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THE IMPACT OF SELF-SERVICE ON THE PERFORMANCE OF RELIANCE SMARTPOINT SUPERMARKETS

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how self-service technologies influence customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, and overall business performance at Reliance Smart Point supermarkets in Coimbatore. Drawing from a sample of 120 respondents, the research reveals a predominantly positive reception towards self-service, particularly among younger, tech-savvy consumers. Findings indicate enhanced convenience, faster checkouts, and moderate cost efficiencies, though challenges such as technical issues and lack of assistance persist. The study offers strategic recommendations for improving the implementation of self-service and concludes that with targeted enhancements, self-service can significantly improve supermarket performance.

INTRODUCTION

Retail is undergoing a digital transformation with self-service technology becoming a key feature in modern supermarkets. Reliance Smart Point, a leading neighbourhood retail chain under Reliance Retail, has embraced self-service solutions including kiosks, mobile apps, and digital payments. This study investigates how these innovations affect customer experience and operational performance in urban India.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- Assess the impact of self-service on customer satisfaction and behaviour
- Examine its effect on checkout speed and staff deployment
- Analyse implications for sales, revenue, and cost efficiency
- Identify implementation challenges
- Propose recommendations for improvement

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

While self-service promises efficiency and cost savings, its impact varies across customer segments. Challenges include reduced personal service, resistance from older or non-tech-savvy users, and operational adjustments such as staff retraining. This study aims to explore these dynamics within Reliance Smart Point stores.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

Scope:

- Focus on customer experience
- Operational outcomes
- Employee role shifts in Coimbatore stores.

Limitations:

- Limited to 120 respondents in one city
- Short duration, excluding long-term behavioural shifts
- Variability in self-service tech across locations

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN:

The study is descriptive in nature. Descriptive studies are more than just a collection of data. They include measurements, classifications, analysis, comparisons and interpretations. It tells about what exists at present by determining the nature and degree of existing conditions.

SAMPLE SIZE

The sample size for the study is 120 only.

TYPES OF DATA COLLECTION

- Primary Data
- Secondary Data

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Meuter et al. (2000) This study explores how self-service technologies can significantly enhance customer satisfaction. By offering more control and convenience, these technologies meet consumer demands for efficiency, leading to a more positive shopping experience.

2. Collier & Evans (2011) The authors discuss the impact of self-service on customer behaviour, emphasizing increased autonomy. Customers are more likely to engage in self-service when they perceive it as beneficial, resulting in a shift in traditional retail interactions.

3. Reddy & Terziovski (2005) This research highlights the operational efficiencies gained through self-service implementations. The reduction in checkout times allows staff to focus on customer service, ultimately improving the overall store performance.

4. Fornell et al. (1996) The study presents a framework for measuring customer satisfaction, crucial for assessing the effectiveness of self-service technologies. Understanding these metrics helps retailers tailor their services to enhance customer experiences.

5. Davis (1989) The Technology Acceptance Model outlines how perceived usefulness and ease of use affect consumer acceptance of new technologies. This model is essential for understanding why customers may choose self-service options over traditional methods.

PROFILE OF THE COMPANY

Company	Reliance Smartpoint
Founded	2006
Parent Company	Reliance Industries Limited (RIL)
Founder	Mukesh Ambani
Headquarters	Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
Sector	Retail (Grocery, Apparel, Electronics, and more)

Company Overview

Reliance Smart Point is a part of Reliance Retail, a subsidiary of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL), one of India's largest conglomerates. Smart Point stores are neighbourhood retail outlets, focusing on providing groceries and daily essentials at competitive prices. These stores are designed to cater to local communities, offering convenience and affordability in a modern retail environment.

Industry

Reliance Smart Point operates within the Retail and Consumer Goods industry. Its specific focus is on grocery retail, with an emphasis on providing an efficient, technology-enabled shopping experience for urban and suburban customers.

Key Products and Services

Reliance Smart Point stores offer a wide range of products and services

- Groceries - Fresh fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy products, and packaged foods.
- Household Goods - Cleaning supplies, kitchenware, and daily-use items.
- Personal Care - Toiletries, skincare, and hygiene products.

- Self-Service Technology - Digital payment solutions, loyalty programs, and mobile shopping applications for a seamless shopping experience.

Omnichannel Integration Customers can purchase products both in-store and online via platforms like Jio Mart, integrating Smart Point into a larger ecosystem of retail services.

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION (SUMMARY)

TABLE NO.1

SHOWING THE SHOPPING FREQUENCY

FACTORS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Daily	14	12%
Weekly	38	32%
Monthly	29	24%
Rarely	39	32%
TOTAL	**120**	**100**

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA

INTERPRETATION: The above table showing shopping frequency of the respondents 12% (14) are daily, 32% (38) of respondents are weekly, 24% (29) of respondents are monthly and 32% (39) of the respondents are rarely

INFERENCE: Majority 32.0% of the respondents are Rarely

CHART - 1

CHART SHOWING THE SHOPPING FREQUENCY OF RESPONDENTS

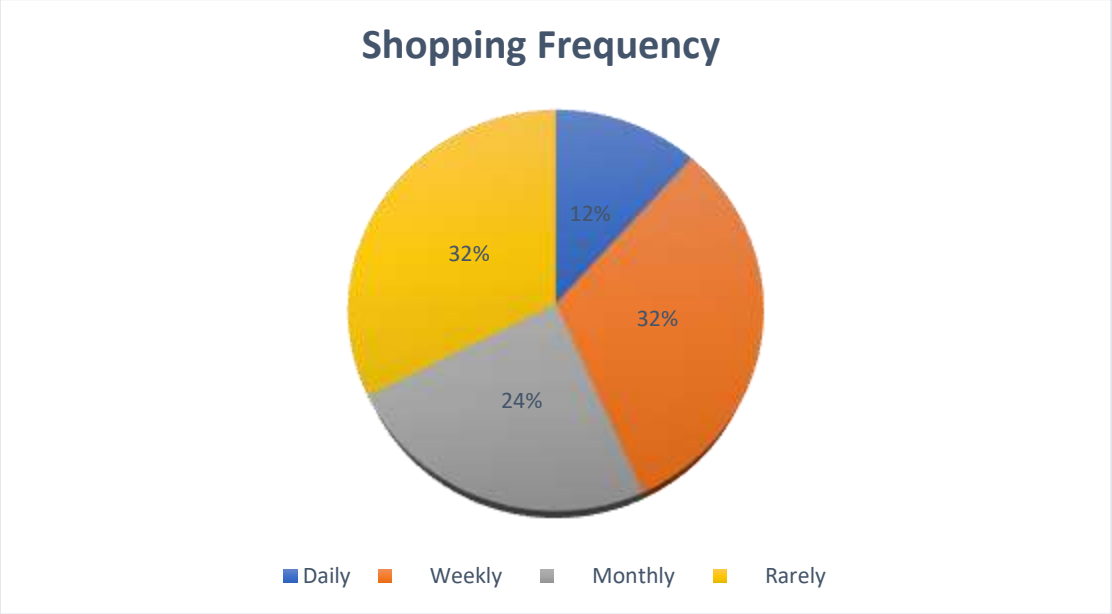

TABLE NO.2

SHOWING RATING OF SELF-SERVICE EXPERIENCE

FACTORS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Excellent	33	28%
Good	59	49%
Average	24	20%
Poor	4	3%
TOTAL	**120**	**100**

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA

INTERPRETATION: The above table indicates the Rating of self-service experience in Reliance Smartpoint of the respondents 28% (33) of respondents are Excellent, 49% (59) of respondents are Good, 20% (24) of respondents are Average, 3% (4) of respondents are Poor.

INFERENCE: Majority 49.0% of the respondents of Good

CHART - 2

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CHART SHOWING RATING OF SELF-SERVICE EXPERIENCE OF THE RESPONDENTS

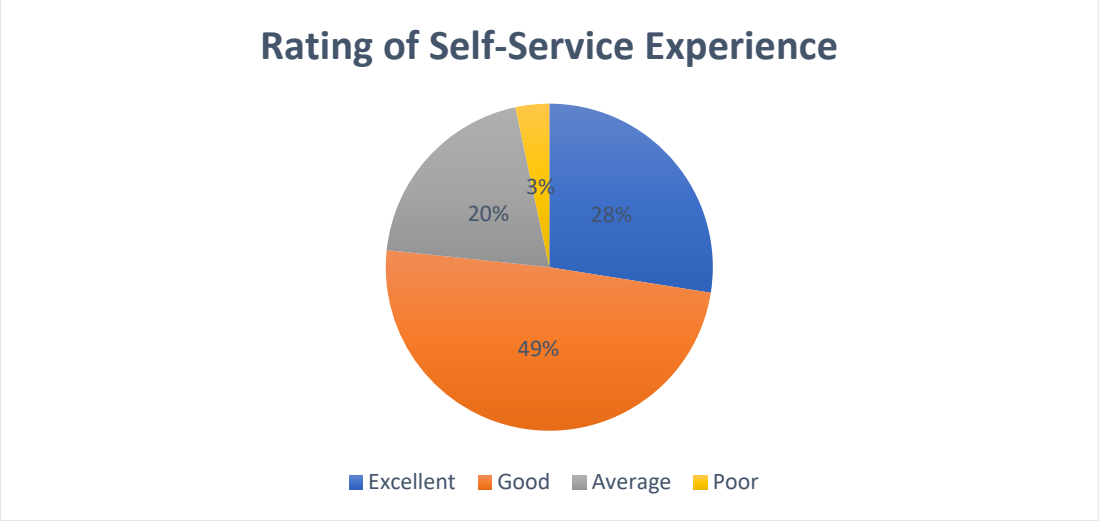


TABLE NO.3

SHOWING FACTORS THAT VALUE MOST IN SELF-SERVICE

FACTORS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Convenience	38	31%
Speed	37	31%
User friendliness	33	27%
None of the above	12	11%
TOTAL	**120**	**100**

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA

INTERPRETATION: The above table indicates the factors that value most in self-service at Reliance Smartpoint of respondents 31% (38) of respondents are Convenience, 31% (37) of respondents are Speed, 37% (33) of respondents are User friendliness 11% (12) of respondents are None of the above.

INFERENCE: Majority 31.0% of the respondents are Convenience

CHART - 3

CHART SHOWING FACTORS THAT VALUE MOST ABOUT SELF-SERVICE AT RELIANCE SMARTPOINT OF THE RESPONDENTS

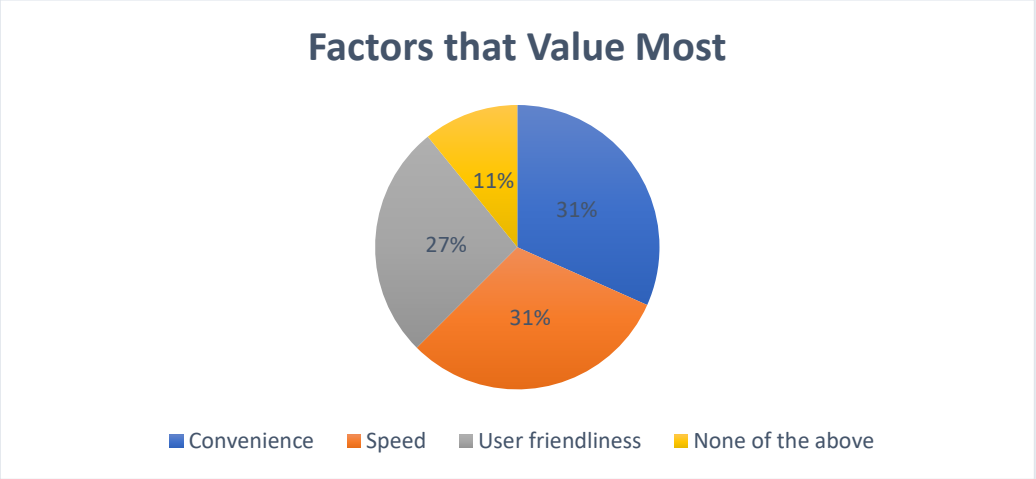


TABLE NO.4

SHOWING BIGGEST CHALLENGES IN SELF-SERVICE

FACTORS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Technical issues	53	44%
Difficulty in understanding the process	37	31%
Lack of staff assistance	24	20%
Resistance to using technology	6	5%
TOTAL	**120**	**100**

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA

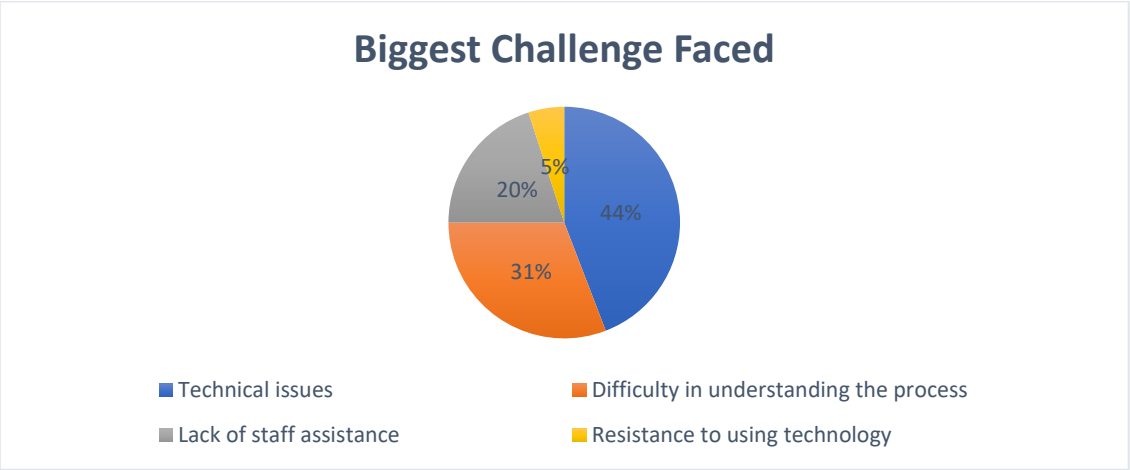
INTERPRETATION: The above table indicates the biggest challenges faced in self-service of respondents 44% (53) of respondents are Technical issues, 31% (37) of respondents are

Difficulty in understanding the process, 20% (24) of respondents Lack of staff assistance, 5% (6) of respondents are Resistance to using technology.

INFERENCE: Majority 44.0% of the respondents are Technical Issues

CHART - 4

CHART SHOWING BIGGEST CHALLENGES FACED IN SELF-SERVICE AT RELIANCE SMARTPOINT OF THE RESPONDENTS



CHI SQUARE TEST

Gender and visiting Status of Respondents to store in the listed application.

NULL HYPOTHESIS: There is no significant relationship between Gender and visiting status of respondents to store.

ALRERNATE HYPOTHESIS: There is significant relationship between Gender and visiting status of respondents to store.

Gender and visiting Status of Respondents to store in the listed application.

Gender	Visiting status				Total
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely	
Male	6	21	16	20	63
Female	8	18	13	18	57
Total	14	39	29	38	120

CHI SQUARE TESTS

	Value	Df	Asymptotic significance (2-sided)
Person Chi – Square	0.6283	3	0.8889
Likelihood Ratio	0.6305	3	0.888
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.1254	1	0.737
N of Valid Cases	120		

- 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.65.

INTERPRETATION: From the above table shows that p-value (0.8899) is greater than 0.05, so we fail to reject the null hypothesis. This means that gender and visiting status of respondents do not have a significant relationship. Hence it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between Gender and visiting status of respondents to store.

RANKING ANALYSIS

A ranking is a relationship between a set of items such that, for any two items, the first is either 'ranking higher than', 'ranked lower than' or 'ranked equal to the second. In mathematics, this is known as a weak order or total pre order of objects. It is not necessarily a total order of objects because two different objects can have the same rating. The ranking themselves are

totally ordered, for example, materials are totally pre ordered by hardness, while degree of hardness are totally ordered.

S.NO	PARTICULARS	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	MEAN SCORE	RANK
1	EFFICIENCY	40	46	25	9	2.97	IV
2	SPEED	36	52	22	10	2.95	V
3	SERVICES	33	59	24	4	3.01	III
4	SATISFACTION	43	47	27	3	3.08	I
5	TIME	38	53	25	4	3.04	II

INTERPRETATION: The above table indicate the ranking analysis of self-service performance on reliance smartpoint that secured First ranking Satisfaction, Second Rank in Timing, Third Rank in Services, Fourth Rank in Efficiency, Fifth Ranking in Speed.

FINDINGS

- Majority 32.0% of the respondents are Rarely
- Majority 49.0% of the respondents of Good

- Majority 31.0% of the respondents are Convenience
- Majority 44.0% of the respondents are Technical Issues

DISCUSSION

Self-service was well-received by young users, supporting findings from literature on tech adoption. While speed and convenience were praised, lack of guidance and occasional glitches affected satisfaction. A hybrid model - retaining both self-service and human checkout - could address diverse customer needs.

SUGGESTIONS

- Enhance Staff Support: Deploy more staff to assist at kiosks
- Improve Systems: Resolve technical bugs and ensure interface simplicity
- Educate Users: Conduct demos, use signage for instructions
- Incentivize Use: Offer discounts or loyalty points
- Balance Formats: Keep traditional checkouts for inclusivity
- Gather Feedback: Use customer input to refine services

CONCLUSION

Self-service at Reliance Smart Point has improved customer convenience and operational efficiency but needs refinement. With system upgrades and staff training, the self-service model can become a major driver of growth, aligning with modern consumer expectations.

REFERENCES

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- Zeithaml, V. A., et al. (2018). Services Marketing.
- Meuter et al. (2000), Davis (1989), Reddy & Terziovski (2005), etc.
- Reliance Retail official sources, IBEF, McKinsey reports.