is 0.682, suggesting that the variables have relatively good internal consistency. In table 2, the alpha coefficient for the twelve variables is 0.813, suggesting that the variables have relatively very high internal consistency.

#### 4.2 Data Analysis

Two different sets of survey questionnaires were delivered to the customers and employees of the studied store. From the authority of studied retail chain store, it was known that everyday almost 200 customers shop and almost 100 employees work at those two outlets. A sample size of 200 was taken for the customers and 44 for employees were taken to get more accurate information. Each questionnaire delivered to customers consists of 16 factors related to customer satisfaction for a retail store. Respondents were asked to rate 5-point Likert scale for each factor. Besides 16 factors there were few questions for collecting demographic data of those respondents. Respondents were sincere enough to provide all information contained in the questionnaires except some demographic information which were optional. So no question was found as unusable. All questionnaires were taken into account for analysis.

##### 4.2.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents (customer):

Descriptive statistics of demographic information obtained from the respondents through the questionnaire are shown in table 3.

Table 3

*Demographic Profile of the Respondents (customers)*

PARTICULARS	CLASSIFICATIONS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGES
GENDER	MALE	120	60
	FEMALE	80	40
AGE	15-25 YEARS	23	11.5
	26-35 YEARS	68	34
	36-45 YEARS	71	35.5
	46-55 YEARS	33	16.5
	55+	5	2.5
EDUCATIONAL STATUS	S.S.C.	9	5.2
	H.S.C.	20	11.6
	UNDERGRADUATE	51	29.7
	MASTERS	66	38.4
	OTHERS	26	15.1
MONTHLY INCOME	"TK 20,000/- - 30,000/-"	32	27.8
	"TK 21,000/- - 40,000/-"	31	27
	"TK 41,000/- - 50,000/-"	26	22.6

PARTICULARS	CLASSIFICATIONS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGES
	“TK 50,000/- +”	25	21.7
AVERAGE MONTHLY PURCHASE	“TK 1000/- - 2500/-”	44	22.2
	“TK 2600/- - 4000/-”	40	20.2
	“TK 4100/- - 5500/-”	42	21.2
	“TK 5500/- +”	71	35.9
FREQUENCY OF SHOPPING	“ALMOST DAILY”	19	9.5
	“1-2 TIMES/WEEK”	76	38
	“1-2 TIMES/MONTH”	59	29
	“OCCASIONALLY”	46	23
STORES BEFORE BUYING AT SWAPNO	“NEIGHBORHOOD STORE”	76	38.2
	“WHOLESALE STORE”	35	17.6
	“DAILY MARKET”	47	23.6
	“OTHERS”	40	20.1
PRODUCT (MOSTLY BUY)	“GROCERY ITEMS”	94	47
	“TOILETRIES”	21	10.5
	“FISH, MEAT, FRUITS, VEGETABLES”	68	34
	“READYMADE GARMENTS”	5	2.5
	“OTHERS”	12	6
RECOMMENDATIONS TO OTHERS BY CUSTOMERS	“DEFINITELY”	29	18.5
	“PROBABLY”	71	45.2
	“MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT”	48	30.6
	“PROBABLY NOT”	8	5.1
	“PROBABLY WILL NOT”	1	0.6

#### 4.2.2 Assessment of Satisfaction level of customers (on the basis of customer's points of view) (sample size n = 200)

Figure 1 exhibits the satisfaction level of customers on different facilities (16 factors) provided by the studied retail chain store. It is noticeable from figure 1 that most of the customers are satisfied with the facilities provided by the studied retail store. Even though, in the case of giving VAT, Product price (comparative to other market) and parking facility, a large portion of the customers showed their dissatisfaction. Apart



from these factors, customers showed their satisfaction on the other 13 factors.

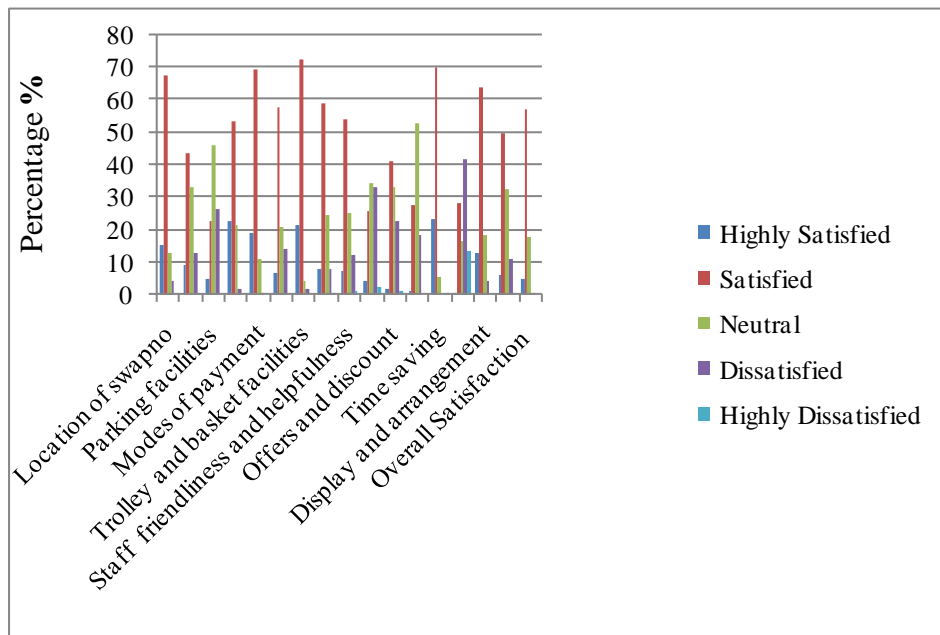


Figure 1: Satisfaction level of customers on different services provided by the studied retail store (Customers point of view)

#### 4.2.3 Factor Analysis

To identify the factors influencing the retail store’s customer satisfaction level we used Factor Analysis technique. It is a commonly used multivariate statistical technique in the social sciences, market research, and other industries that use large data sets. It is a statistical technique that attempts to represent relationships among sets of inter-related variables by a smaller set of relatively independent and interpretable component or factors, but not directly observable. Factor analysis summarizes data into a few dimensions by condensing a large number of variables into a smaller set of latent or hidden variables or factors. For running the factor analysis, all 26 variables of the questionnaire were used. We used principal component method as initial factor extraction method.

4.2.3.1 *Testing appropriateness of factor model:*

At first we checked whether our data is appropriate for running factor analysis or not. So we run the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy test and Bartlett’s test of Sphericity. The first one tests whether the partial correlation among the variables are small or not and the second one tests whether the correlation matrix found in factor analysis output is significantly different than identity matrix i.e. whether the variables are significantly correlated to each other or not.

Table 4

*KMO and Bartlett's Test*

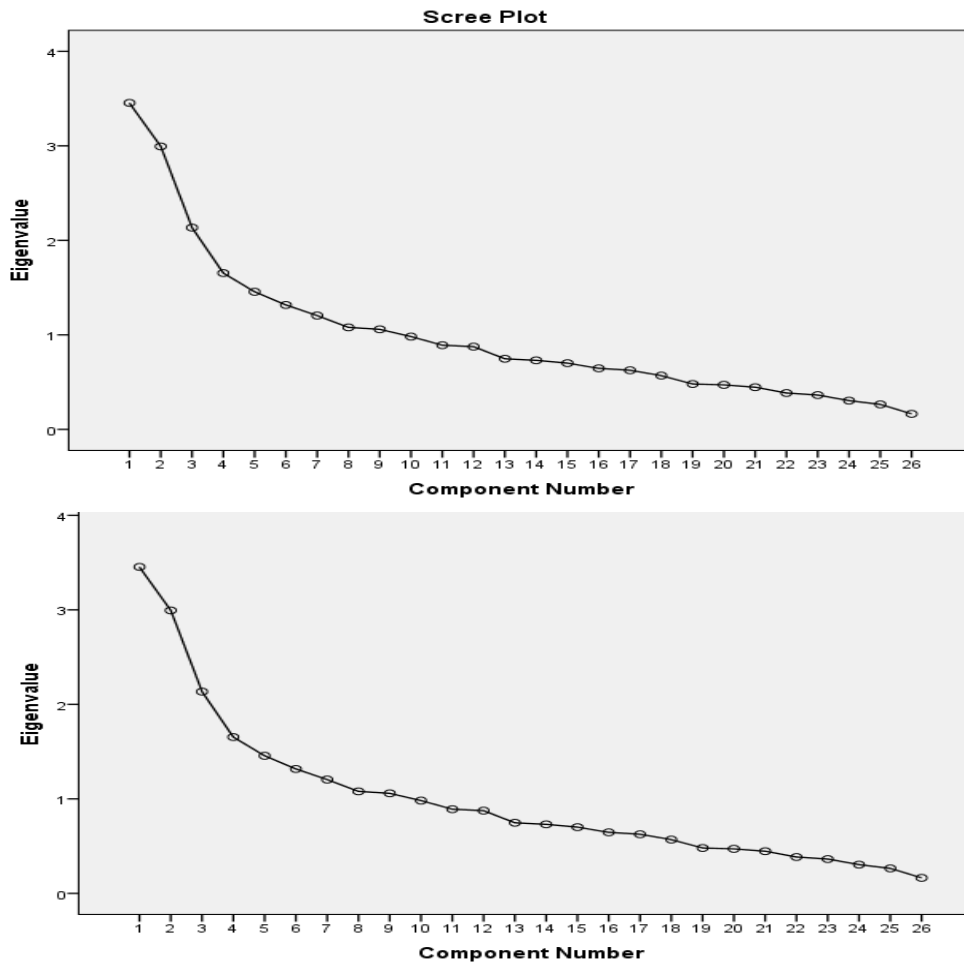
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.621
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	405.911
	Df	325
	Sig.	0.001

To fulfill the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy test criteria, a rule of thumb is that the value should be greater than or equals to 0.5. Table 4 shows that KMO value is 0.621. In Bartlett’s test of Sphericity, when the P-value is less than 0.05, it suggests that the variables are significantly correlated with each other. In the current analysis the value is 0.001 (<0.05), which is the testimony of the appropriateness of the concerned data for use of factor analysis. Therefore, we proceed with the factor analysis.

4.2.3.2. *Identification of the Factors:*

To identify the latent factors that are influencing the customers satisfaction level who shops at the selected retail store, we used “Principal

Component” as the factor extraction technique. The decision to choose the number of factors is taken based on two things - ‘Total Variance Explained Table’ or the ‘Scree Plot’. The number of factors is up to the factor analysis is, although it may sometimes be suggested by the nature of the data. In running factor analysis using principal component, a rough rule of thumb involves choosing number of factors ‘m’ to be the number of Eigen values greater than unity for the correlation matrix of the test scores (Manly, 2004). Another popular technique which is largely used in these days named- Scree plot.



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Scree plot is where the Eigen values are plotted left to right. Rule of thumb shows that we want to retain the number of factors/components that are above what’s known as the “scree” or where the plot tends to taper off

very gradually. Typically we choose the number of factors before the first elbow occurs in the Scree plot.

Here the first elbow occurs after 8 points. So, we should extract 7 factors, which are mostly influencing customer satisfaction. And also these 7 factors have Eigen values greater than one. And these 7 factors explain almost 55% of the total variation altogether which is more than half of the variation explained by all 26 variables.

▪ **Rotated Component Matrix:**

When more than one factor is analyzed, we need rotation of factors for the convenience of interpretation of the factor loadings. Here ‘Varimax’ rotation of the component matrix is used and this rotation is an orthogonal rotation which enables that correlation among the different factors is zero, which eliminates the problem of multi-co-linearity in regression analysis. Rotated component matrix provides the factor loading and the factor loading tells how strong the relationship between the variables and factors as shown in Table 5. A high loading of a variable on a factor indicates a strong association between the variable and the factor.

Table 5

*Rotated component matrix*

	COMPONENT								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
AVERAGE MONTHLY PURCHASE	0.86								
MONTHLY INCOME	0.80								
FREQUENCY OF SHOPPING	0.68					0.40			
OFFERS AND DISCOUNT		0.80							
MARKET PROMOTION		0.59							
PRODUCT PRICE (COMPARATIVE TO OTHER MARKET)		0.58							
NUMBER OF STUFFS			0.83						
STAFF FRIENDLINESS AND HELPFULNESS			0.80						
GENDER	0.43			-0.76					
EDUCATIONAL STATUS				0.58					
AGE GROUP				0.57					
MODES OF PAYMENT					0.79				
TROLLEY AND BASKET FACILITIES					0.53				
DISPLAY AND ARRANGEMENT					0.52			0.48	
TIME SAVING					0.43				

	COMPONENT								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
MEMBERSHIP CARD						0.64			
LOCATION OF SWAPNO						0.58			
VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY		0.40				0.56			
VAT							0.71		
RECOMMENDATION TO OTHERS							0.70		
FRESHNESS OF (FISH, MEAT, VEGETABLES, FRUITS)					0.42		0.48		
NUMBER OF COUNTER								0.61	
PARKING FACILITIES								0.58	
STORES BUYING SWAPNO									0.85
MOSTLY BUY									0.47
HOME DELIVERY FACILITIES						0.42			0.42

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis  
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

Although the rotated component matrix exhibits 9 factors we would choose and interpret 7 factors according to the Scree plot and since these 7 factors alone explains more than half of the total variation. Each of these factors comprises of two or more variables shown in rotated component matrix (Table 5). Among them, the first one is the most contributing factor to customer satisfaction. Here the degree of contribution of the factors to customer satisfaction follows descending order.

Now the factors have to be named based on the higher loading of the factors. The variables that load high will give a good indication of what that factor is measuring or indicating. We literally read those variables, see what is it there measuring and what those variables have in common. That is what the factors should be named. The names of the 7 factors, influencing the customers' satisfaction mostly, are as below. Based on the name of the variables associated with the factors, the factors are described. The numeric value of the respective variables describes how much the variables are contributing to form the factor.

- i. **Purchasing Pattern of Customer:** Average monthly purchase (0.863), monthly income (0.799) and frequency of shopping (0.681) can be termed as purchasing pattern of customer. Among these element average monthly purchase and monthly income of customers have the largest association with this factor, i.e. highest contribution to form the factor. And this factor explains 13.28% of the total variation.

- ii. **Marketing Strategy:** Offers and discount, market promotion and product price (comparative to other market) can be termed as marketing strategy. The Offers and discount (0.796) shows highest contribution to form the factor. Thus it can be told that offers and discount is the most contributing element of marketing strategy. Market promotion (0.594) and price (0.578) shows substantial amount of contributions. This factor is named as marketing strategy because offers and discount, market promotion, product pricing, all are the elements of marketing strategy of any organization. And this factor explains 11.52% of the total variation.
- iii. **Personnel Service:** Number of staffs (0.830) and staff friendliness (0.799) and helpfulness can be termed as personnel services. Both the elements exhibits large amount of association with personnel service. Optimum number of staffs and their knowledge and helpfulness can help customers to get product or services within a few moments and to make them satisfied. And this factor explains 8.21% of the total variation.
- iv. **Demographic Factor:** It comprises of three elements i.e. gender (-0.764), educational status (0.582), age (0.571). We can see gender of the customer explains strongly negative correlation with this factor. The factor is named as “demographic factor” because gender, education status and age all three elements are demographic information of the respondents. And this factor explains 6.36% of the total variation.
- v. **Service Facilities:** Modes of payment (0.795), trolley and basket facilities (0.527), display & arrangement (0.519), time saving (0.428) can be termed as service facilities. Modes of payment are the most contributing element to this factor. The factor is named as service facilities because all elements grouped into this factor are service facilities provided by the studied store. And this factor explains 5.6% of the total variation.
- vi. **Core Competence:** Membership card (0.641), location (0.583), variety and availability (0.563) can be termed as core competence. Membership card is the most contributing element to this factor. Innovative membership card policy, excellent location, variety and availability of product all three elements help to attract and retain

customers. They help to gain core competence on others. So the factor is named as such. And this factor explains 5.06% of the total variation.

- vii. **Post-purchase Behavior:** VAT (0.711), recommendation to others (0.699), freshness of disposable items (0.473) can be termed as post purchase behavior of customer. VAT is the most contributing variable to form this factor. And this factor explains 4.63% of the total variation.

#### 4.2.4 Regression Analysis

In statistical modeling, Regression analysis is concerned with the study of dependence of one variable, the dependent variable, on one or more other variables, the explanatory or independent variables, with a view to estimating and/ or predicting the (population) mean or average value of the dependent variable in terms of the known or fixed value of the independent variables (Gujarati, 1978). In this research regression analysis is performed to determine to what extent overall customer satisfaction depends on seven extracted factors.

Considering overall customer satisfaction as dependent variable and purchasing pattern of customers, marketing strategy, personnel service, demographic factors, service facilities, core competence, and post-purchase behavior as independent variables, we run the regression analysis.

Table 6

*Model Summary*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	0.862	0.743	0.714	0.27707	0.743	24.840	7	60	0.000

Table 6 represents the model summary of regression analysis. Summary of the model indicates that the overall goodness of fit of the model i.e.  $R^2$  is pretty high. Here  $R^2$  refers to how close the data are fitted to the estimated regression line. The value of  $R^2$  is 0.743 which means that 74.3% of the total variation in overall customer satisfaction has been explained by the seven predictor variables.

Table 7

*ANOVA Analysis*

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	13.348	7	1.907	24.840	0.000
Residual	4.606	60	0.077		
Total	17.954	67			

The F-ratio in the ANOVA table 7 tests whether the overall regression model is a good fit for the data or not. The table represents that the independent variables significantly predict the dependent variable (7, 60) =24.840,  $P < 0.05$  (The regression model is a good fit to the data).

Table 8

*Regression Coefficients*

Model	Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.(P-value)
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.851	0.036		106.435	0.000
Purchasing pattern of customers	0.071	0.032	0.152	2.256	0.028
Marketing strategy	0.205	0.037	0.371	5.533	0.000
Personnel service	0.208	0.035	0.424	6.013	0.000
Demographic factors	-0.009	0.037	-0.016	-.229	0.820
Service facilities	0.159	0.033	0.328	4.867	0.000
Competitive excellence	0.167	0.034	0.327	4.881	0.000
Post-purchase behavior	0.169	0.030	0.377	5.633	0.000

Non-standardized coefficients are the ordinary least squares estimates of the population parameters and indicates how much the average value of the dependent variable changes with per unit change in the independent variable when all other independent variables are held constant. The Significant values (P-value) of the regression coefficients suggests that apart from “Demographic factors” all other variables have significant influence on “Overall Customer Satisfaction”.

Now the estimated regression line can be written as:



$Y = 3.851 + 0.071 * \text{Purchasing pattern of customers} + 0.205 * \text{Marketing strategy} + 0.208 * \text{Personnel service} - 0.009 * \text{Demographic factors} + 0.159 * \text{Service facilities} + 0.167 * \text{Competitive excellence} + 0.169 * \text{Post-purchase behavior} + \text{error term}$ .

#### 4.2.5 Analysis of data collected from employees

Data was collected from the employees through survey based questionnaires to assess their perception about the satisfaction of customers with the services provided by the authorities of the studied retail store. The sample population was 44. Respondents were asked to rate 5 point likert scale for each factor contained in the questionnaire.

##### 4.2.5.1 Demographic profile of the respondents

Along with the factors there were some questions for the collection of their demographic profile. The demographic profiles of the respondents are shown in table 9.

Table 9

*Demographic profile of the respondents (employees)*

<b>Particulars</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>No. of respondent</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Gender	Male	11	25.0
	Female	33	75.0
Job experience	Up 1 years	14	31.8
	2-3 years	15	34.1
	4-5 years	10	22.7
	5+ years	5	11.4
Product mostly buy	"Daily market"	27	61.4
	"Toiletries"	2	4.5
	"Grocery items"	12	27.3
	"Readymade garments"	2	4.5
	"Others"	1	2.3

4.2.5.2 Assessment of satisfaction level of customers (on the basis of employee's point of view) (sample size n = 44)

Figure 3 exhibits the satisfaction level of customers regarding different facilities provided by the studied store from employees' point of view.

It is obvious from the figure 3 that most of the customers are satisfied or highly satisfied according to the employees' point of view with the facilities provided by the selected retail store. However, there is a mismatch between the customers and employees point of view.

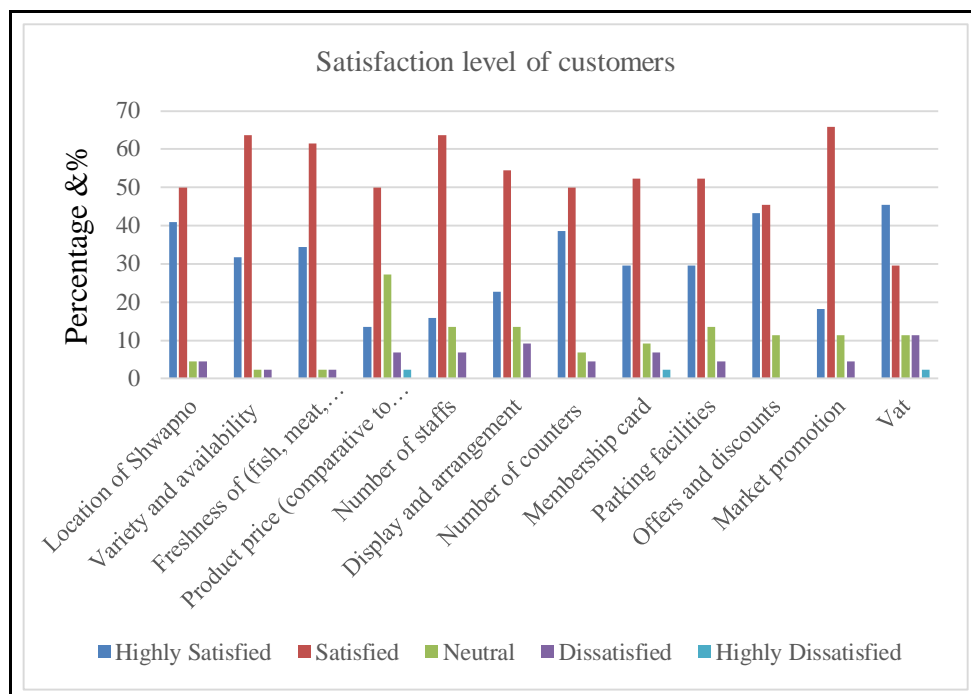


Figure 3: Satisfaction level of customer (on the basis of employees' point of view).

4.3 Comparative analysis between the perception of customers and employees

In both cases (customer and the employee) majority of the respondents showed satisfaction. But the percentages of satisfied respondents are not

same in this regard. Though majority of the customers are satisfied, the percentage level of satisfied customers are not so high. Whereas from employees' point of view it is observed that customers are highly satisfied that contradicts to the perception of customers partially. 51% employees think that customers are highly satisfied with the location whereas only 15.5% customers think so. 31.8% employees think that customers are highly satisfied with variety and availability. 23% customers are highly satisfied with variety and availability. Based on employees point of view and customers point of view it is observed that 50% and 25.6% customers are satisfied with product price respectively. Analyzing every factor from both point of view (Figure 1 and Figure 3) it is seen that the degree of satisfaction level of customers (employees' point of view) is more than actual satisfaction level of customers (customers' point of view).

## ***5. Discussion***

After analyzing the collected data, the realization is that customers are satisfied on most of the selected service facilities (modes of payment, display and arrangement, trolley and basket facilities, time savings, variety and availability, number of counter etc.) provided by the studied retail store both from customers and employees point of view. Yet some factors were not as satisfactory to the customers. The stores are expected to give more concentration on services like market promotion, offers and discount, more freshness of vegetables, fruits, fish and meat. Product price comparative to other markets is not satisfactory to customers. Parking facilities should be paid more attention as most of the respondents are neutral; 46% customers are neutral (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied). The reason of being neutral may be because of average people of our country don't have private vehicles. If customers having private vehicles cannot get available parking facilities, they would be dissatisfied. Moreover, 26.5% of the customers are dissatisfied with parking facilities. Therefore, parking facilities should be more spacious. Most of the customers are dissatisfied with VAT. 41.5% customers are dissatisfied with VAT. It is obvious that customers feel discouraged to buy products from super shops as there is 4% VAT on sales of super shops. If a customer gets the required commodities of same quality on the road side vendor or in a traditional market at a cheaper price, even with other facilities may not attract the customer for going to super shop. On the other hand, 23.8% of the respondents are satisfied with VAT. This may

be due to the awareness of the customers that by giving VAT, they patronize the government, hence the country economy. Home delivery is also an important issue demanded from customers. 88% of the customers expect home delivery service. It can be a great point to attain customer satisfaction. The overall satisfaction of the customers was found that 5% of the customers are highly satisfied and 57% customers are satisfied with the services provided by the studied retail store. Most of the customers told that their reason for shopping at 'Shwapno' is convenience, time saving, no harassment and the variety and availability of everything at one place. Through factor analysis, using 16 factors representing the several services provided by the selected retail chain store, seven latent factors were found contributing mostly to satisfaction of customers. The seven latent factors are: purchasing pattern of customers, marketing strategy, personnel service, demographic factors, service facilities, competitive excellence, and post-purchase behavior. From regression analysis, the value of  $R^2$  (multiple correlation coefficient R) is 0.743 which means that 74.3% of the total variation in customer satisfaction has been explained by predictor variables. From employees' point of view the result about satisfaction level of customers is more satisfactory than that of from customers. The difference between two perspectives may be because of the biasness of the employees' to the enterprise where they work or they may perceive that customers who are frequent in shopping here are satisfied with them. One more important thing is that frequent buying from the same store does not depict satisfaction. This may be because of customers have no other better alternative options. Therefore assessing customers' satisfaction level and realizing their actual perception about the services is very important here to integrate retailers' objectives and customers need at one point and only then it is possible to achieve the ultimate goal of business i.e. customers satisfaction, retention and loyalty.

## **6. Conclusions**

Customer satisfaction is a leading indicator of consumer's repurchase intentions and loyalty. As it is necessary for retailers to know the factors that have significant influences on customers' satisfaction, the current study can contribute. Based on the obtained results the following conclusions can be drawn:

- (i) In this study, the satisfaction level of customers is found as 5% of the customers are highly satisfied and 57% customers are satisfied with the services provided by the studied retail store.
- (ii) Seven latent factors contributing significantly to the satisfaction level was found. These are named as purchasing pattern of customers, marketing strategy, personnel service, demographic factors, service facilities, competitive excellence, and post-purchase behavior.
- (iii) The discrepancies between the customer's point of view and employees' point of view, regarding the services provided by the studied retail store.

These findings can be useful for retailers to pinpoint what have their strength and weakness in their strategy and thus can help to improve their services for customer satisfaction. One limitation of the study is that the findings were based on only the data collected from the outlets of the studied stores in Sylhet city due to time constraints.

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