

The Relationship between Service Quality Dimensions and Customer Satisfaction towards Hypermarket in Malaysia

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Abstract--- *The objective of this study was to measure the relationship between service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction in Malaysian hypermarket. Data was collected from 160 consumers who patronized hypermarkets in the state of Negeri Sembilan and convenience sampling method was applied. The data was then analysed using Partial Least Squares (PLS), SmartPLS v.3.0 software to develop hypotheses that include customer satisfaction and all service quality dimensions. SPSS v.20 software was utilised to analyze respondents' demographic data. Findings show that four service quality dimension were empirically significant except for assurance. Reliability was found to show the highest impact on customer satisfaction followed by tangibility. This study suggests that retail service provider need to recognize the significance of service quality to build a positive image for hypermarket distribution chain.*

Keywords--- *Hypermarket, Customer Satisfaction, Retailing, Service Quality, Negeri Sembilan.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Malaysia has a population of approximately 32,385 million with a growth rate of 0.6 per cent and a median age of 28.9 years (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2019). Malaysia customer base comprises of local citizens and non-citizens or foreigners who form the customer base and more than 3.2 million non-citizens or 29.4 million citizens Department of Statistics Malaysia (2019) have the willingness to spend on the mom-and-pop store or convenience store. The retail sector in Malaysia is evolving as compared to other developing nations within the South-east Asia region until hypermarket got established. The hypermarkets are located in big cities such as Kuala-Lumpur, Selangor, and Johor Bahru, and are expanding quickly across Malaysia including Negeri Sembilan.

The increasing Malaysia population with quantities of demand and expectation make hypermarket very competitive (Ogiemwonyi, Harun, Othman, Ismael and Ali, 2019). A continuing relationship is possible if the tradesperson in hypermarket can evaluate customer satisfaction with the quality of service encountered in the retail store. This is challenging because hypermarket is a service-oriented business and majority of hypermarket in Malaysia have already gone online to offer online supermarket or shopping to meet consumer satisfaction (The Star Online, 2018). This measurement of intangible factor includes service quality in essence. Hypermarket needs to build a good image of service quality if the current customer is to be retained and build new ones to enhance the

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quality of service delivered.

Hypermarket needs to improve on service quality continuously to attain competitive advantage and customer satisfaction will help via service quality to enable hypermarket to increase its sales (Al Karim, 2019; Ogiemwonyi, Harun, Othman, Ismael, Alam and Hamawandy, 2020). The previous study submitted a framework to examine service quality in the retail market via retail service quality scale and validated in several studies (Ogiemwonyi, Rahman and Connie, 2015; Dabholkar, Thorpe and Rentz, 1996; Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985). In that scale, service quality in hypermarket was established and customer satisfaction was significantly forceful. Therefore, the scope of this study is to utilize service quality dimensionality on customer satisfaction across the retail sector in the Negeri Sembilan state of Malaysia. This makes the objective of this current study.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Retailing in Malaysia Hypermarket

The Malaysian economy is growing fast within the structure of its mix of cultural modernization that is based on the religious concept. Shopping and dining in a shopping centre or mall is the major source of entertainment culturally. With hypermarket outlets located within malls and shopping centre, as a facility for Malaysians to relax. This style is often common in several locations across Malaysia. Majorly, hypermarkets or mom-and-pop store are major parts of well-known and favourable malls with ATMs centre, food and entertainment facilities across Malaysia. In Malaysia, most retail and mom-and-pop store are classified as hypermarket (The Star Online, 2018; Ogiemwonyi, Rahman and Connie, 2015; Hassan, Sade and Rahman, 2013). Hypermarket sales in Malaysia are not only a convention for retail sales, however, but sales from hypermarket have also amounted to 8 per cent of total retail sales. Hypermarket in Malaysia has been recording growth both in volume and value. Sales from retail trade have increased from RM 367.7 billion to RM 410.5 billion and the figure keeps increasing for a growth rate of 11.6 per cent since 2016 and after (The Star Online, 2018). Hypermarket in Malaysia has witnessed a major growth compared to other sectors in the economy. However, given the increase of non-specialized retail stores, some hypermarket has also face slow sales because a consumer has more shopping alternatives. According to Department of Statistic Malaysia, electronic commerce reports on business to consumer (B2C) in retail outlet is valued at RM 73.7 billion and the figure keeps increasing yearly (The Star Online, 2018). Malaysian strong economy has profited the people in terms of rising income and the buying power which is a boost for private consumption and purchasing from the hypermarket. These retail shops have continued to get bigger from the Malaysian economy with its share contribution to the national gross domestic product GDP. While hypermarket has its limitation, it seems to satisfy consumer who enjoys the unique service quality.

2.2 Service Quality

The purpose of providing quality service is to satisfy consumers. Measuring service quality is a better way to dictate whether the services are good or bad and whether the customer will or satisfied with the service received. Measuring service quality has been one of the most recurrent topics in the management literature (Ogiemwonyi, Rahman and Connie, 2015; Othman, Harun, Rashid and Ali, 2019). This is because of the need to develop valid instruments for systematic evaluation of company's performance, from consumer point of view and the association

between perceived service quality and other key organization outcomes Khatab, Esmaeel and Othman (2019) which lead to the development of a model for measuring service quality. Gilbert, Churchill and Lacobucci (2005) reviewed various ways service quality can be measured. Service quality and customer satisfaction are two core concepts that are at the crux of marketing theory and practice (Ogiemwonyi, Rahman and Connie, 2015; Spreng, Mackenzie and Olshavsky, 1996). Experts have gone to state that perceived service quality is the outcome of customer satisfaction (Ogiemwonyi, Rahman and Connie, 2015; Khatab, Esmaeel and Othman, 2019). Hassan, Sade and Rahman (2013) have conducted a study in Malaysia and suggested for expansion through service experience enhancement and web retailing market. The study of Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) were to improve the retailing environment with a hierarchical structure with five service quality dimensions. These dimension (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy) make up the ancient SERVQUAL component till the present day. The tangibility dimension is about creating first-hand impressions on the physical surrounding, facilities and personnel way of communication. They are used to convey companies image or signal quality. Reliability is as good as the first-hand impression because every consumer wants to know if suppliers are reliable in service delivery. Responsiveness is providing good quality and fast service to the consumer. Every customer feels more value if they get quality in the service delivered from the hypermarket. Therefore, the service provider should be known to be responsive when they are transacting with a potential customer. Assurance refers to employees with skilled services or trust customers have for suppliers. If the consumer is not satisfied with suppliers there are chances that they will not return to do business (Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler, 2006). Empathy dimension is the care retailers give to their customers to make them feel extra special and valued. This dimension is sometimes combined with the first four dimensions for a high-level service in satisfying consumers even though they separately have their propensity and significance.

2.3 Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Experts have mentioned that satisfaction is the assessment of emotion developed when the emotion is disconfirmed with consumer prior feelings about the consumption impression and service experience (Ogiemwonyi, Rahman and Connie, 2015; Al Karim, 2019). According to Oliver (2000), customer satisfaction is the positive feeling of the net service value received from a supplier along with the negative perception. Khatab, Esmaeel and Othman (2019) argued that service quality and customer satisfaction is a framework to attain a positive image for a firm bottom-line approach. While the connection is also arguable, service quality is the standard for satisfaction (Khatab, Esmaeel and Othman, 2019). Many previous studies have emphases on service quality and customer satisfaction in various sectors of research distributions. These research has received good attention and positive relationships have been observed (Zameer, Wang, Yasmeen and Ahmed, 2019). Customer satisfaction has a wider range of concept and service quality focuses on service along with it dimension and this can be seen as a methodological fit for service quality and customer satisfaction (Al Karim, 2019). The difference between both is the managerial delivery of service that is related to quality while customer satisfaction mirror customer's familiarity with the service received. Customer satisfaction is a post-consumption familiarity that balance perceived service quality with the expected quality. Whilst service quality is the general evaluation of a company's service delivery system and both are closely related (Al Karim, 2019; Jiang and Zhang, 2016). The level of service will determine

the level of customer satisfaction in any retail distributive channels. Some experts have argued that service quality is one measurement which customer satisfaction is depended on (Lacobucci, Ostrom and Grayson, 1995; Othman, Harun, Rashid and Ali, 2019). A higher level of service quality is needed for service provider to attain a high level of satisfaction because the formal is a forerunner for satisfaction. Many research has found that service quality is the antecedent of customer satisfaction (Solimun and Fernandes, 2018). Some have submitted that satisfaction is the framework for service quality (Behera, 2018; Al-Hashedi and Abkar, 2017; Ogiemwonyi, Rahman and Connie, 2015).

2.4 Research Framework

The model for the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction is depicted in Figure 1. The framework model shows the relationship of service quality dimension with customer satisfaction in which all service quality dimension was observed and examined for the retail market. This was developed based on existing literature and the focus of this study.

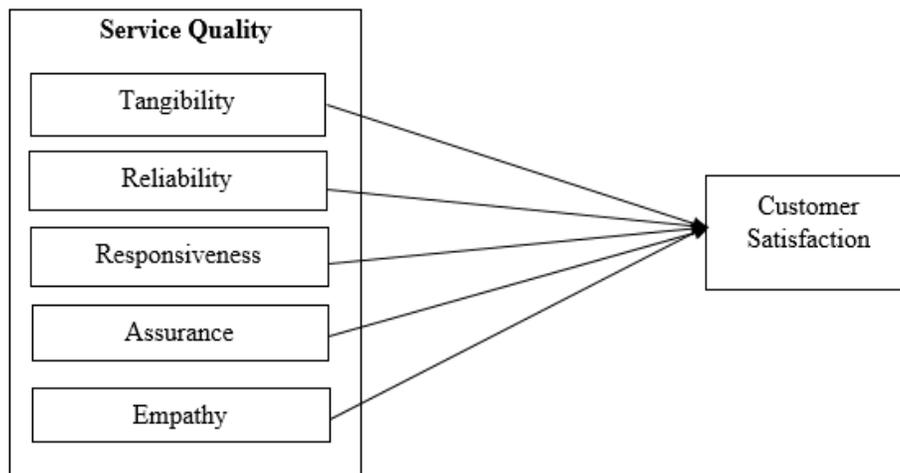


Figure 1: A Research Framework for the Study

From the framework, five hypotheses were derived;

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between tangibility and customer satisfaction towards hypermarket.

Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between reliability and customer satisfaction towards hypermarket.

Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relationship between responsiveness and customer satisfaction towards hypermarket.

Hypothesis 4: There is a positive relationship between assurance and customer satisfaction towards hypermarket.

Hypothesis 5: There is a positive relationship between empathy and customer satisfaction towards hypermarket.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

This study utilised a self-administered questionnaire to examine data. The respondent chosen were consumers who shop in hypermarkets located in the Negeri Sembilan state of Malaysia. A total of 160 sample size of the questionnaire were usable after data screening from the distribution of 200 questionnaires. This sample size received support from Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2006) recommendation, who stated that the sample size of 100 to 150 is suitable to ensure stable maximum likelihood estimation. Convenience sampling technique was applied. The measurements in this study adopted a 5-point Likert scale that includes (Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5)). A total of 19 main research question was segmented that includes questions from five service quality dimensions (tangibility-3 items, reliability-3 items, responsiveness- 3 items, assurance- 3 items, empathy- 3 items) independent variables and customer satisfaction- 4 items, dependent variable. These variables were measured from the service quality dimension developed by (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1988). The demographic questions that include gender, age, education, income level and mode of payment were also examined. On completion of the data sampled, the processed data was transported from Social Science Statistical Package (SPSS V.20) to Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using Smart PLS V3 for processing.

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Respondent Demographic Profile

In this study, the sample includes 160 customers who shopped in hypermarkets in the state of Negeri Sembilan. The characteristics of the respondents as follows. For gender distribution, the results show that 63.13% are male, while 36.88% are female and 66.25% of the consumers were between 15-24 years of age while 33.75% were between 25-54 years of age. About 58.75% have received their bachelor's degree while only 4.38% have received their post-graduate degrees.

Table 1: Demographic Profile

Gender	Frequency (n)	Per cent (%)
male	101	63.13
female	59	36.88
Age	Frequency (n)	Per cent (%)
15-24	106	66.25
25-54	54	33.75
Education	Frequency (n)	Per cent (%)
High School or below	18	11.25
Diploma and Certificate	32	20.00
HND Degree	9	5.63
Bachelor's Degree	94	58.75
Master's Degree and above	7	4.38
Income	Frequency (n)	Per cent (%)
RM 1000 and below	107	66.88
RM 1001 - 2000	33	20.63
RM 2001 - 3000	14	8.75
RM 3001 and above	6	3.75
Payment Mode	Frequency (n)	Per cent (%)
Master card	41	25.63
Visa Card	31	19.38
Direct Payment	88	55.00

For monthly income, only a few consumers 3.75% have received RM 3000 and the majority received below RM 1000 representing 66.88%. The study shows that the majority of customers like to make direct payment while

shopping, 88 customers representing 55% and 25% or 19.38% like to use their master or visa card.

4.2 Measurement Model

In testing the measurement model, structural equation modelling was applied (SEM) as mentioned in the previous session. This is the most reliable method for check reliability and validity of the measuring instrument (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt and Ringle, 2019). The validity of each latent variable was checked, discriminant and convergent validity were verified. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value and factor loading was also examined and must be >0.5 The AVE must link all factor loading while confirming the discriminant validity (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt and Ringle, 2019). Composite reliability should be >0.7 and the reliability of the latent construct is confirmed via Cronbach's Alpha which must be >0.6 (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt and Ringle, 2019). From Table 2, all requirement has been justified and fulfilled in line with (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt and Ringle, 2019). Table 2 present the validity and reliability of the data.

Table 2: Measurement Model Results

Constructs/Items	F.L	C.A	C.R	AVE
Assurance		0.749	0.854	0.662
Ass_1	0.725			
Ass_2	0.866			
Ass_3	0.843			
Cust. Satisfaction		0.740	0.837	0.562
CS_1	0.784			
CS_2	0.730			
CS_3	0.738			
CS_4	0.744			
Empathy		0.711	0.837	0.632
Emp_1	0.771			
Emp_2	0.796			
Emp_3	0.817			
Reliability		0.716	0.841	0.639
Rel_1	0.777			
Rel_2	0.878			
Rel_3	0.736			
Responsiveness		0.675	0.819	0.602
Res_1	0.688			
Res_2	0.829			
Res_3	0.804			
Tangibility		0.721	0.843	0.641
Tan_1	0.788			
Tan_2	0.809			
Tan_3	0.805			

Table 3 present discriminant validity using Fornell-Larcker approach where the square root of the AVE for a specific latent variable must be higher than the correlated of the latent within the construct in the model (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). All criteria have been fulfilled and depicted in Table 3.

Table 3: Fornell and Larcker Discriminant Validity Results

Constructs	Assurance	Cust. Satis.	Empathy	Reliability	Resp.	Tangibility
Assurance	0.814					
Cust. Satisfaction	0.470	0.749				
Empathy	0.656	0.602	0.795			
Reliability	0.548	0.609	0.625	0.799		
Responsiveness	0.643	0.575	0.669	0.607	0.776	
Tangibility	0.476	0.552	0.542	0.534	0.430	0.801

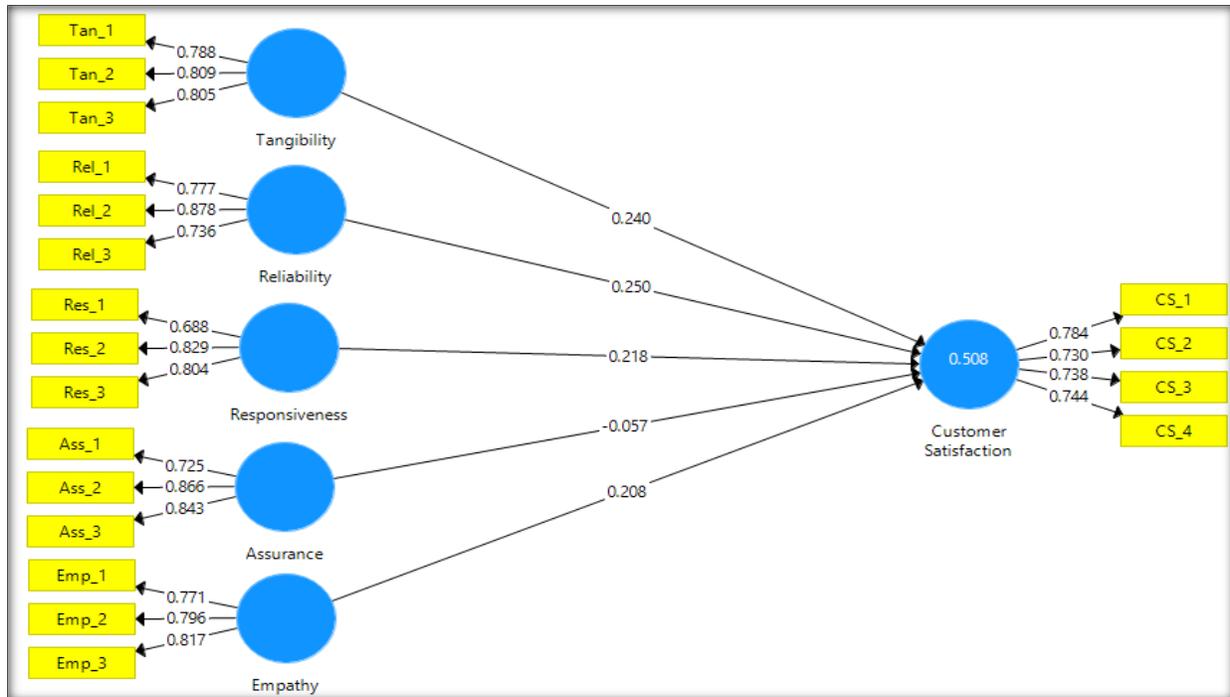


Figure 2: Measurement Model Outer Loading

4.3 Structural Model

For structural model estimation, some criteria must be met to assess the hypothesized paths. These criteria include evaluation of the path coefficient, coefficient of determination R², the effect size f², evaluation of predictive relevance Q² and collinearity Inflation Factor (VIF) (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt and Ringle, 2019). Firstly, coefficient of determination R² was examined following Hair, Risher, Sarstedt and Ringle (2019) literature support for acceptance level 0.75- substantial, 0.50-moderate and 0.25-weak. According to the graphical display in Figure 2 and results presented in Table 4, R² value was found to be 0.508 and this show a moderate level (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt and Ringle, 2019). Secondly, the effect size f² was examined following Cohen (1988) literature support for acceptance level 0.02-small effect, 0.15-medium effect and 0.35-substantial effect. According to the results presented in Table 4, all service quality dimension was found to have a very small effect on customer satisfaction in hypermarket services. Small effect size should not be overlooked because they can have a meaningful condition of beta change, so it is important to notes of these changes (Chin, Marcolin and Newsted, 2003). Structurally, the predictive relevance Q² was evaluated using Hair, Risher, Sarstedt and Ringle (2019) literature support which states that values higher than zero are meaningful. Referring to the result presented in Table 4, the Q² values for the study are larger than zero (CCR -0.268 and CCC- 0.267). This means the model has demonstrated an adequate level of predictive accuracy (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt and Ringle, 2019). Next, the lateral collinearity was assessed using VIF estimated vales and all latent variable show a value <5 according to Hair, Risher, Sarstedt and Ringle (2019) literature support. Finally, the path coefficient estimation was examined following the level of acceptance p<0.05 and t>1.96 (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt and Ringle, 2019). The result presented in Table 4 make support for four hypotheses; Empathy, Reliability, Responsiveness and Tangibility. This literature support is consistent with one

study recently made (Othman, Harun, Rashid and Ali, 2019). The result for assurance was could not meet the acceptance level for (SEM) and the hypothesis was rejected. This is in line with one study recently made (Al Karim, 2019). Contrary to the study of (Khatab, Esmaeel and Othman, 2019).

Table 4: Structural Model Result Estimation

Hypothesized Path	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	SD	T Values	P Values	Decision	R ²	f ²	Q ²	VI F
Assurance -> Customer Satisfaction	-0.057	-0.052	0.093	0.614	0.539	Not Significant		0.083		2.094
Empathy -> Customer Satisfaction	0.208	0.206	0.075	2.766	0.006	Significant		0.035	0.268	2.489
Reliability -> Customer Satisfaction	0.250	0.252	0.100	2.507	0.013	Significant		0.063	0.267	2.007
Responsiveness -> Customer Satisfaction	0.218	0.223	0.076	2.858	0.004	Significant	0.508	0.043		2.247
Tangibility -> Customer Satisfaction	0.240	0.244	0.093	2.587	0.010	Significant		0.074		1.580

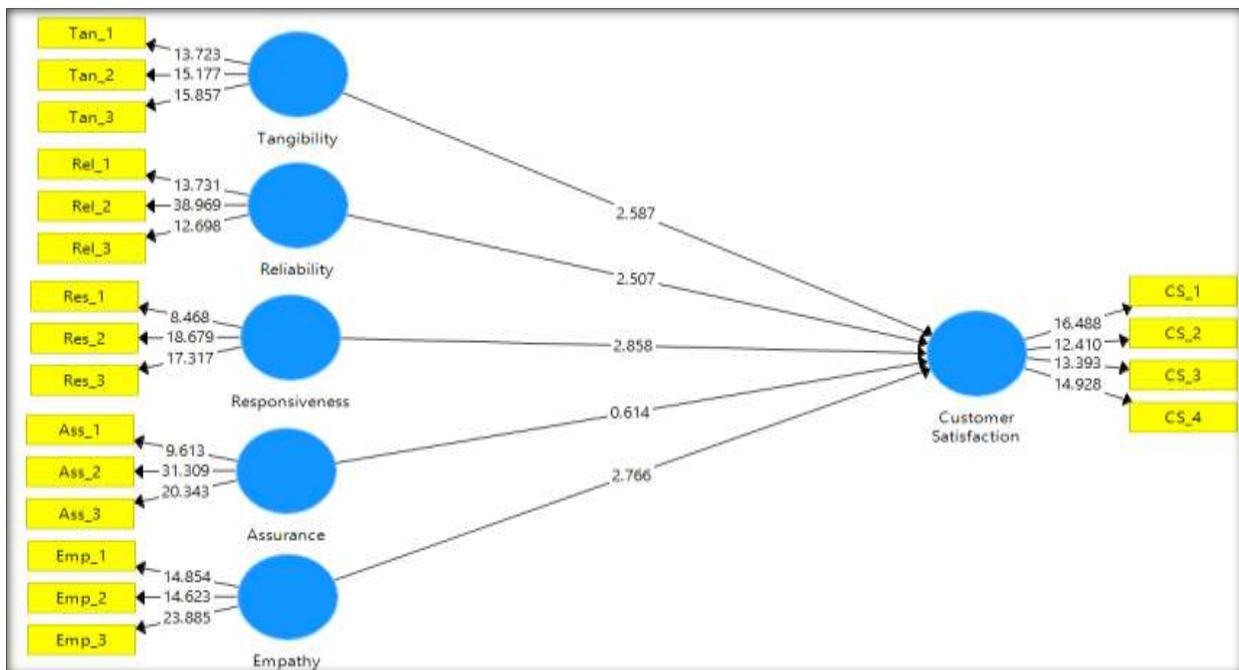


Figure 3: The Inner Structural Model with t-value

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The main focus of the study was to examine service quality dimension on customer satisfaction in Malaysia hypermarket. The study shows that customers are satisfied with the services of hypermarket in Malaysia. The more they are satisfied the more they become loyal and this will increase the repurchase intention. For hypermarket in Malaysia, physical appearance plays a major factor in controlling service quality followed by individual attention customer received in making purchasing. Although the quality of service was also reliable the customers are still

unable to have full confidence in retail services. For example, the service industry assurance is a dimension that is uniquely important for the consumer in accessing their services. Trust and confidence is a representation of the individual who dispatches service to the consumer and this will attract people to the hypermarket (Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler, 2006). Tangibility and reliability appear to have the most effect on customer satisfaction in the model. Accordingly, the customer believes in the quality and accuracy of hypermarket when it comes to the required set of information. Also, the customer cares about facilities and neatness of hypermarket employee and the way of communication when getting the firsthand information. Tangibility is used to convey the image and reflect company quality.

The findings from this study have some implications for managers. A good hypermarket layout builds a positive impression. Consumers in Malaysia search for hypermarket with modern facilities that entails physical and modern looking amenities. The clean and convenient layout is what consumer also look at. Specifically, the Malaysian consumer considers physical features with robust amenities when shopping. Therefore, hypermarket needs to improve on assuring customer through improved service quality as it will build customer satisfaction. Managers also need to discover the service needed to improve on to target the right customer for their services.

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