



SUPERSTORE RETAILING IN BANGLADESH: A COMPREHENSIVE LITERATURE REVIEW FROM CONSUMER PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

During last two decades, Bangladesh has witnessed a tremendous growth in the superstore retailing. The changing trend in the consumers' lifestyle, increasing number of dual earner couples, storage facilities with refrigerators, unwanted crowd in the "wet" markets, etc. make the people interested towards the superstores. Due to remarkable growth, the superstores are facing intense competition with each other. Hence, analyzing the behavioral pattern of the customers regarding superstores is indispensable. The aim of this study is to comprehensively examine the previously published scholarly articles in the context of superstores in Bangladesh from consumer perspective. By reviewing 27 published articles, this study found several gaps pertinent to the superstore literature in the context of Bangladesh. From the review it has been observed that most of the studies were descriptive in nature with a limited focus on consumer behavior, like loyalty. Moreover, a few studies only addressed the causal relationship between customer satisfaction/loyalty and its influencing factors with a sound methodology. Thus, more

studies are demanding to capture the behavioral pattern of the customers, particularly the issue of loyalty, to enrich the domain of superstore literature in Bangladesh. The paper ends with some recommendations to fill the dearth prevails in the superstore literature in Bangladesh.

Keywords: superstore, consumer behavior, customer loyalty, Bangladesh

INTRODUCTION

Since the year 2001, Bangladesh has experienced with a remarkable growth in the superstore sector of retailing. Despite of its tremendous growth, only a few studies have found in the literature focusing on this sector, particularly addressing the behavioral pattern of the customers. With the incremental growth over the period of time, the superstores of Bangladesh are now facing a tremendous competition to retain their existing customers. In such a situation, it is warrant to find out the factors that are influential in capturing loyalty of customers. This study aims to scrutiny the existing literature relevant to the superstore sector of Bangladesh with a view to ascertain the gaps that prevails through the systematic lens. Aligned with the study objective, methodologically this study is an exploratory in nature. Based on the outputs of the extensive review of the current literature, this study is expected to provide the research avenue for future study. In doing so, the rest of the paper starts with literature review focusing on the concept of superstore, the scenario of superstore in Bangladesh, and the comprehensive examination of the past literature pertinent to the superstore of Bangladesh. The paper ends with pointing out several gaps identified from the review of literature and some suggestions for the future study to fill such gaps.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Superstore

A “superstore”, also recognized as supermarket or supershop, is a marketplace where a variety of products are being sold – such as groceries, electronic items, dry foods, household goods and utensils, fish and meat, clothing and so on (Monthly Business Review, 2017). Ushantha, Wijeratne, and Achchuthan (2014) defined superstore as a store which is self-service oriented and physically arranged with numerous departments to make sure the wide variety of food and grocery items. This format of retail store is typically smaller in size with respect to hypermarket and bigger in size compare to traditional grocery shop. This is one of the formats of organized retailing. So far in 1916, the first ever superstore was established by Clarence Saunders in the name of “Piggly Wiggly” (Monthly Business Review, 2017). Since then, the world, especially developed countries, has witnessed the gradual evolution of superstores phase by phase.

The diffusion of superstores in the developing countries took place in three waves, commencing from the early 1990s (Bachmann, 2008). The countries like Latin America, South Africa, and East Asia (except China) experienced with the first wave of the diffusion of superstores. In the second phase, the wave started from mid-to-late 1990s and hits Mexico, Southeast Asia (except Vietnam), and Central America. Started from late 1990s to early 2000s, the third wave strikes the countries like India, China, and Vietnam.

Superstore Retailing in Bangladesh

According to Reardon, Timmer, and Berdegue (2004), by introducing the operation of ever first superstore “Agora” in the year 2001, Bangladesh has become exposed to the fourth wave of superstore diffusion along with Bolivia, Colombia, and certain countries in the West Africa. After the commencement of the superstore operation in Bangladesh, the growth of the industry was quite slow since the initial target customers were from the upper income group of the society. As per the prediction of industrial experts, with the incremental sale growth of 30 percent per annum, the superstore industry will experience with the turnover of \$2.6 billion by the year 2021 (Gain Report, 2013). In the last 14 years Bangladesh has witnessed a revolutionary change in the retail landscape with the evolution of superstore retailing and it is expected that the organized retail industry will move forward to become the next emerging sector in the economy of Bangladesh after readymade garments (Datta, 2018). Including superstore, the retail industry alone has a remarkable impact in the economy of Bangladesh by contributing 41% of the country’s GDP and reducing unemployment rate by accommodating 20% of the country’s labor force (The Daily Star, 2016). In the same vein, the superstore industry of Bangladesh contributes solely in boosting up the economy by enhancing the job facilities for the people since each single outlet accommodates at least 50 workers on an average (Arif, 2013). Though the industry has started its journey targeting the upper segment of the customers, the focus has now been shifted towards the middle class of the society after the commencement of the operation of the superstore “Shwapno” in the year 2008. Monthly Business Review (2017) reported that right now the superstore industry of Bangladesh consists of total 121 outlets and most of them are operated by the leading four retailers in the name of Agora, Meenabazar, Pricebazar, and Shwapno, in the order of their year of establishments.

Review of Previous Studies from the Superstore Context of Bangladesh

Ahmed (2007) examined the consumer attitude towards traditional shopping centers vs. modernized shopping centers (superstores) in Bangladesh with a particular focus on Khulna city. Data gathered from 75 households by using area based sampling technique. Through

frequency analysis, the outcomes of the study revealed that people from private sectors and business holders did visit superstores more compare to govt. employees. Frequency of visit in the superstores tends to increase with the increment of family income whereas the reverse scenario prevails for traditional shopping centers. Availability of fresh and authentic products is the main issue considered by the customers to prefer superstores over traditional shopping centers.

In their study, Datta & Chakraborty (2009) conducted a study to identify the determining factors of customer loyalty towards superstores in Bangladesh. In doing so, the authors undertaken the theoretical framework of loyalty suggested by Oliver (1999). Data were collected from 150 customers who visited Agora, Nandon, and Value plus superstores. Findings of the study illustrated that at the cognitive level of loyalty towards superstores, cost and benefit issues became important to customers, whereas at the affective level, they had positive attitude with satisfaction. With a better satisfaction, customers tend to recommend the store to their friends and family at the conative stage of loyalty, which in turn demonstrated in their frequency of visits (action loyalty).

Tinne (2011) conducted a study to ascertain the influencing factors in determining the behavior of consumers with respect to impulse buying in the superstore context of Bangladesh. Through literature review, the author identified 10 influencing issues that might lead to exhibit impulse buying behavior. Later on, by conducting factor analysis, the study extracted four factors (pricing strategies, store characteristics, situational factors, and promotional activities) that are expected to influence consumers' impulse buying demonstration while shopping at superstores. Though the study developed a hypothesis focusing on the effect of all identified factors over impulse buying behavior, no statistical inference was tested.

In their study, Jahan and Noor (2012) statistically tested the relationships between marketing mix elements (along with services) and store image of Meenabazar superstore in Bangladesh. Findings of the study revealed that all the marketing mix elements with their corresponding items exerted significant influence on overall image of the store except comfortable and friendly environment elements. However, all the regression models were tested separately rather than under an integrated model. Moreover, this study also identified three most important issues, namely ease of shopping, sense of quality product, and feeling of being higher social class, that customers considered in case of selecting Meenabazar as a shopping destination as first, second, and third in their order of important.

Kashem and Islam (2012) carried out a study focusing on the factors influencing the satisfaction of the superstore customers in Bangladesh. Based on eight measurement items identified from literature, authors collected primary data from the fifty (50) customers of five

superstores in Chattogram. By deploying a principal component analysis with varimax rotation technique, the study identified three factors, in the name of products factor, store service factor, and customer facilities factor, that might affect the satisfaction of the customers. However, the study did not take any attempt to test the significant effect of these three identified factors on customer satisfaction.

In the same year, Kashem (2012) solely conducted another study to investigate the consumer attitude and behavior toward superstores in Bangladesh. Data were collected from 50 customers who visited five superstores in Chattogram city. Data were analyzed against the demographic variables (e.g. age, gender, education, marital status, use of credit card). Frequency analysis revealed that most of the visited customers (80%) were from the young generational cohort (Generation Y) as of 2012 the age range of whom in between 18 to 37 years. Besides, consumer behavior related variables also scrutinized such as purchase reasons by age, store wise mostly purchasing products, and customer level of satisfaction for each stores. Based on the assessment of own customers, Meenabazar became number one according to the high level of satisfaction of its customers followed by Agora, Shwapno, Khulshi Mart, and Well Mart. However, no inferential statistical test was done by the study, and hence the results cannot be generalized to the population.

Focusing on green marketing issue, Masum, Amin, and Faruky (2012) conducted a study to ascertain the state of the superstores in offering store brand agricultural products in Bangladesh. Data was gathered from 180 respondents who visited 10 different superstores in Dhaka city. In addition, 10 store personnel also contacted from these 10 different stores to get their opinions in green marketing practices. Results illustrated that among the participants only 30% had the idea of green marketing and the remaining 70% did not have any information. This awareness level regarding green marketing was very low for both customers as well as store officials. The study also revealed that the awareness about green marketing is higher among the male customers, young customers with the age of less than 25 years, and customers with income less than Tk. 15,000 per month. Besides, customers were not fully confident about the capacity of the superstores to ensure the environmentally friendly products. However, customers had positive attitude towards green marketing as they were not price sensitive to have an environmentally friendly product. The study deployed t-test and chi-square test to arrive at conclusion but did not analyze any path coefficient to check the significant association among the used variables.

In their study, Ahsan, Rahman, Chowdhury, and Hoque (2013) carried out a study focusing on measuring the service quality of the superstores in Chattogram city. Taking SERVQUAL as a base, the authors modified the quality measurement instrument under five

dimensions, namely tangibility, reliability, assurance, responsiveness and empathy with total 19 items instead of 22 of the original model. Total 412 responses were gathered from five superstore chains in Chattogram. Analyses revealed that the modified SERVQUAL model was appeared as reliable instrument for capturing service quality for the superstores. Besides, service quality perception of consumers toward superstores significantly varied across gender (except reliability and empathy dimension) and age (except empathy dimension). However, the validity of the modified instrument was not tested statistically.

To investigate the impact of perceived service quality, product quality, price, store assortment, trust, and corporate image on customer satisfaction, Akbar, Salahuddin, and Shahriar (2013) conducted a study in the context of superstore chain in the Dhaka metropolitan areas. To do so, authors did collect 182 responses from different outlets of a major retail chain in Dhaka. Step wise regression analysis indicated that in explaining the variation in the customer satisfaction toward superstore chains, perceived service quality, product quality, price, and store assortment exerted positive and significant influence. However, both trust and corporate image did not have any significant effect over perceived satisfaction of the customers.

In their study, Alam and Rana (2013) carried out a comparative study between retail chain stores and traditional small retail stores focusing on the attitudes of customers. In total 200 responses were collected from four superstores, namely Agora, Meenabazar, Shwapno, and Nandon in Dhaka city. Findings revealed that retail chain stores provide quality products with quality services, variety of assortments in a congenial atmosphere. The outputs of chi-square analysis illustrated the significance variation in the attitudes of the customers towards retail chain stores due to different levels of education of the customers. Moreover, the difference between customers' attitude towards retail chain stores and small retail stores was found statistically significant. The study also pointed out several issues that might responsible for the growth of retail chain stores in Bangladesh. These issues can be classified as store related issues (exclusive and comfortable shopping environment, quality services, variety of assortments under one roof, hygienic products, up-to-date equipment and method of selling, and better supply chain management) and non-store related issues (densely population, upgraded standard of living, increased complexity in life, enhanced purchasing power, traffic jam, the explosive growth of population, and consumers' time limitation).

Arif (2013) conducted an exploratory study to find out the reasons for increasing popularity of superstores among the people in Bangladesh with particular focus on Dhaka city. Both primary and secondary sources of data were utilized by the author to achieve the objects of the study. As the primary source, the study collected data from 9 outlets of Meenabazar, 6 outlets of Nandon, 4 outlets of Swapno, 4 outlets of Agora, and 2 outlets of Princebazar.

However, the author did not mention the sample size used in the study. Issues such as presence of quality products, comfortable and hassle free shopping environment, availability of fresh products, and increasing number of population, were identified as the reasons for growing popularity of the superstores among the city dwellers, particularly among the upper and middle class people of the society. The study also anticipated that in the near future the acceptance of superstore will spread up among the lower income people of the society.

Azad, Hossain, and Parveen (2013) also conducted a study addressing the impact of several customer and store related factors on customers' level of satisfaction. In total 290 responses were collected from different supermarkets in Dhaka city, namely Agora, Carrefamily, Dhaka Bazar, G-Mart, Meenabazar, Princebazar, and Shwapno. The outputs revealed that in selecting the supermarkets, availability of all necessary products within a small place was pointed out by majority of the respondents (72.41%). Moreover, the study also deployed logistic regression analysis to ascertain the impact of several store and customer related factors on the level of customer satisfaction towards supermarkets. The results indicated that the factor customer age had a positive and significant impact on the level of satisfaction. While educated people (having schooling from 3 to 12 years) were satisfied with the supermarkets' performance, the highly educated people (having schooling from 13 years onward) were not. As income escalated, the level of satisfaction towards supermarkets also increased. High price of the products negatively affected the satisfaction level of the customers; whereas, the satisfaction level was positively affected by the availability of the products. Interestingly, the study outcome revealed that those customers were satisfied more who visited the store with less frequency than whom visited more frequently.

Another study was conducted by Akbar (2014) with an attempt to investigate the influence of selected factors (such as perceived service quality, perceived price, perceived product quality, store assortment, trust, and commitment) on shoppers' satisfaction as well as the influence of shoppers' satisfaction on shoppers' re-patronage intention. In doing such investigation, author developed a multi-item structured questionnaire based on the previous literature and collected 210 responses from the shoppers of four different outlets of a major retail chain in Dhaka city. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) assured the reliability and validity aspects of the chosen constructs of the study. Outputs of the structural equation modeling (SEM) revealed that in explaining the variation of satisfaction of the shoppers, perceived service quality, perceived product quality, perceived price, and store assortment appeared as statistically significant. However, both trust and commitment were found as insignificant antecedents of shoppers' satisfaction. Moreover, in the studied model, satisfaction of the shoppers demonstrated as the most prevailing predictor of shoppers' re-patronage intention.

Though the study mentioned about the mediating effect of shoppers' satisfaction in the path relationships of perceived product quality, perceived service quality, perceived price, trust, store assortment, and commitment with shoppers' re-patronage intention, no statistical test was found addressing such issue. However, it is important to note that this was the first study conducted in Bangladesh applying SEM technique to test the study model in the context of superstore retailing focusing on the behavior of consumers.

Khan, Tabassum, and Jahan (2014) made an attempt to investigate the state of service quality of the superstores in Bangladesh. To do so, they tried to identify whether a significant gap prevails or not in the customer expectations and perceptions of superstore services by deploying SERVQUAL model. Based on the data collected from 50 respondents from Dhaka city, outputs revealed that there was a significant gap exists in each of the dimension of the SERVQUAL model between expectations and perceptions of the customers with respect to service quality of the superstores, namely Agora, Meenabzar, Nandon, and Shwapno. The highest gap was found in the assurance dimension of the SERVQUAL model followed by tangible, empathy, responsiveness, and reliability.

Rahman and Khan (2014) investigated the effect of service convenience on service loyalty with the moderating effect of consumer characteristics in the superstore context of Bangladesh. Data were gathered from 355 customers of superstores located in metropolitan areas of Dhaka to achieve the objectives of the study. The findings illustrated that among five service convenience dimensions, only decision convenience and post-benefit convenience dimensions were found as significant irrespective of the variations in consumer characteristics (age, gender, and education). For the youth (18 to 24 years) as well as male consumers, in explaining service loyalty the influence of benefit convenience was not appeared as significant. Access convenience was found as insignificant determinant of loyalty for older consumers, female consumers, and consumers with less educational qualifications. Decision convenience, benefit convenience, and post-benefit convenience were found as the significant precursors of the service loyalty for those consumers whose educational level was less than post-graduate. Surprisingly, the effect of transaction convenience dimension on loyalty was found as insignificant for all moderating variables. However, among the six constructs of the study (service loyalty and five dimensions of service convenience – decision convenience, access convenience, transaction convenience, benefit convenience, and post-benefit convenience), access, transaction, and benefit convenience constructs were not reliable since the Cronbach's Alpha value of each was less than the minimum acceptable level of 0.70. Besides, the study did not justify the discriminant validity of these constructs.

In their study, Rana, Osman, and Islam (2014) examined the influence of several factors (product quality, responsiveness, price, location, and physical appearance) on customer satisfaction focusing on the retail chain stores in Bangladesh. Data were collected from 143 customers of three major retail chain stores. Regression outputs revealed that except location factor, all other factors had significant effects on customer satisfaction. But the scales of all these influencing constructs were not appeared as reliable. Though the study mentioned the influence of satisfaction on customer retention in the conceptual model, the evidence of path analysis of such relationship was absent.

To investigate the antecedents of store image, Salahuddin and Akbar (2014) carried out a study in the retail superstore context of Bangladesh. Based on a multi- items structured questionnaire, total 226 responses were collected from the shoppers of three outlets of a leading retail superstore in Dhaka city. Data analysis confirmed the reliability aspect of all the study constructs, such as location, price perception, store assortment, store service quality, communication, and store image. However, the study did not confirm the discriminant validity of all these constructs. Findings of the study illustrated that in determining the store loyalty, all the predictors (price perception, location, store assortment, and store service quality) exerted significant and positive influence. Among these antecedents of store image, location was appeared as the most important and influencing factor for store image development. Though the study incorporated the communication factor in the conceptual framework, no statistical test was carried out to see the effect of such factor on the formation of store image.

Shamsher (2014a) conducted a study to examine the effect of store characteristics (Store appearance, store convenience, product quality, service quality, product assortment, and product price) on store loyalty in the retail chain store platform of Bangladesh. With 101 samples from four retail chains (Agora, Meenabazar, Nandon, and Shwapno) in Dhaka, this study analyzed the data and ran a multiple regression considering store loyalty as dependent variable and store characteristics as independent variables. The outcome of the study revealed that store convenience, store appearance, service quality, and product quality had a positive and meaningful impact on store loyalty; whereas, product assortment and product price had not. In terms of influencing strength in explaining the variation in the store loyalty, store appearance was found as the most significant one followed by store convenience, product quality, and service quality.

In the same time, Shamsher (2014b) conducted another study to reveal the shopping preferences of consumers towards the superstores in Bangladesh. Based on the data collected from 120 shoppers of supermarkets in Chattogram city, the author concluded that significant change was apparent in the preferential aspects of consumers regarding shopping in the

superstores. Findings revealed that most of the consumers prefer to do shopping in the superstores in the evening on a weekly basis. Majority of the consumers were highly satisfied with the existing operating hours of the superstores and not interested to have the stores open in 24 hours. In selecting the superstores, “time saving” factor motivated the consumers more, followed by cleanliness, avoid unwanted traffic in the store as well as bargaining, and so on.

Alauddin, Hossain, Ibrahim, and Hoque (2015) conducted a study to investigate the influencing factors of consumers’ impulse buying behavior in the superstore context of Bangladesh. In total 100 customers were surveyed who visited the selected superstores in Dhaka city. Findings revealed that store convenience was the most important factor as a store characteristic that influenced the specific planned purchase of the consumers in the superstores, followed by store atmosphere, store image, and store location. On the other hand, store characteristics, such as store atmosphere, point of purchase display, and discount exerted influence on impulse buying behavior in their order of influencing strength. It was also identified that the more the visits in the superstores, the higher the frequency of impulse purchase done by the customers. In addition, the authors also investigated the level of satisfaction of the superstore customers and found that only 5% were fully satisfied, whereas, 54% of them were somehow satisfied with the superstores. However, the study did not make any attempt to test the path relationship between the influencing factors and the impulse buying behavior of the customers during their visit in the stores.

In their study, Akter and Ashraf (2016) inspected the factors influencing the repurchase intention of the retail chain store customers in Bangladesh. To do so, the authors initially conducted a focus group interview to ascertain the factors important to customers of the retail chain stores for their revisit intention. Store image, perceived value, and satisfaction were identified as key factors in the session. Later on, 110 customers were surveyed with a structured questionnaire to check the validity and reliability of the identified factors. Analysis outputs indicated that all the constructs of the study were proved as reliable. However, the study did not deploy any statistical technique to check the validity of these factors. The regression outcomes illustrated that both perceived value and satisfaction had a significant impact in the variation of the repurchase intention; whereas, the store image was appeared as an insignificant predictor.

Alauddin (2016) also conducted a study to analyze the service quality gaps that might prevail in the retail chain stores of Bangladesh. The author gathered 85 responses from Agora, Meenabazar, and Shwapno in Chattogram city. The outputs of the t-test showed that in each dimension of the service quality, there was a significant gap prevails between the expectation and perception of the customers. However, the study did not test the significance of the items of

each dimension and hence raised the question of methodological validity of the study. Besides, dimensions were not identified based on their relative significance in service gaps.

In their study, Islam, Mustaf, Azmi, and Ahmed (2016) investigated the effect of service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction and subsequently on store loyalty. By using a structured questionnaire data were collected from 400 customers who visited Agora, Meenabazar, and Shwapno in Dhaka city. At the initial stage, four factors were identified (physical aspect, reliability, personal interaction, and problem solving and policy) from exploratory factor analysis (EFA). All the study constructs were appeared as reliable and valid (convergent). Based on PLS-SEM analysis, the study out puts revealed that among the service quality dimensions, only physical aspect exerted positive influence on customer satisfaction. In addition, store loyalty was positively and significantly affected by customer satisfaction. Though the study checked the convergent validity of the study constructs, it did not check the discriminant validity, and hence, raised the question about the validity of the measurement model. Moreover, the study attempted to conduct both EFA and CFA by using the same respondents which is not recommended.

Shamsher (2016) conducted a study to address the issues of store image and consumer behavior along with their relationship based on the review of existing literature. At the initial phase, the author described about two major issues in retailing – one is store image and another one is consumer behavior. Grounded on analyzing the existing literature, the study discussed about numerous dimensions of store image suggested and used by many previous scholars. Finally, the author discussed about the impact of store image on various consumer behavioral aspects, such as store choice, purchase intention, store satisfaction, and store loyalty, based on the investigation of the existing scholarships.

Datta, Fraser, & Lebcir (2018) investigated the relationship between relationship marketing and customer retention focusing on the superstore context of Bangladesh. Total 202 customers from four different superstores in Bangladesh were surveyed by utilizing a structured research instrument. Based on the data, the study tested the reliability of the study constructs. In this connection, four constructs, such as satisfaction, loyalty, trust, and commitment were failed to attain the minimum threshold value to be confirmed as reliable. Moreover, the study did not make any attempt to justify the validity (both convergent and discriminant) of the measurement model. Based on correlation analysis, the study confirmed all the hypothesized relationships (i.e. between bond and trust, commitment, and satisfaction; between service quality and trust, commitment, and satisfaction; between loyalty and trust, commitment, and satisfaction; and between loyalty and retention). However, the study did not test any regression

analysis to justify the influence of independent variables over dependent variables of the proposed conceptual model.

Farid, Alam, Rahman, Barua, and Sarker (2018) conducted a study to illuminate the influencing factors in the growth of the supermarket in the Sylhet periphery of Bangladesh. Primary data were gathered from 100 supermarket consumers who visited supermarkets in Sylhet region. Authors found that several micro economic factors (such as age, income, and education of the customers) had the close association with the significant growth of the supermarkets. Moreover, the study also identified some macro-economic factors (such as GDP growth rate, FDI, increasing trend of women workforce, and urbanization) that are expected to contribute the growth of the supermarket.

To investigate the effects of service quality on the customer satisfaction, Islam et al. (2018) carried out a study in the supermarket context of Bangladesh. By using a close ended structured questionnaire, total 211 valid responses were gathered from the customers of four different supermarkets (Agora, Shwapno, Meenabazar, and Nandon) in Dhaka city. With the collected data, authors did check the reliability and validity of the five dimensions of retail service quality scale (RSQS) and found justifiable. However, the study did not report the reliability and validity aspects of the construct customer satisfaction. This is the first study so far tested the discriminant validity of the study constructs focusing on the superstore sector of Bangladesh. Path analysis through SEM technique revealed that except physical aspect and reliability, other dimensions of the RSQS model (personal interaction, problem solving, and policy) positively and significantly affected the satisfaction of supermarket customers. The major drawback of this study appeared in the methodological side. Though the authors mentioned and utilized the RSQS scale to capture the quality aspects of superstores, they did not incorporate all the items (28) of the original RSQS model rather used only 18 items under five dimensions. They did not even provide any justification for such selection of the items. Hence, methodologically the study has become questionable.

Table 1: Summary of the findings of previous studies

Authors	Year	Type of Research	Variables Used	Findings
Ahmed	2007	Quantitative (Descriptive)	Demographic variables (family income, occupation) along with issues related to store choices	People from private sectors and business holders do visit superstore more compare to govt. employees. Frequency of visit in the superstores tends to increase with the increment of family income whereas the reverse scenario prevails for traditional shopping centers. Availability of fresh and authentic products is the main issue considered by the customers to prefer superstores over traditional shopping centers.
Datta & Chakraborty	2009	Quantitative (Descriptive)	Four stages of loyalty (cognitive loyalty, affective loyalty, conative loyalty, and action loyalty)	At the cognitive level of loyalty towards superstores, customers are concerned about cost and benefit issues, whereas at the affective level, they have positive attitude with satisfaction. With a better satisfaction, customers tend to recommend the store to their friends and family at the conative stage of loyalty, which in turn demonstrated in their frequency of visits (action loyalty).
Tinne	2011	Quantitative (Factor Analysis)	Pricing strategies, store characteristics, situational factors, and promotional activities	Based on ten items generated from literature review, the study conducted a factor analysis and came up with four factors that might responsible in demonstrating consumer behavior for impulse buying at superstores, namely pricing strategies, store characteristics, situational factors, and promotional activities.

Jahan & Noor	2012	Quantitative (Regression Analysis)	<i>Dependent Variable</i> Store Image <i>Independent Variables</i> Marketing mix elements (product, price, place, and promotion) & Services	Store image was significantly affected by all elements of marketing mix along with services.
Kashem & Islam	2012	Quantitative (Factor Analysis)	Products factor, store service factor, and customer facilities factor	By conducting a factor analysis, the study generated three-factor model that might influence the satisfaction of the superstore customers in Chattogram. The extracted factors are products factor, store service factor, and customer facilities factor in their order of importance.
Kashem	2012	Quantitative (Descriptive)	Demographic variables (age, gender, education, marital status, etc.), purchase reasons by age, store wise mostly purchasing products, satisfaction level for each store.	Findings revealed that most of the visited customers were from Generation Y cohort (age between 18 and 37 years). Based on the high level of customer satisfaction, Meenabazar was in the leading position followed by Agora, Shwapno, Khulshi Mart, and Well Mart.
Masum et al.	2012	Quantitative (t-test, Chi-square analysis)	Demographic variables with consumer awareness along with consumer perception, preference, and attitude about environmental friendly products	Only 30% of total consumers were concerned about eco-friendly products. Awareness level about green marketing activities was found high among male, consumers with young age (less than 25 years), and low income consumer group. Consumers had positive attitude and preference for having environmental friendly product and they are less price sensitive for them.

Ahsan et al.	2013	Quantitative (Correlation analysis, ANOVA,)	Demographic variables (Age and gender), and five dimensions of modified SERVQUAL model	Modified SERVQUAL model was appeared as reliable with total 19 items under five dimensions. Consumers' perception of service quality about superstores varied across different age groups (except empathy dimension) as well as across gender (except reliability and empathy).
Akbar et al.	2013	Quantitative (Stepwise regression analysis)	<i>Dependent Variable</i> Customer satisfaction <i>Independent Variables</i> perceived service quality, perceived product quality, store assortment, price perception, trust, and corporate image	Findings from step wise regression revealed that perceived service quality, product quality, price, and store assortment exerted significant influence on customer satisfaction towards major retail chains in Dhaka metropolitan areas. However, both trust and corporate image were appeared insignificant determinants of customer satisfaction in this context.
Arif	2013	Exploratory	Not Applicable	The study finds indicated that the popularity for superstores among the city dwellers uplifted due to better quality of products, comfort of shopping, available of fresh products, and growing number of population. The study also expected that in the coming years the acceptance of superstores will not limited to among the higher or middle class people rather will extend to the people with lower income in the society.

Azad et al.	2013	Quantitative (Logistic regression analysis)	Demographic variables, shopping related variables, and customer satisfaction	Using logistic regression analysis, the study delineated that the level of satisfaction of the customers while shopping at the supermarkets was the function of income level and age of the customers, frequency of store visit, price, and availability of the products.
Akbar	2014	Quantitative (Confirmatory factor analysis through SEM)	<i>Dependent Variable (01)</i> Re-patronage intention <i>Independent Variable (01)</i> Customer satisfaction <i>Dependent Variable (02)</i> Customer satisfaction <i>Independent Variables (02)</i> perceived service quality, perceived product quality, store assortment, price perception, trust, and commitment	Through structural equation modeling, the study investigated the antecedents of re-patronage intention in the context of retail chain store in Dhaka city. The confirmatory factor analysis revealed that the measurement model was reliable and valid. The outputs of the structural model illustrated that in explaining the variation in the customer satisfaction, perceived service quality, perceived product quality, perceived price, and store assortment exerted positive and significant influences. However, the antecedents trust and commitment did not appear as significant. Besides, in determining the re-patronage intention, shoppers' satisfaction was found as the most influential one.
Khan et al.	2014	Quantitative (t-test)	Five dimensions of the SERVQUAL model	The gap between expectation and actual perception of customers regarding service quality of superstores was found significant in each dimension of the SERVQUAL model. The highest gap was revealed with respect to assurance dimension of the model followed by tangible, empathy, responsiveness, and reliability.

Rahman & Khan	2014	Quantitative (Regression analysis)	<p><i>Dependent Variable</i></p> <p>Service loyalty</p> <p><i>Independent Variable</i></p> <p>Service convenience dimensions</p> <p><i>Moderating Variable</i></p> <p>Consumer characteristics</p>	<p>Only decision convenience and post-benefit convenience dimensions were significant irrespective of the differences in consumer characteristics (age, gender, and education). Access convenience was found as insignificant determinant of loyalty for female consumers, older consumers, and consumers with less than post graduate qualifications. Decision convenience, benefit convenience, and post-benefit convenience were found as the significant predictors of the service loyalty for the consumers with less educational qualifications. For the male as well as youth consumers, the influence of benefit convenience on service loyalty was not appeared as significant. Interestingly, for all moderating variables, the effect of transaction convenience dimension on loyalty was found as insignificant.</p>
Rana et al.	2014	Quantitative (Regression analysis)	<p><i>DV</i></p> <p>Customer Satisfaction</p> <p><i>Independent Variables</i></p> <p>product quality, responsiveness, price, location, and physical appearance</p>	<p>The findings of the study indicated that product quality, responsiveness, price, and physical appearance exerted positive and significant influence on customer satisfaction. But the location factor was found as insignificant predictor of customer satisfaction.</p>

Salahuddin & Akbar	2014	Quantitative (Step wise regression analysis)	<i>Dependent Variable</i> Store image <i>Independent Variables</i> Location, price perception, store service quality, store assortment, and communication	Analysis indicated that store image was significantly and positively affected by the location, store service quality, price perception, and store assortment. Findings also revealed that location factor was the most important factor influencing the store image. However, the study did not attempt to test the statistical influence of communication on store image, even though the factor was incorporated in the conceptual model.
Shamsher	2014a	Quantitative (Multiple regression analysis)	<i>Dependent Variable</i> Store loyalty <i>Independent Variables</i> Store appearance, store convenience, product quality, service quality, product assortment, and product price	The outputs of the multiple regression analysis showed that in determining store loyalty, store appearance, store convenience, service quality, and product quality had a significant influence; whereas, product price and product assortment did not have any meaningful impact.
Shamsher	2014b	Quantitative (Descriptive analysis)	Different variables related to consumer shopping preference	The study concluded that majority of the consumers like to visit the stores in the evening session on a weekly basis. Most of the shoppers were very satisfied with the current business hours of the superstores. The “time saving” value was recognized by the shoppers as the most motivational factor for visiting the stores followed by store cleanliness, escape from bargaining, avoid unwanted crowds, and so on.

Alauddin et al.	2015	Quantitative (Frequency analysis)	Selected in-store factors influencing both planned and impulse buying behavior	The findings revealed that as a store characteristic, store convenience was the most important factor in determining specific planned purchase, followed by store atmosphere, store image, and store location. However, in case of demonstrating impulse buying behavior in the superstores, consumers were influenced by store atmosphere as the key factor followed by point of purchase display, and discount. No inferential test was done to test the influence of these factors on impulse buying behavior of the customers.
Akter & Ashraf	2016	Qualitative (Focus group discussion) & Quantitative (Regression analysis)	<i>Dependent Variable</i> Purchase intention <i>Independent Variables</i> Store image, perceived value, and satisfaction	Through focus group discussion, the study identified store image, perceived value, and satisfaction as the influencing factors of purchase intention of the customers. The regression outputs indicated that perceived value and satisfaction exerted significant influence on the purchase intention of the customers of superstores; whereas, store image was not.
Alauddin	2016	Quantitative (t-test analysis)	Five dimensions of the SERVQUAL model	The study found that a significant gap exists between the expectation and perception of shoppers in all the dimensions of the SERVQUAL model (reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles) with respect to service quality of the retail chains in Bangladesh.

Islam et al.	2016	Quantitative (SEM analysis)	<p><i>Dependent Variable (01)</i></p> <p>Store loyalty</p> <p><i>Independent Variable (01)</i></p> <p>Satisfaction</p> <p><i>Dependent Variable (02)</i></p> <p>Satisfaction</p> <p><i>Independent Variables (02)</i></p> <p>Physical aspect, reliability, personal interaction, and problem solving and policy</p>	<p>Four factors were extracted from the exploratory factor analysis at the initial stage. All the constructs of the study were appeared as reliable and valid (convergent). The SEM analysis showed that only physical aspect of the service quality dimensions exerted positive and significant influence on satisfaction of the customers. But in explaining store loyalty, satisfaction had a highly significant effect.</p>
Shamsher	2016	Literature review	Store image and consumer behavior	<p>The author tried to highlight the issue of store image and its effect on several consumer behavioral aspects based on reviewing existing literature. Numerous dimensions of store image were reported based on the outcomes of several previous studies.</p> <p>Moreover, the study also discussed about the relationship of store image with several behavioral aspects of consumers such as store choice, purchase intention, store satisfaction, and store loyalty.</p>

Datta et al.	2018	Quantitative (Correlation analysis)	Customer relationship marketing and customer intention	Based on the conceptual model developed at the earlier phase, the study tried to justify the relationship between the study constructs. In this connection, by analyzing correlation coefficients and testing their statistical significance, the authors tried to check the relationship between the study constructs (such as between bond and trust, commitment , and satisfaction; between service quality and trust, commitment , and satisfaction; between loyalty and trust, commitment, and satisfaction; as well as between loyalty and retention) and found all these relationships significant.
Farid et al.	2018	Quantitative (Logistic regression analysis)	Superstore growth, micro and macro- environmental factors	Findings of the study indicated that several micro economic factors (such as age, income, and education of the customers) as well as macro-economic factors (such as GDP growth rate, FDI, increasing trend of women workforce, and urbanization) had the close association with the significant growth of the supermarkets.
Islam et al.	2018	Quantitative (SEM analysis)	<i>Dependent Variable</i> Customer satisfaction <i>Independent Variables</i> Physical aspect, reliability, personal interaction, policy, and problem solving	Based on SEM analysis, the study concluded that in explaining the variation of the customer satisfaction, the RSQS dimensions, such as personal interaction, problem solving, and policy exerted direct and significant influence; whereas, other two dimensions - physical aspect and reliability had no significant impact.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

Taken into consideration all the published studies so far in the superstore context of Bangladesh from consumer perspective, this study has identified several issues. Firstly, it has been observed that not a single study was done aligned with the guidance of a particular theory, especially for those who tested the relationship between dependent and independent variables. In this connection, it is warrant for the future study to examine the consumer behavior in its true sense in the context of superstore retailing by developing and testing the hypothesized model based on supporting theoretical underpinning.

Secondly, there is a scarcity of study using SEM analysis to test the hypothesized relationships in the proposed model except the study of Akbar (2014) and Islam et al. (2018). But these two studies also had some methodological limitations. In the study of Akbar (2014), measurement model was not validated in terms of discrimination among the constructs, whereas, the study of Islam et al. (2018) discarded some measurement items of the established RSQS model without any justification. In this regard, it cannot be claimed that RSQS instrument has become valid and reliable in the context of superstore retailing in Bangladesh. Hence, further study is expected to test the validity and reliability of the RSQS instrument in its original form. Thus, following a complete process of the SEM analysis (assessing the measurement model and structural model), still there is a dearth of study in the exiting literature of superstore retailing from Bangladesh perspective and as a consequence demands for future study.

Thirdly, no one study was tested the indirect relationship of independent variable with dependent variable through a mediating variable. From the global perspective of retailing it is evident in the existing literature that the influence of independent variable(s) on dependent variable(s) is only significant through some intervening variables. Moreover, some direct path relationships are subject to the function of different moderating variables. With this respect, future study is needed to fill such gaps prevails in the retailing literature from Bangladesh perspective by developing and testing an indirect relationship between dependent and independent variables through the influence of mediating variables. Similarly, studies are expected to test the moderation effect on the path relationship between dependent and independent variables.

Fourthly, most of the study collected required sample from only one city of the country (either Dhaka or Chattogram or Khulna). Future study should consider sample from multiple cities to make sure the better representation of the study outputs. Further, no attempt was made by any previous study to analyze the consumer behavior of a particular generation (such as Generation Y). As Generation Y consumers possess some unique characteristics in terms of

spending pattern as well as loyalty behavior, it is unavoidable for the academicians as well as practitioners to examine their loyalty behavior in the superstore context of Bangladesh.

Finally, a comprehensive model for examining the customer loyalty towards superstore is still missing in the existing literature. Most of the study either concentrated to analyze the descriptive variables or examined the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction or between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Hence, it is urgency for the future study to identify the influencing variables of customer loyalty through extensive examination of the existing literature from the global perspective. Today, it is important for the store managers to retain their existing customers compare to attract a new one (Datta et al., 2018) just to confirm their sustainable growth. From consumer perspective, thus, managing a loyal customer base is unavoidable for the superstore owners. Hence, future studies can take into consideration numerous influencing variables of customer loyalty, such as, perceived service quality, perceived customer value, perceived trust, customer convenience, customer satisfaction, store image, corporate image, customer engagement, etc. However, taking into consideration the above gaps, this study proposes a conceptual framework to be tested empirically in the future (see Figure 1). The proposed conceptual model is based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework where service quality, customer value, and trust act as stimuli, corporate image as organism, and customer loyalty as response.

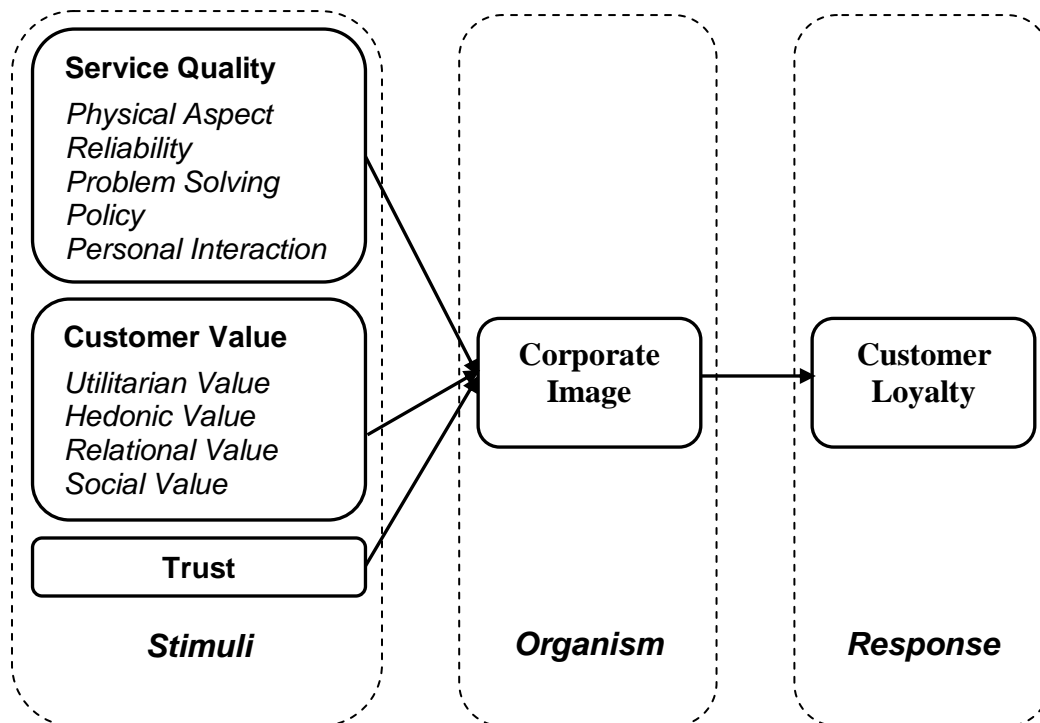


Figure 1 Proposed Research Model

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