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**Factors Affecting Customer Satisfaction towards  
Supermarket(In association with Bhat-Bhateni  
Supermarket and Departmental store)**

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**Abstract**

*Customer satisfaction is a measure of how well a company's products or services meet or exceed customer expectations. It reflects the customer's overall contentment with their experience, including factors such as product quality, service quality, price, and the ease of the purchasing process. Customer satisfaction leads to customer loyalty, retention, positive word of mouth, employee satisfaction, and increased profit. It also prevents negative word of mouth and increases customer feedback, which benefits the firm. Thus, customer satisfaction is crucial for supermarkets to retain customers and build loyalty. This study was conducted with the main objective of determining the most significant and least significant factors affecting the satisfaction level of customers, as well as providing suggestions based on the study's findings. The research uses a conceptual framework developed from a literature review, and the variables used to determine the level of satisfaction are location, facilities, product quality, reliability, customer service, method of payment, and process. The research employs descriptive analysis, i.e., mean, and non-probability convenience sampling method. The sample size used in this research is 50, and the primary data collection tools are survey questionnaires and interviews. The result of the study shows that the overall level of satisfaction among the respondents is moderate. The*

*significant factors for customer satisfaction are price, quality, and location, whereas customer service is less significant for customer satisfaction. The insights regarding the level of customer satisfaction within supermarkets highlight the need to focus on customer retention strategies by enhancing service quality and personalization. After segmenting the market and customizing the products, supermarkets can realize an increase in customer loyalty and ease of purchase. Ultimately, customer satisfaction needs to be given prime attention, as it will build a competitive edge and ensure business sustainability within a competitive environment.*

**Keywords:** Customer Satisfaction, Supermarkets, Customer loyalty, Service Quality, Product Quality.

### **Introduction**

The very nature of the word marketing, as Peter Drucker puts it, is to look at business through the customer's eyes (Swaim, 2010). In contemporary retail business, especially the supermarket industry, customer satisfaction is everything. It is a post-consumption evaluation of the product and/or service and occurs when the perceived performance of an offering meets or exceeds customer expectations (Mittal & Frennea, 2010; Bearden & Teal, 1983; Oliver, 1980). Supermarkets are key players in the retail industry, selling more than just one kind of product—they sell groceries, household items, etc., catering to the needs of different customers.

The concept of supermarkets is relatively new in Nepal, and Bhat-Bhateni has been the oldest and largest supermarket chain in Nepal. Bhat-Bhateni was established by Mr. Min Bahadur Gurung in 1984 as the first departmental store in a small 120 sq. feet rented room and has grown into one of Nepal's biggest business conglomerates. Now it operates multi-storied department stores all over Kathmandu Valley and beyond. Bhat-Bhateni Departmental Store owns sixteen outlets all over the country. The main purpose of choosing Bhat-Bhateni stores for this study is because it operates the maximum number of supermarkets (twelve outlets) in strategic places catering to the growing population of urban areas, especially Kathmandu Valley (BPS, 2015). Since supermarkets in Nepal have not yet reached their maturity level in the product life cycle, customer satisfaction should be taken into account

for their survival and growth.

The supermarket industry in Nepal is growing, mostly in urban areas, and as a result, the competition is also increasing. Besides that, new entrants in the market should also be able to capture the market of a wide range of customers. To sustain, Bhat-Bhateni has to use some kinds of customer-oriented marketing measures. Nowadays, customer satisfaction is not only an indicator of quality service delivery but also a key factor for customer retention. Knowing what customers really want or what their expectations are matters greatly for supermarket survival.

The supermarket industry in Nepal, in general, and particularly in Kathmandu Valley, is at the growth stage with an increasing number of entrants. The challenges for a player like Bhat-Bhateni are not only to respond to the recognized needs of the customers but also to respond to the unrecognized needs, i.e., needs that customers themselves are not aware of but will certainly like if included in the offer. Therefore, this can give a competitive edge to Bhat-Bhateni by differentiating itself from other competitors.

It is important here to study the level of customer satisfaction at Bhat-Bhateni and its contributing dimensions to find out the factors that have a significant effect on the overall satisfaction of customers. This will act as a precursor for Bhat-Bhateni to make substantial changes in its service areas. This research also identifies the least and most significant dimensions influencing the level of customer satisfaction. By knowing these dimensions, priority can be given to those areas where improvement is necessary so that the overall shopping experience of customers can be improved in a better way.

It is essential to manage the relationship between customer satisfaction and competitive advantage in the supermarket sector for any sustainable growth, considering the rapid evolution of retailing. Bhat-Bhateni can solidify its leadership position among the supermarket chains in Nepal, since it already has built a significant number of regular customers, by emphasizing the understanding of customer satisfaction and customer expectations. The purpose of this study is to evaluate overall customer satisfaction levels at Bhat-Bhateni, the relative importance of various attributes in these satisfaction levels, and recommend ways to improve the supermarket's ability to meet and possibly exceed these satisfaction levels.

### **Literature Review**

Customer satisfaction is the emotional response experienced by customers after using a product or service, reflecting how well their expectations are met or exceeded. It is a critical aspect for supermarkets, influenced by multiple factors such as service quality, store atmosphere, product availability, pricing strategies, and technological innovations. Prominent marketing experts like Kotler define customer satisfaction as the feeling of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product's perceived performance to expectations.

According to L. A. Crosby and S. L. Stephens (1987), customer satisfaction is "a mental state resulting from confirming or disconfirming a customer's expectations about a company's offerings in relation to their perceived value."

Similarly, Zeithaml, Bitner, and Gremler (2006) have defined customer satisfaction as "the customer's fulfillment response. It is a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment, including levels of under- or over-fulfillment."

Several studies have explored the determinants of customer satisfaction in retail contexts. Naik, Gantasala, and Prabhakar (2010) focused on service quality within retailing, discovering through a survey of 369 respondents that specific service quality dimensions significantly impact customer satisfaction. Their research emphasized the crucial role of service quality in enhancing customer experiences.

In a study by Ruiz, Yusta, and Zarco (2010) on Spanish grocery stores, the researchers aimed to identify key factors influencing customer satisfaction. They gathered data from 358 customers through questionnaires and interviews, finding that perceptions of service quality and convenience positively affected satisfaction levels. The study highlighted the importance of retailers developing clear value propositions.

Abhubakar, Clulow, and Mavondo (2011) investigated satisfaction among Australian supermarket shoppers, surveying 800 respondents across various postcodes. They utilized exploratory factor analysis and found that store reputation for ethical practices, food handling, and environmental concerns were significant factors. The study revealed differences in priorities

among different areas while maintaining a consistent ranking of important elements.

Sarkar (2013) analyzed Big Bazaar's marketing strategies, aiming to understand how they attract and retain customers. The research involved 200 respondents and utilized both primary and secondary data sources. Findings indicated that promotional strategies like discounts, product variety, and additional services were key in attracting consumers. The study recommended improving product quality and reducing waiting times through technology and well-trained staff.

Mohan (2013) focused on food retail supermarkets in Bangalore, identifying factors that impact customer satisfaction through a descriptive study involving 500 respondents. The research utilized structured questionnaires and advanced statistical analysis methods, including factor analysis and ANOVA. Key factors influencing satisfaction included customer service, store environment, brand variety, convenient location, and shopping convenience. Mohan's study suggested that supermarkets focus on these identified factors to improve customer satisfaction and enhance customer retention strategies. In summary, these studies collectively underscore the complexity of customer satisfaction in supermarkets, highlighting the importance of service quality, convenience, ethical practices, and strategic marketing. They provide valuable insights for supermarket management to refine their strategies and improve overall customer experiences.

#### Research Methodology

This article represents the outcome of quantitative research design, specifically utilizing a descriptive and cross-sectional approach to comprehensively examine customer satisfaction. The target population includes individuals from diverse age groups, with a non-probability sampling method known as the Snowball Sampling Technique employed to gather data. Initially, 50 respondents are selected, who complete an online questionnaire and then encourage others in their networks to participate. Data collection involves both primary and secondary methods: primary data is obtained through structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews, while secondary data is gathered from magazines, newspapers, and reputable online sources. For data analysis, statistical tools such as mean calculations and frequency distributions are utilized to categorize satisfaction levels into

low, moderate, and high. A significant mean value range of 3.2 to 4.0 will identify critical dimensions influencing customer satisfaction, aiming to provide valuable insights for future service improvements.

### **Results and Discussion**

This article presents an in-depth analysis of customer satisfaction levels towards supermarkets, focusing on various factors that influence the shopping experience. Key dimensions explored include location, facilities, product quality, pricing, customer service, methods of payment, and store cleanliness. By examining these elements, the findings aim to highlight areas of strength and opportunities for improvement for supermarkets. Customer satisfaction level was measured across various dimensions as given below:

#### **Location**

Respondents rated their satisfaction level with respect to the area where supermarket is available. The results are shown in the following table;

**Table no:1**

*Location and satisfaction level*

<b>Satisfaction Level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Very Satisfied</b>	18	36%
<b>Satisfied</b>	10	20 %
<b>Neutral</b>	5	10%
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	8	16%
<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	9	18%

The table summarizes respondents' satisfaction levels regarding the location of a supermarket, revealing a mixed sentiment among customers. A notable 36% of respondents indicated that they are "Very Satisfied," while an additional 20% reported being "Satisfied," resulting in a combined positive perception of 56%. This suggests that a majority appreciate the supermarket's accessibility and convenience. However, 34% expressed dissatisfaction, with 16% being "Dissatisfied" and 18% "Very Dissatisfied." This indicates that a significant portion of customers faces issues that impact their experience negatively, such as poor accessibility or an undesirable

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location. Additionally, 10% of respondents felt neutral about the location, implying indifference or a lack of strong opinion. Overall, while the supermarket enjoys a favorable perception among many, addressing the concerns of the dissatisfied customers and engaging with the neutral group could enhance overall satisfaction and customer loyalty.

### **Facilities**

Satisfaction Level in association with the facilities offered by Supermarket is illustrated below:

**Table no. 2**  
*Facilities and satisfaction level*

<b>Satisfaction Level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Very Satisfied</b>	20	40%
<b>Satisfied</b>	17	34 %
<b>Neutral</b>	7	14%
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	4	8%
<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	2	4%

The table shows how satisfied people are with the facilities offered by the supermarket, and overall, the feedback is quite positive. About 40% of respondents are "Very Satisfied," indicating they really like what the supermarket provides, whether it's the variety of products, cleanliness, or customer service. Another 34% are "Satisfied," so together, 74% of customers feel good about the facilities. There are also 14% who are "Neutral," meaning they don't have strong feelings either way, which could suggest they find the facilities just okay. On the other hand, 8% are "Dissatisfied" and 4% are "Very Dissatisfied," indicating that some people have specific concerns, like limited options or maintenance issues. While most customers appreciate the supermarket's facilities, it would be beneficial for the store to address the concerns of those who are unhappy and find ways to improve the experience for everyone.

### **Product Quality**

The satisfaction level rated by the respondents with the quality of products offered by supermarket is illustrated in the following table:

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**Table no. 3**  
*Product Quality and satisfaction level*

<b>Satisfaction Level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Very Satisfied</b>	22	44%
<b>Satisfied</b>	15	30 %
<b>Neutral</b>	10	20%
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	7	14%
<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	6	12%

The table shows how satisfied customers are with the quality of products at the supermarket, and the results are mostly positive. About 44% of respondents are "Very Satisfied," meaning they really like the quality of the products they buy, while another 30% are "Satisfied," which brings the total of happy customers to 74%. However, 20% of respondents feel "Neutral," indicating they think the quality is okay but not great. On the downside, 14% are "Dissatisfied" and 12% are "Very Dissatisfied," suggesting some customers have concerns, possibly about freshness or variety. Overall, while most shoppers are pleased with the product quality, the supermarket has room to improve for those who aren't fully satisfied.

**Pricing**

Respondents' satisfaction with supermarket pricing is summarized in the following table:

**Table no. 4**  
*Pricing and satisfaction level*

<b>Satisfaction Level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Very Satisfied</b>	12	24%
<b>Satisfied</b>	14	28 %
<b>Neutral</b>	6	12%
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	10	20%
<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	8	16%



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The table shows how satisfied customers are with the prices at the supermarket, and the feedback is a bit mixed. About 24% of respondents are "Very Satisfied," meaning they feel good about the prices they pay. Another 28% are "Satisfied," so overall, 52% of customers are happy with the pricing. However, 12% are "Neutral," which means they don't have strong feelings—prices are just okay for them. On the other hand, 20% of respondents are "Dissatisfied," indicating they think the prices could be better, and 16% are "Very Dissatisfied," suggesting they have significant concerns about pricing. This shows that while many shoppers appreciate the prices, a substantial number are not completely satisfied, and the supermarket might need to rethink its pricing strategy to improve customer happiness.

### **Customer Service**

Customer service satisfaction levels are detailed in the following figure:

**Table no. 5**  
*Customer service and satisfaction level.*

<b>Satisfaction Level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Very Satisfied</b>	8	16%
<b>Satisfied</b>	16	32 %
<b>Neutral</b>	15	30%
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	6	12%
<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	5	10%

The table shows how satisfied customers are with the supermarket's customer service, and the results highlight a range of feelings. Only 16% of respondents are "Very Satisfied," which indicates that a small group feels extremely pleased with the service they receive. A larger portion, 32%, is "Satisfied," showing that they generally have a positive experience. However, 30% of respondents are "Neutral," meaning they don't have strong feelings either way; the service is just okay for them. On the downside, 12% are "Dissatisfied," suggesting some customers have had negative experiences, and 10% are "Very Dissatisfied," indicating serious concerns with customer service. Overall, while many customers are content, there's a significant number who feel there's room for improvement in the service provided by the

supermarket.

### **Method of Payment**

Customer satisfaction level in association with method of payment is summarized in the following table:

**Table no. 6**  
*Method of Payment and satisfaction level*

<b>Satisfaction Level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Very Satisfied</b>	22	44%
<b>Satisfied</b>	15	30 %
<b>Neutral</b>	5	10%
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	6	12%
<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	2	4%

The table outlines how satisfied customers are with the payment methods available at the supermarket. A strong 44% of respondents are "Very Satisfied," meaning they really appreciate the payment options offered, which likely include conveniences like card payments and digital wallets. Another 30% are "Satisfied," indicating that they find the payment methods generally good. However, 10% of customers feel "Neutral," suggesting they don't have strong opinions about the payment options—they're just acceptable. On the negative side, 12% are "Dissatisfied," which means they have some concerns, and 4% are "Very Dissatisfied," indicating serious issues with the payment process. Overall, while most customers are happy with how they can pay, there are still some who think improvements could be made to enhance their experience.

### **Store Cleanliness**

The satisfaction level rated by the respondents to store cleanliness is illustrated in the following table:

**Table no. 7**  
*Store Cleanliness and satisfaction level*

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Satisfaction Level	Frequency	Percentage
Very Satisfied	16	32%
Satisfied	10	20 %
Neutral	15	30%
Dissatisfied	5	10%
Very Dissatisfied	4	8%

The table presents customers' satisfaction levels regarding the cleanliness of the supermarket. About 32% of respondents are "Very Satisfied," indicating that they feel strongly positive about how clean the store is. An additional 20% are "Satisfied," showing that many customers think the cleanliness is generally good. However, 30% are "Neutral," meaning they don't have strong feelings about it; cleanliness is just okay for them. On the downside, 10% of respondents are "Dissatisfied," suggesting they have some concerns about cleanliness, and 8% are "Very Dissatisfied," indicating more serious issues. Overall, while a good number of customers appreciate the store's cleanliness, there are still some who think improvements could be made.

**Table no. 2**

*Measurement of overall level of satisfaction from each dimension*

Level of satisfaction	Location	Facilities	Product Quality	Pricing	Customer service	Methods of Payment	Store Cleanliness
Very Satisfied	18	20	12	12	8	22	16
Satisfied	10	17	15	14	16	15	10
Neutral	5	7	10	6	15	5	15
Dissatisfied	8	4	7	10	6	6	5
very Dissatisfied	9	2	6	8	5	2	4
Overall Satisfaction level	3.4	3.98	3.4	3.24	3.32	3.98	3.58

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The above table represents the measurement of overall satisfaction levels across different dimensions for a store. The dimensions are Location, Facilities, Product Quality, Pricing, Customer Service, Methods of Payment and store cleanliness. The satisfaction level is categorized into five groups as Very satisfied, Satisfied, Neutral, Dissatisfied, and very dissatisfied.

The overall satisfaction level of customers towards supermarkets is relatively high. People are highly satisfied with the facilities and methods of payment offered by the supermarket. The overall level of satisfaction from these two dimension is highest ie 3.98. It indicates that the supermarket is performing well in these two areas. Similarly, the overall level of satisfaction obtained by customers from store cleanliness is 3.58 which indicates that the customers are much impressed by the store cleanliness. This provides a strength to the supermarkets over its competitors.

As shown in the table, the overall level of satisfaction obtained by customer from rest of the dimensions/factors ie Location, Product Quality, Pricing and Customer service are 3.4, 3.4, 3.24 and 3.32 respectively. It shows that the customers are less satisfied with the Pricing and customer service as compared to other dimensions. This indicates that customers are more price sensitive and demand for effective customer service.

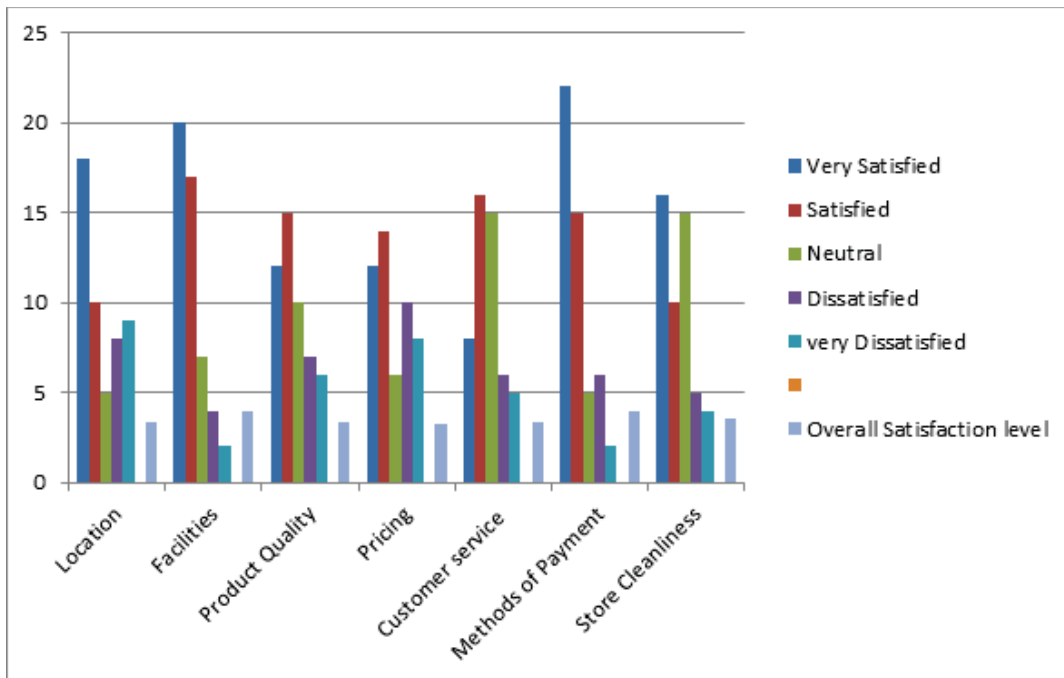
Thus, customers are highly satisfied with the Facilities and Methods of payment offered by the supermarket. Store Cleanliness also shows relatively high satisfaction level. Similarly, they have moderate level of satisfaction towards the location and product quality of supermarket. On the other hand, they are least satisfied with the pricing and customer service offered by the supermarket.

This analysis indicates that the supermarkets are performing well in facilities, methods of payment and store cleanliness. But on the other hand, Customers are less satisfied with the customer service and pricing. So, the supermarkets need to address customer concerns related to pricing and customer service to enhance the overall satisfaction level.

**Fig: 1**

*Presentation of overall satisfaction level in Bar-diagram*

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The above bar diagram shows that customers are highly satisfied with the facilities, store cleanliness and methods of payment. Similarly, they have moderate level of satisfaction towards location and product quality. But, they are least satisfied with Pricing and customer service offered by the supermarket.

**Findings**

This article presents the finding of customer satisfaction levels towards supermarkets using primary data. The findings revealed that facilities, methods of payment, and store cleanliness received the highest satisfaction scores, with mean values of 3.98, 3.98, and 3.58, respectively. In contrast, customer service and pricing scored lower, with mean values of 3.32 and 3.24, indicating that customers are sensitive to pricing and expect effective service.

Overall, 81% of respondents reported moderate satisfaction, while 18% felt highly satisfied. Notably, 69% expressed high satisfaction with location, and 95% were highly satisfied with payment methods. Areas such as product variety, reliability, and processes also showed moderate satisfaction levels.

To enhance customer satisfaction, management should focus on training staff, providing value-for-money products, and implementing discounts and

loyalty programs. Addressing these areas will help supermarkets improve performance and strengthen customer relationships.

The above findings can also be summarized under the following headings:

1. Top Satisfaction: Customers are very happy with the supermarket's facilities, payment methods, and cleanliness, giving them impressive scores of 3.98, 3.98, and 3.58.

2. Room for Improvement: Customer service and pricing didn't impress as much, receiving lower scores of 3.32 and 3.24. Customers expect better service and fairer prices.

3. Overall Satisfaction: 81% of customers are generally satisfied, while 18% are really happy with their experience at the supermarket.

4. Location Wins: 69% of people love how convenient the supermarket's location is.

5. Payment Options: An impressive 95% are very pleased with the easy payment methods available.

6. Moderate Satisfaction: Product variety, reliability, and store processes received decent but not outstanding satisfaction scores.

7. Improvement Suggestions: To make customers even happier, supermarkets should focus on training staff, offering better prices, and creating loyalty programs and discounts. This will help improve service and strengthen customer relationships.

### **Conclusion**

Customer satisfaction is the result of many forms, but the main point is when customers are satisfied with the performance of the services provided by the supermarket, they provide a competitive edge to the supermarket. The satisfaction level of customers gives the supermarket a sustainable goal for their future.

This study shows that for supermarkets to thrive in a competitive environment, it must focus on several key areas. Supermarket must be concentrated with several core areas. Supermarkets that supplies fresh food and provide large selection of products of consumer's choice meet and even more than customer expectations. By providing great value for money on various products thinking of customer's purchasing power through competitive pricing, high frequency of discount and customer loyalty program will attract and retain customer in market. In addition, the shopping

experiences provided by organized store environment, mesmerizing and tidy store increases the customer mood for fun buying and shopping experiences. Furthermore, punctual and efficient customer service from staffs with good knowledge of customer handling and available products greatly enhances the overall shopping experience.

Thus, supermarkets which focus on high quality products, competitive pricing, great store environment, great customer service, and great promotions will earn good level of customer satisfaction. This in turn will lead to customer loyalty, positive word of mouth and long term growth and success.

#### Recommendation

This article represents the following recommendation based on the research study to enhance the overall satisfaction level of customers towards supermarket:

- Fresh and best quality product, particularly in the fresh sections e.g. vegetables, dairy products.
- Introduce timely sales, discounts and promotions to provide value for money.
- Maintain a clean, well-organized and aesthetically pleasing store layout.
- Implement a customer feedback system to quickly address and resolve complaints.
- Maintain an appropriate staffing level for checkouts and customer service counters to minimize waits.
- Train the staffs so that customer service can be improved collectively.
- Incorporate initiatives that are environmentally conscious such as less plastic in the business, using equipment and stuff made from reusable materials and sourced/produced/bought locally.

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