Customers Perception towards Service Quality Delivery in Retail Malls in the Punjab

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ABSTRACT

This research study has been made with the objective of finding out the diversity in the perception of customers in selected cities of Punjab and also to know about any difference in perception of males and females in these cities. A sample of 166 customers from seven different malls in Amritsar, Jalandhar and Ludhiana cities has been selected by using Judgmental, quota and randomized convenience sampling methods. The Retail Service Quality Scale (RSQS) developed by Dabholkar, Thorpe and Rentz (1996) has been modified and used as per the prevailing mall culture in these cities. Data analysis has been done with the help of SPSS 17.0. The results of Independent sample t-test have shown that gender-wise, there is no significant difference in the perception about service quality of malls. As per the results of ANOVA, there is no significant difference in perception about service quality of malls, among customers in all the three cities except for the dimension of physical aspects where a significant difference in perception has been found among customers in Jalandhar and Amritsar.

Key Words: *Customer Perception, Retail Malls in Punjab, RSQS Dimensions.*

I. Introduction

The past one decade has gifted India with a countless number of malls and multiplexes. In Punjab itself, the number is increasing at such a fast rate that Arora, A. (2006) has regarded Punjab as the "Mall Capital of India". At the same time, creating a unique market position by each of these malls vis-a-vis increased level of competition has become a hard challenge. High level of service quality delivery has become need of the hour. The importance of service quality can also be judged from the fact that, any increase or decrease in the service quality ultimately effects customer's level of satisfaction (Debanjan, M. and Peter, N. G. 2005). Zeithaml et al. (2008) have explained that every customer has a 'Zone of Tolerance' which is the range within which any increase or decrease in the level of service performance shall not affect the customer's buying behavior towards a retail store. But if the performance level is higher than the upper limit of the zone, then customer shall feel delighted and surprised. On the other hand, if the performance level falls below the lower limit of the tolerance zone, the customer shall feel frustrated and may choose to limit or stop his future purchases from that store. According to Ramakrishnan, M. and Ravindran, S. (2012), service quality of a store not only includes purely customer services, but also providing of better physical facilities, better products and many more. Thus, it is a multi-dimensional and multi-attribute construct (Parikh, D., 2006).

Measurement of Service Quality in the Retailing Sector

Measurement of service quality means understanding of the gap between customers' expectations and their perception about services provided by any retail store. Zeithaml, et al. (2008) have identified five gaps that may cause unsuccessful service delivery- 1) Not knowing what customers expect, 2) Gap between management perception and service standard, 3) Gap between service quality standards and service delivery, 4) Gap between service delivery and external communications; and 5) Gap between expectations and perception of customers. Various researchers have developed models for the measurement of retail service quality. Some models make a comparison between expectations and perception, while others consider only the perception of customers regarding the service quality of any retail stores. The motive remains the same i.e. measuring the service quality and probing into the relative importance of its various dimensions. Some of the popular models for measuring the service quality in retailing sector, developed by some well known researchers, have been explained as under:

Table I
Popular Models for Measuring Service Quality in Retailing Sector

MODEL	DETAILS
SERVQUAL Model (developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1985)	This model suggests five determinants of service quality delivery by a service provider i.e. Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy. It helps in measuring service quality by finding the gap between expectations and perception of customers and thus helping in finding out the areas

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	where improvement may be required. The model has been criticized on the ground of vagueness of the term 'expectations', since it has been used differently in the service quality literature and customer satisfaction literature. Thus, efforts have been made by *Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry in 1991,* 1993 and 1994, to make the term more clear. Finally they have labeled it as- "what a customer would expect from an 'excellent' service" (Jain and Gupta, 2004).
SERVPERF Model (developed by Cronin and Taylor 1992)	This model takes into consideration only the perception and ignores the expectations of customers about service quality delivery (Ramakrishnan, M. and Ravindran, S., 2012). Bolton and Drew (1991) have found the model to be superior as compared to the SERVQUAL model in terms of reliability and validity. However, according to Jain and Gupta (2004), this model can be more suitable in case the overall service quality is to be determined or if cross service industry service quality comparisons are to be made; but, in case the purpose is to find out any shortfalls in specific areas of service quality, then SERVQUAL shall be more useful.
Retail Service Quality Scale (RSQS) (developed by Dabholkar, Thorpe and Rentz 1996)	Retail Service Quality Scale (RSQS) (developed by Dabholkar, Thorpe and Rentz 1996) It is also a performance based measure of service quality. This scale has in total 28 items out which 17 items originated from the SERVQUAL Model, while, remaining 11 items, which have been believed to be related to retailing, have been added afterwards. These items have been included under five dimensions of service quality in retailing i.e. Physical aspects (Store Appearance and Layout), Reliability (Keeping Promises and Doing it Right), Personal interaction (Being Courteous and Helpful), Problem solving (Handling Customer Complaints, Returns and Exchanges) and Policy (Product Quality, Working Hours, Parking etc).

II. Review of Literature

After reviewing the literature and various studies made by different researchers, it has been observed that all the dimensions of service quality affect the level of customer satisfaction and their decision of choosing amongst different retail stores. Some of the researchers have also tried to check the applicability of various service quality models in different countries/cities. The main focus has been on the previous work related to RSQS, since this scale has been used in its modified form for the purpose of this study. Summary of the literature reviewed is as under:-

Table II
Showing Summary of the Literature Reviewed

Researcher	Focus of the Research Study	Sample of the Research Study	Research Instrument used	Data Analysis	Key Findings
Parikh, D. (2006)	Measuring Retail Service Quality: An Empirical Assessment of the Instrument	102 shoppers from 29 retail stores in Gujarat and surrounding States	Retail Service Quality Scale (Dabholkar et al., 1996)	Gap analysis, Reliability, and Exploratory Factor Analysis on Expectations, Perception and gap scores separately	– Gap scores have been found to be the highest for the dimension of policy. Most of the customers face problem with regard to the parking facilities. – Overall results of Factor Analysis have revealed that the gap analysis doesn't support the five factor model i.e. RSQS. There are some reliability problems, especially with the dimension of physical aspectsll. – RSQS needs modifications before application in Indian retailing sector.
Kaul, S. (2007)	Measuring Research Service Quality: Examining Applicability of International Research Perspectives in India	144 adult shoppers from the city of Bangalore	Retail Service Quality Scale (Dabholkar et al., 1996) modified as per applicability to the Indian market	Reliability and Correlation analysis	Out of the five dimensions, only three (physical aspects, problem solving and policy) had been found to be appropriate under Indian Retail environment.

Ghosh, et al., (2009)	Customer Expectations of Store Attributes: A Study of Organized Retail Outlets in India	Sample of 490 retail customers from two Tier-II cities	Self designed questionnaire with two broad sections – 1st related to purchase pattern of the respondents and 2nd related to store attributes	Factor Analysis, Frequency tables and Cross tabulation	Customers choose between various retail stores depending upon three factors: convenience and merchandise mix, stores atmospherics and store services. Caring about these factors could lead to increased turnover.
Prabhadevi, P. and Sellappan, R. (2009)	Service Quality at Retail Stores- Customers Perception	170 respondents from leading stores in Chennai	Self developed questionnaire with 20 service Quality variables	Cronbach's alpha, Percentage analysis, Factor analysis ANOVA, Intercorrelation and Regression.	- Gender wise differences have been found with regard to the dimension of customer handling.- - Occupation has been found to have correlation with customer convenience. - All the service quality dimensions have been found to be positively correlated.
Azhagan, C. T. and Nagarajan, P.S. (2011)	Analytical Study on Retail Service Quality of Organized Retail Sector in Trichy	Sample of 80 customers in Trichy (a city in the State of Tamil Nadu)	Self developed questionnaire based on RSQS, having 22 variables under five dimensions given by Dabholkar et al., (1996).	Gap Analysis	- The gap between expectations and perceptions has come out to be least in case of physical facilities followed by personal interaction, reliability, problem solving and policy. - Retailers must work on improving upon two dimensions i.e. Policy and problem solving, where the gap in expectation and perception has been more as compared to other dimensions.
Bhaskar, N. Udaya and Shekhar, B. Raja (2011)	Impact of Service Quality on Apparel Retail Customer Satisfaction- A Study of Select Metropolitan City, Hyderabad	250 customers of shopping malls in Hyderabad	Modified RSQS with 25 items	Principal Component Factor Analysis, Multiple Linear Regression test	Except Policy, all the other factors in RSQS, including physical aspects, reliability, personal interaction and problem solving, have been found to be highly significant in effecting customer satisfaction.
Leen, J.Y.A. and Ramayah, T. (2011)	Validation of the RSQS in Apparel Specialty Stores	211 respondents from two well-known apparel stores in Malaysia	Retail Service Quality Scale (Dabholkar et. al., 1996)	Reliability test, Confirmatory factor analysis and Correlation analysis.	- All the dimensions given in RSQS have been found to be highly suited for measuring retail service quality in Malaysia. - All the dimensions (except problem solving) significantly affect a customer's intention to visit the store again, make repeated purchases and recommend to others.
Ramakrishnan, M. and Ravindran, S. (2012)	Customer Expectation of Retail Service Quality- A Comparative Study of Departmental Stores in Coimbatore	250 customers comprising 125 each from two well known Dept. Stores at Coimbatore city of Tamil Nadu	Questionnaire based on RSQS	Reliability and ExploratoryFactor Analysis	Employee-customer relationship has been found to be more important than any other factor. Stress should be laid on improving the factors like keeping promises, creating trust and employee involvement.

Kumar, E.S. and Reddy, M.S. (2013)	A Study on Customer Perception on Retail Services in Select Organized Retail Stores in Semi-urban Areas (A Case Study in Kadapa City, A.P)	200 respondents from Rayalaseema region, especially from Kadapa city	Self developed questionnaire with eleven service quality dimensions	Reliability Check, Factor Analysis, Regression, Chi-SquareTests	- It has been observed that all the eleven factors determined under the study play an important role in motivating customers to revisit a store again. - The result of chi square test reveals that there is no significant association between level of income and various service quality factors including quality of products, availability of brands, promotional offers, discounts and special offers. - Other demographics have not been considered for the study.
Singh (2013)	Relationship between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction in Organized Retail Outlets	600 customers of organized retail stores (200 from Delhi, 200 from Haryana and 200 from UP)	Modified RSQS	Correlation and Factor Analysis	- Out of five Dimensions, Policy has been found to be most important for customer satisfaction, followed by Problem solving and Reliability. - Physical aspects and Personal Interaction have not been found as significant.

III. Purpose of the Study

In India, a large number of studies have been made for measurement of service quality and knowing the relative importance of various service quality dimensions. But, not much work has been done to relate demographics with service quality. The present research study has been made with the focus on finding out the diversity in the perception of customers in selected cities of Punjab and also to identify difference in perception of males and females in these cities towards retail malls service quality delivery.

Objectives of the Research Study

To fulfill the purpose of the study, following objectives have been set:-

1. To determine distinction in experiences about service quality delivery of retail malls on gender basis, and

2. To analyze difference in the perception about service quality of these malls among customers in selected cities of Punjab, under the survey i.e. Amritsar, Jalandhar and Ludhiana.

IV. Research Methodology

Sources of Data:

This study is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data has been collected through field survey, using structured questionnaires filled by customers of various multi-brand retail malls. The secondary data has been collected by reviewing the existing literature in journals, books and from various websites. A qualitative analysis has also been done through expert opinion and observations, from a number of Retail Marketers and Retail Customers; and quantitative investigation has been administrated through survey instrument with the help of parametric and non-parametric statistical methods.

Scope of the Sample:

The sample has been collected from three cities of Punjab i.e. Amritsar, Jalandhar and Ludhiana. Punjab has three natural regions: Majha, Malwa and Doaba. The Majha region comprises of Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Tarn Taran. Amritsar being the border city and city of temples has become one of the main attractions for world tourists. This has given a boost to the retailing sector in this city and for this reason it has been selected under the study. The second region of Punjab i.e. Doaba is comprised of many cities including Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Phagwara etc. Out of all these, Jalandhar has always been a better choice by the retail investors. It is centrally located and mainly comprises of businessmen and professionals. The third region of Punjab i.e. Malwa comprises of 11 districts including Ludhiana. Ludhiana is well known for its hosiery and is an industrial hub. It is fast emerging as a favorite destination for shopping plazas and multiplexes. As compared to all its counterparts, retail boom in Ludhiana has been the highest.

Sampling Method:

For the purpose of this study, at the first stage, judgmental sampling tool has been used to select the cities and the competing malls in those cities. Further, quota sampling technique has been used to ensure that there are approximately equal number of males and females in the sample selected under the study. Also, quota procedure has been employed to select similar type of retail stores in choosing comparable retail malls for the

survey. Randomized convenience sampling method has been used at the final stage, for selecting customers from whom the data collection has been done. Most of the data has been collected immediately after the customers did their shopping, in order to determine the actual first hand experience of their perception towards service quality delivery of selected retail malls. Data collection has been made over a period of three months i.e. February-April, 2013.

Sample Size:

Out of a total number of 174 questionnaires filled by customers, 166 have been found to be usable. Customers from seven different malls in Amritsar, Jalandhar and Ludhiana including- Alfa One Mall (Amritsar), Celebrations Mall (Amritsar), Viva Collage Mall (Jalandhar), MBD Mall (Jalandhar), Silver Arc Mall (Ludhiana), Ansal Plaza (Ludhiana) and Westend Mall (Ludhiana), have been selected. Also, within these malls, customers from five different Retail stores including- Reliance Trends, Shoppers Stop, Big Bazaar, Lifestyle and Woodland have been selected for the survey because each of the above said malls has at least one or two of these stores in common. The demographic profile of the respondents is as under:-

Table III
Showing the Demographic Profile of the Customers under the Study

DEMOGRAPHICS		FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
A)	Gender		
	Females	91	54.8
	Males	75	45.2
B)	Age		
	21-30	83	50
	31-40	48	29
	41-50	20	12
	51-60 or above	15	9
C)	Occupation		
	Business	26	15.7
	Salaried	57	34.3
	Professional	32	19.3
	Student	29	17.5
	Any other	22	13.2
D)	Education	33	19.9
	Under-graduate	71	42.8
	Graduate	62	
	Post-graduate or above	37.3	
E)	Monthly income		
	Less than 15000	61	36.7
	15001-25000	43	25.9
	25001-35000	33	19.9
	35001 or above	29	17.5

Source: Primary Data for Period: February-April, 2013

The minimum age of 21 years has been taken for the survey on the assumption that it is normally this age when most of the people start taking their buying decisions independently. Moreover, it has been assumed that people above this age can easily understand the questions and answer correctly regarding their perception.

The following table shows the number of respondents selected from each of the three cities :

Table IV
Showing Number of Respondents Belonging to Selected Cities under the Survey

CITY	NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS	PERCENTAGE
Amritsar	48	28.92
Jalandhar	63	37.95
Ludhiana	55	33.13
TOTAL	166	100

Source: Primary Data for Period: February-April, 2013

Research Scale used:

The research instrument being used under the study has been the Retail Service Quality Scale (RSQS) developed by Dabholkar, Thorpe and Rentz (1996). On the basis of the results of pilot study and expert opinion from managers of some retail stores, the last item in the scale i.e. "This store offers its own credit card" has not been found to be applicable to the selected malls. Thus, this item has been deleted while making data collection to make the results more realistic. The same observation had also been made by some of the earlier researchers i.e. Parikh, D. (2006) and Kaul, S. (2007). Also, some additional questions relating to the demographic profile of the customers and regarding their frequency of visiting the retail store mentioned by them have also been added. The responses have been measured on a seven point Likert scale.

Data Analysis Techniques used:

In order to test the reliability of the overall instrument, Cronbach's Alfa has been computed for all the dimensions together and also separately for each dimension. KMO has also been calculated to check the sampling adequacy. Further, Independent sample t-test and one-way ANOVA have been applied to fulfill the objectives of the study.

Limitations of the Study:

1. This research study has been geographically restricted to only three cities of Punjab. Other cities have not been covered.

2. The sample size under the study has been 166 respondents. Thus, the results may not be inferred as such for the whole population.

3. Biasness on the part of the respondents cannot be ignored.

4. Biasness due to the sampling method used can also not be ignored.

5. This study limits itself to only gender-wise and city-wise comparison of the customers' perception about service quality in the retail malls. Relation of other demographics with the retail service quality delivery of malls is out of the scope of this study.

V. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data collected from customers has been analyzed through SPSS 17.0. The data analysis and interpretation, as given below, has been presented under various headings to make it more clear and understandable.

Reliability Test:

Cronbach's Alpha, whose value varies from 0 to 1, has been calculated for all the dimensions to check the reliability of the instrument. A value of more than 0.6 indicates satisfactory internal consistency reliability (Malhotra, N., 2013). The results are shown in table V.

Table V
Showing Reliability Coefficients

Factors	No. of attributes	Cronbach's Alpha
1. Physical Aspects	6	.806
2. Reliability	5	.655
3. Personal Interaction	9	.737
4. Problem Solving	3	.603
5. Policy	4	.679
Overall	27	.860

Source: Primary Data

The reliability coefficient for all the dimensions together comes to be .860. Also, scores for all the dimensions individually are also above the cut off of 0.6. Hence, the values indicate the reliability of the data for further analysis.

KMO:

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure is a measure of sampling adequacy. It is an index used to examine the appropriateness of factor analysis. Values between 0.5 and 1.0 are acceptable(Malhotra, N. 2013). Table VI shows the value of KMO.

Table VI
Showing KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.770
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1516.657
	Df	351
	Sig.	.000

Source: Primary Data

As per the above table, the KMO value is equal to 0.77. It means that the sample size is adequate for the interpretation and generalization of the results for the universe of the study.

Gender-wise Comparison of the Perceptual Experiences of Service Quality Delivery of Retail Malls in the Punjab:-

For the purpose of the first objective, the following hypothesis has been set:

$H0_1$: There is no significant difference in the experience about service quality of retail malls between males and females.

For this, firstly, the weighted mean scores of the responses of both the males and females, regarding their perception about the service quality of malls in all the three cities taken together, have been calculated. These values have been shown as under, in table VII.

Table VII
Showing Gender-wise Weighted Mean Scores for Various Factors

Gender	Physical Aspects	Reliability	Personal Interaction	Problem Solving	Policy
Females	6.1868	5.7538	5.9440	5.4846	6.0110
Males	6.1307	5.8560	5.9000	5.5480	6.0133
Total	6.1614	5.8000	5.9241	5.5133	6.0120

Source: Primary Data (Gender Differentiation)

The weighted mean scores for all the five dimensions, in the above table, show that there are differences in the perceptual experiences of males and females regarding the service quality of malls in all the three cities. Further, in order to check whether these differences are significant or not, additional investigation has been made with the help of independent sample t-test. The results of the test are as under:-

Table VIII
Showing Results of Gender-wise Independent Sample T-test for all the Cities

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Lower	Upper
Physical Aspects	Equal variances assumed	2.040	.155	.701	163	.484	.06114	.08724	-.11112	.23340
	Equal variances not assumed			.689	143.645	.492	.06114	.08871	-.11422	.23649
Reliability	Equal variances assumed	.161	.689	-.923	163	.357	-.09210	.09976	-.28910	.10490
	Equal variances not assumed			-.919	153.643	.359	-.09210	.10016	-.28998	.10578
Personal Interaction	Equal variances assumed	.008	.929	.607	163	.545	.04396	.07244	-.09908	.18699
	Equal variances not assumed			.604	153.079	.547	.04396	.07279	-.09984	.18775
Problem Solving	Equal variances assumed	1.040	.309	-.572	163	.568	-.07484	.13085	-.33322	.18353
	Equal variances not assumed			-.577	160.246	.565	-.07484	.12981	-.33120	.18151
Policy	Equal variances assumed	2.452	.119	.071	163	.944	.00761	.10788	-.20542	.22064
	Equal variances not assumed			.069	143.763	.945	.00761	.10970	-.20922	.22444

Source: Primary Data (City-wise Gender Differentiation)

The values of levene's test for equality of variance shows insignificant p-values (0.155, 0.689, 0.929, 0.309, 0.119) showing that variances of the groups are the same. Hence, for further interpretation of the results, variances have been assumed to be equal. T- values of (0.701, -0.923, 0.607, -0.572, 0.071) with degrees of freedom 163, have insignificant p-values (0.484, 0.357, 0.545, 0.568, 0.944) which shows that males and females perceive the service quality of malls similarly. In other words, on gender-wise basis, there is not a significant difference in the perception of customers vis-à-vis all the dimensions under the study, thus accepting the first hypothesis.

City-wise Comparison of the Perceptual Experiences of all the Customers Regarding the Service Quality Delivery of Retail Malls:-

The second hypothesis of the study is as under:

$H0_2$: There is no significant difference in the perception about service quality of malls among the customers in selected cities under the study i.e. Amritsar, Jalandhar and Ludhiana.

To test this hypothesis, first of all, the city wise weighted mean scores and also the average of weighted mean scores, of all the respondents taken together, have been calculated which are presented as under in table IX as follows :-

Table IX
Showing City-wise Weighted Mean Scores and Average of Weighted Mean Scores of all the Respondents Taken Together

DIMENSIONS	AMRITSAR	JALANDHAR	LUDHIANA
Physical Aspects	6.01	6.31	6.12
Reliability	5.75	5.89	5.74
Personal Interaction	5.95	5.93	5.90
Problem Solving	5.54	5.59	5.40
Policy	5.98	5.96	6.10
Average of Weighted Mean Scores of all the Dimensions together	5.846	5.936	5.852

Source: Primary Data (City-wise Comparison)

As per the above table, the perception about the physical aspects, reliability and problem solving for customers based in Jalandhar city comes out to be better as compared to that of Ludhiana and Amritsar city. For the dimension of personal interaction, the mean scores of Amritsar have been found to be the highest, followed by Jalandhar and Ludhiana. As regards the dimension of policy, the mean score of Ludhiana are the highest followed by Jalandhar and Amritsar.

During the survey, it had been observed that Ludhiana has the highest number of modern looking retail malls as compared to Jalandhar and Amritsar. Thus, perceived service quality of customers in Ludhiana should have been better than the other two cities. Surprisingly, as per the city-wise average of the weighted mean scores, Jalandhar has come out to be at the top followed by Ludhiana and Amritsar, meaning thereby that overall perception of customers in Jalandhar is better as compared to Ludhiana and that of Ludhiana is better than Amritsar. This analysis, however, does not make it clear whether the difference is significant or not. Thus, in order to check this, One-way Anova has been applied. The results are as under:-

Table X
Showing Results of One-way Anova for City-wise Comparison of Perception of Customers

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Physical Aspects	Between Groups Within Groups Total	2.615 48.278 50.893	2 163 165	1.308 .296	4.415	.01*
Reliability	Between Groups Within Groups Total	.864 66.336 67.200	2 163 165	.432 .407	1.062	.34
Personal Interaction	Between Groups Within Groups Total	.075 34.909 34.984	2 163 165	.037 .214	.174	.84
Problem Solving	Between Groups Within Groups Total	1.082 113.709 114.791	2 163 165	.541 .698	.776	.46
Policy	Between Groups Within Groups Total	.578 77.398 77.976	2 163 165	.289 .475	.609	.54

*Significant at 1% level of significanceSource: Primary Data

The results of ANOVA show that there has been highly significant disparity in perception of customers in the selected cities, with regard to the dimension of physical aspects. As far as the other dimensions are concerned, the variation does not come out to be significant. It means that perception of customers about the other four dimensions, including reliability, personal interaction, problem solving and policy, has been almost the same whether they belong to Amritsar or Jalandhar or Ludhiana.

Further, a table of multiple comparisons has also been drawn to find out that amongst which two cities the customers differ in their perception regarding physical aspects.

Table XI
Showing Multiple Comparisons between Cities with Respect to Physical Aspects

Dependent Variable	(I) CITY	(J) CITY	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Physical Aspects	Amritsar	Jalandhar	-.30278*	.10427	.012	-.5494	-.0561
		Ludhiana	-.11530	.10750	.532	-.3696	.1390
	Jalandhar	Amritsar	.30278*	.10427	.012	.0561	.5494
		Ludhiana	.18747	.10043	.152	-.0501	.4250
	Ludhiana	Amritsar	.11530	.10750	.532	-.1390	.3696
		Jalandhar	-.18747	.10043	.152	-.4250	.0501

Source: Primary Data

On the basis of the multiple comparisons table, it has been observed that there is significant difference in the perception about physical aspects, among the customers in Jalandhar with that of Amritsar. The mean difference (I-J) (here, Amritsar-Jalandhar) has been negative. It means that the customers in Jalandhar perceive the services of the malls to be better as compared to customers in Amritsar. This may be due to the reason that if compared with Jalandhar, Amritsar has only one mall i.e. Alfa One, which can be called as modern looking mall, with very good layout and a number of multi-brand stores in it. Other small sized malls that are within the city do not have very attractive physical appearance or other facilities. (This information is based on the personal interview with some of the customers in the Amritsar city). On the other hand, most of the malls in Jalandhar and Ludhiana are not only modern looking but also fulfill the requirements of the other sub-dimensions of Physical Aspects including attractive product displays, good layout, easiness in moving around and shopping, clean and attractive trial rooms and rest rooms etc.

VI. Conclusion and Managerial Recommendations

At the end, it has been concluded that all the customers perceive the service quality delivery of retail malls in the Punjab; almost similarly, irrespective of whether they are males or females and to whichever city they belong. Thus, the retail marketers must make efforts to understand customers' expectations and to meet or exceed them, so as to make a distinct market position. On the basis of the collected data and general observations during data collection, there are some suggestions for the retail marketers. These include: increasing the number of billing counters so that customers do not wait for long; expanding the parking space; and proper training of the employees so that they are able to handle customer complaints directly, without interference of the senior managers.

VII. Future Research Directions

A further research can be undertaken to look into the relative importance attached to different sub-dimensions of service quality by the customers in Punjab. Also, this research has covered only the data related to perception of the customers. Another study can be undertaken to do a gap analysis of the expectations and perception of customers about service quality in various malls in the Punjab.

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