Customer Satisfaction In Baqala Store Shopping: Basis For Marketing Strategic Plan

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Abstract

Introduction: Customer satisfaction plays a crucial role in the success and sustainability of retail businesses, including small convenience stores such as Baqala stores. The objective of this study is to determine the level of customer satisfaction in baqala stores in Qatar. It explores customer satisfaction in the baqalas in terms of *merchandise value, internal store environment, personal interaction, merchandise variety, and complaint handling.* **Methodology:** This study utilized a quantitative descriptive design. A total of one hundred thirty-four (134) respondents in chosen baqala stores were gathered using convenience sampling. **Results:** Based on the data, baqala customers, when grouped according to age and sex, have a high level of satisfaction in *personal interaction* and *merchandise variety,* whereas *internal store environment* had the lowest satisfaction level. **Discussion**: No significant differences were found in the respondents' demographic profiles, particularly in terms of age and sex. Customer satisfaction in baqalas is generally high, with *personal interaction* being the most favorable dimension, while the *internal store environment* was rated the lowest. **Recommendations:** Based on the results, it is recommended that baqalas need to implement a structured marketing strategic plan that aligns with customer preferences to better serve their target market, meet customers' needs, and to further increase customer satisfaction.

Keywords: Baqala; Convenience; Customer Satisfaction; Retail; In-Store Shopping

1. Introduction

Customer satisfaction, a pivotal indicator in contemporary business, reflects the extent to which the consumers perceive products, services, or overall experiences as fulfilling their expectations (Otto et al., 2019). The significance of maintaining high customer satisfaction cannot be overstated, given its direct correlation to customer retention and lifetime value. The risk of customers shifting favor and preference to competitors who offer better prices, products, or customer service interactions underscores the imperative for businesses to prioritize and enhance customer satisfaction (Suharto & Yuliansyah, 2023).

Grocery stores are essential retail stores throughout the world as they offer a broad range of products, provide fresh produce directly from vendors, and sell basic necessities for extended hours to meet the community's requirements as it offered the community through accessible distribution, underscores the importance of retailers' marketing offerings in attracting and retaining customers (Anselmsson et al., 2017). Convenience means the ability of the customers to locate and select the things they require and shop at ease (Kumar & Agrawal, 2024). In grocery stores, convenience grew in importance as an indicator in customer satisfaction, and perceptions of product price and quality are vital in evaluating retail stores (Xie & Sun, 2021). It is also crucial that these businesses give consumers greater convenience to better understand the purchasing decisions by understanding their behavior (Toha & Supriyanto, 2023). The important factors that could affect customer's satisfaction are the products whose quality and benefits must fit the needs of customers (Duh & Pwaka, 2023). Price is a crucial element of any market and is essential

to the sustainability of the organization. Services which are interactions between the employees that satisfy the needs of the customer (Prianggoro & Sitio, 2020). Diverse types of grocery stores available today influences cultural factors such as psychological and social which changes the consumer behavior's perception (Dixit & Singh, 2024).

The Middle Eastern term "baqala," refers to neighborhood supermarkets, grocery stores, and convenience stores. Baqalas are a type of small retail business that offer a limited selection of products and services especially in regions with limited access to larger stores. These retail establishments are typically found in residential areas where customers conveniently purchase basic household necessities including groceries, cooking supplies, and other household items. In Middle Eastern nations such as Saudi Arabia, Dubai, and Qatar, baqala stores are commonly found. Despite the convenience stores ability to benefit and satisfy the needs of customers, the local significance of baqalas contrasts with their limited recognition on a global scale as it presented numerous challenges particularly in measuring customer satisfaction. Given that baqala stores primarily catered to limited areas, the scope and applicability of customer satisfaction measurements are inherently restricted. This limitation can affect efforts to generate relevant insights for international market strategies and hinder the competitiveness of baqala stores on a global scale. When it comes to limited product variety, it is important for baqalas to provide a varied choice of products to compete from the fierce market as customers may feel that the products may fall short from their perception (Pojoh et al., 2019). Compared to larger retail chains, baqalas often set higher prices due to their smaller scale operations and less formalized pricing approaches (Hervert-Escobar et al., 2017). Adding to these existing problems, baqalas are now faced with intensive competition, mainly due to online shopping. The universality of mobile technology and online shopping has reshaped customer expectations and behaviors, which even more complicates the task of attracting customers (Chou et al., 2016). In this context, seeking to address the challenges of expanding baqalas into new markets must understand how the absence of global recognition affects the measurement of customer satisfaction.

## Theoretical Background
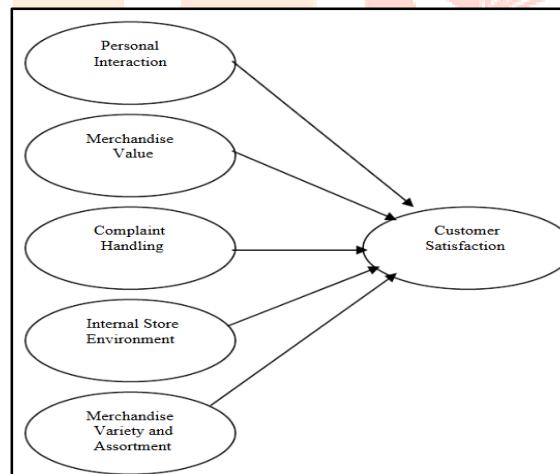
figure 1: theoretical model of customer satisfaction with the controllable elements of the in-store shopping experience (Terblanche and Boshoff's, 2006)

This research dives into a comprehensive examination of customer satisfaction, focusing on five key dimensions integral to in-store shopping experiences: ***merchandise value, internal store environment, personal interaction, merchandise variety, and complaint handling*** (**Terblanche & Boshoff, 2006**). These dimensions collectively contribute to the overall customer satisfaction derived from their interactions with a business.

Merchandise value determines the effect of brand, product variety, and product quality on order decisions. (Arfiana et al., 2025) Beyond just the cost of an item, *merchandise value* also involves the careful selection and balance of merchandise variation—ensuring a variety of choices while maintaining depth in specific categories—which plays a crucial role in satisfying diverse customer preferences (Gielens et al., 2021).

The impact of ***merchandise value*** on customer behavior can be observed in different ways. First, it can result in customers who are sensitive to price changes switch to other cheaper brands (Kencana,

2018). Secondly, a brand serves as a powerful tool for sellers when consumers come to regard it as their "preferred brand". Such loyalty and commitment can make them consistently repurchase or patronize their preferred product in the future (Arshad, 2023). *Merchandise value* has a big impact on consumers' feelings, contentment, which helps to improve their overall shopping experience (Sivadas & Jindal, 2017).

As the retail industry evolves, ***merchandise value*** is no longer just about the price of a product—it is a broader evaluation that considers both tangible benefits, such as quality and functionality, and intangible factors, such as shopping convenience and emotional satisfaction. For a baqala (local convenience store) to thrive, it must offer high-quality, functional products at competitive prices while ensuring customers feel they are receiving good value for their money. By doing so, the store can encourage repeat purchases.

The ***internal store environment*** encompasses various elements that contribute to the overall shopping experience, including store decorations, physical installations, infrastructure, atmosphere, floor layout, product and service organization, as well as the placement of items on shelves to encourage purchases (Chatzoglou et al., 2022). A well-designed store environment is more than just a functional space—it serves as a strategic tool for influencing customer behavior and shaping their perception of the retail   brand.

The visual and physical aspects of a store play a critical role in establishing an emotional connection with customers. A well-maintained and thoughtfully arranged retail space enhances the shopping experience, making customers feel more comfortable and engaged. Additionally, cleanliness and safety are fundamental aspects of the store environment, as they not only reflect professionalism but also demonstrate adherence to business standards and protocols. Ensuring a hygienic and organized space fosters trust and encourages   repeat   visits.

Beyond aesthetics and safety, the way product assortments are arranged within the store environment also has a significant impact on the customer experience. Consumers are less likely to purchase from a given category, driven by display proximity and limited attention to category assortments (Hong et al., 2016). A well-structured product display enhances the store's functionality, making it easier for customers to navigate and find what they need while also subtly encouraging additional purchases.

In the case of baqalas where space is often limited, efficient organization is essential. Proper shelf arrangement ensures that customers can easily find what they need without feeling overwhelmed by clutter. Additionally, maintaining cleanliness is crucial, not only for hygiene and safety but also for reinforcing a professional   and   welcoming   atmosphere   for   both   customers   and   staff.

Personal interaction refers to the direct communication between customers and staff, which plays a crucial role in building trust and loyalty—even in today's digital age. Customer satisfaction relies on meaningful interactions that enhance the overall shopping experience. In baqalas, these interactions significantly influence purchasing decisions.

Staffs' demonstration of friendly and knowledgeable characteristics in their interactions directly impacts customer perceptions of service quality (Kurniawan et al., 2025). This interaction goes beyond in-store conversations—it can include phone calls, social media messages, chatbot assistance, or support emails. These touchpoints ensure customers receive help when needed, making their shopping experience smoother.

Despite the rise of digital communication, human interaction remains a key factor in maintaining a stable business. Strong customer relationships lead to loyalty, which helps businesses thrive. When customers feel their needs are understood and met, they are more likely to return and recommend the store to others.

In baqalas, ***personal interaction*** is even more impactful than in larger retail stores since baqalas serve local communities, sellers have more opportunities to build trust and familiarity with regular customers. This close relationship strengthens customer loyalty and makes a baqala the convenient and reliable choice for daily needs.

Merchandise variety refers to the range of products a retailer offers, including both the number of product categories (breadth) and the number of options within each category (depth) (Simonson, 2016). Studies reveal a relationship between satisfaction and loyalty, despite various moderators and constraints, despite often contradictory results (Biscaia et al., 2017).

Consumers choose products based on convenience, price, and promotional features, making ***merchandise variety*** a crucial element in retail success (Simonson, 2016). Experiential marketing is a

strategy that focuses on providing consumers with a pleasant experience, enhancing the brand's value and making it memorable, rather than just being seen in advertisements.

Consumers prefer grocery stores with hassle-free navigation floor plans and offer a wide-ranging merchandise offering as convenience is prioritized in their busy lifestyles (Phang et al., 2024). By understanding consumer preferences, retailers can ensure they offer the right products for their target market, resulting in more profitable sales.

In baqalas, *merchandise variety* plays a vital role in attracting and retaining customers. Since baqalas are smaller in size than supermarkets, they must carefully select and organize their products to maximize space while meeting customer needs. Stocking essential goods, preferred brands, and locally popular items ensures customer satisfaction and encourages frequent visits. A well-balanced assortment helps baqalas compete with larger retailers by offering convenience and reliability to their local community.

Complaint handling is an important factor in maintaining and improving customer satisfaction. It refers to how customers evaluate a business's response to resolving a problem or concern (Jeanpert et al., 2021). The way a retail store handles complaints can significantly impact customer satisfaction and loyalty—two essential factors in sustaining a profitable business. Effectively addressing customer concerns can have a positive impact on a store's reputation and their relationship with customers. Handling complaints effectively boosts customer involvement, with satisfaction playing a key role in making this connection stronger (Cambra-Fierro & Melero-Polo 2017). Instead of viewing complaints as setbacks, businesses should view it as opportunities for improvement.

In baqalas, *complaint handling* is especially important. Since baqalas primarily serve local customers in small communities, word-of-mouth spreads quickly, and a single unresolved complaint can affect the store's reputation. Addressing concerns promptly and efficiently can build trust, encourage loyal customers, and create a more welcoming shopping environment. By actively listening to feedback and improving services, baqalas maintain customer satisfaction and loyalty, ensuring their long-term success.

This study focuses on customer satisfaction in baqala stores, providing a specific perspective that sets it apart from larger retail studies. Small retail stores, like baqalas, present unique problems and opportunities. This study focuses on these niche attempts to deliver findings that are relevant to the resource-constrained conditions. While other studies may investigate customer satisfaction in larger retail settings, this study fills a critical gap by unraveling the dynamics of customer satisfaction in small retail stores, providing unique knowledge to consumers and baqala owners, through a proposed plan. Efficiently managing customer complaints as opportunities for improvement is key to maintaining satisfaction. Crafting a welcoming retail environment through purposeful design elements contributes significantly to the overall customer experience. The baqala must offer quality and functional products at competitive prices and deliver value for money so that customers will return to the store to repurchase.

Research Questions

The objective of this study was to determine the level of customer satisfaction in in-store shopping. Specifically, the research aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the customers in terms of age and sex?

2. What is the customers' level of satisfaction in baqala store shopping in terms of *merchandise value, internal store environment, personal interaction, merchandise variety,* and *complaint handling* in terms of:

    2.1 age in *merchandise value*;

    2.2 age in *internal store environment*;

    2.3 age in *personal interaction*;

    2.4 age in *merchandise variety*;

    2.5 age in *complaint handling*;

    2.6 age when taken collectively;

    2.7 sex in *merchandise value*;

    2.8 sex in *internal store environment*;

    2.9 sex in *personal interaction*;

    2.10 sex in *merchandise variety*;

2.11 sex in *complaint handlin*g; and

2.12 sex when taken collectively?

3. Is there a significant difference in the customers' level of satisfaction in baqala store shopping in terms of *merchandise value, internal store environment, personal interaction, merchandise variety,* and *complaint handling* when grouped according to:

3.1 age; and

3.2 sex?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive comparative research design was used in this study. Descriptive research aimed to look at the characteristics of a population, identify problems that exist within a unit, an organization, or a population (Siedlecki, 2019). It can respond to inquiries about what, where, when, and how, but not why. Comparative research compared and contrasts distinct entities or phenomena in order to identify patterns and relationships in varied situations (Pennings & Keman, 2020). The goal of descriptive-comparative research involved systematically comparing and contrasting various groups, situations, or phenomena to provide a detailed description of their similarities and differences without necessarily focusing on causal relationships.

Respondents and Sampling Technique

The respondents of this study are Filipino customers in selected baqalas in Qatar, they were selected using a convenience sampling technique. This method allows for the collection of data from respondents who are easily accessible and willing to participate in the study. There are many Filipinos residing near the chosen baqalas. A mix of younger and older shoppers, as well as both male and female respondents, ensures a broader perspective.

Since the exact population size is unknown, a value of 20,000 was determined as the estimated population using the Raosoft sample size calculator, which suggested a required sample size of 120 respondents, based on an 8% margin of error and a 92% confidence level. By the end of the data collection process, 134 respondents had successfully completed the questionnaire, exceeding the initially targeted 120 respondents. This increased sample size enhances the study's reliability, offering a broader dataset for analysis and a more comprehensive understanding of the purchasing behavior of Filipino customers in Baqalas.

Research Instrument

The standard and adapted instrument was used to measure customer satisfaction with the controllable elements of the baqala shopping experience (Terblanche & Boshoff, 2006). After the instrument's validation, it was facilitated to 30 respondents which aligns with the recommended minimum in checking questionnaire reliability (Bujang et al., 2024). Cronbach's Alpha was utilized to determine the data's internal consistency, this study used these tools for data collection as it is useful and effective in analysis in the field of business. The results of using Cronbach's Alpha for the first 30 respondents were found successful and valid in which were included in the final gathered respondents.

The questionnaire consisted of 20 questions aimed at gauging customers' perceptions on baqalas. It evaluated customer impressions across five main aspects: *merchandise value* (4 items), *internal store environment* (5 items), *personal interaction* (4 items), **merchandise variety** (4 items), and *complaint handling* (3 items). Respondents can rate each question using a four-point Likert scale ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (4) "strongly agree," with negative-worded questions being scored in reverse. in the interpretation of scores that were obtained from the survey, the following scales was used:

Mean Range	Description in the Instrument	Verbal Interpretation
3.26 – 4.00	Strongly Agree	Very High Level of Satisfaction
2.51 – 3.25	Agree	High Level of Satisfaction
1.76 – 2.50	Disagree	Low Level of Satisfaction
1.00 – 1.75	Strongly Disagree	Very Low Level of Satisfaction

Validity and Reliability

The research ensured the reliability and validity of the instrument, it underwent a content validity ratio assessment by Lawshe, involving eight validators. They evaluated the instrument items as either essential, useful but not essential, or not essential. For Lawshe, the items should be equal to or greater than 0.750 would be retained (Jeldres et al., 2023). The result of the content validity index was 0.988, in which two questions were removed, one from *merchandise value* and the other one from *personal interaction* as it was found as not essential. The standardized instrument's data initially underwent reliability testing. Cronbach's Alpha was utilized to assess the internal consistency of the pilot-tested data. This process involved thirty (30) respondents who are part of the actual study respondents. The results showed that the Cronbach's Alpha level of reliability scaled to 0.93, interpreted as the highest coefficient.

Cronbach's Alpha is a commonly used statistical tool that tests and scales the research projects to fit its purpose (Taber, 2018). This table shows the different reliability levels scaled from excellent (1) being the highest with a coefficient of more than .90, good (2) being the second with 0.80 - 0.89, acceptable (3) being the third with 0.70 - 0.79, questionable (4) being the fourth with 0.6 - .69, poor (5) being the fifth with 0.5 - 0.59, and unacceptable (6) being the lowest with having less than 0.59 coefficient.

Data Collection Procedure

To ensure the integrity of the research protocol, the following actions were taken during the data collection procedures while adhering to ethical guidelines. First, an official request letter was requested from each of the ten baqala managers to seek approval for the research procedures. Upon securing approval, a QR code linked to the validated questionnaire was displayed in the stores, ensuring convenient access for respondents. The questionnaire included clear instructions to guide customers in accurately completing their responses. Respondents were provided with sufficient time to complete the questionnaire at their convenience. Once the data was collected, it was systematically analyzed and interpreted. Throughout the process, respondent anonymity was maintained, and confidentiality was safeguarded to ensure the ethical handling of all collected information.

Data Analysis Procedure

To determine the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age and sex. Frequency count and percentage distribution were used as this effectively summarizes and presents the demographic profile of the respondents. This allows for easier interpretation of the distribution of the respondents. The frequency count tells you how many people fall into each demographic group, giving a clear idea of the distribution. The percentage distribution then turns those numbers into percentages, making it easier to compare the size of each group and see how they relate to the whole sample. The frequency count and percentage distribution is shown below:

$$\% = \frac{f}{N} \times 100$$

Where: % = Percent
f = Frequency
N = Number of cases

To determine the customers' level of satisfaction in baqala store shopping in terms of *merchandise value, internal store environment, personal interaction, merchandise variety, and complaint handling*

when grouped according to age and sex, their mean would be used. The mean is an essential statistical measurement, as it provides a summary of the data, and allows the researchers to quantify and understand the customer's overall satisfaction. The mean is important in research as it provides a central value that summarizes data, making the results easier to understand.

The mean formula is shown below:

$$\overline{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

$\overline{X}$ = Mean

$\sum X$ = Sum

N = Total number of values

To determine if there is a significant difference in the customers' level of satisfaction in baqala store shopping in terms of *merchandise value, internal store environment, personal interaction, merchandise variety,* and *complaint handling* when grouped according to age and sex. As the T-test is a powerful statistical tool used to determine if there is a significant difference between the two groups, the T-test was used for comparing the significance of age and sex. This would be depending on the normality of the data sets and the homogeneity of the variances. T-test is shown below:
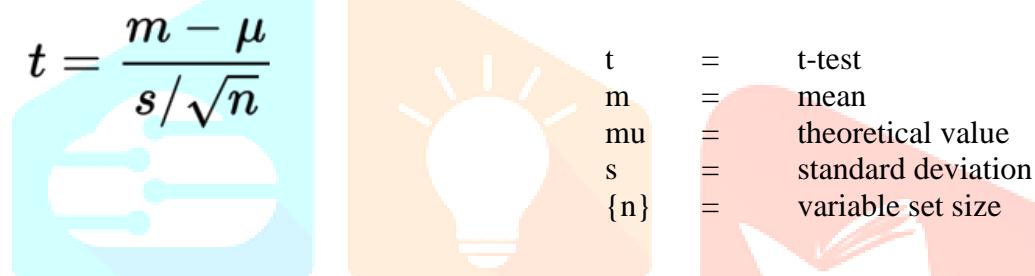
$$t = \frac{m - \mu}{s/\sqrt{n}}$$

t	=	t-test
m	=	mean
mu	=	theoretical value
s	=	standard deviation
{n}	=	variable set size

Ethical   Considerations

Ethical research practices are essential for maintaining the integrity and reliability of this study. This section outlines the key ethical principles followed in conducting the survey questionnaire.

Informed Consent. At the first part of the survey questionnaire, the informed consent statement was indicated. It explained that prior to answering the survey-questionnaire, respondents are provided with clear and understandable information regarding the purpose of the study, and the nature of their involvement. Respondents are explicitly informed that their participation was voluntary, and they have the right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

Confidentiality. Respondents were reassured that their answers would be kept confidential and used exclusively for the stated research goals. Safeguarding their privacy was crucial, particularly when discussing delicate subjects or individual preferences.

Avoidance of Coercion. The survey questionnaire was disseminated via QR code so that respondents may access it whenever it was convenient for them, guaranteeing voluntary participation and avoiding any kind of compulsion. The study adhered to ethical research norms by employing this method, guaranteeing that all replies were provided voluntarily and free from outside influence.

Potential risks. This study would minimize any potential risks like leaked information on their identity to the public by following the guidelines including the informed consent and participant's vulnerability. To add to that, the researchers would ensure the privacy of the participant's information as well as confidentiality up until the end of the research process.

Sufficient equipment. This study will ensure the proper use of technology in gathering the data from the survey-questionnaire for analysis.

Data Security. Any data collected during the survey process would be safely kept and protected from unauthorized access or misuse. This includes both physical security (securely storing paper surveys) and digital security for the digital data.

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the customer's level of satisfaction in baqala store shopping in terms of *merchandise value, internal store environment, personal interaction, merchandise variety*, and *complaint handling* when grouped according to age and sex.

RESULT

Customer satisfaction is a key factor in evaluating customer experiences and the business performance. This segment of the paper shows the gathered data used to answer the research questions. It first describes the profile of the respondents when grouped according to age, and sex. Additionally, it examines the customers' level of satisfaction in baqala store shopping based on *merchandise value, internal store environment, personal interaction, merchandise variety, and complaint handling,* analyzed according to age, and sex. Finally, it identifies any significant differences in customer satisfaction when grouped according to age and sex.

1. The demographic profile of the customers in terms of age and sex

Table 1
Profile of the Respondents(n=134)

Profile	n	%
Age		
Younger	60	44.78
Older	74	55.22
Total	134	100
Sex		
Male	52	38.81
Female	82	61.19
Total	134	100

Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents when grouped according to age and sex. Based on the age, there were 60 (44.78%) respondents younger than the age of 40 and 74 (55.22%) respondents that were 41 and above.

In this study, the demographic factor in terms of age was categorized into younger and older groups. The categorization of respondents into '40 and below and '41 and above' is based on research indicating that age influences consumptive behavior (Zahra & Anoraga, 2021). This demographic divide suggests potential variations in preferences, shopping behaviors, and expectations between younger and older customers. The age categorization aligns with existing research that suggests age is a key demographic factor that significantly influences changes in consumer behavior, particularly in the development and evolution of individualists' needs (Tesárová, & Križanová., 2023). The larger proportion of respondents over 41 indicates that this demographic may form a core customer segment for Baqala stores, which has important implications for marketing strategies and store operations, and helps in determining the generalization of the research findings (Borgstede & Scholz, 2021; Real 2024).

Understanding these age-related differences can guide store managers in optimizing the store environment, product, and customer service to better satisfy the needs of both younger and older shoppers.

The data also indicates a significant distribution between the two sexes, with 82 female respondents accounting for 61.19%, while 52 male respondents make up 38.81%. This gender distribution suggests potential differences in shopping behaviors, preferences, and purchasing decisions between male and female consumers. Gender is a key factor influencing consumer behavior, making it an essential consideration in understanding shopping patterns. As a demographic element, it plays a crucial role in shaping customer expectations and purchasing decisions (Mehta, 2020). Furthermore, research indicates that retail is predominantly associated with women, as shopping is often linked to their social and leisure activities (Ramprabha, 2017). This aligns with the findings, as shown in the table, where more than half of the respondents are female, reinforcing the idea that females are more frequent shoppers. Recognizing these gender-related shopping behaviors can help store managers tailor their strategies, from product selection to customer engagement, ensuring a shopping experience that meets the preferences and expectations of their primary consumer base.

2. The customers' level of satisfaction in baqala store shopping in terms of *merchandise value, internal store environment, personal interaction, merchandise variety,* **and** *complaint handling* **in terms of:**

Table 2.1
Customers' Level of Satisfaction in Baqala Store Shopping When Grouped According to Age in Merchandise Value

Dimensions	Younger (n=60)		Older (n=74)	
	$\bar{x}$	VI	$\bar{x}$	VI
2.1 Merchandise Value				
The products of the Baqala are of good quality.	3.20	HS	3.27	VHS
The prices at the Baqala offer value for money.	3.38	VHS	3.18	HS
The Baqala's products function the way they are supposed to.	3.40	VHS	3.41	VHS
The Baqala's products are free from defects and flaws.	3.02	HS	3.05	HS
Mean of means	**3.25**	**VHS**	**3.23**	**HS**

Legend:
$\bar{x}$ = mean,
VI = verbal interpretation

HS = High Satisfaction (2.50 - 3.25)
LS = Low Satisfaction (1.75 - 2.49)
VLS = Very Low Satisfaction. (1.00 - 1.74)

VHS = Very High Satisfaction (3.25 - 4.00)

Table 2.1 displays the differences of the customers' level of satisfaction grouped according to age in *Merchandise Value*. The results show that younger consumers (below 40) perceive a high level of satisfaction when grouped with an overall mean of 3.25, while the older consumers (above 41) perceive a high level of satisfaction when grouped with an overall mean of 3.23. The results revealed that both younger and older consumers share a similar level of satisfaction in terms of *Merchandise Value*, this means that consumers are satisfied with the *Merchandise Value* of baqalas. This indicates that consumers of all age prioritize the *merchandise value* of a store, as factors like in-store promotion, visual displays and overall store appearance influence customer satisfaction and willingness to purchase (Maharani & Helmi., 2020)

Table 2.2

Customers' Level of Satisfaction in Baqala Store Shopping When Grouped According to Age in Internal Store Environment

Dimensions	Younger (n=60)		Older (n=74)	
	x̄	VI	x̄	VI
2.2 Internal Store Environment				
The Baqala has attractive decor.	2.82	HS	2.81	HS
The Baqala has attractive physical facilities (check-out counters, shelves, etc).	3.02	HS	2.95	HS
The Baqala has attractive product and promotional displays.	2.95	HS	2.97	HS
The Baqala has attractive materials associated with their service (shopping bags, catalogs, etc).	2.90	HS	2.96	HS
The Baqala has well-spaced product displays.	3.08	HS	3.01	HS
Mean of means	**2.95**	**HS**	**2.94**	**HS**

Legend:

x̄ = mean, HS = High Satisfaction (2.50 - 3.25)
VI = verbal interpretation LS = Low Satisfaction (1.75 - 2.49)
 VLS = Very Low Satisfaction. (1.00 - 1.74)

VHS = Very High Satisfaction (3.25 - 4.00)

Table 2.2 displays the differences of the customers' level of satisfaction grouped according to age in the Internal Store Environment. The results show that younger consumers (below 40) perceive a high level of satisfaction when grouped with an overall mean of 2.95, while the older consumers (above 41) perceive a high level of satisfaction when grouped with an overall mean of 2.94. The results revealed that both younger and older consumers share a similar level of satisfaction in terms of *Internal Store Environment*. Despite the fact that the satisfaction levels are still considered high, Based on the results, it is revealed that *Internal Store Environment* scored slightly lower than the other dimensions, this suggests that while customers are generally satisfied, there may still be room for improvement in this area. An *internal store environment* includes the cleanliness, lighting, music, space, employee appearance (Ndengane et al., 2021), these elements contribute significantly to the overall shopping atmosphere and can influence the customer's satisfaction. This indicates that both ages prioritize the *internal store environment.*

Table 2.3

Customers' Level of Satisfaction in Baqala Store Shopping When Grouped According to Age in Personal Interaction

Dimensions	Younger (n=60)		Older (n=74)	
	x̄	VI	x̄	VI
2.3 Personal Interaction				
The Baqala's staff give me personal attention.	3.22	HS	3.14	HS
The Baqala's staff are always willing to help me.	3.33	VHS	3.30	VHS
The Baqala's staff provide me with prompt service.	3.23	HS	3.31	VHS
The Baqala's staff are courteous.	3.30	VHS	3.35	VHS
Mean of means	**3.27**	**VHS**	**3.27**	**VHS**

Legend:

x̄ = mean, HS = High Satisfaction (2.50 - 3.25)
VI = verbal interpretation LS = Low Satisfaction (1.75 - 2.49)
 VLS = Very Low Satisfaction. (1.00 - 1.74)

VHS = Very High Satisfaction (3.25 - 4.00)

Table 2.3 displays the differences of the customers' level of satisfaction grouped according to age in *Personal Interaction*. The results show that younger consumers (below 40) perceive a very high level of satisfaction when grouped with an overall mean of 3.27, while the older consumers (above 41) perceive a very high level of satisfaction when grouped with an overall mean of 3.27. This reveals that both ages got the same level of satisfaction, which indicates how satisfied they are with the baqalas *personal interaction* as it positively influenced the customer engagement, which can lead to a favorable brand experience (Islam & Hollebeek., 2019). This result shows how important *personal interaction* is in customer satisfaction and how it is consistently delivered at a satisfactory level in baqalas. This outcome also emphasizes the strategic importance of training staff to provide high-quality customer service, as it contributes to customer satisfaction and engagement.

Table 2.4

Customers' Level of Satisfaction in Baqala Store Shopping When Grouped According to Age in Merchandise Variety

Dimensions	Younger (n=60)		Older (n=74)	
	x̄	VI	x̄	VI
2.4 Merchandise Variety				
The Baqala offers a choice of different brand names.	3.10	HS	3.18	HS
The Baqala offers a good selection of well-known brands.	3.18	HS	3.16	HS
The Baqala offers a variety of brand names that are available in many different sizes.	3.18	HS	3.12	HS
The Baqala offers a wide variety of products.	3.13	HS	3.06	HS
Mean of means	**3.15**	**HS**	**3.14**	**HS**

Legend:
x̄ = mean,   HS = High Satisfaction   (2.50 - 3.25)
VI = verbal interpretation   LS = Low Satisfaction   (1.75 - 2.49)
                                               VLS = Very Low Satisfaction.   (1.00 - 1.74)

VHS = Very High Satisfaction   (3.25 - 4.00)

Table 2.4 displays the differences of the customers' level of satisfaction grouped according to age in *Merchandise Variety*. The results show that younger consumers (below 40) perceive a high level of satisfaction when grouped with an overall mean of 3.15, while the older consumers (above 41) perceive a high level of satisfaction when grouped with an overall mean of 3.14. The results indicate that both ages perceived a high level of satisfaction in *Merchandise Variety,* suggesting a consistent positive perception across generations. This also shows that *merchandise variety* has a significant and partial effect on customer satisfaction (Norawati & Arman., 2021) revealing that baqalas offer what customers look for in a store. This outcome emphasizes the role of *merchandise variety* as one of the key factors of customer satisfaction. Not only that, the fact that both age groups share a similar level of satisfaction also implies that the baqalas have successfully curated a product mix that appeals to a broad demographic, this shows that they have an understanding of customer needs and market demand.

Table 2.5

Customers' Level of Satisfaction in Baqala Store Shopping When Grouped According to Age in Complaint Handling

Dimensions	Younger (n=60)		Older (n=74)	
	x̄	VI	x̄	VI
2.5 Complaint Handling				
The Baqala has an effective means of dealing with customer complaints.	3.08	HS	3.12	HS
The Baqala has a fair system for the handling of complaints.	3.10	HS	3.12	HS
The Baqalas' staff efficiently deal with customer complaints.	3.07	HS	3.27	VHS
Mean of means	**3.08**	**HS**	**3.17**	**HS**
Overall	**3.14**	**HS**	**3.15**	**HS**

Legend:

x̄ = mean,   *HS = High Satisfaction*   *(2.50 - 3.25)*

VI = verbal interpretation   *LS = Low Satisfaction*   *(1.75 - 2.49)*

     VLS = Very Low Satisfaction.   *(1.00 - 1.74)*

VHS = Very High Satisfaction   *(3.25 - 4.00)*

Table 2.5 displays the differences of the customers' level of satisfaction grouped according to age in *Complaint Handling*. The results show that younger consumers (below 40) perceive a high level of satisfaction when grouped with an overall mean of 3.14, while the older consumers (above 41) perceive a high level of satisfaction when grouped with an overall mean of 3.15. These findings suggest that regardless of age, customers perceive *complaint handling* practices of baqalas effective and satisfactory as based on the results of the table, it can be assumed that both ages are satisfied with the baqalas *complaint handling*, Effective *complaint handling* not only addresses customer concerns but also plays a critical role in maintaining positive customer relationships, it is also revealed that customer satisfaction is heavily influenced by *complaint handling* as it affects customer loyalty (Arumugam & Subramaniam., 2020). The presence of younger store operators in baqalas has contributed to more dynamic and customer-friendly environments, making personal interaction a key strength in sustaining customer satisfaction and loyalty in the baqala setting (Real, 2023).This consistent level of satisfaction across different age groups highlights the importance of a well-managed *complaint handling* process in the retail industry.

Table 2.6
Customers' Level of Satisfaction in Baqala Store Shopping When Taken Collectively According to Age

Dimensions	Younger (n=60)		Older (n=74)	
	x̄	VI	x̄	VI
1. Merchandise Value				
The products of the Baqala are of good quality.	3.20	HS	3.27	VHS
The prices at the Baqala offer value for money.	3.38	VHS	3.18	HS
The Baqala's products function the way they are supposed to.	3.40	VHS	3.41	VHS
The Baqala's products are free from defects and flaws.	3.02	HS	3.05	HS
Mean of means	**3.25**	**HS**	**3.23**	**HS**
2. Internal Store Environment				
The Baqala has attractive decor.	2.82	HS	2.81	HS
The Baqala has attractive physical facilities (check-out counters, shelves, etc).	3.02	HS	2.95	HS
The Baqala offers attractive products and promotions.	2.95	HS	2.97	HS
The Baqala has attractive materials associated with their service (shopping bags, catalogs, etc).	2.90	HS	2.96	HS
The Baqala has well-spaced product displays.	3.08	HS	3.01	HS
Mean of means	**2.95**	**HS**	**2.94**	**HS**
3. Personal Interaction				
The Baqala's staff give me personal attention.	3.22	HS	3.14	HS
The Baqala's staff are always willing to help me.	3.33	VHS	3.30	VHS
The Baqala's staff provide me with prompt service.	3.23	HS	3.31	VHS
The Baqala's staff are courteous.	3.30	VHS	3.35	VHS
Mean of means	**3.27**	**VHS**	**3.27**	**VHS**
4. Merchandise Variety				
The Baqala offers a choice of different brand names.	3.10	HS	3.18	HS
The Baqala offers a good selection of well-known brands.	3.18	HS	3.16	HS
The Baqala offers a variety of brand names that are available in many different sizes.	3.18	HS	3.12	HS
The Baqala offers a wide variety of products.	3.13	HS	3.06	HS
Mean of means	**3.15**	**HS**	**3.14**	**HS**
5. Complaint Handling				
The Baqala has an effective means of dealing with customer complaints.	3.08	HS	3.12	HS
The Baqala has a fair system for the handling of complaints.	3.10	HS	3.12	HS
The Baqalas' staff efficiently deal with customer complaints.	3.07	HS	3.27	VHS
Mean of means	**3.08**	**HS**	**3.17**	**HS**
Overall	**3.14**	**HS**	**3.15**	**HS**

Legend:

x̄ = mean,
VI = verbal interpretation

HS = High Satisfaction (2.50 - 3.25)
LS = Low Satisfaction (1.75 - 2.49)
VLS = Very Low Satisfaction. (1.00 - 1.74)

VHS = Very High Satisfaction (3.25 - 4.00)

Table 2.6 displays the significant differences of the customers' level of satisfaction grouped according to age. The results show that older consumers perceive a high level of satisfaction when grouped with an overall mean of 3.15. As for dimensions, the highest was ***Personal Interaction*** with a mean of 3.27, And the lowest was ***Internal Store Environment*** with a mean of 2.94 Whereas the younger consumer's perceived a high level of satisfaction when grouped with an overall mean of 3.14. As for the dimensions, the highest was ***Personal Interaction*** with a mean of 3.27 and the lowest was ***Internal Store Environment*** with a mean of 2.95. The results revealed that both younger and older consumers share a similar level of satisfaction, with ***Personal interaction*** standing out as the most appreciated aspect of their shopping experience. This suggested that, regardless of age, customers value communication and service

during their shopping trips. The similarities across age groups highlights the importance of individual characteristics over demographic segmentation in understanding buying behavior (Slabá, 2020). Retailers can capitalize on this insight by ensuring that personal engagement remains a priority, improving satisfaction across the board.

The results revealed that both younger and older consumers share a similar level of satisfaction with *personal interaction*, it stands out as the most appreciated aspect of their shopping experience receiving the highest rating among the other dimensions.

This suggested that, regardless of age, customers value communication and service during their shopping trips. This highlighted that *personal interaction* is the highest dimension while the *internal store environment* has gotten the lowest dimension meaning that the baqalas did not meet the expectations of the customers in terms of attractive decorations, attractive physical activities, attractive product and promotional displays, attractive materials associated with their service, and spacing of displays, also indicating areas that retailers should prioritize for enhancing satisfaction across different age groups. But overall, both is significant in shaping their overall satisfaction, The *internal store environment* could be enhanced by improving its lighting to complement the merchandise, music, subtle scents and layout to ensure the displays are appealing and neat, while also prioritizing congruent design elements (Kodali et al., 2021). In summary, the younger and older customers are very satisfied with *personal interaction* in baqalas. The very high satisfactory result implies that younger customers are satisfied when a staff is courteous and willing to help them. Younger customers may experience enhanced communication with staff due to the potential for shared experiences and a closer sense of communication (Subramanian, 2018). While for older customers they are satisfied when they are given *personal interaction* which includes assistance, prompt service and find the staff courteous as these contributes to their social connectedness and sense of belonging, that enhances their social well-being (Altinay, et al., 2018) As for the lowest dimension, the *internal store environment,* both younger and older customer's lowest dimension, emphasizing similarities. This implies that the baqalas may lack in terms of visual appeal such as inadequate lighting and layout (De Villiers et al., 2018).

Table 2.7
Customers' Level of Satisfaction in Baqala Store Shopping When Grouped According to Sex in Merchandise Value

Dimensions	Male		Female	
	$\bar{x}$	VI	$\bar{x}$	VI
2.7 Merchandise Value				
The products of the Baqala are of good quality.	3.19	HS	3.27	VHS
The prices at the Baqala offer value for money.	3.27	VHS	3.27	VHS
The Baqala's products function the way they are supposed to.	3.44	VHS	3.38	VHS
The Baqala's products are free from defects and flaws.	3.17	HS	2.95	HS
Mean of means	**3.27**	**VHS**	**3.22**	**HS**

Legend:
$\bar{x}$ = mean,   *HS = High Satisfaction   (2.50 - 3.25)*
VI = verbal interpretation   *LS = Low Satisfaction   (1.75 - 2.49)*
                                                   VLS = Very Low Satisfaction.   (1.00 - 1.74)
VHS = Very High Satisfaction   (3.25 - 4.00)

Table 2.7 displays the differences of the customers' level of satisfaction grouped according to sex in *Merchandise Value*. The results show that younger consumers perceive a very high level of satisfaction when grouped with an overall mean of 3.27, while the older consumers perceive a high level of satisfaction

when grouped with an overall mean of 3.22. Young consumers tend to evaluate *merchandise value* based on visual displays, promotional offers, and perceived quality (Maharani & Helmi., 2020)

Table 2.8

Customers' Level of Satisfaction in Baqala Store Shopping When Grouped According to Sex in Internal Store Environment

Dimensions	Male $\bar{x}$	Male VI	Female $\bar{x}$	Female VI
2.8 Internal Store Environment				
The Baqala has attractive decor.	2.81	HS	2.82	HS
The Baqala has attractive physical facilities (check-out counters, shelves, etc).	3.00	HS	2.96	HS
The Baqala has attractive product and promotional displays.	3.06	HS	2.90	HS
The Baqala has attractive materials associated with their service (shopping bags, catalogs, etc).	3.00	HS	2.89	HS
The Baqala has well-spaced product displays.	3.06	HS	3.04	HS
Mean of means	**2.98**	**HS**	**2.92**	**HS**

Legend:
$\bar{x}$ = *mean,*
VI = verbal interpretation

HS = High Satisfaction (2.50 - 3.25)
LS = Low Satisfaction (1.75 - 2.49)
VLS = Very Low Satisfaction. (1.00 - 1.74)

VHS = Very High Satisfaction (3.25 - 4.00)

Table 2.8 displays the differences of the customers' level of satisfaction grouped according to sex in the *Internal Store Environment*. The results show that younger consumers perceive a high level of satisfaction when grouped with an overall mean of 2.98, while the older consumers perceive a high level of satisfaction when grouped with an overall mean of 2.92. Younger consumers are particularly sensitive to retail aesthetics, such as store layout, cleanliness, ambiance, and ease of navigation (Khan et al. 2022)

Table 2.9

Customers' Level of Satisfaction in Baqala Store Shopping When Grouped According to Sex in Personal Interaction

Dimensions	Male $\bar{x}$	Male VI	Female $\bar{x}$	Female VI
2.9 Personal Interaction				
The Baqala's staff give me personal attention.	3.31	HS	3.09	HS
The Baqala's staff are always willing to help me.	3.42	VHS	3.24	VHS
The Baqala's staff provide me with prompt service.	3.38	HS	3.21	VHS
The Baqala's staff are courteous.	3.42	VHS	3.27	VHS
Mean of means	**3.38**	**VHS**	**3.20**	**VHS**

Legend:
$\bar{x}$ = *mean,*
VI = verbal interpretation

HS = High Satisfaction (2.50 - 3.25)
LS = Low Satisfaction (1.75 - 2.49)
VLS = Very Low Satisfaction. (1.00 - 1.74)

VHS = Very High Satisfaction (3.25 - 4.00)

Table 2.9 displays the differences of the customers' level of satisfaction grouped according to sex in *Personal Interaction*. The results show that younger consumers perceive a very high level of satisfaction when grouped with an overall mean of 3.38, while the older consumers perceive a high level of satisfaction when grouped with an overall mean of 3.20. *Personal interactions* with salespeople significantly affect customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth, especially in retail contexts where trust and rapport play a vital role (Ma & Kim 2021).

Table 2.10

Customers' Level of Satisfaction in Baqala Store Shopping When Grouped According to Sex in Merchandise Variety

Dimensions	Male $\bar{x}$	Male VI	Female $\bar{x}$	Female VI
2.10 Merchandise Variety				
The Baqala offers a choice of different brand names.	3.06	HS	3.20	HS
The Baqala offers a good selection of well-known brands.	3.13	HS	3.20	HS
The Baqala offers a variety of brand names that are available in many different sizes.	3.17	HS	3.13	HS
The Baqala offers a wide variety of products.	3.12	HS	3.10	HS
Mean of means	**3.12**	**HS**	**3.16**	**HS**

Legend:
$\bar{x}$ = mean,   *HS = High Satisfaction   (2.50 - 3.25)*
VI = verbal interpretation   *LS = Low Satisfaction   (1.75 - 2.49)*
                                                                    VLS = Very Low Satisfaction.   (1.00 - 1.74)

VHS = Very High Satisfaction   (3.25 - 4.00)

Table 2.10 displays the differences of the customers' level of satisfaction grouped according to sex in *Merchandise Variety*. The results show that younger consumers perceive a high level of satisfaction when grouped with an overall mean of 3.12, while the older consumers perceive a high level of satisfaction when grouped with an overall mean of 3.16. *Merchandise variety* plays a pivotal role in enhancing customer convenience and satisfaction, especially in fast-paced lifestyles where consumers value options and ease of access (Phang et al. 2024).

Table 2.11

Customers' Level of Satisfaction in Baqala Store Shopping When Grouped According to Sex in Complaint Handling

Dimensions	Male $\bar{x}$	Male VI	Female $\bar{x}$	Female VI
2.11 Complaint Handling				
The Baqala has an effective means of dealing with customer complaints.	3.23	HS	3.02	HS
The Baqala has a fair system for the handling of complaints.	3.15	HS	3.09	HS
The Baqalas' staff efficiently deal with customer complaints.	3.17	HS	3.18	HS
Mean of means	**3.19**	**HS**	**3.10**	**HS**

Legend:
$\bar{x}$ = mean,
VI = verbal interpretation

VHS = Very High Satisfaction (3.25 - 4.00)   LS = Low Satisfaction (1.75 - 2.49)

HS = High Satisfaction (2.50 - 3.25)   VLS = Very Low Satisfaction. (1.00 - 1.74)

Table 2.11 displays the differences of the customers' level of satisfaction grouped according to sex in *Complaint Handling*. The results show that younger consumers perceive a high level of satisfaction when grouped with an overall mean of 3.19, while the older consumers perceive a high level of satisfaction when grouped with an overall mean of 3.10. Effective *complaint handling* not only addresses customer concerns but also plays a critical role in maintaining positive customer relationships (Arumugam & Subramaniam., 2020).

Table 2.12
Customers' Level of Satisfaction in Baqala Store Shopping When Grouped According to Sex

Dimensions	Male x̄	Male VI	Female x̄	Female VI
1. Merchandise Value				
The products of the Baqala are of good quality.	3.19	HS	3.27	VHS
The prices at the Baqala offer value for money.	3.27	VHS	3.27	VHS
The Baqala's products function the way they are supposed to.	3.44	VHS	3.38	VHS
The Baqala's products are free from defects and flaws.	3.17	HS	2.95	HS
Mean of means	**3.27**	**VHS**	**3.22**	**HS**
2. Internal Store Environment				
The Baqala has attractive decor.	2.81	HS	2.82	HS
The Baqala has attractive physical facilities (check-out counters, shelves, etc).	3.00	HS	2.96	HS
The Baqala has attractive product and promotional displays.	3.06	HS	2.90	HS
The Baqala has attractive materials associated with their service (shopping bags, catalogs, etc).	3.00	HS	2.89	HS
The Baqala has well-spaced product displays.	3.06	HS	3.04	HS
Mean of means	**2.98**	**HS**	**2.92**	**HS**
3. Personal Interaction				
The Baqala's staff give me personal attention.	3.31	VHS	3.09	HS
The Baqala's staff are always willing to help me.	3.42	VHS	3.24	HS
The Baqala's staff provide me with prompt service.	3.38	VHS	3.21	HS
The Baqala's staff are courteous.	3.42	VHS	3.27	VHS
Mean of means	**3.38**	**VHS**	**3.20**	**HS**
4. Merchandise Variety				
The Baqala offers a choice of different brand names.	3.06	HS	3.20	HS
The Baqala offers a good selection of well-known brands.	3.13	HS	3.20	HS
The Baqala offers a variety of brand names that are available in many different sizes.	3.17	HS	3.13	HS
The Baqala offers a wide variety of products.	3.12	HS	3.10	HS
Mean of means	**3.12**	**HS**	**3.16**	**HS**
5. Complaint Handling				
The Baqala has an effective means of dealing with customer complaints.	3.23	HS	3.02	HS
The Baqala has a fair system for the handling of complaints.	3.15	HS	3.09	HS
The Baqalas' staff efficiently deal with customer complaints.	3.17	HS	3.18	HS
Mean of means	**3.19**	**HS**	**3.10**	**HS**
Overall	**3.19**	**HS**	**3.12**	**HS**

Legend:

x̄ = mean,   HS = High Satisfaction (2.50 - 3.25)

VI = verbal interpretation   LS = Low Satisfaction (1.75 - 2.49)

        VLS = Very Low Satisfaction. (1.00 - 1.74)

VHS = Very High Satisfaction (3.25 - 4.00)

Table 2.12 displays the significant differences of the customers' level of satisfaction grouped according to sex. It shows the customer satisfaction levels in a Baqala store, comparing responses from male and female customers across various dimensions such as *merchandise value*, *store environment*, *personal interaction, merchandise variety,* and *complaint handling*.

For the male, the dimension with the highest weighted mean is ***Personal Interaction*** with a mean of 3.38, the male population of respondents are ***very satisfied*** with their ***Personal Interactions*** held in the shop. As for the dimension with the lowest weighted mean for the male respondents, it resulted in the ***Internal Store Environment*** with a mean of means of 2.98 with a Verbal Interpretation of being Highly Satisfied with the environment, so despite it having the lowest mean of means the results are still favorable.

The findings underscore that ***personal interaction*** played a vital role in shaping the shopping experience for male customers, reinforcing the assertion that customer engagement positively impacts customer co-creation and relationship quality, with stronger associations in service-based contexts compared to product-based contexts (Behnam et al., 2021). The strong reception toward *personal interaction* suggested that male shoppers often rely on these exchanges—whether through staff assistance, seeking opinions from fellow customers, or forming relationships within the store—as a core part of their decision-making process. This implied that for male customers, the social aspect of shopping was not just a supplementary experience but an integral factor that enhanced their overall perception of the store.

At the same time, while the ***internal store environment*** was rated the lowest among male respondents, its positive evaluation suggests that store design still holds considerable influence over their shopping behavior. A retail environment with an impactful store design and atmosphere significantly influences shoppers' purchase decisions, whereas elements like lighting, color, music, and signage have minimal effect on consumer behavior (Khan et al., 2022). The fact that male shoppers still found the store environment favorable implied that elements such as layout, product accessibility, and ambiance contribute to their satisfaction, even if not as prominently as *personal interaction*. This reinforced the idea that for male customers, a well-designed store was not merely a backdrop but an active component that affected their engagement, time spent in-store, and likelihood of making a purchase.

For the female population, the dimension with the highest mean of means was ***Merchandise Value*** being 3.22 yielding a High Level of Satisfaction with their Merchandise. Meanwhile, similar to the male respondents, the ***Internal Store Environment*** also had the lowest mean of means of 2.92 which makes it the dimension that had the most room for improvement.

These results translate to female customers prioritizing *merchandise value* as the most significant factor in their shopping experience on consumer purchasing behavior (Safitri, 2018). The high satisfaction with ***merchandise value*** suggests that female shoppers are satisfied with the product's quality, value, and product function precision when evaluating their purchases. This indicated that well-priced and quality-inspected products enhance their overall satisfaction from the store, making *merchandise value* a central dimension for female customers' satisfaction. Unlike male customers, who are more satisfied with *personal interaction*, female customers appear to be more product-focused, emphasizing the tangible benefits of their purchases over social engagement within the store.

However, similar to male respondents, the ***internal store environment*** was rated the lowest, signifying that while it may not be the primary driver of satisfaction, it still holds an essential role in the overall shopping experience. For female customers, the store environment may not overshadow *merchandise value*, but its impact on ease of navigation, product accessibility, and physical facilities remains crucial.

In summary, the results show that the male consumers of baqalas are very satisfied when having *personal interactions* with staff while female consumers are more satisfied with the baqala's *merchandise value* providing very high satisfactory results , implying that men tend to communicate more with the personnel and ask questions while women observe the prices and value of the goods sold. *Internal store environment* however received the lowest mean of means result from both male and female consumers due

to baqalas not meeting the expectations of customers in terms of attractive decorations, attractive physical activities, attractive product and promotional displays, attractive materials associated with their service, and spacing of displays, which are common to baqalas. Considering that they are typically located in commercial complexes within residential and industrial areas, this results in these stores occupying a small space that leads to overcrowded environments due to poor space management (Ndengane et al., 2021)

3. The significant difference in the customers' level of satisfaction in baqala store shopping in terms of *merchandise value, internal store environment, personal interaction, merchandise variety,* and *complaint handling*

Table 3.1
Significant Difference in the Customers' Level of Satisfaction in Baqala Store When Grouped According to Age (n=134)

Dimensions	Computed t	P-value	Sig. @ 0.05	Status of Hypothesis
Merchandise Value	0.313	0.755	Not Significant	Accepted
Internal Store Environment	0.114	0.909	Not Significant	Accepted
Personal Interaction	-0.027	0.979	Not Significant	Accepted
Merchandise Variety	0.028	0.978	Not Significant	Accepted
Complaint Handling	-0.749	0.455	Not Significant	Accepted

Legend:
Computed t = t-value   *p > 0.05 = Not Significant   (Accepted)*
P value = Probability value   *p < 0.05 = Significant   (Not Accepted)*
Sig. @ 0.05 = Significant value

Table 3.1 reveals the significant differences in the customers' level of satisfaction in baqala stores when grouped according to Age with a sample size of 134 respondents (n=134). Among the dimensions, **Personal Interaction** shows the highest P-value 0.979 (computed t = -0.027), while **Complaint Handling** had the lowest P-value of 0.455 (computed t = -0.749). The results indicated that customer satisfaction levels do not significantly differ across different age groups. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that there was no significant difference in customers' level of satisfaction in Baqala stores grouped according to age, accepted. Age does not specifically affect customer satisfaction, and it was only used as an independent variable for literature (Leninkumar, 2017).

For businesses to effectively communicate their products and target audiences, they must select the best marketing approach based on time, money, form, and efficiency (Chen, 2023). Anything that can be made available to the public for consideration, purchase, usage, or consumption in order to meet a need or want is considered a product. When developing a marketing strategy, it's essential to consider product development along with related factors such as packaging, warranty, and branding. In addition, customer behavior is essential for the store's success, as it is the key to maximizing perceived value, which in turn enhances satisfaction (Jaafri & Mansor, 2024). This implies that in Baqala stores, customer satisfaction does not significantly vary across age groups, indicating that no particular age demographic prioritizes a specific aspect of service. As all factors were found to be statistically insignificant, it suggests that businesses should focus on a broader, more inclusive approach when designing their marketing strategies, rather than targeting specific age groups.

Table   **3.2**

Significant Difference in the Customers' Level of Satisfaction in Baqala Store When Grouped According to Sex (n=134)

Dimensions	Computed t	P-value	Sig. @ 0.05	Status of Hypothesis
Merchandise Value	-0.685	0.495	Not Significant	Accepted
Internal Store Environment	-0.548	0.584	Not Significant	Accepted
Personal Interaction	-1.650	0.102	Not Significant	Accepted
Merchandise Variety	0.346	0.730	Not Significant	Accepted
Complaint Handling	-0.719	0.474	Not Significant	Accepted

Legend:

Computed t = t-value   *p > 0.05 = Not Significant   (Accepted)*
P value = Probability value   *p < 0.05 = Significant   (Not Accepted)*
Sig. @ 0.05 = Significant value

Table 3.2 shows the significant differences in the customers' level of satisfaction in baqala store when grouped according to sex with a sample size of 134 respondents Among the dimensions, *merchandise variety* showed the highest P-value of 0.730 (computed t = 0.346), while *personal interaction* had the lowest P-value of 0.102 (computed t = -1.650). The results showed that customer satisfaction was relatively similar between male and female customers. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that there was no significant difference in customers' level of satisfaction in Baqala stores grouped according to sex holds true. The result indicated that the customer satisfaction levels are not influenced by sex.

Sex does not significantly impact consumer satisfaction levels, as both male and female consumers share similar levels of contentment and commitment (Maryanti et al., 2022). Regardless of sex, customers tend to give priority to all of the factors of which were found to be not significant. A study stated that exploring other demographic factors beyond gender, such as income level, education, or shopping frequency, can provide a more sophisticated perspective on how the customer's traits influence preferences in the retail setting (KR, & Reka, 2024). This implies both male and female have a close relationship in the perception of all the dimensions.

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis which states that *there is no significant difference in the customer's level of satisfaction in baqala store shopping in terms of merchandise value, internal store environment, personal interaction, merchandise variety, and complaint handling when grouped according to age is* accepted, which means that age does not specifically affect customer satisfaction. Also the results showed that customer satisfaction was relatively similar between male and female customers. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that *there is no significant difference in customers' level of satisfaction in Baqala stores grouped according to sex* holds true. The result indicated that the customer satisfaction levels are not influenced by sex.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendation

Customer satisfaction plays a crucial role in the success of baqalas in Qatar, as these small convenience stores rely on loyal customers and the community's trust. This study explores how factors such as *merchandise value, internal store environment, personal interaction, merchandise variety, and*

complaint handling influence customer satisfaction levels of age, and sex (Terblanche and Boshoff's, 2006).

This study's demographic profile of the respondents found out that the majority of the customers were 41 years old and older with 74 respondents and 40 years old and younger with 60 respondents. With the data provided, we can imply that the majority of the customers are older people, as older people are more frequent in purchasing products in baqala stores compared to younger people (Schwendtner et al., 2024). In terms of sex, the majority were female with 82 respondents and the male with 52 respondents. The data suggests that females are more frequent in purchasing products in baqala stores compared to males, as these stores tend to attract more female customers (Savaşkan & Çatı, 2021).

In terms of customer satisfaction, age plays a moderating role in the relationship formed between the customer and the shopping experience (Maggon et a l., 2018). Both younger and older respondents reported high satisfaction with *personal interaction* having the highest score, while the *internal store environment* received the lowest for both ages. This shows that the older and younger population value the willingness and promptness of staff to assist them (Rather et al., 2021). Moreover, both populations felt the least satisfied with the decoration and materials associated with the service like plastic bags and catalogs (Brozović et al., 2021). When grouped by sex, the male group showed higher satisfaction than the female group. The male group rated *personal interaction* as the highest and the female group rated merchandise value as the highest, while both male and female groups rated *internal store environment* as the lowest. This proves that the male population is satisfied with the courteousness and personal attention that the staff had treated them in their experience. As for the female population, they are highly satisfied with the value, quality, and function of the products. However, just like the younger and older population, both male and female respondents are also least satisfied with the baqala's decoration and materials associated with their services. These findings came out as effective in determining which of the five dimensions were considered as the best in satisfaction and which needs improvement. Despite the overall high satisfaction levels of customer satisfaction, particularly with *personal interaction* and *merchandise value, improvements* to the *internal store environment* can elevate the shopping experience by further enhancing the internal store's environment which includes its lighting, music, aroma, window displays, and product setup has a significant impact on how customers behave (Cloete & Semente, 2022). Gathering information regarding these dimensions is crucial, as it will enable baqalas to identify the factors that most significantly affect customers and determine the areas with potential improvement.

There was no significant difference in satisfaction across age groups, with *personal interaction* ranking highest and *complaint handling* lowest. Similarly, sex did not significantly impact satisfaction, with both male and female customers valuing *merchandise variety* the most and *personal interaction* the least. Sex and age do not significantly influence customer satisfaction, suggesting that individuals across these demographics share similar perceptions of service quality and satisfaction (Deshwal, 2016).

The baqalas used in the study had the same pricing which is a crucial element as it ensures that price differences do not affect customer satisfaction. Consistent pricing among baqalas helps mitigate customer dissatisfaction by eliminating price variability, as observed in chain stores where uniformed pricing ensures consistency and reduces consumer sensitivity to cost differences (Benoit et al., 2020). The baqalas were also located near the proximity which was utilized to eliminate any potential bias and allowed for more consistent and comparable customer opinions. Additionally, the baqalas were of the same size which meant that customers' experiences were more unlikely to be impacted by the differences in the store's capacity. This could conclude that there are different levels of satisfaction in the different groups which could help navigate in easily targeting the specific customer preferences to align for not only diversity, but also enhance the shopping experience. Although most of the dimensions are considered as being highly satisfactory, it is recommended to ensure consistency and possibly further development by training the employees which could follow and implement all five dimensions for very high satisfaction. With an active and passionate employee to their service quality and job performance would lead to customer satisfaction would lead to fostering better experience and frequent purchases (Duong & Ng, 2025).

Baqalas in Qatar are vital retail establishments that provide daily necessities, such as food and varying products offering convenience and accessibility. This study provided valuable insights into the demographic characteristics of baqala customers, revealing that the majority were over 41 years old, with a higher percentage of female shoppers.

In terms of customer satisfaction, results showed that both younger and older customers generally had high satisfaction levels, with *personal interaction* being the most valued factor among older shoppers and *merchandise variety* ranking highest among younger ones. Males reported slightly higher satisfaction than females, though both groups consistently rated *personal interaction* as the most positive aspect and *internal store environment* as the weakest. Satisfaction also varied, emphasizing the need for baqalas to maintain strong customer engagement and improve store conditions to enhance the shopping experience. Moreover, it is concluded that there is no significant difference in the level of customer satisfaction across all dimensions according to both age and sex implying that the satisfaction levels of customers are similar.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that baqalas implement a structured Marketing Strategic Plan to align their products and services with customer preferences, particularly targeting the younger demographic and female customers. This plan should include market segmentation strategies to better cater to the diverse needs of their clientele. To enhance the customer satisfaction in terms of the *internal store environment*; improving the cleanliness, design of the baqala will help solve navigation issues and enhance satisfaction for all customers. Staff training is also crucial to improve *personal interaction* and *complaint handling* to ensure that all customers receive personalized, and efficient service. By implementing these strategic marketing initiatives, Baqalas can effectively meet customer expectations, improve overall shopping experiences, and increase customer retention, ultimately strengthening their competitive position in the market.

It is also recommended that baqala stores should focus on improving *personal interaction* and *complaint handling,* as these areas have the greatest potential to enhance customer satisfaction. Standardizing best practices across stores, using high-performing branches as models, can ensure consistency in service. Additionally, improving product variety, enhancing store aesthetics, implementing staff training programs, and offering good value products can contribute to sustained customer satisfaction. Since neither age nor sex significantly influence satisfaction, baqala owners should adopt inclusive marketing strategies that cater to a broad audience. By prioritizing customer engagement and service consistency, baqalas can strengthen customer loyalty and improve overall store performance.

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