

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to determine the customer orientation of the small retail outlets in La Trinidad and to be able to identify the customer service of the small retail outlets, to determine the customer satisfaction towards a particular retail outlet, to determine the common customer complaints towards small retail outlets, and to determine the factors that the customers consider in patronizing or choosing a small retail outlet to buy or to purchase.

The study was conducted in the municipality of La Trinidad, Benguet from December 2007 to February 2008 where a total of 200 respondents who are customers of the selected small retail outlets were asked to answer a survey questionnaire.

The study shows that sellers or store staffs of assessed small retail outlets were customer oriented wherein they provide variety of quality products with fair and reasonable prices, maintains the cleanliness of their store environment including the products, and projects themselves in a friendly professional manner, as well as the store. Moreover, assessed small retail outlets allows credit services, return and exchange of defective and inferior products, extended business hours, and accommodates customer

complains. Furthermore, customers of assessed small retail outlets acknowledge that their purchase experience was pleasant giving them the desire to shop again and would refer the store to a friend. However, most customers of assessed stores encounter unavailability of wanted products.

In addition, most customers of assessed small retail outlets in La Trinidad recognize the accommodation of the seller as one factor in selecting a store to purchase or to buy from.

It was then recommended that the sellers of assessed small retail outlets in La Trinidad should further improve and gear towards perfection of more effective customer service and provide goods that will appeal to customers focusing on what the customers really need and want.

It is also recommended that the DTI provide seminars to the sellers of small retail outlet on improving customer service and include it during the availing of business permit.

Lastly, a follow-up study should be done considering the representation of higher age bracket or the adults and the representation of the total number of small retail outlets, and also to seek the consent of the customers who quit doing business to the small retail outlets to further determine what factors caused them to stop doing purchase.

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INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Small retail outlets are categorized as micro enterprises by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) for having capitalization of less than three (3) million pesos with the employment of 1-9 (DTI, 2004). It could be associated to sari-sari stores, convenience stores, mini-marts, mini-shops, and other small stores or shops catering products or services directly to the consumer. The retail industry is in the market structure of perfect competition wherein the market consists of a very large number of firms producing a homogeneous product (Wikipedia, 2007) which is true in La Trinidad since retail outlets are almost adjacent to each other making competition stiffer and meeting customer expectations more of a challenge. However, it is more difficult to entice customers especially if one store offers the same products as the others.

Retail strategies such as providing discounts, offering the least price, and others would probably be attractive to most economical consumers, however as Santos (2007) said, “in a competitive market, what differentiates you from your competitors is your customer service”. Also, according to Lopo Rego as cited by Snee (2006), “smaller businesses that can't compete on price survive by offering great customer service. They know best their customers by name and greet them when they come in. They know what their customers want and they make them feel good when they shop there.” Walters (2007) also stressed that by making the business unique, offering exceptional customer service and having a cozy atmosphere, the retailer can take a fair share of the market. Hence customer service is a strategic marketing tool in building customer relationship.



Customer service, as defined by John Berry (2005), is a process of providing competitive advantage and adding benefits to the supply chain in order to maximize the total value to the ultimate customer. It is the provision of service to customers before, during, and after a purchase and according to Turban et al (2002) “*Customer service* is a series of activities designed to enhance the level of customer satisfaction – that is, the feeling that a product or service has met the customer expectation” (Wikipedia, 2007). And how a retail outlet value customers in terms of service is known as Customer Orientation.

Customer Orientation is the set of beliefs in sales that says that customer needs and satisfaction are the priority of an organization (Wikipedia, 2007). It is also regarded that customer orientation is a core success factor that enterprises remain in business (Vogt, 2004). It recognizes that one valid purpose of having business is to create customers as quoted from Drucker (2005), wherein the customer is “KING” and as Sam Walton puts is: “There is only one boss: the customer”. Hence, marketing’s primary purpose: to satisfy customers’ needs and wants at a profit (Jussaume Jr., 2000; Kotler and Keller 2006). It is also the case that ‘without customers you do not have a business’ (Gabogrecan, 2007).

Since customers are primary reasons of business existence, the study will then be conducted to determine how customer oriented small retail outlets in La Trinidad are.



Objectives of the Study

The study was conducted to determine the customer orientation of the small retail outlets in La Trinidad and to be able to:

1. Identify the customer service of the small retail outlets in terms of:
 - i. Accommodation of the seller towards the customer
 - ii. Merchandise Display, Availability, Pricing, Layout, and Sanitation
 - iii. Business hours, Credit Service and Complaint Handling
2. Determine customer satisfaction towards a particular retail outlet.
3. Determine the common customer complaints towards small retail outlets.
4. Determine what customers consider in patronizing or choosing a small retail outlet to buy or to purchase.

Importance of the Study

The study is expected to provide information on how small retailers nowadays deal, settle, approach, handle, and value their customers. It would also give information to government agencies like the Department of Trade and Industry of what programs, assistance, trainings, and seminars should they provide to local retailers for them to improve their operations.

The results would also provide information on how customers rate the satisfaction they get from patronizing retail outlets as well as their complaints on service rendered, which would give valuable insights to retailer into what areas of customer care need improvement thereby aiding them in enhancing services and staying competitive.



Scope and delimitation of the study

The study was conducted on selected small retail outlets in La Trinidad wherein the small retail outlets are those categorized under Micro Enterprises by the Department of Trade and Industry which are Sari-sari Stores and Convenience Stores.

The study was conducted base on customers' point of view on the performance and satisfaction derived from the services provided by the small retail outlet and would exclude other concepts such as perceptions and expectations towards the small retail outlet. The study was based on the assessment of customers presently buying or purchasing on the small retail outlet during the conduct of the study since convenience sampling was the method used in looking for respondents.



REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter discuss about the related literature accessed from books, articles, and the World Wide Web where it talks about retailing in the Philippines, retail outlet, importance of customer service, and the elements of customer service which includes the accommodation of the seller or the retailer towards the customer, merchandise display, availability, pricing, layout, business hours, credit service, sanitation, and complaint handling of the retail outlet.

Retailing

Retailing in the country dates back when Chinese merchants engaged themselves in all sorts of retail business with the establishment of *Parian*, a market and trading center, that spread all over the country. The growth and development of retailing in the country resulted from the upgrade of the people's standard of living with their desire to satisfy their wants and needs as noted from Miranda and Miranda (1982).

“Retail Trade” as defined by Republic Act No. 1180 otherwise known as Nationalization Retail Act, is any act, occupation, or calling of habitually selling direct to the general public, merchandise, commodities, or goods for consumption. It says that no Filipino citizen shall engage directly or indirectly in retail business which gave Filipinos the right to man and enjoy the retail trade in the country thus establish different retail stores and which common is *Sari-sari Stores* that became indispensable in our economic society since it serves as a connecting link between producer and consumer wherein the desire of customers to obtain goods at their convenience and in the amounts (Miranda and



Miranda, 1982). However, the Act was amended on July 26, 1991 to R.A. 8762 otherwise known as Retail Trade Liberalization Act of 2000 which provides that in order to bring down prices for the Filipino consumer, create more jobs, promote tourism, assist small manufacturers, stimulate economic growth and enable Philippine goods and services to become globally competitive, the Philippine retail industry was then liberalized to Filipino and Foreign Investors. As a result, competition in the retail industry in the country became harder and stiffer; but in the other side of the coin, retailers now offer higher quality goods, better services, wider choices, and lower prices.

Retail Outlet Defined

A retail outlet is a store selling merchandise and/or services directly to the public in unlimited quantities (Business Dictionary, 2007) or to individuals making purchases for themselves or their families (Microsoft Encarta, 2007). Retail outlet includes specialty stores, department stores, discount stores, retail chain stores, warehouse retailers, and off-price retailers (Microsoft Encarta, 2007), however new types of general merchandise retailers have emerged over time because they have attracted and maintained a significant customer base which includes specialists, home-improvement centers, off-price retailers, catalogue showrooms, warehouse clubs, and hypermarkets. A retailer can also be a manufacturer or a wholesaler in the distribution chain; most retailers direct their efforts to satisfying needs of ultimate consumers (Spirou, 2007).

According to Miranda and Miranda (1982), Sari-sari stores as retail outlet are unique since it caters to general public in a way that will tend to redound to the benefit of



its customers and it also likewise devise ways and means to offer better merchandise and offer them for sale at the lowest possible price.

Importance of Customer Service in Retailing

According to Kurtz, Dodge, and Klompmaker (1988), and also with Woodcock, Stone, and Machtynger (2000), customers are a firm's most valuable asset where their rights must be understood and respected. This account for the "sovereignty of consumer" where the customer is "King" and that his wants and needs must be given not only preferential attention but doubtlessly be satisfied if that is possible in any given circumstance (Miranda 1990). It is why in any varying degree, all firms attempt to satisfy customer needs and wants through a set of activities known as customer service which emphasizes that without customers, profit is not possible (Pride and Ferrell, 1989). Worms and Brown (1990) further state that customers are extremely important to the success of a business and should be treated with care. Berkowitz, Kern, and Rudelius (1989) also noticed that companies now see customer service as a strategic tool for increasing customer satisfaction and sales, and that better customer service builds-up customer retention which businesses today believe that it is more profitable to sell to existing customers than to new ones. As a result, marketing now also involves finding ways to turn one-time purchasers into lifelong customers (Microsoft Encarta, 2007). However Woodcock, Stone, Machtynger (2000) also emphasized that customers are expensive to acquire and not easy to keep. Moreover, Buxton (2000) also discussed that, serving customers better creates satisfied customers, builds repeat business, and drives



profitability. Furthermore, she also cited that most North American companies spend 3% of their revenues to learn more about how they are doing with customers.

Lake (2007) also stressed that customer retention is not only a cost effective and profitable strategy, but in today's business world it is necessary because 80% of business sales come from 20% of the customer and clients and after all, many experts (Kotler and Keller, 2006; Santos, 2007; Worms and Brown, 1990,) will tell that it is five times (5x) more expensive to acquire new customers. In addition it is often easier to re-attract ex-customers (because company know their names and histories) than to find new ones (Kotler and Keller, 2006).

Elements of Customer Service in Retailing

Accommodation of the Seller/Retailer Towards the Customer

Effective customer service starts from the seller wherein according to Berry (2005) most consumers often feel uncomfortable buying some of the products or availing of a service unless they feel the sense of friendliness and comfort from the seller. It could also be related from what Gabogrecan (2007) said, "Never underestimate the importance of making your customers feel special – you, as a customer, like to feel special – don't you?" In relation, Seavey and Wells (2005) also discussed that the customer's concern does not end with the decision to purchase where the customer immediately begins to re-evaluate the product or service. "Did it perform as I expected? Was I treated as a valued customer?" If the customer is satisfied with the re-evaluated purchase, the business would have a loyal customer and more purchases will follow. They further emphasized that courteous service every time will keep the customers coming back.



Moreover, Kowal (2007) discussed the difference of Core Service and Quality Service wherein Core service is the *procedural side of service*, consisting of established systems and procedures to deliver the product or service; it is the business “reason for being” which includes three elements: cost, delivery and quality wherein it could be easily replicated by a competitor. On the other hand, Quality Service is the *personal side of service*, including people and processes that incorporates how the customer is treated in the interactions while conducting business; it is this personal side of business that enables an organization to differentiate themselves – to consistently meet and exceed the customer's expectations and provide them with a reason to want to return.

Furthermore, Obarski (2002) highlighted three “A” of comfort zones that a seller should possess: First “A” would be “*Attitude*” which pertains to the behavior that a seller shows to a customer wherein according to Santos (2007) and Berry (2005) an effective approach in customer service would be greeting the customers with a friendly smile and ending the transaction by thanking the customer and by telling the customer to come back. She also cites that three (3) out of four (4) customers leave a store because of impolite, inattentive salespeople which are the most common complaints towards the seller. In addition, a survey of consumers as cited by Santos (2007) and Adams (2003) shows that Sixty-eight percent (68%) of customers quit doing business resulting from the indifferent, uncaring attitudes of owner, manager or some employees toward customers, 14% due product dissatisfaction, 9 percent - competitive reasons, 5% due to friends’ influence, 3 % because customers move away, and 1% due to death. Meanwhile, the Second “A” stands for “*Audience*” in which the seller should be a good audience that gives attention to customers since customers are like actors in a play where making eye



contact, listening to their needs and finding a way to satisfy their wants is part of being a good audience. On the other hand, the third “A” stands for *Awareness or Alertness* of what is happening around and to move when necessary since most customers won’t ask directly when they need help (Berry, 2005). In addition Miranda and Miranda (1982) stressed that in most stores seller play the role of helpers instead of a seller thus giving assistance when needed and not to interlude. Common complaints also arise due to delays and long waits due to the inattentiveness of the seller Santos (2007).

Merchandise Display, Availability, Pricing, Layout and Sanitation

According to Miranda (1979), the fact that the seller is obtaining goods for resale it is important that the seller should obtain merchandise that will appeal to customers thus purchase what the customers really need and wanted. The seller should also know what to stock and not to be burdened with large reserve stock.

It is also important that the seller is knowledgeable about the goods that he/she is offering, according to Berry (2005) knowing the product being offered would trigger good customer service. The seller should also be acquainted with the prices also with the merchandise display so that the seller would be easily located the product. It is also the case that most customers complain due to the long queue due to the wondering of the seller. In addition Miranda and Miranda (1982) made mention that most seller don’t employ trained laborers that in the absence of the seller, members of the family were being told to operate which results to the changes in pricing and the unavailability of the product since the one told to operate is not knowledgeable of the offered products thus results to customer complaints.



Seavey and Wells (2005) also stressed that quality products should be offered and as noted from Santos (2007), most customers complain due to defective or inferior products where the Department of Trade and Industry reminds the consumers that only those defective goods can be returned or exchanged and one cannot return the goods nor ask for a refund if the customer only had a change of mind. Moreover Duncan, Hollander, and Savitt (1983) also emphasized that the retailers' most basic service is to offer desirable goods at reasonable prices in a convenient way through attractive and well located stores wherein goods should be attractively displayed through noticeable layout so that browsers would be enticed to buy by looking at the properly layout displayed products and would also affect in the convenience of the customer in buying and the availability of the product is also influential.

According to Berry (2005), the cleanliness, care, and beauty of the outlet, all contribute to that sense of welcome and comfort that is communicated to the customer thus sanitation of the store should always be given importance.

Business Hours, Credit Service, and Complaint Handling

According to Miranda and Miranda (1982) also with Pride and Ferrell (1989), and Duncan, Hollander, and Savitt (1983), small retail outlets are providing services to attract and hold customers like providing credit to customers and extended business hours wherein the stores opens early in the morning and late in the evening; hence the reasons for their continued patronage.

As quoted from H. Gordon Selfridge, "The customer is always right" and it is accepted by most customer-oriented businesses. According to Jim (2007), Customers are



always right when they believe they are right, they may be dead wrong but by understanding the situation and acknowledging their belief, the seller would begin to present a different way of looking at the situation. In contrast, according to Walters (2007), “Customers make honest mistakes and sometimes they want something for nothing and that while the customer isn't always right, it's the job of retailers is to make them feel like they are always important.”

A customer complaint is an opportunity to improve service or products. According to Berry (2005), it is harder to satisfy a customer who has a complaint, or who has had a bad experience. Santos (2007) also discussed that an unsatisfactory experience is easier to remember, describe and record. Statistics indicate that 91% of dissatisfied customers slip quietly and never return. And an unhappy customer tells 20 people and a happy one tells on 3 or 4 people.

Mehrmann (2007) also emphasized that it is important to recognize that the majority of customers who complain are loyal customers who care about the business. Customers who take the time to complain are also taking the time to tell what went wrong. Customers who are disappointed and do not complain are already lost, but you have a chance to save the ones who are loyal enough to give you the opportunity to respond. He also stressed that if one customer complains, it is typically an indication that there are several more with the same experience and if a complaining customer is irate, it is because the customer is disappointed and that the customer is not complaining about the business, rather they are expressing the dissatisfaction to business. In addition, Kowal (2007) cited that one reason why customer call the attention of the business is for the desire to be heard or to be understood.



In general, satisfaction of the purchaser/buyer would be the result from the services offered by the small retail outlets to the customers, thus consciously or unconsciously providing customer service to the customers wherein the dissatisfaction of customers on the services would result to complaints.

According to Duncan, Hollander, and Savitt (1983), no retailer can completely eliminate customer complaints. Moreover Kurtz, Dodge, and Klompaker (1988) stressed that most difficult aspects of ensuring repeat business is handling complaints and that the best way to handle it is by avoiding them by putting emphasis in customer service.



METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the process on how the researcher conducted the study. It discussed the location and time of conduct of the study, the method use in selecting the respondents, how data were collected, and the statistical method employed to analyze the data gathered

Locale and Time of the Study

The study was conducted in the municipality of La Trinidad, Benguet from December 2007 to January 2008. It covered the selected small retail outlets particularly the barangays located from Km. 4 to Km. 6 namely Balili, Pico, Lubas, Mamaslyn, Betag, and Tabangawen since it is where most small retail outlets are adjacent to each other.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were the customers of the selected small retail outlets. According to Kurtz, Dodge, and Klompaker (1988), existing customers are ideal source of information whether they're purchase experience are satisfactory or not and that if their experience would be shared to friends and acquaintances.

Using the survey cited by Santos (2007) and Adams (2003) that 68% of customers quit doing business as a result from the indifferent, uncaring attitudes of owner, manager or some employees toward customers, the researcher then draws an assumption that out of 100 respondents it is possible that 68 respondents are still satisfied with the service of the small retail outlet since they're still purchasing on it which gives a confidence interval of 9.14%



that results to 199 respondents which was rounded to 200 in a confidence level of 99% using a sample size calculator..

Data Collection

Data collected were based on the objectives of the study. Survey questions would be patterned from Mystery Shopping. Mystery Shopping/Test Shopping/Silent Shopping is a tool to measure quality of retail service. It allows a “view” from outside to counteract professional blinders, the actions and reactions of sales representatives/seller before, during, and after the purchase of the customer, that offers an opportunity to retain customers and improve internal processes that helps to identify areas which already work well, and those which still need improvements as noted from Vogt (2004) and from Wikipedia (2007).

The “view” from the outside are the simple observations of the retail outlets’ sale and services provided from the point the respondent enters the store, during the transaction process including inquiry, and until the customer checked out. It also includes the observations from the store environment as well as the products being offered. These views from the outside are important information for the business to focus on what aspect of operations needs improvement.

Data Gathering

Convenience sampling under Non-probability sampling method was used. It is an appropriate sampling method according to Swanson and Gallowey (1997) for undetermined population size, since customer populations of small retail outlets were unknown, and for limited time of study.



Since the study covered Km. 4, 5, and 6 particularly from barangays Balili, Pico, Lubas, Mamaslyn, Betag, and Tabangawen ten (10) small retail outlets would be selected per kilometer a total of 30 small retail outlets wherein a particular small retail outlet would be evaluated by only 7 respondents.

The respondents were asked to answer the survey questionnaire immediately the researcher.

The data gathered talks about the accommodation of the seller or the store staff, the store and its environment, the store services, the customer satisfaction and referral, the common complaints towards the store, and the factors that customers consider in choosing a small retail outlet to shop/buy. The data collected were in Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, 5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest with a descriptive equivalence of:

1.00-1.80 = Never

1.81-2.60 = Rarely

2.61-3.40 = Sometimes

3.41-4.20 = Often

4.21-5.00 = Always

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed according to the objectives of the study. The collected data was tabulated and presented using frequency, percentage, and weighted mean.

Frequency, percentage, and weighted mean are used to describe simple features or simple summaries about the sample and the measures. Frequency is the quantitative measure of the number of occurrence. On the other hand, Percentage is a way of expressing a number



as a fraction of 100 used to express how large one quantity is relative to another quantity. Meanwhile, Weighted Mean is the average with weight so that a data with a high weight would contribute more to the weighted mean likewise to the data with a low weight wherein the weights pertained to are the scales corresponding to a qualitative value or descriptive equivalence.

Percentage is computed as

$$\left[\frac{Xi}{N} \right] \times 100$$

Where :

Xi = Frequency

N = Total number

Weighted mean is computed by:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n w_i x_i}{\sum_{i=1}^n w_i},$$

Or

$$\bar{x} = \frac{w_1 x_1 + w_2 x_2 + \dots + w_n x_n}{w_1 + w_2 + \dots + w_n}.$$

Where:

Xi = Frequency

Wi = Weights

\bar{X} = Weighted mean



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents results and interpretations from the survey questionnaire answered by 200 respondents residing in the municipality of La Trinidad who are customers of small retail outlets located from Km. 4 to Km. 6 particularly from the barangays of Balili, Lubas, Betag, Pico, and Tabangawen.

The data gathered covers the customer accommodation by the seller or the store staff, the store and its environment, the store services, the customer satisfaction and referral, the common complaints towards the store, and the factors that customers consider in choosing a small retail outlet to shop/buy from.

The collected data were tabulated and presented using frequency, percentage, and weighted mean to determine trend of responses and were analyzed according to the objectives of the study.

Respondents' Profile

Table 1 presents the respondents' profile that shows age, sex, civil status, and frequency of buying. It shows that most of customers of small retail outlets were teenagers, single, and females who buy or purchase at the store around 1 to 3 times in a week.

Age. Majority of the respondents present during the conduct of the study were teenagers with a frequency of 106 (53%). 76 (38%) of respondents belong to the age range of 20-29, 10 (5%) respondents were at the age range of 30-39, and 8 (4%) of the respondents were at the age range of 40-49. Majority of respondents were teenagers since



the location of study particularly from km. 5 to km. 6 were dominated by boarding houses whose residents were students. In relation, a study conducted by Julian (2006) on Consumer's Choice of Market Outlets for Grocery in La Trinidad reflects that most consumers distinguish and select a particular outlet for specific type of product wherein a significant factor that influence a consumers' decision to purchase from a particular market outlet as to location is the accessibility, short walking distance adjacency, and nearness of the outlet. Also, he concluded that most married customers who are at their middle age purchases at larger market outlets such as groceries and supermarkets for their household needs and purchases only at sari-sari stores or small retail outlets for unplanned or emergency situations.

Sex. Females dominated the males where 129 (64.5%) respondents were females and 71 (35.5%) respondents were males.

Civil status, Most respondents (80.5%) were single since most of them were teenagers and 39 (19.5%) were married.

Frequency of buying. Most respondents were frequent buyers and can easily assess the customer orientation of the small retail outlet since 96 (48%) of the total respondent buy or purchase around 1-3 times per week, 35 (17.5%) purchases 4-6 times peer week, and 69 respondents (34.5%) buy or purchase from the store about more than 6 times per week



Table 1. Respondents' profile

INFORMATION	FREQUENCY <i>f</i>	PERCENTAGE %
Age		
Teenagers	106	53
20 ^s	76	38
30 ^s	10	5
40 ^s	8	4
TOTAL	200	100
Sex		
Females	129	64.5
Males	71	35.5
TOTAL	200	100
Civil Status		
Single	161	80.5
Married	39	19.5
TOTAL	200	100
Frequency of Buying		
More than six times (6x) a week	69	34.5
Four to six times (4-6x) a week	35	17.5
One to three times (1-3x) a week	96	48.0
TOTAL	200	100

Accommodation of the Seller/Store Staff

Tables 2, 3, and 4 show that the sellers of assessed small retail outlets in La Trinidad were often accommodating and friendly and that they greet their customer upon entry to the store, projects themselves in a professional appearance appropriate to the



nature of the retail store, leave their customer the desire to return for further purchases, assist and help the customer whenever the customer experiences difficulty in buying, and wraps or bags the purchased product; it appears that the sellers of assessed small retail outlets in La Trinidad provides a pleasant purchase experience to their customers from the time the customer enters the store until they check out from the establishment. Their dealing scheme before during and after the customer purchase and the appropriateness of presenting themselves to their customers were often satisfactory and appealing to their customers with an overall mean of 3.88.

The results show that the small stores believe what was noted from Berry (2005) wherein most consumers often feel uncomfortable buying some of the products or availing of a service unless they feel the sense of friendliness and comfort from the seller where Obarski (2002) discussed about “Attitude” that sellers must project. Also as noted from Miranda and Miranda (1982) that stores seller should play the role of helpers more than merely selling.

Dealing scheme of the seller to the customer before and during shopping. Table 2 presents the experience of the respondent upon entry to the store and during the shopping or buying process which considers professional courtesy of the seller to the respondent upon entry to the store, the assistance of the seller to the respondent during purchase, query accommodation of the seller, extra helpfulness of the seller, and the overall knowledge and helpfulness of the seller or store staffs.

As to professional courtesy of the seller or the store staffs, it shows that 61 respondents (30.5%) always experience professional courtesy by the seller, 48 (34%) respondents said that the seller often show professional courtesy, 39 (19.5%) were



sometimes addressed professionally, 32 (16%) respondents were rarely being greeted, and 20 (10%) respondents claimed that they were never been greeted in a friendly professional manner by the retailer. Over all, the assessed small retail outlets often display professional courtesy for having a weighted mean of 3.49.

With regards to the assistance given by the seller or store staffs to the customer, 57 (28.5%) respondents claimed that they were always being assisted by the seller, 59 (29.5%) respondents were often been assisted, 72 (36%) respondents were sometimes being assisted, and 12 (6%) respondents said that they were rarely been assisted by the seller or the store staff. Overall, the seller or store staffs of assessed small retail outlets often extend assistance whenever the respondent experience difficulty in finding or selecting what he/she needs for having a weighted mean of 3.81.

On the query accommodation of the seller or the store staffs, 88 (44%) respondents stated that the seller always accommodates inquiries, 45 (22.5%) respondents said that their inquiries were often accommodated, 59 (29.5%) respondents claimed that their inquiries were sometimes being accommodated, 7 (3.5%) respondents said that their inquiries were rarely being accommodated, and 1 (.5%) respondent declared that his/her inquiry was never been accommodated. Over all, sellers of assessed small retail outlets were often accommodating and helpful to respondent's inquiries for having a weighted mean of 4.06.

As to the extra helpfulness of the seller or the store staffs, 1 (.5) said that the seller never seek further help from others whenever the seller doesn't know the answer to the respondent's inquiry, 14 (7%) respondents said that the seller rarely provide extra helpfulness, 66 (33%) respondents claimed that the seller sometimes exhibit extra



Table 2. Dealing scheme of the seller to the customer before and during shopping

ITEM	NEVER		RARELY		SOMETIMES		OFTEN		ALWAYS		MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE EQUIVALENCE
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>F</i>	%	<i>F</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
Professional courtesy of the seller	20	10	32	16	39	19.5	48	24.0	61	30.5	3.49	Often
Assistance given by the store staff	0	0	12	6.0	72	36.0	59	29.5	57	28.5	3.81	Often
Query accommodation of the staff	1	.5	7	3.5	59	29.5	45	22.5	88	44.0	4.06	Often
Extra helpfulness of the staff	1	.5	14	7.0	66	33.0	62	31.0	57	28.5	3.80	Often
Overall knowledge and helpfulness of the staff	0	0	10	5.0	60	30.0	66	33.0	64	32.0	3.92	Often



helpfulness, 62 (31%) respondents said that the seller was often extra helpful, and 57 (28.5%) claimed that the seller or the store staffs were always been extra helpful during the shopping of the respondent. Over all, sellers of assessed small retail outlets often find ways to be of further help for having a weighted mean of 3.80.

In the overall knowledge and helpfulness of the seller or store staffs, 64 (32%) respondents claimed that the seller or the store staffs were always knowledgeable and helpful, 66 (33%) said that the seller was often knowledgeable and helpful, 60 (30%) respondents said that the seller was sometimes knowledgeable and helpful, and only 10 (5%) respondents asserted that the seller or the store staffs were rarely knowledgeable and helpful. Overall, sellers or store staffs of assessed small retail outlets were often knowledgeable and helpful during the shopping of the respondent with a mean of 3.92.

Dealing scheme of the seller to the customer after purchase. Table 3 presents the experience of the respondent during the checkout process where it considers the honesty of the seller in giving change, promptness of the seller, wrapping or bagging of purchased products by the seller, gratitude of the seller to the customer after purchase , and the overall convenience of the respondent during checkout.

As to the honesty of the seller in giving change, majority of respondents (123 or 61.5%) always receives their exact amount of change, 61 (30.5%) respondents said that the seller often gives the correct amount of change, 12 (6%) stated that the seller sometimes gives the correct amount of change, and only 4 (2%) respondents claimed that the seller rarely gives the correct amount of change. Overall, sellers of assessed stores were honest for always giving the correct amount of change to the respondents with a mean of 4.52.

With regards to the promptness of the seller during the checkout of respondent, 4 (2%) respondents claimed that the seller has never been quick in assisting the respondent during checkout, 17 (8.5%) respondents said that the seller was fast, 38 (19%) respondents stated that the seller was sometimes prompt, 92 (46%) respondents said that their checkout was fast and trouble-free, and 49 (24.5%) respondents asserted that the seller was fast in catering to them during checkout. Overall, respondents claimed that their checkout was always fast and trouble-free for having a weighted mean of 3.83.

On the wrapping or bagging of purchased products by the seller, 94 (47%) respondents said that the seller wraps or bags their purchased products, 56 (28%) respondents pointed out that the seller often wraps or bags their purchased products, 29 (14.5%) respondents claimed that the seller sometimes wraps or bags their purchased products, 14 (7%) respondents stated that the seller rarely wraps or bags their purchased products, and only 7 (3.5%) respondents pointed out that the seller never wraps or bags their purchased products. Overall, sellers of assessed stores often wrap or bag purchased products of respondents for having a weighted mean of 4.08.

For the gratefulness of the seller to the respondent during checkout, 41 (20.5%) respondents were always thanked by the seller after purchase, 60 (30%) respondents were often thanked after purchase, 44 (22%) respondents were sometimes thanked, 46 (23%) respondents were rarely thanked, and 9 (3%) respondents pointed out that they were never thanked by the seller after their purchase. Overall, sellers of assessed small retail outlets sometimes thanks their customers after purchase for having a weighted mean of 3.39.

Table 3. Dealing scheme of the seller to the customer after purchase

ITEM	NEVER		RARELY		SOMETIMES		OFTEN		ALWAYS		MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE EQUIVALENCE
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
Honesty of the seller in giving change	0	0	4	2	12	6	61	30.5	123	61.5	4.52	Always
Promptness of seller during checkout	4	2	17	8.5	38	19	92	46	49	54.5	3.83	Often
Wrapping or bagging of purchased products by the seller	7	3.5	14	7	29	14.5	56	28	94	47	4.08	Often
Gratefulness of the seller to the respondent during checkout	9	4.5	46	23	44	22	60	30	41	20.5	3.39	Sometimes
Overall, convenience of respondent after purchase	6	3	8	4	61	30.5	66	33	59	29.5	3.82	Often

As to the overall convenience of the respondent after purchase, 59 (29.5%) respondents always experience good checkout process, 66 (33%) respondents often experience good checkout, 61 (30.5%) respondents sometimes experience good checkout, 8 (4%) respondents rarely experience positive checkout, and 6 (3%) respondents claimed that their checkout experience was never good. Over all, respondents often met favorable experience during their checkout giving them the desire to patronize the store given a mean of 3.82.

Seller/store staff appearance. Table 4 presents the seller or the store staffs' appearance during the transaction process that presents the cleanliness of the seller's appearance, the disposition/mood of the seller, and the overall suitability of seller's appearance in the store.

On the clean and neat appearance of seller, 83 (41.5%) respondents stated that the seller always have a clean and neat appearance, 81 (40.5%) respondents said that the seller often appears to be clean and neat, 25 (12.5%) stated that the seller sometimes have a clean and neat appearance when attending to them, 10 (5%) said that the seller rarely appear clean and neat, and only 1 (.5%) declared that the seller never have a clean and neat appearance. Overall, the sellers of small retail outlets assessed often have a clean appearance when attending to their customers for having a weighted mean of 4.18.

As to the good disposition of the sellers or store staffs, 39 (19.5%) respondents answered that the seller always have a good disposition, 74 (37%) responded that the seller often display good disposition, 56 (28%) respondents state that the sellers are sometimes in a good disposition, 28 (14%) said that the sellers rarely exhibit a good disposition, and only 3 (1.5%) responded that the sellers never appear to be in a good

Table 4. Seller/store staffs' appearance

ITEM	NEVER		RARELY		SOMETIMES		OFTEN		ALWAYS		MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE EQUIVALENCE
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
Clean and neat appearance of seller	1	.5	10	5	25	12.5	81	40.5	83	41.5	4.18	Often
Good disposition of seller	3	1.5	28	14	56	28	74	37	39	19.5	3.59	Often
Overall appropriateness of seller's appearance in the store	1	.5	10	5	57	28.5	60	30	72	36	3.96	Often

disposition when attending to them. Overall, the sellers of small retail outlets assessed were often in a good disposition when attending to their customers for having a weighted mean of 3.59.

For the overall appropriateness of the seller's appearance, 72 (36%) of the total respondents answered that the seller always have an overall appropriate appearance, 60 (30%) said that the seller often show an overall appropriate appearance when attending to them, 57 (28.5%) responded that the seller sometimes display an overall appropriate appearance, 10 (5%) answered that the seller rarely appear to be in an overall appropriate appearance, and only 1 (.5%) responded with seller that never attend to customers in an overall appropriate appearance. Overall, the sellers of the small retail outlets assessed often attend to their customers in an appropriate appearance suitable in the nature of the store for having a weighted mean of 3.96.

The Store and Environment

Data in tables 5, 6, 7, and 8 presents the store and its environment in relation to its merchandise display and availability of products, pricing of products, store layout, and sanitations of the assessed small retail outlets in La Trinidad. It shows that the assessed small retail outlets offer variety of merchandise display that were of perceived quality where its pricing were just fair and reasonable. Its layout also aids much in the convenience of the customer. And that, most of these stores have clean environment as well as in their offered products with an overall mean of 3.83.

These results show that stores practices what was noted from Duncan, Hollander, and Savitt (1983) and from Seavey and Wells (2005) that sellers obtain goods for resale

and it is important that the obtained merchandise should be of perceived quality and should also appeal to customers.

Pricing of small retailers were just fair and reasonable. Miranda and Miranda (1982) noted that since most small retail outlets don't employ laborers, which are additional cost to their business, they could offer goods at lower prices.

Merchandise display and availability of products. Table 5 presents the merchandise display and availability of goods from the small retailers. Respondents rated the small retail outlets' merchandise display and availability according to the availability of wanted products by the respondent, quality of products, standard measurement of products, variety of products, and overall availability of wanted products and variety of products display.

On the availability of wanted products in the small retail outlets assessed, 61 (30.5%) of the total respondents said that the products they want were always available, 78 (39%) responded that the products they want are often available, 55 (27.5%) answered that the products they want were sometimes available, and 6 (3%) stated that the store rarely offers the products they want. Overall, the small retail outlets assessed often offers products wanted by their customers for having a weighted mean of 3.97.

For the quality of products offered by the small retail outlets assessed, 81 (40.5%) respondents said that the products were always of good quality, 78 (39%) responded that the products offered were often of good quality, 35 (17.5%) answered that the stores sometimes offers products that are of good quality, 2 (1%) stated that the small retail stores rarely offers products of good quality, and 4 (2%) respondents claimed that the

small retail stores never offered products of good quality. Overall, products offered by the small retail outlets assessed were often of good quality with a weighted mean of 4.15.

As to the accuracy of measurements and standard partition of the products offered in the small retail outlets assessed, 72 (36%) of the total respondents said that the stores always offer products that are in accurate measurements and standard partition, 75 (37.5%) answered with stores often selling products that were in accurate measure and standard partition, 47 (23.5%) responded that the products were sometimes accurate in their measurement and standard partition, 5 (2.5%) said the store rarely offers products in accurate measure and standard partition, and only 1 (.5%) answered with the store never selling products in accurate measurements and standard partitions. Overall, the products offered in the small retail outlets assessed were often accurate in their measurements and in standard partitions for having a weighted mean of 4.06.

With regards to the variety of merchandise display being offered by the small retail outlets assessed, 72 (36.5%) of the total respondents said that the store always offer a varied merchandise display, 75 (37.5%) of them responded that the store often sell a good variety of merchandise, 47 (23.5%) stated that a variety of merchandise were sometimes offered, 5 (2.5%) responded that the store rarely offer a varied display of merchandise, and only 1 (.5%) respondent answered that the stores never display a variety of merchandise. Overall, the merchandise displays of the small retail outlets assessed were often varied with a weighted mean average of 4.05.

As to overall availability of wanted products and variety of products on display by the small retail outlets assessed, 66 (33%) of the total respondents said that the store always offer high overall availability and variety of products, 77 (38.5%) responded that

Table 5. Merchandise display and availability of products

ITEM	NEVER		RARELY		SOMETIMES		OFTEN		ALWAYS		MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE EQUIVALENCE
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
Availability of wanted products	0	0	6	3	55	27.5	78	39	61	30.5	3.97	Often
Quality of products	4	2	2	0	35	17.5	78	39	81	40.5	4.15	Often
Accuracy of measurements and standard partition of products	1	.5	5	2.5	47	23.5	75	37.5	72	36	4.06	Often
Variety of merchandise display	0	0	15	7.5	40	20	66	33	79	39.5	4.05	Often
Overall availability of wanted products and variety of products display	0	0	3	1.5	54	27	77	38.5	66	33	4.03	Often

the overall availability and variety of products were often high, 54 (27%) answered that the stores sometimes offer high overall availability and variety of products, and only 3 (1.5%) stated that the store rarely offer high overall availability and variety of products. Overall, the availability and variety of products offered by the small retail stores assessed are often high with a weighted mean of 4.03

Pricing of products. Table 6 presents the pricing of the assessed small retail outlets to their offered products where it talks about the easiness of price determination, fair and reasonable pricing, discounts for products, and the overall reasonable and standardized pricing of products.

On the ease of determining the price, 35 (17.5%) of the total respondents said that its always easy for them to determine the price of the products being sold by the small retail outlets, 78 (39%) responded that its often easy, 59 (29.5%) said its sometimes easy to locate the price tag, 26 (13%) claimed that the price of the products being sold were rarely easy to locate, and 2 (1%) declared that price tags for the products are never easy to locate. In general, for the small retail outlets assessed, determining the price of products is often easy.

As to fair and reasonable pricing, 64 (32%) of the total number of respondents claimed that the store always offer products with fair and reasonable prices, 68 (34%) said the prices are often fair and reasonable, 43 (21.5%) sometimes sell products with fair and reasonable prices, 23 (11.5%) stated that the store rarely offer fair and reasonable prices, and there are 2 (1%) respondents who declared that the store never sell products with fair and reasonable prices. In general, the small retail outlets assessed often offer products with fair and reasonable prices, emphasized by the weighted mean value of 3.85.

Table 6. Pricing of products

ITEM	NEVER		RARELY		SOMETIMES		OFTEN		ALWAYS		MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE EQUIVALENCE
	<i>F</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
Ease of determining the price	2	1	26	13	59	29.5	78	39	35	17.5	3.59	Often
Fair and reasonable pricing	2	1	23	11.5	43	21.5	68	34	64	32	3.85	Often
Discounts for products	39	19.5	55	27.5	49	24.5	41	20.5	16	8	2.70	Sometimes
Overall reasonable and standardized pricing of products	9	4.5	21	10.5	51	25.5	58	29	61	30.5	3.71	Often

For discounts on products, 16 (8%) of the total number of respondents claimed that the stores always offer discounts, 41 (20.5%) said discounts are often given, 49 (24.5%) stated that it's only sometimes, 55 (27.5%) said the stores rarely give discounts, and there are 39 (19.5%) respondents who claimed that the stores never give them discounts on particular or even selected products. In general, for the small retail outlets assessed, they sometimes give discounts on particular or selected products, as further shown by the weighted mean value of 2.70.

As to overall reasonable and standardized pricing, 61 (30.5%) of the total number of respondents said that the store always offer reasonable and standard prices, 58 (29%) responded that its often, 51 (25.5%) claimed it was only sometimes, 21 (10.5%) said that the store rarely gives out reasonable and standard prices of products, and there are 9 (4.5%) who declared that the store never gives reasonable and standard prices for the products they sell. In general, the small retail outlets assessed often sell products with reasonable and standard prices, stressed by the weighted mean value of 3.71.

Store layout. Table 7 presents the store layout of small retail outlets where it shows that the store layout of assessed small retail outlets were suitable and convenient, the products wanted by the customers were often easy to find and locate. Also, the display of products by groups or category depending on their kind will make the customers feel that the store has a very good store layout.

With regards to ease of locating products, 58 (29%) of the total number of respondents said that they always find it easy to locate the products they want to buy, 66 (33%) stated it was often easy to locate products, 65 (32.5%) claimed they sometimes

Table 7. Store Layout

ITEM	NEVER		RARELY		SOMETIMES		OFTEN		ALWAYS		MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE EQUIVALENCE
	<i>F</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
Ease of locating products	0	0	11	5.5	65	32.5	66	33	58	29	3.86	Often
Categorical grouping of products	0	0	11	5.5	40	20	92	46	57	28.5	3.98	Often
Overall convenience due to layout	0	0	7	3.5	57	28.5	88	44	48	24	3.89	Often

find the products they need easily, and there were 11 (5.5%) who said that they rarely experience ease in locating the products they need from the store. In general, the customers often experience ease when locating products in the small retail stores assessed with a mean of 3.86.

As to display of products in categorical grouping, 57 (28.5%) of the total number of respondents said that the stores always display products according to their kind, 92 (46%) responded that the stores often display products of the same kind next to each other, 40 (20%) claimed that it was only sometimes, and 11 (5.5%) stated that the store rarely display products in categorical grouping. In general, the respondents think that the stores often display their merchandise according to its category with a mean of 3.98.

As to overall convenience with regards to store layout, 48 (24%) of the total number of respondents claimed that the store always have a good layout that facilitated their convenience when shopping, another 88 (44%) said the store layout often makes them at ease, 57 (28.5%) stated it was only sometimes that the store's layout provide convenience, and there were 7 (3.5%) who claimed that the store's layout was rarely convenient. In general, the store's layout of the small retail outlets assessed often provide convenience to their shoppers, as further indicated by the weighted mean value of 3.89.

Sanitation of the retail outlet. Table 8 presents the sanitation ratings of the stores assessed. It shows that customers would often want to buy from small retail outlets which were clean in their surroundings and also as to the offered products which are free from contamination.

With regards to cleanliness of surroundings, 60 (30%) of the total number of respondents said that the store and its surroundings were always clean, 68 (34%) stated

the store and its surroundings were often clean, 56 (28%) responded that it was only sometimes, 11 (5.5%) claimed the store and its surroundings were rarely clean, and 5 (2.5%) respondents declared that the store and its surroundings were never clean. In general, the small retail outlets assessed and their surroundings were often clean, which is indicated by the weighted mean value of 3.84.

On the products cleanliness, there were 72 (36%) respondents who said that the store always offer clean product, 60 (30%) stated that the store often sell products which were clean, 52 (26%) responded that it was only sometimes, 14 (7%) claimed that the store rarely sell clean products, and there were 2 (1%) respondents who declared that the store never offer products which are clean. In general, the small retail outlets assessed often offer products that were clean, which is further signified by the weighted mean value of 3.93.

As to the overall cleanliness of products and surroundings, 72 (36%) of the total number of respondents said that the store always offer clean products and have clean surroundings, 61 (30.5%) stated that the store often sell products that are clean and have clean surroundings, 47 (23.5%) responded it's only sometimes, 14 (7%) declared the store were rarely clean and rarely offer clean products, and 6 (3%) claimed that the store and its surroundings were never clean and that they never sell clean products. In general, the small retail outlets assessed ad their surroundings were often clean and the merchandise that they sell were often clean and in good quality, which is signified by the weighted mean value of 3.90.

Table 8. Sanitation of the retail outlet

ITEM	NEVER		RARELY		SOMETIMES		OFTEN		ALWAYS		MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE EQUIVALENCE
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
Cleanliness of surroundings	5	2.5	11	5.5	56	28	68	34	60	30	3.84	Often
Cleanliness of products	2	1	14	7	52	26	60	30	72	36	3.93	Often
Overall cleanliness of products and surroundings	6	3	14	7	47	23.5	61	30.5	72	36	3.90	Often

Store Services

As discussed by Miranda and Miranda (1982), Pride and Ferrell (1989), and Duncan, Hollander, and Savitt (1982), small retail outlets are providing services to attract and hold customers such as providing credit to customers, extended business hours where it opens early in the morning and late in the evening, accommodates return and exchange of defective or inferior products, and accommodating customer complains which aids in customers patronage. Tables 9, 10, and 11 then present the services of assessed small retail outlets where it shows that most of the stores often provide such services.

Business hours of the store. Table 9 presents the business hours of the stores assessed where it talks about the punctuality of opening and closing time of the store and extension of business hours in special occasions or whenever the respondent asks for business hour extension.

As to punctuality with regards to opening time, 82 (41%) of the total number of respondents said that the store always open on the time they were expected to, 82 (41%) also said the store often do, 23 (11.5%) responded that it was only sometimes, 11 (5.5%) declared the store rarely opens on time, and there were 2 (1%) who claimed that the store never opens on the expected business opening time. In general, the small retail outlets assessed often open on the expected time of business opening as indicated by the weighted mean value of 4.16.

As to punctuality with regards to closing time, 79 (39.5%) of the total number of respondents said that the store always close on the time they were expected to, 65 (32.5%) stated the store often closes on time, 42 (21%) responded that it was only sometimes, and 14 (7%) claimed that the store rarely close on their expected business

Table 9. Business hours of the store

ITEM	NEVER		RARELY		SOMETIMES		OFTEN		ALWAYS		MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE EQUIVALENCE
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
Punctuality of opening	2	1	11	5.5	23	11.5	82	41	82	41	4.16	Often
Punctuality of closing	0	0	14	7	42	21	65	32.5	79	39.5	4.05	Often
Extension of business hours	2	1	18	9	51	25.5	83	41.5	46	23	3.77	Often

closing time. In general, the small retail outlets assessed often close on the expected time of business closing as indicated by the weighted mean value of 4.05.

As to extension of business hours, 46 (23%) of the total number of respondents said that the store always extends their business hours on special occasions, 83 (41.5%) stated that the store often do, 51 (25.5) responded that it was only sometimes, 18 (9%) declared the store rarely extend, and there were 2 (1%) who claimed that the store never extend their business hours on special occasions. In general, the small retail outlets assessed often extend their business hours during special occasions, as signified by the weighted mean value of 3.77.

Credit service of the store. Table 10 presents the credit service of the stores which covers the availability of credit service and interest on credit.

On the availability of credit service, 74 (37%) respondents said that the seller always allows credit in cases that the respondent was short for his/her payment, 48 (24%) respondents claimed that the seller often allows credit, 39 (19.5%) said it was only sometimes, 17 (8.5%) respondents stated that rarely do seller allow credit, and 22 (11%) respondents declared that the seller never allows credit service. Overall, stores assessed often allow credit to respondents who are short of cash for their payment with a weighted mean of 3.68.

With regards to the interest on credit, a majority 129 (64.5%) respondents declared that the seller never gives interest on their credit, 15 (7.5%) respondents said that rarely does the seller add interest on their credit, 20 (10%) said it was only sometimes, 14 (7) respondents claimed that often does the seller adds interest on their credit, and 22 (11%) respondents claimed that the seller always adds interests on their

credit. In general, sellers of assessed stores rarely add interest on their customer's credit for having a weighted mean of 1.93.

Complaint handling of seller or the store staff. Table 11 presents the complain handling of the stores where it talks about the accommodation of complain raised by the respondent, the immediate action to complain, and the accommodation of defective and inferior products.

As to accommodation of complain, 46 (23%) respondents said that the seller always accommodate their complain, 60 (30%) respondents declared that the seller often accommodates complain, 55 (27.5%) said that sometimes seller does, 22 (11%) stated that the seller rarely accommodates complain, and 17 (8.5%) claimed that the seller never accommodates their complain. Overall, sellers of assessed stores often accommodates customer complain.

With regards to the immediate action to complain raised by the respondent, 59 (29.5) respondents answered that the seller always attends at once to the complain raised, 49 (24.5%) stated that the seller often does immediate action their complain, 60 (30%) said that it was sometimes, 21(10.5%) stated that it was rarely that the seller attend to their complain, and 11 (5.5%) claimed that the seller never attends to their complain. Overall, sellers of assed stores often do attend at once to the customer who complains.

On the accommodation of defective and inferior products, most respondents with a total number of 80 (40%) declared that the seller always accommodates the return of defective and inferior products previously purchased by the respondent, 43 (21.5%) respondent said that the seller often accommodates return of defective and inferior products, 49 (24.5%) claimed that it was sometimes, 14 (7%) stated that it was rarely that

Table 10. Credit service of the store

ITEM	NEVER		RARELY		SOMETIMES		OFTEN		ALWAYS		MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE EQUIVALENCE
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
Availability of credit service	22	11	17	8.5	39	19.5	48	24	74	37	3.68	Often
Interest on credit	129	64.5	15	7.5	20	10	14	7	22	11	1.93	Rarely

Table 11. Complain handling of the seller or the store staffs

ITEM	NEVER		RARELY		SOMETIMES		OFTEN		ALWAYS		MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE EQUIVALENCE
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
Accommodation of complain	17	8.5	22	11	55	27.5	60	30	46	23	3.48	Often
Immediate action to complain	11	5.5	21	10.5	60	30	49	24.5	59	29.5	3.62	Often
Accommodating return of defective and inferior products	14	7	14	7	49	24.5	43	21.5	80	40	3.81	Often

the seller accommodates defective and inferior products, and another 14 (7%) respondents claimed that the seller never accommodates return of inferior or defective products. Overall, sellers of assessed small retail outlets often accommodate return of defective and inferior products previously purchased by the customer.

Customer satisfaction and referral

As emphasized by Berkowitz, Kern, and Rudelius (1989), and Buxton (2000), customer service results to customer satisfaction and that satisfied customers refer the business to a friend or someone related to him/her which would be of big help to the business since additional customers would walk-in.

Table 12 presents the customer satisfaction and the referral from customers of assessed small retail outlets which includes the enjoyable purchase experience, sales return or purchase repetition, and the referral of the respondent.

As to the pleasant purchased experience, 56 (28%) respondents rated that their purchased experience was always enjoyable, 62 (31%) respondents claimed that their purchased experience was often been enjoyable, 64 (32) of them said that it was only sometimes, 17 (8.5) stated that rarely do they enjoy their purchase, and only 1 (.5%) asserted that his/her purchase experience was never been enjoyable. Overall, often do respondents enjoy their purchase in assessed stores for having a weighted mean of 3.62.

For the purchase repetition or sales return, 67 (33.5%) respondents responded that they would always return for further purchases, 59 (29.5%) respondents would often return for further purchase, 51 (25.5%) said that they sometimes would return, 19 (9.5%) claimed that they would rarely return for further purchases, and 4 (2%) respondents

Table 12. Customer satisfaction and referral

ITEM	NEVER		RARELY		SOMETIMES		OFTEN		ALWAYS		MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE EQUIVALENCE
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
Pleasant purchase experience	1	.5	17	8.5	64	32	62	31	56	28	3.78	Often
Purchase repetition / Sales return	4	2	19	9.5	51	25.5	59	29.5	67	33.5	3.83	Often
Referral to a friend	8	4	31	15.5	55	27.5	37	18.5	69	34.5	3.64	Often

would never return to the store to purchase again. Overall, respondents of the assessed store would often return for further purchases.

With regards to the referral of the respondent, 69 (34.5%) respondent would always refer the store to a friend, 37 (18.5%) respondents would often refer the store to a friend, 55 (27.5%) respondents would sometimes refer the store to a friend, 31 (15.5) respondents would rarely refer the store, and 8 (4%) respondents would never refer the store to a friend. Overall, respondents would often refer the assessed stores to their friends for having a weighted mean of 3.64.

Common complaints towards the store

Common customer complains were brought out during the transaction process as noted from Santos (2007), Adams (2003), Berry (2005), Gabogrecan (2007), and Seavey and Wells (2005) where Table 13 presents the common complaints of the respondents towards small retail outlets.

As to the seller, 61 respondents (30.50%) experienced unfriendly and rude seller or store staffs, 39 respondents (19.50%) experienced inattentive seller or store staffs, and 17 respondents (8.50%) experienced inefficient or unknowledgeable seller.

With regards to the products being offered by the store, 135 respondents (67.50%) experienced unavailability of products wanted, 31 respondents (15.50%) experienced purchasing defective and low quality products, 7 respondents (3.50%) experienced buying altered products, and 12 respondents (6%) experienced purchasing products which weights were reduced.

During the checkout of the respondent, 57 respondents (28.50%) encounter paying high priced products, 46 respondents (23%) encounter seller/cashier without enough amounts for change, and 31 respondents (15.50%) encounter long queue.

Other complains indicated was that the store is a “tsismis” avenue where the customer is directly affected and in relation to the top most frequent common customer complain that the customer encounter, it was also emphasized by Miranda (1979), that the seller should obtain goods that will appeal to customers focusing on what the customers really need and wanted and that seller should also know what to stock and not to be burdened with large reserve stock.

Table 13. Common complaints towards the store

COMMON COMPLAINTS TOWARDS THE STORE	FREQUENCY (<i>f</i>)	PERCENTAGE (%)
Defective and low quality products	31	15.50
Rude and unfriendly seller/store staff	61	30.50
Inattentive seller/store staff	39	19.50
Inefficient or unknowledgeable seller/store staff	17	8.50
Unavailable products	135	67.50
Seller/cashier doesn't have enough amounts of money for change	46	23.00
High prices of products offered	57	28.50
Dirty products	23	11.50
Altered and products	7	3.50
Reduced weights of products	12	6.00
Long queue when checking out	31	15.50

Factors that customers consider in choosing a store to buy/purchase

Common factors that customer consider in selecting a store to buy/purchase includes store layout, sanitation and cleanliness, credit service, merchandise display, pricing , and sellers accommodation where in Table 14 it shows that most customers with a frequency of 174 (87%) consider pricing as the primary factor, followed by sanitation and cleanliness with a frequency of 157 (7.5%), sellers accommodation with a frequency of 107 (53.5%), store layout with a frequency of 97 (48.5%), merchandise display with a frequency of 93 (46.5%) and credit service as the least factor with a frequency of 63 (31.5%).

Other factor indicated was location.

Table 14. Factors that customers consider in choosing a store to buy or purchase

FACTORS	FREQUENCY (f)	PERCENTAGE (%)
Store Layout	97	48.50
Sanitation and Cleanliness	157	78.50
Credit Service	63	31.50
Merchandise Display	93	46.50
Pricing	174	87.00

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The study was conducted to determine the customer orientation of small retail outlets in La Trinidad and to be able to identify the customer service of the small retail outlets in terms of the accommodation of the seller towards the customer, the store's merchandise display and availability, pricing, layout, sanitation, business hours, credit service, and complain handling. It also intended to determine the customer satisfaction towards a particular retail outlet, the common customer complaints towards small retail outlets, and the factors that the customers consider in patronizing or choosing a small retail outlet to buy or to purchase. In addition, the study was expected to provide information on how small retailers nowadays deal, settle, approach, handle, and value their customers; and on how customers rate the satisfaction they get from patronizing retail outlets as well as their complaints on service rendered, which would give valuable insights to retailer into what areas of customer care need improvement thereby aiding them in enhancing services and staying competitive.

The study was conducted in the municipality of La Trinidad, Benguet from December 2007 to February 2008. It covered the selected small retail outlets from Km. 4 to Km. 6 particularly from the barangays of Balili, Lubas, Betag, Pico, and Tabangawen where a total of 200 respondents were asked to answer a survey questionnaire.

The data gathered covers the customer accommodation by the seller or the store staff, the store and its environment, the store services, the customer satisfaction and



referral, the common complaints towards the store, and the factors that customers consider in choosing a small retail outlet to shop or buy from.

On the accommodation of the seller towards the customer, it appears that most sellers of assessed small retail outlets were accommodating and friendly that they greet the customer upon entry to the store and by projecting professional appearance appropriate to the nature of the retail store. Sellers of assessed stores also leave the customers the desire to return to the store for further purchases by assisting and helping the customer whenever the customer experiences difficulty in buying; and, by wrapping and placing the purchased goods in a bag.

For the merchandise display, availability, pricing, store layout, and sanitation, respondents say that most assessed small retail outlets in La Trinidad offer variety of merchandise display that were of perceived quality where its pricing were just fair and reasonable. Furthermore, most stores are perceived to have clean environment as well as in their offered products being free from contaminations.

With regards business hours, credit service and complaint handling, collected data shows that most assessed small retail outlets does provides such services. Most stores often open and closes at the time the customer expect and extent business hours when asked by customers, often allow credit in cases the customer is short for his/her payment, and often accommodates customer complains. This reflects flexibility in operation of the store.

Data gathered on customer satisfaction towards a particular retail outlet, most respondents recognized that their purchase transaction was pleasant giving them the



desire to shop again and that they would refer the store to a friend or someone related to them.

On the common customer complaints towards small retail outlets, most respondent experiences unfriendly and rude seller or store staffs, inattentive seller/store staff, and inefficient or unknowledgeable seller. Also, most respondents experiences unavailability of wanted products and purchasing defective and low quality products, dirty or contaminated products, altered products, and products which weights were reduced. Furthermore, most respondents encounter during their checkout were paying high prices, seller/cashier without enough amounts of change, and long queue. In addition, other complains such as “tsismis” avenue was indicated.

As to what customers consider in patronizing or choosing a small retail outlet to buy or to purchase, most respondents considers pricing as the primary factor followed by sanitation and cleanliness, sellers accommodation, store layout, merchandise display , and that credit service as the least considered factor.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, conclusions were derived;

1. Sellers or store staffs of assessed small retail outlets are customer oriented.
2. Small retail outlets are flexible in their operation with regards to business hours.
3. Assessed small retail outlets provide services which are recognized by their customers.
4. Customers of assessed small retail outlets were satisfied with the services of the store and that they are pleased with the store such that they patronize it.



5. Most customers of assessed small retail outlets encounter unavailability of wanted products.
6. Most customers of assessed small retail outlets recognize the accommodation of the seller as one factor in selecting a store to purchase to buy.

Recommendations

1. Although the results show that most customers are pleased with the store services reflecting their high customer orientation, there is still room for improvement since the overall mean corresponds to OFTEN and that they should gear towards perfection of more effective customer service.
2. It is also recommended that sellers of small retail outlets provide goods that will appeal to customers focusing on what the customers really need and want.
3. It is also recommended that the DTI provide seminars to the sellers of small retail outlet on improving customer service and include it during the availing of business permit.
4. A follow-up study should be done considering the representation of higher age bracket or the adults and the representation of the total number of small retail outlets, and also to seek the consent of the customers who quit doing business to the small retail outlets to further determine what factors caused them to stop doing purchase.



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APPENDIX

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Date: _____ Time: _____

Name: (optional) _____

Age: _____ Civil Status: _____

Sex: female male

Name of the Retail Outlet: _____

How often do you buy/purchase at this store in a week?

1-3 Times 4-6 Times More than 6 Times

Please rate the store accordingly. Check the columns that correspond to your answer:

5 – Always 4 – Often 3 – Sometimes 2 – Rarely 1 – Never

I. Accommodation of the Seller/Store Staff					
A. Entrance to the Store and During Shopping	5	4	3	2	1
1. Were you greeted in a friendly, professional manner by the seller/store staff as soon as you enter the store?					
2. If you experienced any difficulty finding or selecting what you needed, was the seller/store staff easy to find and helpful to you?					
3. If you asked any questions, was the seller/store staff accommodating in answering and helping you?					
4. If the seller/store staff doesn't know the answer to your questions, does he/she urgently find ways to be of further help?					
5. Over all, are the sellers/store staff knowledgeable and helpful?					
B. Checkout	5	4	3	2	1
1. Did the seller/cashier give you the correct amount of change for your purchase, if there is?					
2. Was the process of paying your purchase fast and trouble-free? (Example: You don't have to wait for the cashier to find the necessary change if you have a big bill.)					
3. Did the seller/store staff wrapped or put your purchase in a bag?					
4. Did the seller/store staff thank you after payment of purchase?					
5. Overall, was the payment or checkout experience positive, leaving you with the desire to return to the store for further purchases?					



C. Seller/Store Staff Appearance	5	4	3	2	1
1. Does the seller/store staff exhibit cleanliness in appearance? (The seller/store staff has washed his/her face or took a bath.)					
2. Does the seller/store staff exhibit a cheerful mood?					
3. Overall, does the sellers/store staff have a professional appearance appropriate to the nature of the retail store?					
II. Store and Environment					
A. Merchandise Display and Availability	5	4	3	2	1
1 Is the store providing the type of product you want?					
2. Are the products being offered of perceived quality and exact in figures or quantity? (Example: Products are not expired. Products are exact in quantity.)					
3. Are the products available in standard and accustomed divisions? (Example: Sugar–1 Kg., ½ Kg.; Lard–1 Kg., ½ Kg., ¼ Kg.)					
4. Is there a variety of merchandise in display offering choices at the store? (Example: Milk–Powder, Evaporated, Condensed, etc.; Milk Brands–Bear Brand, Alaska, etc.)					
5. Overall, is the store providing the expected type and variety of products?					
B. Pricing	5	4	3	2	1
1. Are the prices of products easy to determine?					
2. Are the prices of products of good value for purchase?					
3. Does the store provide discounts for particular products?					
4. Overall, are the prices fair and reasonable?					
C. Store Layout	5	4	3	2	1
1. Are the products you wanted easy to find and locate?					
2. Are products of the same kind or category in display next to each other or grouped together?					
3. Overall, does the store layout facilitate in your convenience of purchase?					
D. Sanitation	5	4	3	2	1
1. Is the store and its surroundings clean at all times?					
2. Are the products free from contaminations from insects or other animals? (Example: rat manure and urine, cockroach manure, etc.)					
3. Overall, are the store, its surroundings, and products clean?					
III. Store Services					
A. Business Hours	5	4	3	2	1
1. Does the store open at the time you expect?					
2. Does the store close at the time you expect?					
3. Does the store extend their business hours during special occasions or when they are asked to?					



B. Credit Service	5	4	3	2	1
1. Does the seller allow credit if in case you were short for your payment?					
2. Does the seller add interest to your credit upon payment?					
C. Complain Handling	5	4	3	2	1
1. Does the seller/store staff accommodates complain?					
2. Does the seller/store staff attend to you at once when you have complains?					
3. Does the store accommodate return and exchange of previously bought products?					
Customer Satisfaction and Referral	5	4	3	2	1
1. Was your purchase experience enjoyable?					
2. Do you plan to shop again?					
3. Would you refer a friend to purchase here?					

Which of the following are your common complaints towards the store? (You may check more than one.)

- Defective and low quality products
 - Rude and unfriendly seller/store staff
 - Inattentive seller/store staff
 - Inefficient or unknowledgeable seller/store staff
 - Unavailable products
 - Seller/cashier doesn't have enough amounts of money for change
 - High prices of products offered
 - Dirty products
 - Altered and Products
 - Reduced Weights of Products
 - Long queue when checking out
- Others Please Specify: _____

Which of the following is important for you when deciding where to purchase? (You may check more than one.)

- Store Layout
 - Sanitation and Cleanliness
 - Credit Service
 - Merchandise Display
 - Pricing
 - Seller's Accommodation
- Others Please Specify: _____

THANK YOU!!!

