DIMENSIONS AND DOMINANT GROUPS OF CUSTOMER PERCEPTION AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS BEAUTY PARLOUR SERVICES

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ABSTRACT

Beauty parlour services industry in India has witnessed tremendous growth due to the enhancement in the socio-economic conditions and changing lifestyle of the people. Beauty care industry was categorised into three different types namely, hair care, skin care and general personal care products. This primary study was aimed to explore the customer attitude and perception towards visiting the beauty parlors in Chennai city. This study was adopted survey method and questionnaire to collect responses from the beauty parlour visitors. The statistical tools such as, percentage analysis, factor analysis, cluster and discriminant analysis has been applied to draw meaningful findings for the research questions. The result reveals that beauty parlour service variables are grouped into promotional, safety, atmosphere, functional, technological advancement and service factors and all the respondents are significantly grouped into two cluster groups based on these seven factors. The service providers are suggested to use those products which creates safety and credibility sense among the consumers and they should avoid use of local cosmetics and other personal care products. Store atmosphere and store ambience are another important factor influencing the perception and attitude of the customers with respect to beauty parlour services.

Key words: Customer Attitude, Perception, Beauty Parlour, Promotion and Store Atmosphere.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the recent past, the beauty services industry in India has witnessed tremendous growth due to the reason of changing lifestyle of the people. The beauty service industry is steadily growing in India at a CAGR of 18.6 percent, driven by a burgeoning Indian economy, where the mindset of the people are the age does not matter where looking pretty and feeling beautiful are given the prime importance in the society. Along with beauty services the spa industry has also shown a tremendous growth as the awareness about the products and services has been raised in the retail beauty market (Jones, 2010; Khraim, 2011). The beauty and wellness industry has a high growth rate the market provides more opportunities to the both domestic and the foreign players (Featherstone, 1991; Rahman, T. 2012). In the recent past the Indian cosmetics market created a major change in both the user's perception and product availability. The tastes and customs of the society is more conscious of their appearance and the willingness to spend extra cash on the beauty products leads to the changes on the socio-economic status of the Indian consumers especially women.

The beauty and salon segment include skin, hair and nail care services. The sector is spread across hygiene-oriented and image enhancement continuum. Services are partly reactive, as they are undertaken to address perceived flaws in appearances or respond to aging-related signs and partly proactive, as it can be pursued in a wellness-oriented approach to self-image enhancement. The beauty sector industry was only known for their services such as hair cutting and styling, waxing, threading, facial massages etc. but now they are judged by different yardsticks such as their infrastructure, ambience and their service quality (Yee, & et al., 2008; Meesala, & Paul, 2018). Beauty parlours are also offering specialized services such as hair reviving, hair revitalizing, skin toning, skin lightening, scalp conditioning etc. in addition to their existing services.

The service attributes and skill sets required by service employees at the parlour are of utmost importance in the beauty care services industry. The success of any parlour depends upon their unique skill sets of managing, servicing and retaining customers (Lovett, 1997; Chang, & Chen, 2011; Chen, & et al., 2015). Rather than the infrastructure and ambience of the parlour, customers give utmost importance to the quality of services offered by the parlour employee. Customer satisfaction and resulting customer loyalty is directly attributed to the service quality offered by the parlour contact employee.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sheikh Majedul Huq & et al., (2015) have examined customer satisfaction towards the beauty parlour which is connected with our feelings, perceptions and emotions. Customer satisfaction is a very significant issue which attracts new customers and retaining the existing through enhancing their own beauty. The main objective of the study identifies the factors influencing customer satisfaction and loyalty towards the beauty parlour. The author explored the study through a survey administered questionnaire. The author identified the need to build customer relationship management by preparing a customer database system. The author has concluded that beauty parlour owners should explore themselves as per the customer demand and could be identified more carefully in order to serve for the betterment of their targeted customers.

Sureka & et al., (2015) examined customer satisfaction and service quality are very important concepts that remain competitive and grow. The author has identified the customer satisfaction access to the service quality towards quality, ambience, brand image, the response in beauty Parlour. The primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire. The findings of the study revealed that the service with reasonable price to attract middle and low-class people and the service available at beauty parlour is comparatively costlier than other

parlours. The study concluded that customer awareness and identifying customer behaviour leads to repeat the purchase and loyalty satisfaction which helps the customer to achieve the highest level of repurchased intention and subsequent to retention.

Farzana and Priya (2016) have examined the satisfaction level of customer independent variable categories and dependent variable categories are same or not. The author analyzed the consumer preference towards the beauty parlour and its effectiveness towards the media to promote the brand in the present market. The author used a quota sample method of data collection in primary data using a well-designed questionnaire. The author concluded that the popularity of rising salons and the income along with the beauty conscious was identifying consumer behaviour which leads to repeat purchase & loyalty.

Savla Swati Jayesh and Manjrekar Pradip (2014) have explored the perception of women as customers towards beauty services and also to understand the factors that influence women to visit beauty salons as customers. The primary data were collected from the structured questionnaire. The author has applied various models to explore the dimensions of the study. The author found that the ambience of salons plays a major role. Finally, the author concluded that the perception of women as customers on beauty services is in a positive way as it is stress relief due to the hectic schedule. Furthermore, the authors concluded that the rising disposal income along with changing lifestyles of the masses.

Vidya Panicker and Khalil Ahmad (2017) have aimed to be focused on the study for the Service Quality Attributes of the Parlous Service employees and their contribution towards customer Satisfaction in the beauty care and the author have investigated the preference for the services of particular parlour employees and customer satisfaction. The methodology adopted here is primary data through a well-designed questionnaire and the convenience sampling was adopted here for the Utilization of the Study. The author concluded that the beauty care services industry in India is booming due to several reasons such as globalization, changing demographics and lifestyles, urbanization, media proliferation, availability and awareness of domestic and foreign brands. Furthermore, the author concluded that higher service quality results into higher levels of customer satisfaction which in turn leads to greater customer loyalty.

Jashimuddin Ahmed and Humayun kabirchowdhury (2012) have explored that consumer perception of quality towards beautification products is formed and also this study investigates the influence of some important extrinsic cues relevant to Bangladesh. The study provides guidance to the policymakers for developing appropriate marketing strategies. The methodology adopted here is primary data through a structured Questionnaire and the Convenience sampling was adopted here for the Utilization of the Study. Furthermore, the author adopted Structural Equation Modeling for the variables of brand image and perceived quality are positively affected by the perception of country image and it indicates good fit indices. Finally, the author concluded that the proposed model where two extrinsic cues that show the direct positive and significant influence on consumer perceived quality.

3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study envisages on the exploration of the customer satisfaction on the beauty services provided in the beauty industry. The study identifies the level of the satisfaction of the customers as well as the quality of the services provided by the beauty industry. The study investigates the customer satisfaction on the basis of reliability, tangibility, empathy, responsiveness and assurance. The reliability of the customers depends on the services provided by the service providers as it leads to regular visit to the beauty salons and spas. The tangibility of the parlour includes the physical appearance and the facilities available in the salons. Empathy provided by the beauty industry attracts the customers towards the regular

visits to the parlours as the individual attention entices to avail beauty services. Responsiveness of the beauty service providers induces the customers to gain the services as it helps to have a greater satisfaction to the customers through the proper response from the service providers. Assurance is the faith given to the customers on the service provided to them through their knowledge of the beauty services in order to gain the confidence of the customers and to attain the competitive advantage. This study focused on the dimensions influencing the beauty parlour service effectiveness towards the customer satisfaction.

4. NEED OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted to identify the level of the satisfaction attained through the beauty services provided in beauty salons and spas. The services provided are much more digitalized through the adoption of the latest technology in the beauty industry. The need of the study explores the importance and effectiveness of the technology adopted by the beauty services in order to identify and understand the customer satisfaction through the adoption of such technology in the beauty industry. This survey also provides insights for the understanding the role of the digitalized technology in the digitalized beauty industry. This study paves way to the beauty providers in the salons and spas for the betterment in their strength and opportunities of their beauty services.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the personal and beauty parlour service profile of the respondents.
- To identify the underlying dominant dimensions of Customer Perception and Attitude towards beauty parlour service variables.
- To classify the respondents based on the perception and attitude of respondents with respect to beauty parlour service factors.

6. METHODOLOGY

The study was empirically derived with data from cross sectional survey data. The research design of this study was both quantitative and descriptive in nature, and the selected sample was Chennai respondents those who are obtaining the beauty parlour services and products in their day to day living. The sample for the study was 150 and non-probability convenience sampling technique had been used to collect the primary data from respondents due to not available of comprehensive population in this study.

This survey is empirical and descriptive in nature. The survey questionnaire started with demographic and ended with variable specific questions related to beauty parlour service usage profile, followed by variables measuring the perception and attitude towards beauty parlour service are measured by using the five point Likert scale(1-Strongly Disagree ,5-Strongly agree)

The sample size was limited to 150 due to time and cost constraint and application of non-probability convenient sampling to collect the primary data from respondents.

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The primary data collected were processed using SPSS statistics 20 software package was used for the following analysis frequency, factor, cluster, discriminant and independent sample t-test have been applied.

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age (In Years)		
Between 15 to 25 Yrs	86	57.3
Between 26 to 35 Yrs	24	16.0
Between 36 to 45 Yrs	33	22.0
Above 46 Yrs	7	4.7
Gender		
Female	92	61.3
Male	58	38.7
Occupational Status		
Self Employed	12	8.0
Salaried	43	28.7
House Wife	3	2.0
Professional	11	7.3
Others	81	54.0
Family Monthly Income (In Rs.)		
Below Rs. 10,000	23	15.3
Rs.10,000 – Rs.30,000	32	21.3
Rs.30,000 – Rs.60,000	82	54.7
Above Rs.60,000	13	8.7

Table 1 indicates that Majority of the respondents on the usage of the beauty parlour are between 15-25 years and followed by the other age groups from 26-46 years. Majority of the respondents are female (61.3%) followed by the male respondents (38.7%). Majority of the respondents are from the other groups (54%), followed by the salaried people (28.7%), self-employed (8%), professionals (7.3%) and the housewife (2%). The majority of the respondents are from the income groups of Rs.30,000- Rs. 60,000 (54.7%), followed by the income group of Rs. 10,000 – Rs. 30,000 (21.3%), followed by below Rs.10,000 income group (15.3%) and the income group of above Rs. 60,000 (8.7%).

Table 2 Beauty Parlour Service Profile of the Respondents

Beauty Parlour Service Profile of the Respondents	Frequency	Percent
Beauty Parlor Outlet Preference		
Shopping Malls	40	26.7
Direct Parlor Brand Outlet	55	36.7
Both	55	36.7
Products Preference in Parlor Services		
Home Made Products	37	24.7
Branded / Exclusive Products	56	37.3
Both	57	38.0
Spending Money for Parlour Service		
Less than Rs.1000	77	51.3
Rs. 1001 to Rs.2000	23	15.3
Rs. 2001 to Rs.3500	33	22.0
Above Rs.3501	17	11.3
Mode of Payment		
Cash	82	54.7
Debit Card	46	30.7
Credit Card	11	7.3
Gift Vouchers	4	2.7
Other	7	4.7

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The table 2 indicates that the respondents prefer the beauty parlour services are high on the both (36.7%) shopping malls and direct parlour brand outlets. Most of the respondents prefer both (38%) the home made products and the branded/exclusive products in the beauty parlour. Majority of the respondents spend less than Rs. 1000 (51.3%) followed by the respondents spending Rs. 2001 to Rs. 3500 (22%), followed by the amount spending of Rs. 1001 to Rs. 2000 (15.3%) and the other respondents who spend above Rs. 3501 (11.3%). Majority of the respondents prefer with mode of cash payment (54.7%) followed by the debit card payment (30.7%), credit cards (7.3%), through other modes of payments (4.7%) and the usage of the gift vouchers (2.7%).

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was applied to measure every dimension of Customer Perception and Attitude towards Beauty Parlour Service

Table 3 Factorisation of Customer Perception and Attitude towards Beauty Parlour Service Variables

Dimensions	Items	Mean (SD)	Communalities	Total Variance (Eigen Value)	Loadings	Validity
Promotional Factor	The outlet provides me discounts / loyalty schemes / promotional, seasonal, festival offers (CPAB14)	3.83 (1.054)	0.747	11.276 (2.142)	0.839	0.692
	The parlor shops treatment / services/ products prices are reasonable (CPAB13)	3.83 (1.048)	0.732		0.731	
	The parlour employees also provide me to discount while service booked through mobile application (CPAB10)	3.64 (1.101)	0.578		0.622	
	The apparel outlets are providing membership cards and it aid to get discounts on my next service obtaining (CPAB15)	3.75 (0.996)	0.568		0.476	
Safety Factor	I feel employees at the spa / parlor outlet are secure & reliable in providing the best service I expect. (CPAB1)	3.80 (0.760)	0.529	10.613 (2.016)	0.711	0.569
	Employees are knowledgeable & understanding of customer's service needs and getting feedback from me (CPAB2)	3.75 (0.845)	0.636		0.691	
	The beauty parlor spa has good credibility in providing the products & service to me (CPAB9)	3.65 (1.049)	0.505		0.616	
Atmosphere Factor	The tangible (: In-Store Mobility appearance of outlets attributes : trolley, shopping bags, staff, lighting, Music) aspects of spa shop service are excellent (CPAB7)	3.89 (0.966)	0.653	10.334 (1.963)	0.755	0.600
	When a customer has a problem, the spa shop employees shows a sincere interest in solving it directly & immediately (CPAB6)	3.91 (1.010)	0.614		0.692	
	The shops provides digital payment option (CPAB19)	4.06 (0.853)	0.439		0.551	

Dimensions	Items	Mean (SD)	Communalities	Total Variance (Eigen Value)	Loadings	Validity
	Employees are responsive to my spa treatment service requests in outlet (CPAB3)	3.83 (0.825)	0.462		0.495	
Functional Factor	The beauty parlor spa shops operating hours convenient to all their Customers (CPAB18)	3.89 (0.901)	0.743	8.458 (1.607)	0.799	0.518
	The parlor / spa shop outlets has modern-looking equipment and fixtures (CPAB17)	3.95 (0.918)	0.658		0.641	
	The spa centers are clean, attractive and convenient physical facilities (Restrooms, Dressing Rooms & etc.,) (CPAB8)	3.89 (1.050)	0.623		0.505	
Technological Advancement	The beauty parlor shops provides the service through modernized equipments (CPAB12)	3.81 (0.915)	0.617	7.695 (1.462)	0.722	0.501
	The beauty parlor spa outlets proves a sufficient range of treatment and services choices (CPAB11)	3.80 (1.017)	0.700		0.663	
Service Factor	The parlor provide service according to my prior schedule (CPAB16)	3.87 (1.021)	0.734	7.363 (1.399)	0.815	
Responsiveness Factor	Employees in apparel outlets are available to answer my spa service treatment / product related choices & quarries (CPAB5)	3.71 (0.922)	0.709	6.889 (1.309)	0.786	0.500
	Employees in spa / parlour outlets are courteous in providing me individual attention service (CPAB4)	3.67 (0.909)	0.652		0.496	
Total Variance = 62.628% and Reliability – Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.787 KMO and Bartlett's Test Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. = 0.704 (Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: Approx. Chi-Square = 566.527; Df = 171; Sig. 0.000)						

Table 3 shows that KMO measure of sampling adequacy is 0.704, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity with approximate Chi-square value= 566.527, df = 171 and p = 0.000 are statically significant at 5 % level. This showed that the sample size was good and enough for the customer perception and attitude towards the beauty parlour services. KMO – Test of suitability of factor analysis varies between 0 and 1, and value closer to 1 are better and therefore suitable for exploratory factor analysis.

The table 3 indicates that the customer perception and attitude towards the beauty parlour services have been significantly grouped into seven independent dimensions factor which explains 62.628% of variance in them. The most dominant promotional factor explains 11.276% variance in the customer perception and attitude towards beauty parlour services variables and it contains four variable labeled as the “promotional factors” which induces the customers to avail the beauty services.

The second dominant factor explains 10.613% of variance in the perception of the customers in the beauty parlour services and it is made of three variables labeled as “safety factor” which indicates that the availability of the safety services in the beauty parlour through the knowledgeable employees.

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The third dominant factor is the atmosphere factor which explains the 10.334% of variance in the customer perception on the beauty services provided and it consists of three variable which are the labeled as the “atmosphere factor” it indicates the employers interest in the providing the services and the nature of the environment in availing the beauty services.

The fourth dominant factor is the functional factor which indicates that 8.458% of the variance in the perception of the customers in availing the beauty services which consists of the three variables which the labeled as the “functional factor” as it indicates on functionality of the beauty services provided and the modernized equipment’s in providing the beauty services to the customers in the format to have a convenient and attractive facilities.

The fifth dominant factor is the technological advancement factor which indicates the 7.695% of the variance in the customer perception towards the beauty parlour services which has the two items which are the labeled as the “technological advancement” as it specifies on the adoption of the technology in the beauty service industry through the improvising the technology advancement by providing the effective treatment and services.

The sixth factor is the service factor which indicates the 7.363% of variance in the perception of the customers in availing the beauty services and the parlor provide service according to my prior schedule (CPAB16) which is labeled as the “service factor” as the beauty provider serves the customers on their schedules.

The seventh factor is the responsiveness factor which indicates the 6.889% of the variance in the customer perception of the beauty services which has the two items which are labeled as the “responsiveness factor” as it indicates the individual attention to the customers through the effective responsive to the customers.

Table 4 Cluster Groups of the Respondents based on the Attitude Factors

Variables	Discriminant Coefficient	Discriminant Loadings	Explicit Attitude Group	Implicit Attitude Group	Tests of Equality of Group Means			t-test	
			Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Wilks' Lambda	-Value	Sig.	t-value	Value
Functional	0.882	0.796	16.932 (1.490)	12.295 (2.558)	0.430	95.827	.000	3.994	.000
Beauty	0.245	0.431	11.798 (1.561)	10.328 (2.166)	0.864	23.343	.000	.831	.000
Atmosphere	0.501	0.275	16.764 (1.948)	14.114 (2.317)	0.721	57.291	.000	.569	.000
Functional	-0.025	0.232	12.180 (1.898)	11.066 (2.104)	0.928	1.409	.001	.378	.001
Technological Advancement	0.037	0.226	11 (1.465)	13 (1.505)	0.904	5.783	.000	.973	.000
Service	0.130	0.192	14 (0.907)	15 (1.058)	0.899	6.686	.000	.085	.000
Responsiveness	-0.229	0.083	18 (1.454)	20 (1.420)	0.986	2.109	.149	.452	.149
(Wilks Lambda = 0.324; Chi-square = 162.934, df = 7, Sig. = 0.000)									
Eigen Value = 2.088									
t-value = 12.088 with P-Value = 0.000									
Accuracy of Customers Classification									
	Cluster Number of Case			Predicted Group Membership				Total	

			Explicit Attitude Group	Implicit Attitude Group	
Original	Count	licit Attitude Group	86	3	89
		licit Attitude Group	4	57	61
	%	licit Attitude Group	96.6	3.4	100.0
		licit Attitude Group	6.6	93.4	100.0
Accuracy – 95.3% of Original – Validated Grouped Cases Correctly Classified					

Discriminant analysis creates an equation which will minimize the possibility of misclassifying cases into their respective groups or categories. The aim of Discriminant analysis is to combine the variable score in same way so that for a single new composite variable, the Discriminant score is produced. Discriminant analysis was performed to predict a group membership between the clusters. First, the researcher examined whether there were any significant differences between groups on each factors using group means. Mean differences between two (2) cluster groups depicted in table suggest that the clusters were good discriminators as there were some deviations among the factors. The selection criteria of minimizing Wilk's Lambda and a tolerance level of 0.001 was used to generate the discriminant function to discriminate between highest adopter and high adopters. The results of the analysis are presented in table 4. The values of Wilk's Lambda, Chi-Square value and significance are provided.

All the variables such as, Promotional, Safety, Atmosphere, Functional, Technological Advancement and Service are found to be significant variables to discriminate of explicit attitude group and implicit attitude group and Responsiveness are found to be not significant. The mean, SD and test of equality of group means explicit F statistics value are also provided for each dimensions of customer attitude of beauty parlour service for the two cluster groups. It can be clearly seen that the differences between the two groups are significant for these all dimensions except responsiveness factor.

Another test in discriminant analysis is to examine the classificatory ability of the discriminant function, i.e., the ability to classify the cases using the discriminant function into the correct group. The classification results are provided in Table 4. The overall classificatory ability is quite high (95.3%), but it should be noted that the values could be slightly inflated due to classifying the same sample on which the discriminant function was developed. It is necessary to compare the classificatory ability of this model with a chance model (Hair et al, 1992). A t-test on the classification accuracy of the two models found the accuracy to be significantly different for the two models ($t = 12.088$; $P < 0.0001$).

8. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This primary survey proves that majority of beauty parlour customers are aged less than 25 years. So, the parlour service provides are suggested to attract more youngsters rather than the aged customers. The customers give more importance to discounts, loyalty schemes and promotional offers to visit parlour. The service providers should devise appropriate promotional offers based on the age groups, branded products and special discounts to regular visitors for increasing the customer footfall in the service centers. The service provides are suggested to use those products which creates safety and credibility sense among the consumers and they should avoid use of local cosmetics and other personal care products. Store atmosphere and store ambience are another important factor influencing the perception and attitude of the customers with respect to beauty parlour services. The service providers should ensure the store atmosphere is pleasing and attractive for all the customers.

The beauty parlour service providers should ensure that store should operate at convenient hours based on the customers preference and it should have clean, attractive and modern equipment for attracting more youngsters towards store. The stores should be technological advanced and updated to provide sophisticated services to its customers and service providers should be more responsible and courteous for providing good and satisfactory services to all kind of customers visiting the beauty parlours.

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