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**An Investigation of Factors Influencing Retail Service Quality Scale in the Irish  
Grocery Retail Market**

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## **Acknowledgement**

Words cannot convey my gratitude to my supervisor, **Mr. Stephen walsh** who's invaluable patience, expertise and feedback guided me through this journey. I am equally thankful to my classmates and cohort members for their help, crucial feedback sessions, and moral support.

Thanks should also go to the librarians, Research

Assistants of the NCI Library and study participants who impacted and inspired me.

Lastly, I would be remiss in not mentioning my family, especially my parents, their belief in me has kept my spirits and motivation high during this process.

## ***Abstract***

Retailers in the Irish grocery market faces significant challenges when it comes to customer loyalty. Despite considered as one of the attractive markets in the European region, there is little research conducted on consumer behavioral patterns and service quality measurements in this market. Retail Service Quality Scale increasingly perceived as effective tool to influence consumer behavioral and attitudinal loyalties of the consumers to position in an highly competitive market. Existing research regarding retail service quality scale indicates that effective service quality increases consumer satisfaction and loyalty towards to the retailer. This study aims to shed light on the ways which retail service quality scale measurements of customer shopping experiences in the context of the Irish grocery retail market. Considered as five dimension construct of Physical appearance, Reliability, Personal interaction, Problem solving, and Policy. This scale ability to understand behaviour and attitudinal patterns of consumers loyalties for key findings of consumer shopping experiences and satisfactory factors. By utilizing the implementation of retail service quality scale to access consumer behavioral patterns, retailers can exponentially increase brand perception in the consumers. Exploratory surveys conducted in Dublin,Ireland, to gather primary data to test hypothesised conceptual framework. The empirical findings of this study reveals that customer behavior patterns are significantly effected by the first order dimensions of the retail service quality scale, such as policy, personal interaction, physical aspects. Brand switching can be effectively prevented by the effective evaluation of consumer satisfaction with retail service quality scale. This study results revealed that the effectiveness of Service quality scale evaluation, results an comprehensive outlook at consumer purchase patterns to create effective brand switching barriers.

*Key words- Retail service quality scale, consumer behavior, Retail service quality, Personal interaction, customer satisfaction, shopping experience, Irish grocery retail market.*

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## **Chapter 1 : Introduction**

### **1.1 Outlines of Irish grocery retail market**

The retail grocery market in the Republic of Ireland is a vibrant, dynamic, innovative, and highly competitive market. The total population of Ireland reached 5.01 million and recorded the highest population growth by adding 1 million in the last 20 years. The 25-44 year age group is the largest age cohort, and another important aspect regarding the population is that Ireland is one of the highest birth rates in the European Union. Another aspect is that due to its geographical advantages, the Republic of Ireland is able to attract a large number of skilled labor across the world making 12.7% of its population are non-Irish residents (Irish Food Board, 2022). Ranked as high-income region (OECD, 2020), with weekly average household income reaching (unadjusted) 880 euros per week (Irish Food Board, 2022) disposable incomes of Irish households are growing attractively with a well-educated population. Fueled by these factors, grocery retail sales showed impressive growth reaching circa €12.4 billion in 2022 with the pandemic restrictions, positioning the Irish grocery retail market as one of the attractive markets in the European region.

With ease of doing business ranking of 24 in the world, The Republic of Ireland is seen as an open economy with fair trade practices (OECD, 2020), grocery retail products offered are at the highest quality. Government established statutory and regulatory bodies to monitor and streamline market competition and consumer rights. The Competition and consumer protection commission is the responsible statutory body to protect, enforce, and promote compliance with fair trade practices and consumers rights in accordance with consumer protection law in Ireland (CCPC, 2023). This market showed resilience during the covid pandemic period even though with strict lockdown procedure and high inflation recorded 9.8% growth in 2021 (Sarah O'Sullivan, 2024). Covid pandemic impact on the Irish grocery retail significantly. Due to strict lockdown measures, average spending of shoppers fell by 144 euros.

In addition, items consumers have buying changed considerably. Due to the nature of market conditions, external factors influence effected grocery retail market dynamics where significant changes observed. Brexit had mixed impact on the Irish retail market, as it induced supply chain disruptions, but also provided an attractive opportunity for domestic producers to develop local supply chains (KPMG, 2022). This reaction was not seen with the energy price hike during Russia invasion of Ukraine (Ged nash, 2023). Significant increases in energy prices, coupled with supply

chain bottlenecks and significant underlying demand price hike inflation to its highest point after pandemic to 6.1% (Irish Food Board ,2022) in 2022.

This inflation had significant impact on the Irish grocery retail market. Staple foods such as bread, pasta, Cooked poultry and butter have seen the significant increases (Ged Nash, 2023). Many customers felt the price hike in their grocery spending, estimated average Irish house hold need to increase their spending on grocery bills by 330 euros per annum (Emar Harly, 2022). This led significant changes in customer grocery shopping patterns, and retailer's response to these changes by providing economical benefits on every time purchase, adding every day low price sales to their catalogue. By the end of December 2023 grocery sales growth regained to the pre-pandemic levels and saw the highest increase in the recent year. One of the significant changes seen with grocery sales pattern payments of shoppers through digital wallets or card. In First Quarter on 2024, daily sales of groceries conducted through digital wallets in Ireland reached 44 million euros (Bank of Ireland, 2024).

## **1.2 Research Background**

Shifts in the consumer behavior patterns induced by the geopolitical and pandemic caused significant changes in Irish retailers customer relations. Customer preferences are dynamically changing after the pandemic throughout the Globe (Jayasankaraprasad Cherukuri ,2023). Product knowledge, sustainable practices started influencing shopper purchase intentions(Huiqin Zhang et al 2024). This led to retailer perception towards to the customers, started optimizing their operations, supply chain management by a customer-centric approach. Changes in their policy, store organizations, changes in product offerings, changes vendor selections were widely observed in post pandemic environment. Another important change seen in the grocery retail market is the significant rise in the sale of own brand (Bank of Ireland, 2024). Concentrated and well established market like the Irish grocery retail market, customer retention became as important as acquiring new customers. Customer satisfaction and service efficiency led in increase loyalty of consumers towards to companies evolves into multifaceted intricate element created by interplay of various internal and external factors which can be divided into two different independent constructs (Sirirat Rattanapituk, et al 2023). Traditional approach to customer retention always emphasized on behavioral loyalty of consumers where price benefits/rewards considered crucial which is an important factor which induces short term benefits this approach(Chiara, G. et al 2007) . Due to increase in customer awareness and demand for sustainable practices led to consider this approach insufficient by modern

researchers, and equal importance to emotional loyalty, as the shopping experience creates strong impact on individual and their retention (Belem Barbosa et al 2023). Initially, the Cognitive element of customer intention was classified as an independent construct of consumer loyalty but most of the researchers considers this as part of emotional construct due to its functionality on individual (James Agarwal et al 2009). Several researchers found that behavior loyalty leads to increase of repurchases and retention but price sensitive in nature ,emotional loyalty creates strong barrier to migration, brand avoidance, creates retention at price premiums, strong identity and induces advocacy(Li Zhuoqun, et al 2023). These two constructs are inter-dependent in nature, but differentiate at functionality. This conclusion established that comprehensive study requires to create inclusive structural strategies to create positive impact(Jasim Rahi Kadim et al 2023). To achieve this associated with multifaceted customer loyalty with grater retention of customers , Retail service quality was introduced for improving customer shopping experience (Bagozzi, R. P, 1999). Retail service quality defined as an approach to increase the effectiveness and competitiveness of an retail store (Ajai Pal Sharma, et al 2022). This can be determined by many ways but customer satisfaction is the most probable way to determine due to the nature of the business is customer-centric. (Rendy Indra Yusnara et al 2023).

By incorporating these dimensions of customer loyalty in the customer service greatly enhances Customer shopping experience leads to greater customer retention and increase in brand positivism in customers(Ball. D et al, 2004). Retail service quality scale has five dimensions such as physical aspects, Reliability, Personal interaction, problem solving and policy including Company attitude towards sustainable practices ,Diversity and social inclusion and corporate social responsibility(Darshan Parikh , 2006 ). Of these five dimensions also known as second Order factors of customer loyalty. First 3 dimensions are having 2 sub dimensions each under the pretext of correlative independents and these six sub dimensions are first order factors such as Appearance, convenience, promise, Doing it right, Inspiring confidence and courteousness/helpfulness(Assael, H. 1998). These above elements will be considered as core in the retail service quality and each of these dimensions which are hierarchical in nature are distinct and correlated and interdependent variables with in the frame work of the retail service quality(Abdullah Ali Mohammed Al Balushi et al ,2023). And these aspects provide strategic focus areas for the retailers for improvement where performance will be increased in significant manner (Subhasini Kaul,2007). By analyzing this dimensions in the Retail service quality scale in the context of Irish grocery retail market in quantitative manner which effectively bypass the problems of customer shopping experience in the stores along with enhancing customer loyalty towards to the brand.

### **1.3 Research Aims and objectives**

This research aims to understand factors influencing Retail Service Quality Scale in the context of Irish grocery retail market. The following Objectives are addressed through this study.

*Research Aim 1 : To understand Retail service quality in the context of Irish grocery Retail Market*

*Research aim 2: To determine factors influencing Retail service quality scale based upon functionality in the context of Irish grocery retail market.*

*Research aim 3 : To understand customer satisfaction with respect to loyalty and positive impact on Consumer based upon retail Service quality of the in the Irish grocery retail Market.*

*Research Question 1 : What is the nature, dynamics of the Irish Grocery retail market and factors inducing the dynamics in Irish grocery retail market.*

*Research Question 2 : What is the retail Service quality scale and factors determining the Retail quality scale in the context of Irish retail market.*

*Research Question 3 : What is the Retail Service Quality scale impact on customer satisfaction and enhancing brand loyalty in customer in the context of Irish retail market*

### **1.4 Research Hypothesis:**

Following hypothesis are proposed and tested through out research for the present study

*Hypotheses H1 : Retail Service Quality has a positive effect of customer intention to revisit of the the store.*

*Hypotheses H2 :Physical aspects of the store has positive side effect on retail service quality of the store.*

*Hypotheses H3 :Reliability of the the store has positive side effect on retail service quality of the store.*

*Hypotheses H4 : Active engagement of the staff with customers has positive side effect on customer repurchase intentions in the store*

*Hypotheses H5 : Effective customer care management has positive side effect on customer repurchase intentions in the store*

*Hypotheses H6 : Policies of the store has positive side effect on customer repurchase intentions of the store.*

### **1.5 Research Significance**

Main reason for researchers to focus on this particular topic to include in their research framework to analyse and possess deeper understanding of the intricate variables which have significant influence in the customer behaviour in grocery retail market in Ireland. Primary focus areas of professional research objectives includes customer interests, needs and aspirations which shapes customer buying patterns and loyalty towards to brand based upon an individual's demographic profile (Hans-Joachim von Haenisch et al 2024). Highly competitive and dynamic market such as grocery retail , retailers are working in thin margin, which needs continuous improvement to hold market position and sustainability in revenue generation (Roberto Sanchez-Gomez et al 2024). Even though this market showing promising growth , various external factors such as Covid pandemic and ever changing geopolitical environments leading supply chain bottlenecks, leading hindrances in operational margins causes significant impact on their market positions and sales(Li Zhuoqun et al 2023). Customer attitude towards to brand loyalty and selection of retailer for shopping changing rapidly for better shopping experience along with perception of value for money(Juan Erikson et al 2023). Consumers showing great interest not only in the pricing of the product , their perception of value for money greatly influence by shopping experience and ethical and sustainable practices of products they are purchasing(Abdullah Ali Mohammed Al Balushi et al 2023). Consumer shopping selection of store greatly influenced by company policies and Corporate Social Responsibility actions.

This research presented detailed analysis of Irish grocery retail market and its dynamics and customer shopping behaviour. The main focus of this research is to understand factors influencing Retail Service quality in accordance with nature and dynamics of Irish grocery retail market in a methodological way. This research collected, analyzed and presented necessary data to obtain an

scientific output to understand factors influencing retail service quality. This study presented detailed picture of how customer behaviour patterns and loyalty influenced by the service quality. Customer needs and perception of value for money changes drastically in an post pandemic situation (Pratibha Bhardwaj et al 2023). Changes induced by the competition , and shopper preferences for selection of products led retailers to integrate technology and innovative methods for customer convenience(Duan, Y et al 2022). Store selection and loyalty patterns varies in different demographic groups of consumers (Halil nadiri et al 2009).

### **1.6 Research Rationale**

This Scientific way of research has been able to produce sufficient information as well as shopping preferences in accordance with individual demographic profile in purposeful manner. Detailed accounts of the different aspects of consumer preferences in shopping has been taken under consideration in the analysis of data produced by this research. This led the possibility to structure different variables with in a framework to objectify the shopping behaviour of customers in an scientific approach and suggest the importance of work to undertake this study to analyse factors influencing the retail service quality in grocery retail sector in Ireland.

The rationale of this research to explore the multi faceted nature of customer shopping behaviour and preferences in the context of Irish grocery retail sector by analyzing Retail service quality and factors influencing service efficiency. The outcome of this research can be valuable to provide crucial insights to the stakeholders in order to enhance service quality and continuous improvement . Further studies can be conducted based upon the outcomes of this research for better understanding and in-deapth insights.

The rationale of this extensive study to formalize and conclude to a logical explanation in understanding Consumer purchase behaviour with retail service quality scale in context with Irish grocery retail market. This research work showed profound reasons for the need of study and its commercial importance in order to sustain an highly dynamic market. This topic chosen due to its significant impact on Irish economy and understanding of consumer behaviour .

### **1.7 Summery**

This research work enables to understand customer behavior patterns and provide better picture of service quality in Irish grocery retail segment. By understanding aspirations and needs of

the consumers , there is significant advantage for retailer in their consumer relations. A detailed analysis of grocery retail market dynamics and factors influencing market was presented to understand the nature of the market and its sensitivities. Major problem is that retail service quality is independent of market dynamics and its implications. Effective Retail service quality means minimization or elimination of market dynamics impact on consumer shopping experience (Shikha Bhagat et al 2024). Plethora of scientific methods employed to understand factors influencing retail service quality in detail. Through this paper , it has been clearly understood the purpose of the research and what are the factors influencing retail service quality in Irish grocery retail market.

## Chapter 2 : Literature Review

Initiation of this research to understand the service quality in the Irish grocery retail market. Since the emergence of retail segment across the globe, there is great deal of interest generated in the academia and companies to understand the different dimensions of this retail market business since economic dividends are enormous. Initially the retail market considered as whole , different scales are generated to measure service quality of this companies to process continuous improvements. Since the convergence of the markets due to globalization competition increased tremendously where customer retention became top priority since new customer acquisition costs are increasing on alarming rates. Nature of the products and services changing rapidly in the retail sector where market segmentation enabled to effective business management . In this, grocery retail sector emerged as one on the major segment in the market plays pivotal role to lead the market. Due to the nature of products and services are different grocery retail market require different standards and measurements to enable effective services to consumers in the dynamic market.

Services in this sector measured in different quality scales , SREVQUAL prepared by Parasuraman et al became foundation for service quality measurement. This is a wide framework which in general intended to used for the all segments in the retail market, changes in consumer preferences and the products offerings led to develop tailored versions of the service quality measurement scales. Retail service quality scale (RSQS) develops to measure service quality in the context of grocery retail segment. This research focused to understand dynamics of service quality in the context of Irish grocery retail market.

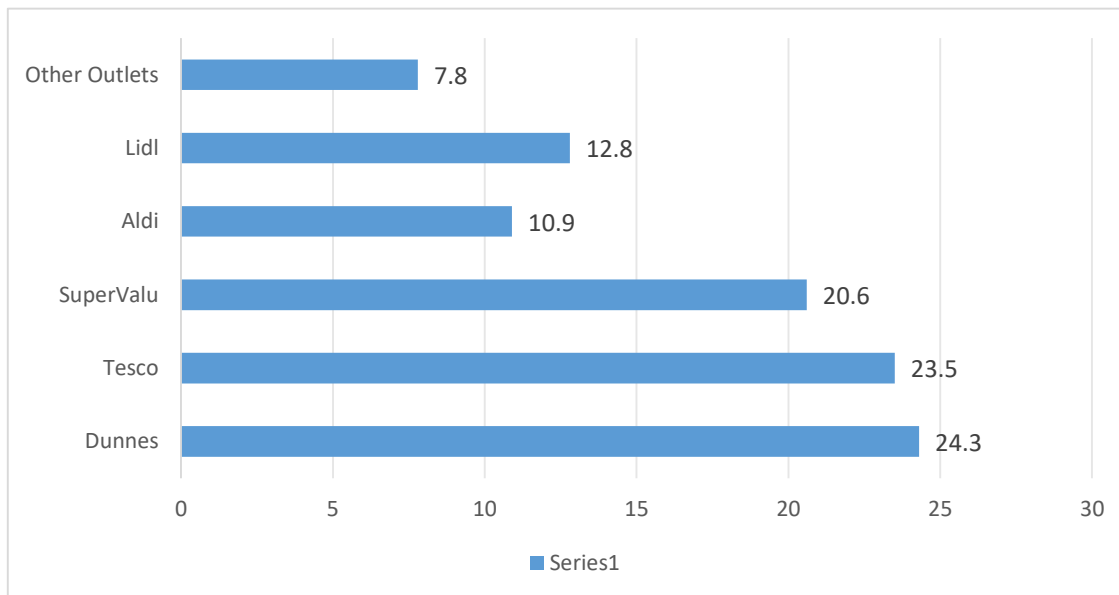
Understanding of the dimensions of retail service quality enables retailers and academia to formulate effective strategies for sustainability. Nature of the business is customer-centric in retail segment and another important factor that products offered in this market are essential goods which price changes plays crucial factor to change customer perception along with the market footprint of the company. To attain effective customer loyalty , its crucial to understand and act as per the consumer preferences. Basic retail service quality build upon the five factors with comprehensive understanding of retail market.



## 2.2 Irish Grocery retail market

Irish grocery retail market is a dynamic and vibrant sector which shown continuous growth even during global catastrophes. Due to Average household earnings stood at 881€/week in 2022 and growing, Irish grocery retail market poised for sustainable growth thus provides ample opportunities to local and international retailers. Faced multiple hurdles during pandemic period, Market able to quickly retain its growth and grow in significant numbers and play major role in Irish economy. (Irish Food board ,2022). Considered as highly competitive, Market is dominated by 3 major super market chains Tesco Express, Supervalu and dunnes stores called “big three” their positions are challenged by the relatively new players Aldi and lidl growing rapidly to acquire more market share in this high price sensitive market . Even with new players like this “the Big Three” relatively hold 68% market in Grocery retail. This kind of concentration leads to high competitiveness, nature of the market turned into price sensitive where retailers are focusing on inducing revenues by giving discounts and value added programmes to customers made short terms gains but due to their effect on its margins led them to take different approach for acquiring new customers and retaining customers by implementing multiple methods for inducing loyalty in customers.

## 2.2 Market Concentration



Irish Grocery retail Market (Kantar,2024)

While competition in the grocery retail sector typically takes place at the local level, operational decisions such as pricing are generally uniform and apply nationally. Therefore, national market share is one appropriate framework for considering the level of concentration within a sector. The Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) is a measure of the competitiveness of an market in terms of the

market concentration of its participants. Higher values of the index indicate higher market concentration and possibly higher market power as well as decreased competitiveness. A market with an HHI of less than 1,500 is considered a competitive marketplace, an HHI of 1,500 to 2,500 is moderately concentrated, and an HHI of 2,500 or greater is highly concentrated. the HHI Reported in 2001 was 2797 (Kantar,2024) indicating that the market was highly concentrated with the sector comprising a small number of players, with Tesco, Dunnes Stores, and Supervalu is calculated by squaring the market share of each firm competing in the market and then summing the resulting numbers.

It is primarily used to evaluate and understand how mergers will affect their associated markets. grocery market share data is derived from its World panel research covering the grocery purchasing habits of a number of demographically representative households in Ireland. M&S supermarkets in addition to convenience stores (e.g. Mace) are captured under ‘other outlets’ market share. It is important to note that the HHI figures calculated for 2023 are likely to be lower than reported given that one of the main operators, SuperValu, operates on franchise model that not all stores are owned and run by SuperValu, which is acquired by Musgrave in 2011. As of 2023, the HHI has decreased to 1950 indicating that the market is moderately concentrated (CCPC, 2023).

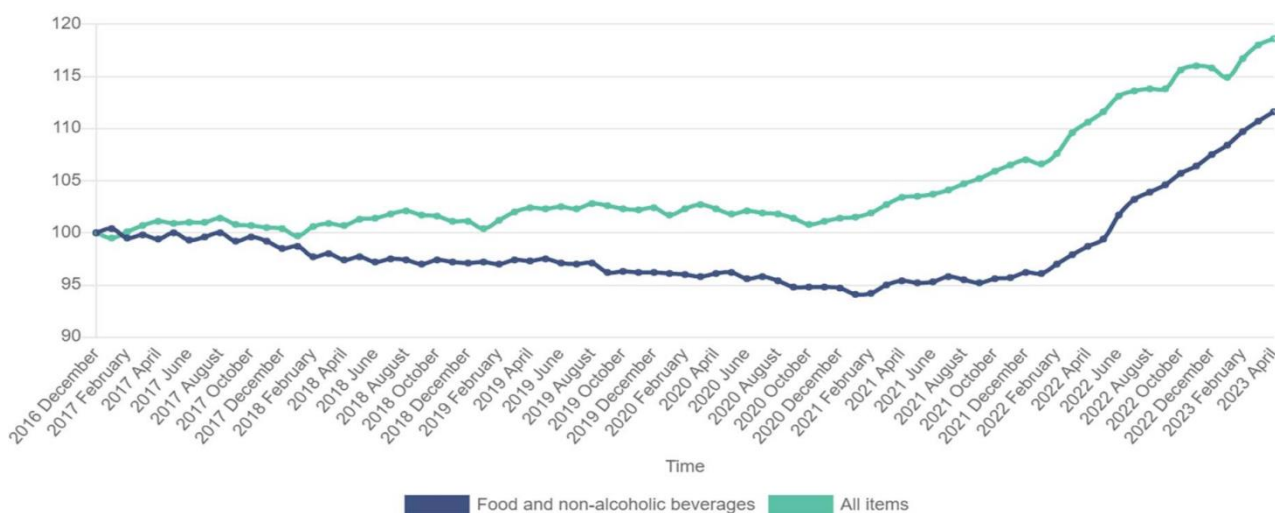
### **2.3 Macroeconomic conditions**

Its widely acknowledged that in general competition for food products takes place at a local level. Information relating to market share at this level is not publicly available. However, one driver of the reduced concentration figures at national level has been the entry and expansion of Lidl and Aldi into the market (Irish Food Board, 2022).

Both retailers operate across the country and have opened 326 stores since their entry in 2000. Therefore, it is likely that concentration levels in many local markets have also reduced in recent years. Based on this indicator, the data suggests that the level of competition in the grocery sector is likely to have increased in recent years. However, it is important to note that measurement of competition is not straightforward as the intensity of competition is not always directly observable. There is no consensus over the best measure to infer the intensity of competition. Individually, each of the measures provides only a limited amount of information, but together they can provide useful information to get a fuller understanding of the trends in competition (OECD,2020).

CPI and HICP						
	CPI				HICP	
	% monthly change		% annual change		% monthly change	% annual change
Jan 2024	-1.3		4.1		-1.4	2.7
Feb 2024	1.0		3.4		1.1	2.3
Mar 2024	0.5		2.9		0.3	1.7
Apr 2024	0.2		2.6		0.2	1.6
May 2024	0.5		2.6		0.6	2.0

**Table 1 - Consumer price Index and Harmonised Index of consumer prices(central Statistics office , 2024)**



Consumer Price Index 2017-2023 (central Statistical Office,2024)

No other major grocery retailer has entered the Irish market since 2001, all other existing major retail operators expanded their operations in recent years. Since 2001, UK based retailers Aldi and Lidl have opened and additional 146 and 143 stores, respectively. One of the benefits of new entry to a market is the ability to bring new business models and innovation. Both Lidl and Aldi provide slightly different approaches from the other major grocery retailers with smaller stores, a narrower range of products and a greater focus on private label products at low prices. The increase in their market share suggests that this has been an attractive combination for some consumers. On

the other hand, it is noteworthy that other European traders in the grocery retail sector, including some active in Great Britain and Northern Ireland have not entered the Irish market. In addition, Due to nature of economics of scale and fierce competition of planning as a potential barrier to entry and in the past has made a number of recommendations relating to reforming planning guidelines(Bank of Ireland, 2024). Market entry mechanisms in general perception understood as that the planning system can potentially be used by existing major market players to object to new comers and this may have the effect of acting as a barrier to entry – particularly in certain local areas.

The evidence we have observed suggests that the barriers to entry and expansion are generally not a deterrent at the national level given the experience of Aldi and Lidl. However, the planning system may continue to act as a barrier to new development which may risk limiting competition in certain local areas.

### **2.3 Market Dynamics**

Several factors influence dynamics in the Irish grocery retail market which creates significant changes in retailers market share and consumer relation with them. These market dynamics mentioned below are dynamics which are intrinsic nature which are induced by the stakeholders with the market excluding statutory and regulatory bodies (CCPC, 2023). Interesting issue in this that that consumer goods especially Grocery products such as meat, non alcoholic beverages and dairy products and raw materials had long established supply chain from Europe and united kingdom to The republic of Ireland. 2 of Big three retailers in the Irish grocery market tesco, supervalu are from united kingdom. Aldi and lidl also originated from united kingdom. Convenience stores such as spar and Centra are part of Musgrave group which runs in franchise model, also established international supply chain in especially in grocery materials. Due to Ireland's natural similarities with United kingdom's market and long established trading with Northern Ireland which is widely known as agrarian region. By leveraging EEC regulations it become easier to enter for different products to enter Irish market. Domestic player Dunnes established its own supply chain which has its up stream activities in domestic and international arenas especially in European and United kingdom. Until recent years Irish grocery retail market did not faced external factor influence. European Economic Commission and government of Ireland plays crucial factors to shield Irish grocery market from external influences.The covid pandemic is the First external factor that hits Irish grocery retail market in 21th century by creating unprecedented bottlenecks in supply chain and inducing demand. Russian invasion into Ukraine led another energy crisis which created negative impact on Irish

grocery market. To sustain the increased costs, retailers increased the prices of products which created huge negative impact on their market share.

### **Price**

Irish grocery retail market is highly competitive market in which price of the products is the major factor for consumer preference in shopping. Competitive pricing is crucial to sustain in an highly dynamic market where upstream activities of supply chain are bound to face significant influence of external factors. Price competition is very high in between players small percentage of price hike will leads negative impact on revenues and market share. Along with this factor statutory body of competition and consumer protection authority made special mechanisms to prevent price gauge to increase fairness in level playing field. And grocery products are comes in consumer price index list which is crucial for sustainable growth practices. In these conditions any change in the price of the products leads significant changes in the consumer behaviour and market reacts with in an opposite direction.

### **Promotions and Loyalty Programmes**

Focused on importance of price, some of the major grocery retailers compete on offering lower prices for members of the loyalty programme. In addition, grocery retailers generally offer promotions such as vouchers (e.g., spend €50 and get €10 off) or in-store deals ‘buy-one, get one half price’(CCPC, 2023).

### **Product Offering and Choice**

Its been observed that Consumers tend to engage in multiple types of shopping trips (i.e., main shop, secondary shop and top-up shop) and can switch between stores for this purpose.v Store size is a key factor in a major grocery retailer ability to serve and product offerings to be an household’s main weekly shop(Irish Food Board, 2022). Large retail stores generally sell a wider range of products providing consumers with more choice. In addition, these stores can also compete on providing a wider range of non-food products (e.g. clothing; home ware, electronics).

### **Own-brand**

The growth of own brand or private label products in supermarkets has had a significant influence on competition in the grocery market. The market share associated with own label brands grew by 151% between 2006 and 2023. Own label sales grew by 15.6% while brands grew by 8%. Value own label “had the strongest growth, up 33.4% with shoppers spending €18m more on these ranges (sarah

O'sullivan, 2024). In packed food segment brands holding 47.5% of the market with Retailer own label holding 46.9% (Irish Food Board ,2022)). By expanding their own brand offerings (particularly with the addition of more premium items which are considered higher quality than the 'value' items), major grocery retailers own-brands have become stronger competitors to local, national and international brands(CCPC, 2023).

### **Convenience**

Grocery retailers in General aimed to establish stores in convenient locations, both Residential along with commercial areas to serve grater catchment area. Currently Centra, Spar and Apple green are major player in convenience retail . These Stores can compete on a number of factors such as parking and opening hours. There is significant growth in residential areas in Dublin suburbs which high competition exists between larger retailers along with convenience retailer. Another advantage in convenience retailing that it requires significant lower investments compared with the supermarket model. This leads significant growth in convenience retailing and growth in this sub segment is optimistic.

### **Online Services**

In recent years, and particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic, online shopping for grocery items has grown. 25 Almost 1 in 5 Irish households now purchase groceries online. Although in-store shopping remains the most popular method of shopping, the growth of online sales suggests that major grocery retailers can compete over longer distances(CCPC, 2023).

## **2.5 Consumer Behaviour**

Consumer behaviour can be defined as activities people undertake when obtaining, consuming and disposing of products and services in order to fulfill and desires. This includes different processes an individual undertake to lead up to purchase, by collecting information , processing the information which includes collecting information analyzing it, comparative analysis with other products, consideration of economics and framing decision to acquire the products, utilization and disposal of the products and services(Urban G. L et al 1993). As Markets evolving thorough time, and convergence of the markets becoming natural phenomenon in the global(asmine Yeap Ai Leen et al 2011). Highly competitive markets such as in grocery retail, its crucial to understand that nature consumer behaviour, leads to greater insights in consumer shopping patterns, their preferences regarding particular products and most importantly drivers of decision making process of purchase (Zubin Sethana, 2023). Factors influencing consumer behaviour can be classified as 3 major groups

based upon their functionality and nature of influence origin (intrinsic or extrinsic). Those are The decision making process, social and cultural influence and psychological factors (Madhurima Deb et al 2014). In these factors psychological factors are considered as intrinsic factors which biases of the consumer on individual level leads the consumer behavior to instigate consumption regarding particular product or service (Christoph Teller et al, 2006). Some research studies found out behaviour loyalty is majorly depends upon psychological factors of consumer behaviour (White. K et al 2019). Decision making process and social and cultural influences are considered as the nature of influence is extrinsic on individual that conditions and social groups that consumer belonged to propelled the buying intention and purchase patterns of the consumer.

## **2.6 Consumer loyalty**

Consumer loyalty is a complex, multi dimensional concept that propels customer to choose a particular brand over its competitors (Inoue Y., et al 2022). Researchers have been discussing about the nature of loyalty in the grocery retail sector to identify the origin that it is based on a person's actions such as repurchases or based upon their thoughts (Madhurima Deb et al 2014). Repurchases alone can not provide sufficient evidence on consumer loyalty, indicating that this single factor suggest false loyalty such as low psychological attitudes but high behavioral attitudes to brands. Certain additional variables in this segment have significant effect on consumer attitude, such as discounts and low prices (Hao Cheng, et al 2024). As per cognitive theorists, who have advocated using both repurchase and attitude aspects of loyalty to assess real allegiance of strong attitudinal and high behavioural actions towards to the brand (Hsieh .F, et al 2008). This frame of mind can be effective to measure and understand how committed a customer is to a brand, and how likely they are to recommend that brand to others, and how positive their beliefs and feelings are about brand.

Enabling consumer loyalty depending upon various factors which are related to every aspect of company operations. The need of consumer loyalty propelled companies to adopt customer-centric approach in their products/services (Lisa J. Morrison Coulthard 2004). Consumer loyalty consists of 5 constructs which are independent in nature. Each type of construct propels consumer loyalty in different dimensions and its intensity towards to the brand. Interesting factor observed in these constructs are that they are vulnerable to external factors but not affected each other (Juan Erikson, 2023). major factors affecting consumer loyalty are the customer satisfaction, customer experience, trust, brand identity and perceived value. One of the best examples for customer loyalty rewarded companies is in the TESCO case in United kingdom retail market. Tesco out performed its market competitor Sainsbury's by a 27% to 18% in regards to customer loyalty and emotional

connection. The key to this success attributed to Tesco ability to form unique strong relationships with customers (Turner, J. J. et al, 2006).

### **Behaviour Loyalty**

Behaviour loyalty measures on customer actions and their repurchase intentions. This has most effective tangible benefits to company that due to behaviour loyalty customer repentance becomes higher without explicit emotional attachment or preferences over other brands (Chiara, G et al, 2007). This loyalty constructs develop based by strong influences of convenience, price and availability. This is also considered weak construct compared to other loyalties due lack of emotional bond with the brand. Building behaviour loyalty in consumers is effective in the sense that this loyalty can be developed in shorter periods of time but due to its high volatility and greater influence external factors that customer tends to look for other alternatives for better price and convenience. Economics benefits and convenience of the customers are the major factors to propel behavior loyalty. Convenience is a broader umbrella term in general to understand which in nature multi-layered factor. To enable behavior loyalty companies usually provided discounts, value added programme and flash sales.

### **Attitudinal Loyalty**

Attitudinal loyalty refers to the emotional and psychological attachment of the consumer to the brand. This loyalty build upon positivism and characterized by positive attitude towards to the brand, strong orientation toward to the brand over other competitors and willingness to promote the brand through recommendations to others. This loyalty construct consider as stronger comparative to behaviour loyalty that consumers purchases developed by strong positive mentality towards to the brand. Attitudinal loyalty fostered in customers by the brands through their culture, customer services, ethical and policy decisions. Due to its nature attitudinal loyalty is not depended upon physical benefits such as economic rewards, convenience but aligning with customers core beliefs with brand and built strong identity. Consumers having strong attitudinal loyalty does not switch brand and their affection towards to brand is an long term generated product. This loyalty generated by interactions and it requires continuous fostering to develop.

### **Cognitive loyalty**

Cognitive loyalty also called as intellect loyalty that depends upon the rational assessment of consumer on the value proposition offered by the brand. Cognitive loyalty based upon consumer assessment on product quality, pricing, features and most importantly value for money (Salem, M.,



2020). This is initial loyalty construct develops in customer and it evolves in to other constructs (Lousie O'brien, 1995). This loyalty depends upon competitive advantage of company over others since in initial approach of consumer to any brand is logical assessment of product offerings (Boshoff, C. G. B. 2004). Its depends upon consumer knowledge , rationale, perceived quality and consumer approach to value for money for the purchase. This is considered as weak loyalty construct due to its nature to evolve to other loyalty constructs (Chiara, G, 2007). Due to this phenomenon this construct need to be reinforced by either behavior or attitudinal constructs in consumers to decrease the risk of brand switching.

### **Affective loyalty**

Affective loyalty referred as emotional loyalty, that consumer develops trust with brand with positivism due to its emotional nature. This loyalty considered as stronger than cognitive and attitudinal loyalty constructs that it enables brand switching difficult even with the external factors(Inoue Y, 2022). Affective loyalty also depends upon the rationale and assessment of brand propositions and value for money while adhering with the philosophies of the brand. This develops in nature of time and customers with this loyalty does not influenced by hindrances in product or service and willingly comes forward to defend the brand against criticism(Chaudhuri A ,2001). Customers with this loyalty is also generally referred as 'Fan base' of a brand that initiation of strong positive attitude and emotional attachment comes from consumers rather than brand. This construct often develops by ethical and moral policy implementations of the company and sustained by superior quality of service and product quality.

### **Action loyalty**

Action loyalty is considered as strongest loyalty construct that it not only enables strong emotional attachment with brand also assures frequent repurchases. Action loyalty propels customers that even significant changes in product/service and quality, strong aversion towards to brand switching(Brennan. D et al, 2000) . consumers developed action loyalty have holistic approach towards to the brand with positive belonging towards to brand which enables brand to experiment different approaches and willingly become part of brand ambassadors. This greatly enhances brand presence and turn in to life style (Inoue Y.,2022). In general context achieving loyalty, refers to attaining Action loyalty due to its strong impact in creating loyal dependable consumer base which ensures repeated purchases, strong promotional content

## 2.7 Factors affecting customer loyalty

customer loyalty construct development requires an holistic approach in the products and services. Multiple factors influence customer loyalty based upon the loyalty constructs which single factor can influence multiple constructs. Brand intrinsic and extrinsic approaches towards to its philosophy , core values , sustainability practices, company ethical and moral code and fair trade practices of the business and management behaviour regarding different aspects of business(Rethina bai.R (2015)). Along with this effective communication with consumers and communication strategy is one of the key elements to develop establishment of relationship with consumers. Active listening to consumers and upgradation of the products according to the needs and desires are crucial to ensure consumer repeatability of purchase. One of the major factors which hinders consumer loyalty is the lack of trust between the consumer and seller. This bond is crucial to sustain long term relationships(Sharma, Rajesh, 2021). Time is another factor that consumer loyalty develops over the time. Due to changes in the market and consumer approaches towards to shopping , perception of the value of the product greatly varies in different age group consumers. Another emerging trend is the policy decisions of the company. Many new generational consumers are attracted towards to ethical and moral practices and demanding brands to meet those standards. Price is always a factor in consumer loyalty which enjoys significant advantage in influencing customer shopping decisions(Prateek Kalia et al 2016). Another emerging factor evolving in the retail sector that improving shopping experience generates significant changes in changing customers perception towards to retailers. This have immediate tangible benefits such as improving customer satisfaction, increase in perception of value , repeatability of consumers(Siguaw J. A., Simpson et al 1996). Convergence of the markets led retailers to attract diverse groups of consumers and awareness regarding products along with the nature of needs and requirements of consumers changing rapidly. Meeting consumer expectations due to these effects played significant role on consumer loyalty towards to retailers. Effective marketing strategies, comprehensive methods in accordance with continuous improvement techniques are crucial to enhance customer loyalty (Sirdeshmukh, D, 2002). Trust of consumers on the retailers depends upon their primary and initial interactions with the store. By focusing on effective training methods on consumer increase in the brand image will be improved. Customer loyalty is an multifaceted construct to achieve this it requires comprehensive continuous improvement plan and effective implementation required to achieve desired results.

## 2.8 Retail service quality scale

Service quality and customer satisfaction are crucial issues that affect all types of organisations in retail market, irrespective of their presence such as small or large, local or global. In particular, the quality of the service offered to the customers each time may not be similar, due to this variance in service the level of satisfaction of customers can be differential. In addition to that, the convergence of the global markets enables high concentration, competition became so stiff that high quality of service is the only tool that can lead to a competitive advantage for sustainability. To attain advantage in a such a competitive market, focus increased in customer satisfaction, most companies try to enhance their quality of service in order to strengthen their position in the market. Service quality can be defined in retail grocery sector through out the time since SERVQUAL inception. Many have defined it in the form of relative inferiority or superiority of the services provided by a retailer or group of retailers based upon their presence in the market and the number of customers they are serving.

Retail service quality scale is an improved version of SERVQUAL method developed by Zaithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (Ajai Pal Sharma et al 2022). This SERVQUAL is an assessment scale that developed to measure Service quality in the Emerging Retail sector in the context of US retail market in 1977. This Scale prepared with the focus of service performance, Operational efficiency and product quality. SERVQUAL is as gap-based conceptualization of service quality where gap indicates the extent of the realization indicates service meets the customer expectations (Subhasini kaul, 2001). This is conceptualized in the context of US retail market as single unit to measure. One of the major disadvantages in this perception that retail market in the US comprises of different segments and the nature of the product offerings and service environment is quite differential to one another. Several studies found that this gap based assessment of service performance is insufficient (Gagliano, K B et al 1994) to provide comprehensive monitoring scale in grocery retail sector that grocery retail environments are different with other segments due to the nature of the product offerings and service environment (Finn David W et al 1991.) to take an holistic approach for continuous improvement to increase customer satisfaction and enhancing over all shopping experience. First, developed in 1996 (Subhasini kaul, 2001) (Boshoff, C. G. B. 2004), by adapting Retail service quality scale method of measuring Service quality by focusing on customer satisfaction and accurate assessment of shopping experience of customer During shopping. This scale has universal applications that it can be implemented with little adjustments according to the nature and type of the market. (Brennan, D. P, 2000) observed as interesting phenomenon that how

large discount stores attracted customers by offering attractive discounts where small stores failed to retain their customer base. This in the context of United states rural area small towns. Superior quality in shopping experience boosts an effective competitive edge to an retailers over others by creating strong positive impact, taken as parameter to induce brand loyalty. Since its inception, this become effective tool to measure service quality in retail sector which greatly enhances overall service experience in great detail.

Limited study conducted on Reatail service quality in the Irish grocery retail sector even though its one of the major markets in the europe, focus shall be on continuous improvement methods by the retailers to enhance overall experience of the customer regarding multiple factors related to store .Studies observed that behaviour loyalty explicitly observed in most of consumers in highly competitive market (Anisimova, T. A. (2007). Same phenomenon observed in Indian Organized gocery retail market where Price being key factor for customer repurchase(Cherukuri Jayasankaraprasad, 2012). There are no studies conducted yet in assessing consumer loyalty in the Irish grocery market but this could have taken as consideration that where price is playing major factor. Adaptation of SREVQUAL to grocery retail sector considered as 10 dimensions of service quality scale later on, culminated into five based on the strong correlation among the each dimension. Based on the five dimensions of service quality, it can be formulated a scale, popularly known as the retail service quality scale, to measure the satisfaction of users in the services in grocery retail sector.

### **Structure of Retail service quality scale**

Retail service quality scale based upon five dimensions which are called as first order dimensions which comprises of 6 sub dimensions each.

- Physical aspects
- Reliability
- Personal interaction
- Problem solving
- Policy

### **Physical aspects**

Physical aspects refers to the conditions of the store which includes location of the store ,surrounding, amenities at the store such as parking, safety , ambiance of the store, lay out and design, store accessibility and arrangement of the products. This mostly talks with location and appearance of the

store which are having significant impact on visual perception. This dimension have two sub dimensions called appearance which considers ambiance of the store, and convenience which deals with facilities provided at the store.

### **Reliability**

Reliability in retail service quality refers with the ability of retailer delivery on promises and conducting business to meet customer expectations. These includes consistent product availability, Timely delivery and accuracy in transactions. This enables dependability and plays significant role in gaining consumer trust. This dimension have two sub dimensions promises and doing it right. Promises deals with how store delivers the requirements and store offerings , doing it right dimension deals with the delivery and efficiency of the store offerings.

### **Personal interaction**

This section refers with employee interaction with consumers for the assistance during shopping. positive and effective consumer interactions leads to greater deal in creating trust and positive attitude towards to the retailer. Cordial interactions greatly enhances customer shopping experience which leads greater positive impact which leads higher chances of repeatability. This dimension have 2 sub dimensions which are inspiring confidence and helpfulness and courteousness.

### **Problem solving**

Problem solving section in the retail service quality refers to ability to address customers issues. These are comprises of handling customer complaints , flexibility in handling special requests and needs of the customers. This is crucial to understand needs and requirements of the customers and resolving the issues arise during shopping. Effective problem solving reflects retailer commitment towards to customer service leads significant impact on consumer loyalty.

### **Policy**

Policy refers to the retailer philosophy towards to the business in an holistic approach. Emergence in consumer awareness in the practices and approaches to different socioeconomic factors leads fair practices in the conduct of business. This policy includes internal operational handling, transparency in business operations and practices of sustainability. Consumers considering company policies. Consumers considering retailer policies one of the factor in shopping selection which plays great deal in creating positive impact in consumer approach towards to retailer.

## 2.9 Summery

Irish grocery retail market is one of the emerging markets in European markets. This is an highly competitive , dynamic market where market entry requires specific requirements. Dominated by 3 major players the Irish grocery retail sector showing promising growth in the near future. Due to nature of market is moderately concentrated, consumer loyalty towards to retailers are highly volatile. To mitigate this retailer are employing different approaches to retain customers and assure repeatability of purchases(Soyounfg Kim, 2002). Retail service quality scale is developed to ensure constant monitoring and generating effective an accurate data to measure customer experience during shopping. This is five dimensional scale which comprises of overall operations of the store in order to enhance shopping experience to increase customer loyalty towards to the store. These dimensions starts from physical appearance of the store to post service customer relationship. Implementation of retail service quality has huge benefits towards retailers that it has ability to produce tangible results which are effective to enhance shopping experience and service quality.

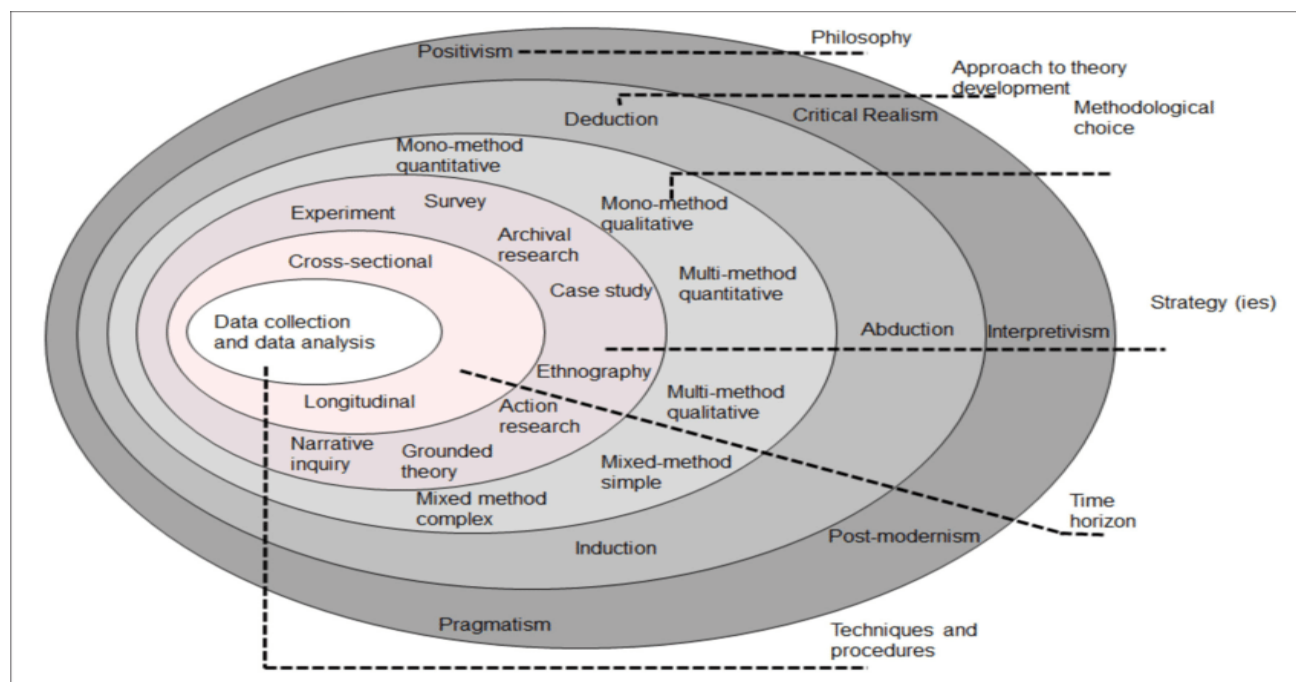
## Chapter 3: Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

For any study to undertake its essential to employ various techniques and methodologies to create a comprehensive analysis and understanding of the selected topic. Selection and implementation of methodology play a crucial role in the research endeavor. This chapter comprises detailed description and contributions of the techniques employed to data generation, evaluation, and justification of the selection approaches to implement for the analysis. The researcher uses primary data gathering approach in the next section to provide a detailed account of the selected topic in accordance with independent thought by excluding third-party influence. Selection and incorporation of quantitative methodologies in the study were justified with indepth understanding of the selected problem.

### 3.2 Research Onion

Research onion can be defined as an structural framework that outlines various strategies and techniques for obtaining aims and purposes of the selected research(saunders et al 2019). The research Onion is of developing and implementing strategies and methods deemed to necessary to obtain objectives while adhering scientific approaches for data collection and analysis.



**Research Onion (saunders et al , 2019)**

Research methodology of this study integrated below mentioned subjects in the process

- Research Philosophy
- Research Approach
- Research Strategy
- Choices
- Time Horizon
- Techniques and Procedures

For better understanding of these sub-structures of the research onion can be outlined, i.e. for instance, research philosophy is defined as a belief that the structure and framework for the design and execution of the research study (Dhall, P. 2019). Strategies implemented for data generation and analysis are defined by the research design. Techniques implemented for obtaining data will determine the generation of data of similar aspects that might be gathered. While the sampling techniques abbreviate how the data of this particular research to reach participants. Subsequently, the framework of the research methodology explains the process to evaluate the data obtained by the sampling process, in accordance with the ethical requirements of this study were thoroughly stated in the ethical consideration section.

### **Justification**

According to (Kothari, C. R. 2015), the selection of the research onion as the base point for the research methodology step for responsible for framing an structured procedure for employing effective methods and techniques by which attaining the long term value of the generated data can be managed. The consideration of the research onion determines the limitations and focus areas of data collection and analysis methods with the focus to induce credibility in long term impact of the research topic. Further, the research onion contains specific procedures adhering to creation of long term value research value.

### **3.3 Research Philosophy**

Four major types of constructs found in research philosophy, those are Positivism, Interpretivism, realism and pragmatism (Dhall, P. 2019) which are taken to consider to frame the research procedure and defining the structure of the research project to carry out a detailed study of chosen topic. The study of the project capabilities of identifying realism and objectives based upon the ontology and construct of the research philosophy. Research philosophy helps to generate a clear picture of the



research intentions and assumptions, nature of the reality of the focused area, and the nature of the information and most important, it plays crucial role to define the relationship between research and researcher (Dhall, P. 2019). Academics can utilize the nature of the flow, knowledge and information about a study are collected, defined using the epistemological properties of research philosophy, which enables to explain the method employed to collect and analyse the information that has been acquired. The positivist paradigm was selected for this research study due to its significance to allows information to be evaluated independently without external factor influences(Kothari, C. R. 2015).The approach derives its credibility by presenting an observational perspective on the research topic.

### **3.4 Research approach**

Research approach refers strategy and directions adopted to conduct a constructive study to guide the researcher. Adopting correct research approach is crucial due to its nature to drive the study to enable addressing the research problem, data processing and most importantly ability to derive conclusions based upon the information available. Quantitative research approach was employed for this research due to its ability to precise identification of the focused subject by utilizing various statistical techniques and methodologies to be utilized to analyse data according to the standards as per the outlines drawn according to research Strategy (Kothari, C. R. 2015). This led to choose Quantitative approach to employ to execute this particular research.

Main supportive argument for this choice is Quantitative approach has the ability to precise analysis of the gathered information in accordance with statistical techniques. The statistical techniques employment to analyze the data gathered creates exceptional evaluation outputs that can be measurable and applicable in an effective manner. This leads significant enhancement of the value of the research topic that it can be extended for long term. Due to these reasons to conduct this study quantitative approach method has been chosen.

### **Justification**

Quantitative approach has the ability to employ statistical techniques in effective manner (Kothari, C. R. 2015). This research contains enhanced analytical knowledge of the information gathered regarding the objectives and aims of the subject chosen. Researcher employed both qualitative and qualitative methodologies for this research, and the quantitative approach implementation presents better picture of the findings and concepts are the further considerations to take The deductive approach as appropriate for conducting this research(Gupta, A. & Gupta, N., 2022).

### **3.5 Research Strategy**

The Survey approach has been connected to the research methodology used in this work. The project was able to accurately analyse the variables it had acquired by selecting the technique, and it was also able to provide a full understanding of the subject by applying the evaluation by collecting data from large group of individuals by standardized practices (Gupta & Gupta, 2022). The project used the evaluation of the Survey strategy to carry out an analysis based on the hypothesis. The study project has benefited from the real time data collected to gain a complete comprehension of the selected topic while keeping in mind both theoretical and statistical ideas. By using a quantitative research approach, it will be possible to examine factors influencing retail service quality in an highly competitive market such as the Irish grocery retail sector.

### **Justification**

Survey strategy approach has been selected for its utility for for collective large sample data from targeted population, and flexibility for include diverse variables in an single structural framework to derive multi variable data pool to formalize standardize output. This strategy is effective especially when research objectives involves collection of different variables and understandings of large population. This project was greatly benefited by collecting real time data to analyse and frame an comprehensive understanding of the selected topic in accordance with theoretical and statistical theories. By implementing survey strategy approach in this particular study for better understanding factors influencing retail service quality scale in the Irish grocery retail sector. Data gathered by survey strategy shed significant insights in this particular topic.

### **3.6 Choices**

Research choice refers to the methodological path to derive logical conclusions to meet the objectives defined by the research design. There are two primary research choices qualitative and quantitative methods (Kothari, C. R. 2015). Selection of research choices depends upon various factors such as the philosophical stance of the research, research problem, framework of research methodology, and type of the data required and availability of resources to conduct efficient research. Quantitative research choice characterized by the use of numerical data, statistical data analysis. This is very effective to measure objectives in effective manner , test hypotheses and establishment of cause and effect relationships(Gupta, A. & Gupta, N., 2022). Quantitative research choice based upon the research philosophy of positivism that reality of the data can be quantified and measured. Qualitative research choice involves collection of non numerical data mostly descriptive nature to

explore complex issues and provide pathfinder analysis (Dhall, P. 2019). This choice typically chosen to explore meanings, experiences and complex social issues. This choice based upon the research philosophy of interpretivism, emphasizes on subjective experiences and descriptive analysis of issues in the context of individuals.

### **Justification**

Choice of research methodology majorly depends upon the strategy of the project undertaken. For this research, Quantitative research choice taken with mono-method approach due to the data collected during in this research will be evaluated and measured in quantitative manner. By employing mono method approach an effective outcome can be derived by focusing specific variable analysis with out external influence to eliminate interference in result generation.

### **3.7 Time Horizon**

Time horizon is an crucial element in research methodology to shape research design, execution and interpretation, resource allocation of the study. Time horizon refers temporal framework which within the research conducted. In-depth analysis on time horizon in the research design provides clear understanding in research planning, setting up realistic expectations and most importantly choosing appropriate research methods. Time horizon divided in to two types based upon characteristics, cross-sectional and longitudinal time horizons (saunders et al 2019). These two types varies with the temporal frame work where cross-sectional time horizon focused upon collection of data on a single point of time or with in a short period. This provides what is called snap shot interpretation of specific observation of condition at short period of time. This differentiated longitudinal time horizon method that enables research can be conducted for extended period of time and collection of data with repeated objectives and observations by changing variables with in single research design. Longitudinal time horizon employs to track changes over time, trends, patterns and relationships for extended period of times. For this particular research Cross-sectional time horizon taken to develop research design and framework.

### **Justification**

Cross-sectional time horizon effective in particular to analyse statistical data of a condition, description of specific characteristics of population, comparative analysis of different variables in an specific point of time or during short time period. Choice of cross-sectional time horizon brings relativity of current trends with the research. This enables to provide strong positivism on the research by pathfinder understanding of the factors influencing retail service quality in grocery retail

market in Ireland that exposed to various external factors in recent times. Incorporation of Cross-sectional time horizon in research design enables to highlights the growth as well as segmentation of the research in effective manner.

### **3.8 Research Procedures and techniques**

Research procedures and techniques refers to the spectrum of methods and steps researchers employed to collect, analyse and interpret data in order to test the proposed hypotheses and objectives. Type of procedures and techniques depends upon research design, nature of research and aims and objectives of the study. For increase the validity of this research undertaken Probability sampling approach has been chosen to employ for data gathering and analysis.

#### **Justification**

Probability sampling is one of the popular data collection methods in the academic research. Main advantage with this sampling method is to each member of selected population has equal opportunity to be part of the sample. This procedure is optimum to obtain especially in this research objectives requirements opinions of entire population, makes the selected sampling shall be generalized to define and conclude objectively phenomenon of the larger population. Another advantages for this random probability sampling method is in the nature of simplicity, unbiased approach and generalization of the outcomes for larger population.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations are critical factors in the this research, ensuring its rights, dignity and data protection of privacy of the data and anonymity of participants. Adhering ethical guidelines is essential for upholding integrity of the research process for gaining trust among the stakeholders i.e, institutions, participants and the public. Adhering ethical practices enables the relativity of the project with the chosen subject. For this research, Ethical practices are followed as per the guidelines of British Psychological society codes of ethics and conducts in accordance with National college of Ireland ethics manual for academic research. This Research undertaken survey in Dublin, Ireland with the voluntary participation of every participant with recorded consent and from a total number of 88 participants based in Dublin, Ireland.

### **3.10 Summery**

To present an accurate result of the research undertaken, accurate methodologies and techniques were employed. By integrating ethical considerations integration of choices and research methodology framework in effective manner. Each part of research methodology and the justifications for presented in this part of project. The nature of quantitative methods in accordance with primary data collection and analyze by using statistical data analysis to gain insights of the research in accordance with aims and objectives defined with in the research framework. The cross-sectional research was chosen to effectively execute this research objectives to derive effective outcome by effective statistical procedures and methods to evaluate primary data. An inclusive research methodology was employed while considering all the components of research onion layered in an systematic approach to understand factors affecting research service quality in the Irish grocery retail market. Use of positivism in research methodology justified by providing its utility in creating strong base to understand the problem and derive objectives and frame competent research questions in complete independence of external factor influence. Implementation of these methods helps to achieve accomplish the aims and objectives framed in the structural framework of the research.

## **Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion**

### **4.1 Questionnaire prepared for the survey**

This Questionnaire comprises of all aspects of retail service quality scale as mentioned in literature review. Studies reported that each dimension have equal importance but does not need to frame same number of questions shall be framed in the survey questionnaire (Subhashini Kaul , 2007)(Sundararaj, V. 2021). Cumulative effect of each dimension shall be considered as equal irrespective of the number of questions posed in that segment (Supipi P. B. Kodithuwakku et al 2023). demographic information sensitive and intrusive questions related to explore much indepth analysis of participant grouping are eliminated due to constraints regarding data secrecy and fear of individual lack of support in participation this study. Basic Retail service quality scale comprises of 5 dimensions which are physical aspects, reliability ,problem solving, personal interaction and Policy. These 5 dimensions are called as first order factors. 3 of this first order factor possess 2 of each sub dimensions which are called as second order factors. Physical aspects having two sub dimensions , Appearance and convenience, reliability having two sub dimensions, promises and doing it right, personal interactions have two sub dimensions which are helpfulness/courteousness and inspiring confidence. Multiple studies concluded that, these are dependent variables with have high significance. Also another factor considered that the number of questions shall be varied from one dimension to other but the number of questions framed on each dimension carries equal weight among themselves. Questionnaire prepared in complete accordance with ethical and data privacy guidelines . Questionnaire prepared with the main objective to understand shopping pattern and customer satisfaction with careful understanding of participants sensitivities regarding sharing personal data such as family size, income per month, ethnicity , occupation etc. omitted in the demographic questions. Response recorded on a scale of 1-5 , Where 1- Utterly Unsatisfied , 2- Un Satisfied, 3- Neutral, 4- Satisfied, 5- Totally Satisfied.

### **4.2 Profile of respondents**

The distribution of frequencies method used to illustrate demographic data obtained by primary data collection in this research. This data initially classified to two major classes depending upon the gender,3 sub classes of each class based upon the age group that participant belonged. Respondents are classified according their gender, age group and weekly spending on the groceries. Gender classified of the collected responses are male and female. None of the respondents are identified other than these gender. Age group is classified as 3 groups, 18-25, 26-40 and 40-55. Based upon

the spending on groceries on weekly basis three groups classified 25-50, 51-100, 101-150 and 151-200.

Gender	Age Group	Frequency	Percentage in Total Participants
Female	18-25	6	6.82
	26-40	22	25
	41-55	4	4.55
<b>Total</b>		<b>32</b>	<b>36.36</b>
Male	18-25	15	17.05
	26-40	32	36.36
	41-55	9	10.23
<b>Total</b>		<b>56</b>	<b>63.64</b>

**Table 2 - Breakdown of Demographics on basis of Gender (Source- Author's analysis results)**

Gender	Spend amount weekly(in Euro)	Age group Frequency		
		18-25	26-40	41-55
<b>Female</b>	25-50	4	16	
	51-100	2	3	2
	101-150		3	
	151-200			2
<b>Male</b>	25-50	15	16	1
	51-100		12	
	101-150		3	6
	151-200		3	2

**Table 3 -Breakdown of Demographic Characteristics of survey on basis of Spending**

(Source- Author's analysis results)

The above tables represents total number of participants voluntarily participated in this research process for primary data collection. Out of total population of 88 , Male population of 63.64% is significantly higher than female participant population of 36.36%. male population of age group 26-40 is 36.36% of total population, highest among the other sub classes of the population. Accordingly male population of age group 18-25 is 17.06%, male population participated in the survey belongs to age group 41-55 is 10.23%. Female population belongs to age group 41-55 is 4.55 %, is lowest participation in the total population. Accordingly Female population of age group 18-25 is 6.82%,and Female population belongs to age group 26-40 is 25%, is highest in the females. Majority of the respondents participated in the survey in both female and males are belongs t the age group 26-40. Interestingly in the weekly spending a mount for groceries 26-40 age group predominantly fall down in 25-50 euro category but in the male 26-40 age group , frequency titled towards to 25-50 euro category, closely followed by 51-100 euros per week spending on groceries.

#### 4.3 Data analysis

Total 88 respondents participated in this survey.By employing various statistical methods, the recorded responses were analyzed to obtain results. In order to validate the responses the initial data should be validated to either consider these responses were sufficient to obtain conclusions. By employing descriptive statistical methods and their relations we can access effectiveness of the data obtained. For better understanding of the data initial analysis of means and standard deviation of the

#### 4.4 Mean and Standard deviation for demographic Information on gender

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	1.91	0.618
Weekly spending on Grocery	1.67	0.943
gender	1.36	0.484

**Table 4 - Mean and standard deviation of Demographic information based upon gender(Source- Author's analysis results)**



#### 4.5 Mean and Standard Deviation Derivatives for the Questionnaire

S.NO	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
<b>Q1</b>	4	1	5	3.19	0.149	1.397	1.951
<b>Q2</b>	4	1	5	3.08	0.137	1.289	1.660
<b>Q3</b>	4	1	5	3.82	0.116	1.089	1.185
<b>Q4</b>	4	1	5	4.43	0.093	0.868	0.754
<b>Q5</b>	4	1	5	3.14	0.136	1.279	1.636
<b>Q6</b>	4	1	5	3.73	0.149	1.396	1.948
<b>Q7</b>	4	1	5	3.63	0.134	1.253	1.570
<b>Q8</b>	4	1	5	2.56	0.124	1.163	1.353
<b>Q9</b>	4	1	5	3.14	0.163	1.533	2.349
<b>Q10</b>	4	1	5	3.08	0.124	1.167	1.361
<b>Q11</b>	4	1	5	3.13	0.115	1.081	1.168
<b>Q12</b>	4	1	5	3.26	0.141	1.326	1.758
<b>Q13</b>	4	1	5	3.20	0.141	1.323	1.751
<b>Q15</b>	4	1	5	2.99	0.142	1.335	1.781
<b>Q16</b>	4	1	5	3.40	0.129	1.209	1.461
<b>Q17</b>	4	1	5	2.84	0.161	1.508	2.273
<b>Q18</b>	4	1	5	3.07	0.126	1.182	1.398
<b>Q19</b>	4	1	5	2.83	0.150	1.408	1.982

<b>Q20</b>	4	1	5	2.83	0.150	1.408	1.982
<b>Q21</b>	4	1	5	4.14	0.121	1.136	1.292

**Table 5 - Mean and standard deviation for each question in the questionnaire(Source- Author's analysis results)**

#### Summery statistics of the Questionnaire

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	3.273	2.557	4.432	1.875	1.733	0.215	21
Item Variances	1.631	0.754	2.349	1.595	3.116	0.156	21
Inter-Item Correlations	0.343	-0.319	1.000	1.319	-3.137	0.056	21

**Table 6 - Summery statistics of the Questionnaire(Source- Author's own analysis results)**

Summery and individual descriptive analysis states that total item mean is 3.27, with the of minimum of 2.557 to maximum 4.432 with the range of 1.875. Variance is 0.215 is observed for the total number of 21 items. These items doesnot include demographic information but only for retail service quality scale. Item variances mean is 1.631 with ranage of 1.595 of minimum 0.754 and maximum 2.349. variance for this range is 0.156 . And for the inter-item correlations mean is 0.343 with range of 1.319 of minimum observed value is -0.319 and maximum vale at 1.000. variance for inter-item correlations observed is at 0.056 and deduction of maximum observed value with minimum observed value stand at -3.137. This actually present some interesting observations that even that there are good commonalities in the given data set and it can be taken considerations to prove hypotheses of the proposed research to meet its objectives.

#### 4.6 Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy and chi-Square test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure test for sampling adequacy is a statistical method to determine weather gathered data is significant to analyse weather the data is suitable for factor analysis or not. This helps to determine the presence of correlations between the variables are significant to provide strong

reliable results from factor analysis (Kothari, C. R. 2015). This usually done with Bartlett's test for sphericity, which is used to test whether correlation matrix is significantly different from identity matrix. In general perception that Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure near to 1 is higher chances of data pool for factor analysis and lesser or equal to 0.5 indicates that correlations in the variables are not enough to factor analysis that partial correlation between the variables are very high that the data is not suitable for factor analysis. This conditions occur due to smaller sample sizes and or high multi collinearity among the variables (Kothari, C. R. 2015).

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.588
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	35.667
	df	3
	Sig.	≥0.001

**Table 7- Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin Measure of sample adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity**  
(Source- Author's analysis results)

**Discussion-** For research, to conduct factor analysis for proposed retail service quality scale KMO measure is 0.588, indicates that this data is suitable for factor analysis but indicates that there is significant partial correlations among the variables. Bartlett's test for sphericity of chi-square is 35.667 with significance  $\geq 0.001$  indicates that even though there are considerable correlations between the variables and some underlying aspects presence in the data regarding the correlations between variables, and acceptable for factor analysis. This supports to conduct factor analysis but due to less KMO measure of 0.588 multi factor analysis can not be conducted with this data with sub dimensions to the proposed retail quality scale but its possible to conduct factor analysis with in the first order dimensions since data population is adequate to undertake factor analysis to obtain possible acceptance of null hypotheses but not large enough to undertake further actions in multi factor analysis.

#### 4.7 Reliability Statistic - Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's alpha is an effective statistical method to measure internal consistency in a test or survey measurement of commonality. This is widely employed to understand the commonality in the test results in accordance with rating measurement (Gupta, A. et al, 2022). Test results understood with the range that less than 0.5 is considered as poor condition of the rating system employed in the survey and the data provided is insufficient to obtain or support hypotheses. High Cronbach's Alpha test indicates that there is higher consistency with rating mechanism. Given that result ranges from 0.9 to 1.0 indicates higher consistency in the ratings but there are underlying redundancies presence in the produced data (Kothari, C. R. 2015). This test results shall be taken in to consideration to access efficiency of the test or survey results where multiple variables measured.

**Discussion-** For this research Cronbach's alpha results are 0.918 and with the number of items being 21. This indicates that there is high efficiency of synchronization in the framing of the questionnaire and the rating system but there might be underlying redundancies presence. This indicates there is strong underlying aspect of correlation between the items and variables and analysed but there might be redundancies present in the data. This can be further analyzed to get clear picture for accrual understanding of the data correlative validity. Based on standardized items Cronbach's alpha is 0.913. Both estimates that there is significant correlations between the items presented and redundancies in the data.

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.918	0.913	21

**Table 8 - Test results of Cronbach' Alpha (Source- Author's analysis results)**

#### 4.8 ANOVA (analysis of variance) with Friedman's Test

Friedman's test is a non parametric test alternative test to the repeated measure of ANOVA, in situations to assess ordinal data. This test is also employed when test data assumptions are not met with parametric tests. It designed to evaluate different conditions over multiple measurements from the same subjects. This test is suitable for ordinal data where assumptions are normally considered as violated or possibility of violation is highly likely (Gupta, A. et al, 2022). This test uses mean ranks

are significantly different across various conditions. Friedman's test employs chi-square distribution to compare the p-values to determine significant difference between conditions. This is significant to determine validity of hypotheses. If p-values are lesser than 0.005 there is higher degree of possibility of rejection of null hypotheses (Kothari, C. R. 2015). Mean square value is essential to determine Friedman's test to access the squared means value distributed across the ranks and grand mean of ranks. In general there is conditions for limitations and grouping to assume the results, Friedman's test of chi-square shall be in less number with p-values equal or higher than 0.005. If chi-square test given higher ranks with p-value lesser than 0.005 null hypotheses shall be rejected (Kothari, C. R. 2015).

#### 4.9 Kendall's Coefficient of concordance(W)

Kendall's coefficient is a measure to access the agreement among the participants while ranking same set of items. It specially employed to evaluate consistency of the rankings. This is not useful to examine the other aspects of statistical data analysis but provides great insights in the ranking system employed and the agreement among the raters for different subjects (Gupta, A. et al, 2022). In general Kendall's Coefficient range is 0.00 to 1.0, increase in range and near results of the 1.0 is considered as high agreements among the participants.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	Friedman's Chi-Square	Sig
Between People		1108.695	87	12.744		
Within People	Between Items	360.124 <sup>a</sup>	19	18.954	188.258	0.005
	Residual	1728.726	1653	1.046		
	Total	2088.850	1672	1.249		
Total		3197.545	1759	1.818		
Grand Mean = 3.27						
a. Kendall's coefficient of concordance W = .413.						

**Table 9 - Test results of Friedman's Chi-square test with Kendall's Coefficient of concordance (Source- Author's analysis results)**

**Discussion-** For this research Kendall's coefficient of concordance is 0.413 shows that there is good amount of agreements among the raters in accordance to understand rating system. This is not result is sufficient to conduct further analysis but realization is not with par with expectations. This helps

better understanding of Friedman's Chi-square test results for this research is 188.258 with significance of 0.005. And mean square is 12.744 with the sum of the squares is 1108.695. Grand mean is 3.27 for Friedman's chi-square test. Which is in accordance with The correlation between these two non parametric test results implies that high chi-square results indicates significant variances in the rankings which is undesirable but **the significance of 0.005 shows that there is enough evidence in the produced data to conduct further analysis to test hypotheses.**

#### 4.10 Fleiss Multirater Kappa

Fleiss mulirater kappa is one of the statistical measure to access the reliability of of agreement between multiple raters to find commonality. This is extension of Cohen's alpha, which employs to find agreeableness between two ratings. Fleiss kappa is essential to find commonality in a large sample of responses which enables to understand synchronization in the large pool of data where multiple categories. In general perception, Fleiss kappa is greater 0.75 consider as excellent agreement with the responses (Goldsmith R.E et al, 1991) which also indicates that , Kappa estimate is in between 0.4 to 0.75 consider as fair chance of agreement in total responses with acceptable differences in between, Kappa lesser than 0.4 considers as poor agreement between the respondents.

Overall Agreement <sup>a</sup>						
	Kappa	Asymptotic			Asymptotic 95% Confidence Interval	
		Standard Error	z	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Overall Agreement	0.570	0.047	1.194	0.232	-0.036	0.150
a. Sample data contains 88 effective subjects and 3 raters.						

**Table 10 - Test results of Fleiss multirater kappa(Source- Author's analysis results)**

**Discussion:** For this research, Fleiss multirater kappa is 0.57 with standard error of 0.047, assuming 95% confidence interval. Result of 0.57 shows there is fair chance of agreement of the responses, and the variables are sufficient to consider to obtain sufficient results in accordance of hypotheses. Z value of 1.194 with significance of 0.232, implies that the survey conducted is in order to obtain enough evidences to achieve intended aims and objectives of this study.

#### 4.11 Pearson Chi-Square Test

Pearson chi-square test is one of the effective tests for independence to determine variation in variables present in data. This usually considers to validate null hypotheses. In general understanding, Pearson chi-square higher indicates lesser p-values indicates that there are significant discrepancies between observed frequencies and expected frequencies. But this needs to be understood with chi-square likelihood ratio. If the likelihood ratio and chi-square test results are similar, assumptions of larger Pearson chi-square results shall not be taken as significant. Higher values of chi-square test and likelihood indicate smaller p-values which results in rejection of null hypotheses but higher likelihood value indicates that there is strong correlation between the test pool variables, independence of variables are minimal.

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	39.914 <sup>a</sup>	6	≥0.0001
Likelihood Ratio	37.510	6	≥0.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	29.112	1	≥0.001
N of Valid Cases	88		
a. 7 cells (58.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .89.			

**Table 11 - Test results of Pearson Chi-Square Test(Source- Author's analysis results)**

**Discussion:** For this research Pearson chi-square value is 39.914 with difference of 6, with asymptotic significance of ≥0.001(1-sided). Likelihood for the test is 37.510 with difference 6. Linear-by-linear association of data population 29.112. Results of chi-square obtained that 7 cells of the population of 88 is lesser count than expected. This indicates robustness of the data pool that even though both chi-square and likelihood ratio are higher, there are fair chances of accepting null hypotheses. This also indicates robustness of the results that there are differences observed in the data pool there are unlikely due to chance alone. This is a general phenomenon in open survey samples that discrepancies can be observed in single variable set(Goldsmith R.E et al 1991).

#### 4.12 Factor analysis

Factor analysis is an exploratory analysis method to identify underlying components from a large set of data variables by reducing them into factors by deductive methods. These factors represent the underlying components in the data which represent commonality structure in the data to summarize into more comprehensive interpretative form. For this research factor analysis was conducted for retail service quality scale components which are considered as first order factors independently to analyse correlation between components with themselves to derive better understanding. Factor analysis conducted for this is Alpha factor analysis with varimax and with Kaiser normalization rotation.

Questionnaire	Factor Loading
<b>Dimension - Physical aspects</b>	
<b>Sub dimension- Appearance</b>	
Does the location of a store and the availability of convenient parking significantly impact your decision when choosing where to do your grocery shopping	0.811
How significant do you consider the elements of store presence, such as lighting, decor, display arrangement, and color themes, in influencing your shopping experience	0.784
<b>Sub Dimension - Convenience</b>	
Does the layout and product placement in a store affect your shopping experience and likelihood of returning	0.691
Does the availability of multiple brands for the same product influence your decision to revisit a store	0.570
<i>Reliability Cronbach's alpha- 0.921</i>	
<i>% of variance -9,660. % of rotated variance is 12,123</i>	
<i>% cumulative variance -17,660. % rotated Cumulative variance - 47,064.</i>	
<b>Dimension - Reliability</b>	
<b>Sub dimension-Promises</b>	
Does the pricing of products influence your decision to revisit a grocery shop for shopping	0,659
To what extent does brand name influence your choice of shop for shopping	0.604
To what extent do value cards or discounts influence your decision to revisit a shop for future purchase	0.652



Does the availability of self-checkout kiosks influence your likelihood of revisiting a store	0.533
<b>Sub dimension- Doing it right</b>	
Do online shopping options like click-and-collect or home delivery influence your choice of store for shopping	0.615
Does the placement of local produce or products in a store influence your decision when choosing where to shop	0.696
Does the integration of technology, such as virtual tours and AI recommendations of products, influence your choice of store for shopping	0.512
<i>Reliability Cronbrach's alpha- 0.913</i>	
<i>% of variance -33,228. % of rotated variance is 19,328</i>	
<i>% cumulative variance -65,549. % rotated Cumulative variance - 19,228</i>	
<b>Dimension - Personal Interaction</b>	
<b>Sub Dimension - helpfulness/courteousness</b>	
To what extent does the knowledge and expertise of store staff about their products influence your decision to shop at a particular store?( Please consider factors such as the ability to answer questions, provide recommendations)	0.646
Does the active engagement of staff influence your likelihood of revisiting the store for shopping	0.905
<b>Sub Dimension - Inspiring confidence</b>	
To what extent does the availability of eco-friendly products influence your decision when choosing a store for shopping	0.935
Does Usage of Eco friendly packaging influence your selection of store for shopping	0.701
<i>Reliability Cronbrach's alpha- 0.912</i>	
<i>% of variance -9,074. % of rotated variance is 12,324</i>	
<i>% cumulative variance -11,076. % rotated Cumulative variance - 7,032</i>	
<b>Dimension - Problem solving</b>	
Does Immediate action on complaints influence your decision to shop at a store	0.603

To what extent do you believe that the availability customer care through phone call or email features influence your decision to shop there?	0.656
<i>Reliability Cronbrach's alpha- 0.915</i>	
<i>% of variance -9,263. % of rotated variance is 15,324</i>	
<i>% cumulative variance -14,263. % rotated Cumulative variance - 14,768</i>	
<b>Dimension -Policy</b>	
To what extent do you consider a store's social responsibility policies, such as environmental sustainability efforts or community support initiatives, when deciding where to shop	0.684
Does Diversity in staff influence your selection of store for shopping	0.814
To what extent do you value a store's communication regarding its social activities, such as charitable donations, community involvement, or ethical practices, when choosing where to shop?	0.756
<i>Reliability Cronbrach's alpha- 0.921</i>	
<i>% of variance -7,263. % of rotated variance is 11,651</i>	
<i>% cumulative variance -10,263. % rotated Cumulative variance - 09,768</i>	

**Table 12 - Factor analysis of first order dimensions of retail service quality scale (Source- Author's analysis results)**

**Discussion:** Factor analysis conducted for the retail service quality scale presented positive results to establish relationships between the dimensions with in the scale along with the responses for each question in questionnaire. There is significant variations observed for different questions but this is expected due to cronbrach's alpha result for standardized item of 0.913 analysis determines that there might be redundancies underlying with the data. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) values of 0.588 presented that data available for this research having enough evidences to understand the objectives and aims of the research. Kendall's coefficient of concordance (W) value of 0.413 also indicates that there is substantial evidences present in the data to understand customer satisfaction and preferences in the context of The Irish Grocery retail sector. Fleiss mulirater kappa value of 0.570 presented the fact that there is moderate agreement among the raters where the ratings have substantial evidence to provide clear understanding of the aims and objectives. These two parameters explains the validity of the data presented to address the survey questionnaire

and its ranking system. This excludes demographic information regarding the participants and focuses on the responses conducted based upon the service quality scale. Factor results with positive notes of each dimension of the scale with high Cronbach's alpha- Physical appearance 0.921, reliability - 0.913, Personal Interaction-0.912, problem solving 0.915 and policy 0.921 indicates the relations with higher significance with similarities within the dimension and the responses. Factor analysis of first order dimension, physical aspects - consists upon 4 questions and these first two questions related to appearance and third and fourth questions related to convenience. Higher degree of factor loading for these questions 0.811, 0.784, 0.691 and 0.570 with the respect to sequence of the questions presents importance of store appearance in order to create positive impact of shopping experience. In the Physical aspects, question no 4 yielded less factor loading value of 0.570. This is related to having multiple products. This is an interesting observation. For sector of reliability of store, six question comprises with two set of categories promises and doing it right, which results factor loading of 0.659, 0.604, 0.652, 0.533, 0.615, 0.696 and 0.512 respectively. For this section question regarding integration of AI and virtual tours got least factor loading of 0.512 results customer preference about this particular aspect. Another question regarding availability of self checkouts kiosks in the store results factor loading of 0.533. Factor loading of 0.533 for this question indicates preference regarding availability of self checkout kiosks presence in the store on customer shopping preferences. For third dimension in the retail service quality Personal interaction comprises of two categories helpfulness/courteousness and Inspiring confidence. Factor loading for the four questions mentioned in this segment are 0.646, 0.905, 0.935 and 0.701 respectively. For question regarding active engagement of staff with consumers yielded higher factor loading of 0.905 compare to the knowledge of staff regarding products 0.646. This shows participants preference over engagement than knowledge of the staff. Participants prefers staff who is actively engages with consumers than staff knowledge in this product matters. Another question in this segment find higher factor loading that availability of eco friendly products is 0.935 which is highest in the overall scale. This indicates participants preferences for these eco-friendly products availability in the store. For fourth segment Problem solving based upon customer complaint management, consists upon 2 questions for that factor loading is 0.630 and 0.656 respectively. This shows customer preferences with regarding customer care attitude and their response. This can be understand with the context active engagement during shopping resulted higher factor loading that customers prefers to interact with staff before the purchase than post purchase. In fast pacing retail sector environment, This behaviour actually yield positive results for shop which involves active pre purchase engagement. Fifth dimension in the scale is about policies of retailers consisting of three questions. Factor loading for these questions are 0.684, 0.814 and 0.756 respectively. Interesting point in that

participants response to diversity in the staff resulted high factor loading of 0.814. This indicates that participants opinion for diversity in the staff . Another aspect observed in that community engagement of the store resulted factor loading of 0.756 which indicates participants favour stores who are actively engage with community development issues as a part of their corporate social responsibility policies.

#### 4.13 Hypotheses Testing

Multiple regression analysis conducted on retail service quality scale to test the hypothesis proposed in this research. VIF number for the testing of the hypothesis is below 10, which shows significance of the research. Proposed hypotheses proposed on customer repurchase are dependent variable and retail service quality scale and the factors influencing the retail service quality scale effect on customer repurchase intentions. This is within the parameters of aims and objectives of the study where focusing on behaviour patterns especially with focus of repurchase intentions of customer with the respect of service quality parameters and factors influencing the retail quality scale. Repurchase intentions chosen to test behaviour pattern of customer due to its ability to measure in short span of time frame and accuracy of the results.

Testing of hypotheses results mentioned below.

*Hypotheses H1 : Retail Service Quality has a positive effect of customer intention to revisit of the the store.*

	Correlation (R)	Adjusted R Square	Beta
value	0.728	0.556	0.0728
p-value	0.000		0.000

**Table 13 - Testing of Hypotheses -1 Results** (Author analysis results)

*Hypotheses H2 :Physical aspects of the store has positive effect on customer repurchase intentions.*

	Correlation (R)	Adjusted R Square	Beta
value	0.753	0.526	0.0753
P-value	0.000		0.000

**Table 14 - Testing of Hypotheses -2 Results** (Author analysis results)

*Hypotheses H3 : effectiveness of services and operations of the the store has positive effect on customer repurchase intentions.*

	Correlation (R)	Adjusted R Square	Beta
value	0.713	0.521	0.0713
P-value	0.000		0.000

**Table 15 - Testing of Hypotheses -3 Results** (Author analysis results)

*Hypotheses H4 : Active engagement of the staff with customers has positive effect on customer repurchase intentions in the store*

	Correlation (R)	Adjusted R Square	Beta
value	0.851	0.568	0.0851
P-value	0.000		0.000

**Table 16 - Testing of Hypotheses -4 Results** (Author analysis results)

*Hypotheses H5 : Effective customer care management has positive side effect on customer repurchase intentions in the store*

	Correlation (R)	Adjusted R Square	Beta
value	0.721	0.514	0.0721
P-value	0.000		0.000

**Table 17 - Testing of Hypotheses -5 Results** (Author analysis results)

*Hypotheses H6 :Policies of the store has positive side effect on customer repurchase intentions of the store.*

	Correlation (R)	Adjusted R Square	Beta
value	0.743	0.526	0.0743
P-value	0.000		0.000

**Table 18 - Testing of Hypotheses -6 Results** (Author analysis results)

**Discussion:** Above results presented to test the hypotheses results proposed in the study to establish relations with customer repurchase intentions with retail service quality and effect of five dimensions of the retail service quality constructs influence on customer repurchase intentions.

**Hypotheses 1** - its proposed that retail service quality has positive impact on the customer repurchase intentions. This is proven by correlations of the overall service quality scale results of correlation R value of 0.728 with adjusted  $R^2$  value of 0.556. This proves significant correlation between the overall service quality and the repurchase intentions. Adjusted R square value is statistically significant, Hence the Proposed hypotheses proved that Retail service quality has positive impact on customer repurchase intentions.

**Hypotheses 2-** Its proposed that physical aspects of the store has positive impact on customer repurchase intentions. This hypotheses established by the correlation value of physical aspects with the dependent variable intentions to repurchase resulted 0.753 with adjusted  $R^2$  value of 0.526. This value is statistically significant. This proves that proposed hypotheses physical aspects of the store has strong impact on customer perception of the store and their repurchase intentions is valid.

**Hypotheses 3** - Its proposed that effectiveness of the store operations and services has positive impact on customer revisit intentions. This is comes under second dimension of retail service quality scale -reliability which tested with customer repurchase intentions., results correlation value of 0.713 with adjusted R square value of 0.521. This establishes that operational effectiveness and services of the store has significant positive impact on the customer revisit hence the proposed hypotheses is proved.

**Hypotheses 4** - Proposed hypotheses is to check significance of staff engagement with customers during shopping on customer repurchase intentions. This is one of the dimensions of service quality which is considered as independent variable which tested against customer repurchase intentions results correlation value R, of 0.851 and adjusted R square value of 0.568. This is the highest correlation value observed in the overall service quality scale which implies significant relation with staff engagement with customer repurchase intentions. These Correlation value proved that proposed hypotheses is valid.

**Hypotheses 5** - This hypotheses is to establish relation between customer care management with customer repurchase intentions. Customer care management is part of retail service quality scale

which considered as one of the first order factors Problem solving. This is post purchase engagement with consumer and deals with efficiency of the shop problem solving capabilities. Correlation results with problem solving with repurchase intentions yields correlation value  $R$  of 0.721 with adjusted  $R$  square value of 0.568. this indicates there is strong correlation between repurchase intentions and effective customer care management. Hence proposed hypotheses is proved.

**Hypotheses 6** - Its proposed that Policy matters of the store influences customer repurchase intentions. This comes in retail service quality scale as policy dimension which deals with company attitude towards different ethical and moral social attitudes . Correlation value of policy and customer repurchase intentions resulted  $R$  value of 0.743 and adjusted  $R$  square value of 0.526. This  $R$  square value is considered significant. Hence there is strong correlation between policy practices and customer repurchase intentions , Hypotheses is proved.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

### 5.1 Discussion:

For this study retail service quality scale proposed for the understanding of consumer preferences in their shopping experience resulted effective outputs to understand consumer behaviour patterns in the Irish grocery market. First order dimensions of the RSQS presents consumers preferences to choose retailer for their grocery shopping(Bagozzi, R. P et al 1999). Each dimension deals with different area of retail market environment which take great deal to enhance consumer shopping experience. Notion of Changing customer preferences in the Irish retail market clearly observed in this research. **This study finds that active engagement of the staff and policy decisions of the retailer plays crucial role to create positive impact over the price of the products on consumer during shopping.** Policy decision placement of Eco friendly products and usage of eco friendly packaging becomes top priority over the price of the products. Its observed that Policy decisions such as community engagement, and diversity inclusion in the staff influencing the consumer choice to selecting the retailer for shopping. **This study finds that in physical aspects of the shop, parking availability and ambiance of the surrounding of the shop taken prescience over shop layout and design. Along with this, Integration of technology like virtual tours, recommendations by AI for products , consumers shows least preferences. This study finds that consumers preference over local produce offerings over availability of self check out kiosks.** Price is factor in the consumer preferences but its playing secondary effect for policy and customer interaction. It Implies significance of retail service quality scale adaptation to Irish Market context to determine consumer shopping patterns.

This research provides substantial evidence that given the nature of grocery retail segment , Implementation of retail service quality scale yields accurate understanding of the consumer shopping preferences(Darshan Parikh ,2006). General perceptions regarding consumer preferences yields negative results in this ever changing market where better scales and techniques need to employ . The Irish Grocery market is an emerging dynamic market, converged with European and international grocery retail markets(UK). This study able to find first order factor analysis in the context of Irish grocery retail market segment which actually provides substantial results to support the accuracy and efficiency of the retail service quality scale.



## 5.2 Objective realization

This research topic is explicitly examined to reach its objectives in the literature review before the investigation started. Below objectives established based on the study.

Research Question 1 : What is the nature, dynamics of the Irish grocery retail market and factors inducing the dynamics in Irish grocery retail market.

This study finds that nature of the Irish grocery retail market is moderately concentrated with high competitive environment. Few players are leading in this segment. Its been observed consumer loyalty is mostly expressed as behaviour loyalty which is highly influential with external factors. Prices , consumer preferences, supply chain issues are the most important factors influencing Irish grocery retail market.

Research Question 2 : What is the retail Service quality scale and factors determining the Retail quality scale in the context of Irish retail market.

Retail service quality scale is an effective tool to measure shopping behaviour patterns and its dynamics of consumers. This study finds that retail service quality scale is highly effective to measure customer shopping behaviour in Irish grocery retail market. This study and data analysis finds that First order dimensions of retail service quality are effective to measure each pattern of consumer behaviour which presented effective results to understand consumer shopping preferences.

Research Question 3 : What is the Retail Service Quality Scale impact on customer satisfaction and enhancing brand loyalty in customer in the context of Irish retail market

This study and data analysis provides substantial evidence that implementation of retail service quality scale to understand the consumer preferences in Irish grocery retail market yields explicit results. This study able to provide substantial results that notions that price is the crucial factor in grocery retail are not substantial, where policy, communication taken precedence in the consumer preferences. This study finds that retail service quality scale ability to capture accurate account of customer preferences in the Irish grocery market sector.

### 5.3 Recommendations

Irish grocery retail market is an dynamic, highly competitive market, highly sensitive with external and internal factors. This study finds that retail service quality scale is an effective tool to understand consumer behavioral patterns. This enables to firms to formulate sustainable practices and can increase consumer retention with ease. Further studies can be conducted on the basis of the framework proposed for service quality scale by enhancing its scope by analyzing populations in various sub sections. One of the important aspect that this can be dissected the market in to urban and rural areas and analyse consumer behaviour pattern. Shopping preferences can be varied to groups of population by extending the research framework on the behaviour loyalties there will practical solutions will found to tackle the bottlenecks in Retail market segment. **Retail service quality scale primarily focuses on behaviour loyalty dimensions ,There is substantial evidence provided that it can be effective to understand attitudinal loyalty dimensions.** By applying different methods and increasing the scope of retail service quality measurements to Irish grocery market , there will be higher chances that it enables to provide critical information regarding consumer shopping patterns to create an substantial platform to prepare long term sustainable practices.

### 5.4 New contributions of the Research:

There is no study conducted earlier to understand service quality dimensions and consumer shopping preferences in the Irish retail grocery retail market. Understanding the retail quality dimensions greatly enhances understanding of consumer preferences which enables The Irish retailer to frame strategies to adjust to the market dynamics. This helps especially the small players in the market where large companies dominating the landscape. Understanding the consumer aspirations leads huge advantages in this kind of market where consumer brand loyalties are changing according to the needs and aspirations. Retail service quality scale enables firms to compete effectively and enhance their customer shopping experience. This study to focus on behaviour loyalties but this opened up another dimension to understand attitudinal loyalties of the consumers in the Irish grocery retail market. By providing substantial evidence through this research , this study found that accrual capture of the consumer perceptions and needs can be effectively done by Retail service quality scale which enables sustainable practices in business management. This research effectively established that retail service quality scale brings holistic approach towards to customer service which is crucial to sustain markets like Irish grocery retail sector.

## **5.5 Limitations**

One of the major limitations for this study is time and lack of availability of previous research on consumer loyalty in Irish context. This propelled to identification and realizations of objectives delayed due to lack of academic back ground in the consumer loyalty constructs in Irish population context. This led to extend time periods in understanding and framing the objectives with in the selected topic outlines. Constraints of lack of academic research led to understand and general concepts of RSQS and prepare it according to the Irish grocery retail market context. Lack of time effected of data collection which actually led to analyse different loyalty constructs which could have not attempted earlier in the context of Irish grocery consumers.

## **5.6 Summery**

Retail service quality scale is an effective measure to analyse consumer preferences and behaviour patterns and intricate dynamics of the consumer loyalty constructs. Dynamic markets such as Irish grocery retail sectors greatly benefits from understanding consumers behaviour patterns to optimize operations effectively to attain higher consumer satisfaction and shopping experiences. This also enables to dwell in to the complex subjects such as consumer loyalty constructs in Irish population. Research conducted in this sector can be utilized to access the other market retail market segments to attain higher customer loyalties. This also enables academia to conduct studies related loyalty patterns in Irish consumers.

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