

**IMPACT OF SUPERMARKET SERVICE QUALITY ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY:
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NORTHWESTERN PROVINCE, SRI LANKA.**

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of service quality on customer loyalty in Sri Lanka's supermarket industry. With intense competition among major supermarket chains, this research employed the SERVQUAL model to assess how service quality influences customer satisfaction and loyalty in this rapidly growing sector. This study specifically focuses on the dimensions of the SERVQUAL model, including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility. This research problem stems from the need to understand how service quality drives customer loyalty in this expanding sector. Following an extensive literature review, a theoretical framework is developed based on the SERVQUAL model and applied to the supermarket sector to explore these effects. This study adopts a quantitative deductive approach, employing a survey strategy with a cross-sectional time horizon. The study population consisted of all supermarket customers in Puttlam district, and a sample of 200 respondents was selected using convenience sampling. A structured questionnaire was distributed to the target population to collect the data. The findings revealed a significant impact of reliability, responsiveness, empathy, and tangibility on customer loyalty, whereas assurance had an insignificant impact. This study provides valuable insights into how service quality dimensions affect customer loyalty in Sri Lankan supermarkets and offers practical recommendations for managers seeking to enhance service quality and improve customer retention. Managers should prioritize reliability, responsiveness, empathy, and tangibility to boost customer loyalty in the Sri Lankan supermarket sector.

Keywords: Customer loyalty, service quality, supermarket industry