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CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR (HALDIRAM)

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ABSTRACT:

This study delves into customer satisfaction within Haldiram, a prominent Indian sweets and snacks manufacturer established in 1937. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the research focuses on Haldiram's B2B customers in northern India, encompassing distributors, wholesalers, and retailers. Data collection methods include surveys, in-depth interviews, and focus groups, analyzed through descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, and thematic analysis.

Key findings reveal that customers express high satisfaction with Haldiram's product quality, emphasizing freshness, taste, and packaging. Efficient delivery systems are praised for timely deliveries and minimal errors. The customer service team receives positive feedback for responsiveness, empathy, and issue resolution. Regular communication, including updates on new products and promotions, is appreciated. While some perceive prices as slightly higher than competitors, most agree that the quality and service justify the cost. High loyalty and retention rates are reported, with customers citing the company's commitment to quality and service. Suggestions for improvement include expanding product offerings, enhancing online ordering and payment systems, and improving sustainability practices.

The study underscores the critical role of customer satisfaction in the industrial sector, highlighting Haldiram's strengths in product quality, service, and communication. While customer satisfaction levels are high, identified areas for improvement offer opportunities for further enhancement of customer experience and loyalty.

Introduction

Customer satisfaction has become one of the most important factors in the success and long-term sustainability of any business, particularly in the food processing industry where competition, consumer expectations, and evolving market dynamics are constantly shifting. In India, Haldiram stands out as a leading name in this space, known for its traditional sweets, snacks, and especially its dominance in the namkeen category. With a strong legacy dating back to 1941 and a widespread presence across the country, Haldiram has cultivated a brand image built on quality, trust, and Indian cultural identity.

This research investigates how customers—especially B2B clients like distributors, wholesalers, and retailers—perceive Haldiram in terms of satisfaction with products and services. It explores what makes customers loyal, what concerns they raise, and how factors such as product quality, pricing, service, delivery, packaging, and digital experience influence their overall satisfaction. The growing importance of customer experience in the Indian food market, particularly in high-demand regions like Delhi and NCR, makes this research highly relevant for brands looking to remain competitive.

The study also looks at how Haldiram can maintain and improve its strong market position in the face of increasing customer expectations and operational challenges. As India's food habits evolve and more people turn to online ordering, customer satisfaction is no longer limited to just taste or price—it includes ease of access, reliability, consistency, and the emotional connection customers share with a brand. This research captures these layers of satisfaction in the context of a brand that is both deeply traditional and continuously modernizing.

1.1 Motivation for Choosing the Topic

The idea to explore customer satisfaction at Haldiram came from both academic interest and personal curiosity. As one of India's most loved and recognized brands, Haldiram has always stood out for its quality, variety, and deep cultural connection with its customers. Having grown up seeing Haldiram products in almost every Indian household and store, I was naturally interested in understanding what makes people continue to choose this brand, even as new competitors enter the market.

What really motivated me to take this up as a research topic was the realization that customer satisfaction goes far beyond just liking a product. It includes the full experience from ordering and delivery to packaging, service, and after-sales support. With the rise of digital ordering, changing food habits, and growing expectations for convenience and quality, I felt it was the right time to take a closer look at how Haldiram is meeting the needs of today's customers especially those in the B2B space, like distributors and retailers, who are often the first point of contact between the brand and the end consumer.

This topic gave me a chance to connect classroom learning with real-world observations, and to contribute insights that could help brands like Haldiram not only maintain their reputation, but continue to grow and adapt in a competitive market

1.2 Research Background

The Indian food processing industry is one of the fastest-growing sectors in the country, supported by rising incomes, urbanization, changing lifestyles, and growing demand for convenience. Haldiram, a pioneer in branded namkeens and traditional sweets, has built a stronghold in this competitive environment through its commitment to freshness, quality, and authenticity. As consumer behavior becomes more dynamic, understanding the relationship between product offerings and customer expectations is essential.

This study focuses on understanding customer satisfaction in this industrial setting by evaluating how Haldiram's B2B customers experience its services. By combining both qualitative and quantitative data, the research offers insights into how customer satisfaction drives brand loyalty and long-term engagement in the food sector. With a growing shift toward digital ordering and increased awareness about hygiene, value, and service quality, the relevance of this research is timely and essential.

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

The research begins with an introduction to Haldiram and the importance of customer satisfaction in the food processing sector. It then reviews relevant literature to provide context and theoretical grounding for the study. The next chapter outlines the research methodology, including sampling techniques and data collection tools used to gather insights from Haldiram's B2B customers. Following that, data analysis and interpretation present detailed findings based on the survey responses and interviews. The final chapters discuss the key conclusions, theoretical and managerial contributions, limitations of the study, and future research directions. Together, these components aim to offer a comprehensive understanding of how Haldiram can maintain and enhance customer satisfaction in a rapidly evolving market.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Customer satisfaction in India's food processing industry is influenced by several key factors, including food quality, service quality, consumer behavior, and the rise of online food delivery services. Understanding these elements is crucial for businesses aiming to enhance customer loyalty and maintain a competitive edge.

Food quality is a primary determinant of customer satisfaction in the food processing industry. Attributes such as taste, freshness, and presentation significantly influence customer perceptions and satisfaction levels. For instance, a study on fast-food businesses highlighted that food quality directly affects customer satisfaction and loyalty. Similarly, research on convenience food choices emphasized the role of sensory appeal, nutritional quality, and safety in shaping consumer satisfaction.

Service quality, encompassing dimensions like reliability, responsiveness, and empathy, plays a pivotal role in customer satisfaction. The SERVQUAL model, developed by Parasuraman et al., is widely used to assess service quality across various industries. In the context of food outlets in Chandigarh, service staff behavior was found to have a statistically significant effect on customer satisfaction, contributing 64.9% to overall satisfaction.

The proliferation of online food delivery services has transformed customer expectations and satisfaction metrics. A study assessing customer satisfaction with online food delivery companies in India revealed that service quality dimensions such as tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy significantly influenced customer satisfaction. This underscores the importance of maintaining high service standards in digital platforms to meet customer expectations.

Consumer behavior studies provide insights into the factors influencing customer satisfaction in the food processing industry. An integrative literature review on consumer behavior in the service industry highlighted the complex interplay of various factors, including product quality, service quality, and customer expectations, in shaping customer satisfaction. Understanding these behavioral patterns is essential for businesses to tailor their offerings and enhance customer satisfaction.

For companies in India's food processing industry, focusing on both food and service quality is essential to enhance customer satisfaction. Implementing quality control measures, training staff to improve service delivery, and leveraging technology to streamline operations can contribute to improved customer experiences. Additionally, understanding consumer behavior and adapting to changing preferences can help businesses stay competitive in a rapidly evolving market.

To enhance customer satisfaction in India's food processing industry, companies must adopt a multifaceted approach that integrates stringent quality control, continuous staff training, technological advancements, proactive consumer feedback mechanisms, and sustainable practices.

Implementing robust quality control measures is paramount. This involves establishing rigorous processes to ensure consistent food quality, conducting regular inspections, and adhering to food safety standards. Such practices not only maintain product quality but also build consumer trust and safeguard brand reputation. For instance, leveraging automation and data analytics can streamline quality control processes, enabling real-time monitoring and early detection of potential issues, thereby enhancing product consistency and safety.

Equally important is investing in staff training. Regular training programs equip employees with the necessary skills and knowledge to uphold quality standards and respond effectively to challenges. A well-trained workforce is more adept at identifying deviations from established norms and implementing corrective actions promptly, thereby contributing to overall product quality and customer satisfaction.

The integration of advanced technology further bolsters these efforts. Utilizing tools such as Internet of Things (IoT) devices, artificial intelligence (AI), and machine learning can enhance quality control by providing real-time data on critical parameters like temperature and humidity. Additionally, AI-driven analytics can predict potential quality issues, allowing for proactive measures to be taken before problems arise. Companies like Nestlé and Amul have successfully implemented such technologies to monitor and maintain product quality throughout the supply chain.

Proactively gathering and analyzing consumer feedback is another crucial strategy. By regularly collecting input from customers, companies can gain valuable insights into consumer preferences and expectations. This information can inform product development and service enhancements, ensuring that offerings align with market demands and fostering stronger customer loyalty.

Lastly, adopting sustainable practices in sourcing, production, and packaging is increasingly important. Consumers are becoming more environmentally conscious, and companies that demonstrate a commitment to sustainability can enhance their brand image and build customer loyalty. Implementing eco-friendly practices not only meets consumer expectations but also contributes to the long-term viability of the business.

By integrating these strategies—rigorous quality control, continuous staff development, technological innovation, proactive consumer engagement, and sustainable practices—companies in India's food processing industry can significantly enhance customer satisfaction and maintain a competitive edge in the market

Source: google scholar

Research Gap

While Haldiram is a well-established and popular brand, existing research has not thoroughly explored how its B2B customers perceive its service and product delivery. Much of the available literature focuses on consumer satisfaction in retail food outlets, but there is limited insight into how distributors, wholesalers, and retailers evaluate their experience with Haldiram on factors such as delivery efficiency, communication, digital interactions, and service responsiveness. Furthermore, though the brand is widely known for its quality and tradition, there is a lack of detailed study on whether customers feel these qualities are consistently delivered. Gaps in digital experience, occasional service lapses, and quality concerns raised by customers such as product safety or packaging issues highlight the need for a deeper analysis. This research fills that gap by gathering first-hand data from Haldiram's industrial customers and exploring both satisfaction levels and opportunities for improvement.

Research Objectives

S.NO	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESEARCH OBJECTIVE
1	How does food quality impact customer satisfaction in the Indian	To assess the influence of food quality attributes (taste, freshness,
	food processing industry?	presentation) on customer satisfaction levels.
2	What role does service quality play in shaping customer perceptions	To evaluate the effect of service quality dimensions (reliability,
	in this sector?	responsiveness, empathy) on customer satisfaction.
3	How have online food delivery services influenced customer	To examine the impact of online food delivery platforms on customer
	satisfaction in India?	satisfaction in the food processing industry.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology of the study

Research Methodology decides the territory of proposed study and gives information to the readers about adopted process of analysis for the respective study. This includes aims for which the study is undertaken. This also clarifies time, scope, data sources etc. of proposed study. Another significant aspect is tools and techniques which are used for the study. In brief this chapter helps the researcher to decide his path of research work.

Research design:

A research design is the detailed blueprint used to guide a research study towards its objective. It helps to collect, measure and analysis of data. It is the specification of the method and procedure for accruing the information needed. The present study is a descriptive research study based on analytical research design. The secondary data from the annual reports of relevant banks for a period of 5 years (2008-2012) have been taken.

Methodology of the project

For present study a structured questionnaire was designed and canvassed among the sample respondents. A simple random sample method was chosen in collecting the required data from the respondents. A sample of 150 was considered for the study from a huge population of various policy holders of life Insurance. The collected data was analyzed and interpreted through tables and graphs and findings are reported and suggestions made accordingly

METHODOLOGY

Exploratory research: this kind of research has the primary objective of development of insights into the problem. It studies the main area where the problem lies and tries to evaluate some appropriate courses of action.

NATURE OF DATA

PRIMARY DATA: Data which is collected through direct interviews and by raising questionnaires.

SECONDARY DATA: Secondary data that is already available and published.

It could be an internal and external source of data. Internal source: which originates from the specific field or area where research is carried out e.g. publish brochures, official reports etc. External source: This originates outside the field study like books, periodicals, journals, newspapers and the Internet.

DATA COLLECTION

Primary Data: To be collected through structured questionnaires, personal interviews/ discussions with focus on his/her choice before availing for the service.

SAMPLE DESIGN

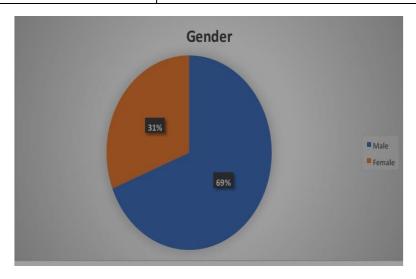
Research Location: NCR

Sample Size The sample size was 100 RESPODENT Sampling Technique Adopted: Convenient sampling

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

1. GENDER OF THE RESPONDENTS.

Gender	No. of Respondents
Male	69%
Female	31%
Total	100%

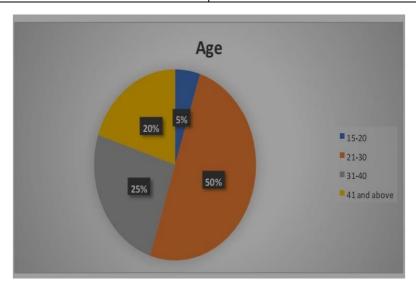


INTERPRETATION: -

 $Out of 100 \ respondents, 69\% \ are \ male \ Job \ Seeker \ and \ 31\% \ are \ female \ Job \ Seeker \ in \ the \ population \ of \ selected \ Area.$

2.AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS.

Age	No. of Respondents
15-20	5%
21-30	50%
31-40	25%
41 and above	20%
Total	100%

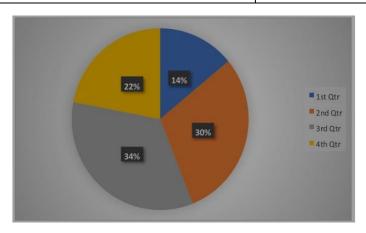


INTERPRETATION: -

Out of 100 respondents, 50% peoples are those, they are Adult, or their age are considered 2130. The remaining 50% are collected those, they lie 15-20 is 5%, 31-40 is 25% and 41 or above aged person is 20% are considered.

3.OCCUPATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

1	Professional	14
2	Business	30
3	Employee	34
4	Student	22
	Total	100



INTREPRETATION

From the above table, it shows that 34% of the respondents were employees, 30% of the respondents were Businesspeople, 22% of the respondents were students and 14% of the respondents were professional. It inferred that Majority (34%) of the respondents were employees.

4.MARITAL STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS

SI. No	PARTICULARS	NO. OF. RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	Married	72	56.3
2.	Unmarried	56	43.8
TOTAL		128	100

MARITAL STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS



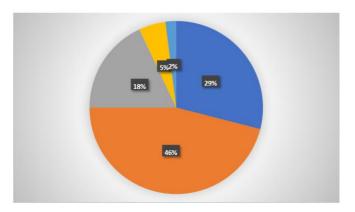
INTREPRETATION

The above table is inferred that 52.3% of the respondents are married and the remaining 43.8% of the respondents are unmarried

5.GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF INCOME AMONG RESPONDENTS

Classification based on income

Description	Frequency	Percentage
< 10,000	128	29%
10,000-25,999	201	46%
26,000-49,999	80	18%
50,000-1,00,000	24	5%
>1,00,000	8	2%



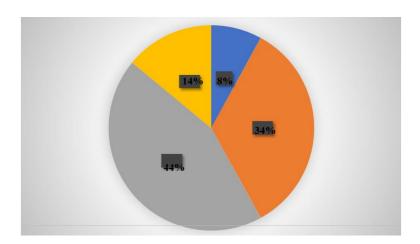
INTREPRETATION

The pie diagram shows 29% of the respondents have income less than Rs.10,000 per month while 46% of the respondents have income in between Rs. 10,000-25,999,18% of the respondents have income in between Rs. 26,000-49,999 which is followed by 5% of the respondents having an income in between Rs. 50,000-1,00,000 and only 2% of the respondents have income more than Rs.1,00,000.

6.GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

AMONG RESPONDENTS

Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High School	147	34
Graduate	195	44
Postgraduate	62	14
Others	37	8

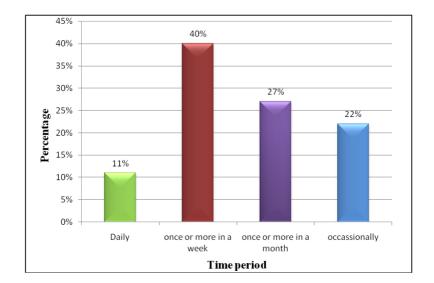


INTREPRETATION

The pie diagram shows 8% of the respondents have other qualifications, 14% of the respondents were postgraduate, 34% of the respondents were high school passed out and 44% of the respondents were graduates.

7.HOW OFTEN DO YOU VISIT RESTAURANT?

□ Daily □ Once or more in a week □ Once or more a month □ Occasionally



INTERPRETATION

According to the survey conducted, around half of the people eat out at least once or more a week, some of the people eat out once or more a month, some of the people eat out occasionally and the remaining people eat out daily as shown in fig. So, it says that people prefer a change from home cooked food on a regular basis.

8.WHAT IS YOUR RESTAURANT VISIT BUDGET USUALLY?

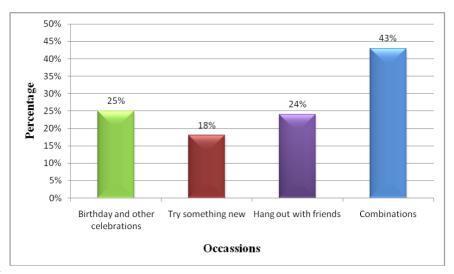
- \square Below Rs.100 \qquad \square Rs.100- 300 \qquad \square Rs.300- 500 \square Rs.500& above
 - 60%
 50%
 40%
 30%
 20%
 10%
 8%
 10%
 8%
 10%
 SPENDING

INTERPRETATION

According to the survey conducted majority of people i.e. nearly half of the people spend between Rs.300 - 500 on per person per visit when they eat out, rest people spend between Rs.100 - 300, very few people spend below Rs.100 or Rs.500 & above which means that people in today's time are ready to spend more for good food.

9. WHAT ARE THE OCCASIONS WHEN YOU LIKE TO HAVE YOUR MEALS IN RESTAURANTS?

- □Birthday and other celebrations □Try something new
- \Box Hang out with friends \Box Combinations

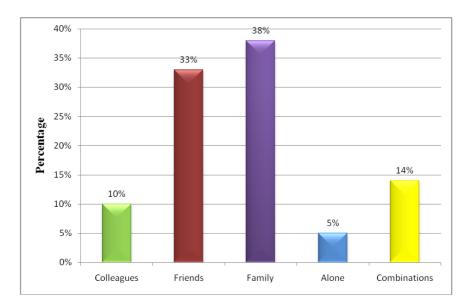


INTERPRETATION

According to the survey conducted, $1/4^{th}$ of people eat out on birthdays and other celebrations, few people eat out just to try something new, nearly $1/4^{th}$ people eat out when they hang out with friends and the remaining people say they eat out in combinations of these occasions as shown in fig So it shows that mostly people eat out on celebrations or when they are out with their friends.

10.WHOM DO YOU VISIT THE RESTAURANT?

- □ Colleagues □ Friends □ Family □ Alone
- □ Combinations

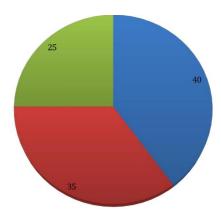


INTERPRETATION-

According to the survey some of the people prefer eating out with colleagues, maximum people prefer to eat out with friends or with their family, just very few people eat out alone and rest of the people eat out in combinations of these like- sometimes with friends, sometimes with family, etc this is shown in fig which means most of the people don't prefer to eat out alone or with their colleagues rather they prefer eating out with their friends and families.

11.HOW, YOU RANK ENDORSEMENT OF HALDIRAM?

Respondents	Good	Average	Should improve
100	40	35	25



INTERPRETATION

This pie-chart depicts that 40 out of 100 respondents ranked endorsement of Product good and 35 respondents satisfy with brand endorsement whereas 25 want some improvement in celebrity endorsement.

RESULT AND FINDINGS

RESULT

The results of this research provide a strong understanding of how customers feel about Haldiram, especially in the Delhi and NCR region. Most of the people who responded to the survey were young adults between 21 and 30 years old, and a majority of them were men. This age group seems to be the

most enthusiastic about eating out, with many saying they dine out at least once a week not just for the food, but also for the experience of spending time with family or friends, celebrating special occasions, or simply enjoying a break from everyday meals at home.

When asked about their spending habits, most respondents shared that they typically spend between ₹300 and ₹500 per person during a restaurant visit. This suggests that many customers are happy to pay a bit more for a quality food experience. In terms of brand preferences, Haldiram clearly stood out. A large number of respondents said they prefer Haldiram for both sweets and Indian snacks, often choosing it over competitors like Bikanervala. They pointed to the brand's consistent product quality, freshness, and authentic traditional flavors as key reasons for their loyalty. Many also appreciated the welcoming atmosphere in Haldiram outlets and found them easy to access due to the brand's widespread presence across the region.

However, opinions about Haldiram's brand promotions were mixed. While some customers thought the current endorsements and branding were effective, others felt there was room for improvementespecially when it came to advertising strategies and celebrity involvement. Despite these suggestions, the overall perception of the brand remains very positive. Haldiram continues to be a favorite thanks to its strong identity, reliable quality, and deep-rooted place in customers' lives. That said, to keep up with evolving customer expectations, the brand could benefit from updating its promotional strategies and offering more personalized customer experiences in the future.

FINDINGS

A recent survey conducted among consumers in Delhi and NCR provides valuable insights into dining preferences and perceptions of Haldiram's offerings. The findings highlight key trends in consumer behavior and brand perception. (fr.scribd.com)

The survey indicates that the majority of diners are between the ages of 20 and 30, with 40% eating out at least once a week. As age increases, the frequency of dining out decreases, likely due to health considerations and lifestyle changes. Regarding spending habits, 48% of respondents spend between 300 and 500 per person per visit, suggesting a willingness to invest in quality dining experiences.

Occasions for dining out vary, with many individuals choosing to eat out on birthdays and other celebrations. Additionally, a significant number of people dine out to try new dishes and when hanging out with friends. Family and friends are the preferred companions for dining out, with 38% and 33% of respondents, respectively, indicating a preference for these company types.

When it comes to Haldiram's, the survey reveals that 59% of participants prefer the brand for sweets, and 57% favor it for Indian snacks and food. In terms of product quality, 58% of respondents believe Haldiram's products are superior to those of Bikanervala, citing better quality control and freshness. Ambience also plays a role in consumer preference, with 64% expressing a liking for Haldiram's store ambiance. Furthermore, 67% find Haldiram's locations and availability more convenient, attributing this to the brand's extensive presence in Delhi and NCR.

These insights underscore Haldiram's strong market presence and consumer preference, driven by quality offerings, appealing ambiance, and strategic location choices. However, ongoing attention to product consistency and customer experience is essential to maintain and enhance this position in the competitive food industry.

Conclusion

This chapter brings together the main insights from the research on customer satisfaction in the industrial sector, with a focus on Haldiram. It summarizes the key findings related to the study's objectives and explores both the theoretical and practical implications. It also reflects on the limitations of the research and suggests possible directions for future studies.

General Conclusions

This study confirms that Haldiram remains one of the most trusted and preferred brands in India's food processing industry, especially in the snacks and sweets segment. Using a combination of surveys and interviews with business-to-business (B2B) customers like distributors, wholesalers, and retailers the research found that customer satisfaction largely depends on the quality of products, timely deliveries, and clear communication. Customers consistently praised Haldiram's products for their taste, freshness, and packaging. The brand's wide availability and smooth logistics were also appreciated, particularly in the Delhi-NCR region where the company has a strong presence.

That said, the study also uncovered a few areas of concern. Some customers reported quality control issues, such as finding plastic pieces in snack packets or noticing fungal growth on sweets. Others were unhappy with the portion sizes in executive meals and pointed out a decline in staff behavior and professionalism at certain outlets. Additionally, customers using online delivery services experienced problems like delays and mismatches between what was ordered and what was delivered.

Even with these challenges, Haldiram still enjoys high levels of brand loyalty. Its long-standing reputation and widespread reach continue to earn the trust of its customers. To sustain and improve this trust, the research suggests that Haldiram should strengthen its quality control, invest in staff training, and upgrade its digital ordering and delivery systems.

Theoretical Contributions

This research contributes to the existing understanding of customer satisfaction in the food sector by applying key service quality principles like reliability, responsiveness, and empathy within a B2B context. It supports established frameworks such as the SERVQUAL model and reinforces the idea that while product quality matters, service-related factors are just as important for ensuring customer satisfaction.

The study also supports theories in consumer behavior by showing how external factors like store ambiance, staff conduct, and ease of digital access influence buying decisions. It successfully connects real-world business practices in retail with academic theories, helping to bridge the gap between research and practice in this field.

Managerial Contributions

From a business perspective, the findings offer several useful takeaways for managers and decision-makers in the food industry. Most importantly, the study stresses the need to consistently maintain high product quality, as this is central to building and keeping customer trust. Efficient delivery and logistics systems are also crucial, especially for B2B clients who rely on timely and accurate shipments. Furthermore, customer service must be a priority training staff to be polite, professional, and responsive can greatly enhance the customer experience both in-store and online.

Another key insight is the growing role of digital platforms. As more customers shift to online ordering, companies like Haldiram need to ensure their digital systems are smooth, user-friendly, and reliable from placing an order to final delivery. Lastly, the research suggests that Haldiram should focus on offering better value for money, especially in packaged meals, to stay competitive in a market where customers are increasingly price-conscious but still expect high quality.

Limitations and Future Research

While the research provides meaningful insights, it does have a few limitations. The study was conducted primarily in Delhi and the NCR region, so the findings might not reflect customer behavior in other parts of India or in international markets where Haldiram also operates. Additionally, the sample size, though adequate for this study, could be expanded in future research to include more diverse participants in terms of location, background, and preferences.

Future studies could explore comparisons between Haldiram and its competitors in different regions to get a broader view of market trends. There is also room to study how digital transformation and sustainability efforts impact customer satisfaction especially as online shopping grows and consumers become more environmentally conscious. These areas offer promising opportunities for continued research in the evolving food industry landscape.

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