A Study on Role of Customized Marketing in Retaining Customers – "A Case Study of Taj Hypermarket" Suwaiq, Sultanate of Oman

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Abstract: *The primary aim of this research is to identify how customized marketing can be used to retain the current and potential customers of Taj Hypermarket Suwaiq-Sultanate of Oman. Secondarily, this research also enlightens proper customized marketing strategies that Taj Hypermarket can implement to acquire the best possible results. Based on the review of literature, It was found that the previous literature lacks the understanding of the role of customised marketing in customer retention as well as attracting new customers in the region. The gaps identified in review of literature and the requirements of Taj Hypermarket are the key concern of current research. The data sources used for this research include both primary and secondary data. The primary data is collected through questionnaire and the customer feedbacks. The secondary data incorporates the review of literature already done from peer-reviewed sources, journals and websites. Descriptive research design isbeing used for analysing the primary quantitative data collected from 100 respondents through questionnaires. The analysis is presented through statistical methods by using SPSS, conclusion and recommendations are presented in the end of the paper.*

Keywords: *Customized marketing, Customers, Marketing Strategies, Customer Retention, Oman*

1. INTRODUCTION

In terms of retail industry, Oman has been ranked 17th most attractive destination for the retail investment within 30 developing countries across the world. A growing economy, population and increasing confidence of the consumers of Oman are driving the growth of the retail industry of the country.

On the other hand, the demand of young consumers in Oman and change in the lifestyle of the consumers of Oman along with the increasing numbers of tourists entering Oman are all set to push the retail industry of Oman to its prime position. According to Ali et al. (2017), it is expected that eventually more than 6.2 million sq./m of the area will be captured by retail facilities of all Gulf Co-operational Council nations and Oman will be leading nation in this.

The retail sector of GCC countries is expected to reach $313 billion by the end of 2020 and it is expected that Oman will play a major role in it (Belwal and Belwal 2017). On the other hand, It is also expected that in the year of 2020 Oman retail sector will generate over 50,000 jobs in the retail sector. In this condition, it is obvious that the retail sector of Oman is a highly competitive sector.

Customized marketing which is also known as personalized marketing is a popular marketing strategy that entirely focuses on targeting marketing initiatives and sending a message to individual existing or potential consumers (Csikósová*et al*. 2014).

Individual or personalized marketing entirely depends on making an attractive strategy and data analysis techniques along with digital technology (Shen 2014).For implementing, a successful customized marketing an organization needs to collect personal information about its existing or potential consumers (Guelman*et al*. 2015).

The best medium for customized marketing is digital media through which it is highly possible to track information with the help of cookies, beacons or interactive feedback tools on a website (Boyle

et al. 2014). After collecting personal data, this data is then analysed and leveraged to deliver customized, targeted offers, recommendations and messaging designs to appeal to every customer based on the previous attitudes, buying behaviours, interests and other data (Tucker 2014).

2. RESEARCH AIM

The primary aim of this research is to identify how customized marketing can be used to retain the current and potential consumers of Taj Hypermarket. Secondarily, this research will also identify proper customized marketing strategies that Taj Hypermarket can implement to acquire the best possible results.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives are as follows:

- Understanding the role of customized marketing in retaining customers and attracting new customers.
- Identifying the relationship between customized marketing and customer retention.
- Analyzing the factors influencing customer retention through customized marketing.
- To recommend customized marketing strategies that Taj Hypermarket can adapt to ensure retention of its customers

3.1. Research Questions

The key research questions are as follows:

- Whether customized marketing can attract new customers?
- How does customized marketing strategy be used to retain their existing customer?
- Will it be practically possible to apply customized marketing to many customers?
- How technological support can be used to enhance customized marketing?

Customized marketing which is also known as personalized marketing or one to one marketing. It is one type of marketing strategies, through which, organizations advantage digital technology and data analysis in order to provide individualized messages (Homburg *et al.* 2017).

Customized marketing involves in any organizational flexibility, Involves in the organizational brand capability for changing its own behavioural pattern based on the individual customer. (Kwiatkowski 2018).

Information technology plays a remarkable role in promoting customized marketing. If an organizational brand is ready to use the policy related to the customized marketing, then this organization must be made alteration at any provided time. In the case of services, it is highly suitable (Kwiatkowski 2018).

According to Ali (2017), Customized marketing also allows the company for making small modifications along the way, which is successful. It also helps each of the business for reaching out to the base of broad customer by being able for meeting the individual requirements of the customer.

According to Csikósová (2014), the companies also look for the usage pattern that might include when the person buys and how they usually use the service or product from the business, the marketers might better match the strategies of marketing with the core customers.

Customer retention can be described as the actions and activities, which organisation and companies usually take for reducing the number of defections around the customers. The goal of programs for customer retention helps companies for retaining as much as customers as possible opened through brand loyalty, initiatives and customer loyalty programs.

According to Guelman (2015), it is an efficient way for growing the revenue, as the companies usually do not need for educating, attracting and converting the new customers. Companies also should therefore cause for retention of customers, finding it much more effective process as their

marketing for the customers having been expressed in the interest of the products that have been engaged with the brand.

According to Homburg (2017), it becomes quite essential for the companies to build a great strategy and increase the profit to have before they should be also be taken for the customer service. It should include implementing services of anticipatory that helps in eliminating problems before they might find it. Companies for building relationships should also use social media. It should be built through Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook for connecting and communicating with the customers and giving them space for sharing their feedbacks and becoming brand ambassadors of the company.

As per Jahromi (2014), reminding and reconstructing of the existence on the customers helps in demonstrating the objections that they still find valuable, respecting them to be having a tremendous bounty of sales that are drastically increased.

According to Belwal (2017), there are powerful system, which also helps in improving the interpersonal skill of the team that helps in modifying the spirit of the organisation. It usually involves speaking to the colleagues politely and presently without any kind of parody or sarcasm and treating them well as they are treating the customers.

Customer retention also helps in motivating the employees for providing a service, which is extraordinary, and encourage them for presently consistent in all kinds of dealings that are related to customers in terms of human relation, customer dealings in a natural and welcoming manner (Kerr, 2015).

Conceptual Framework
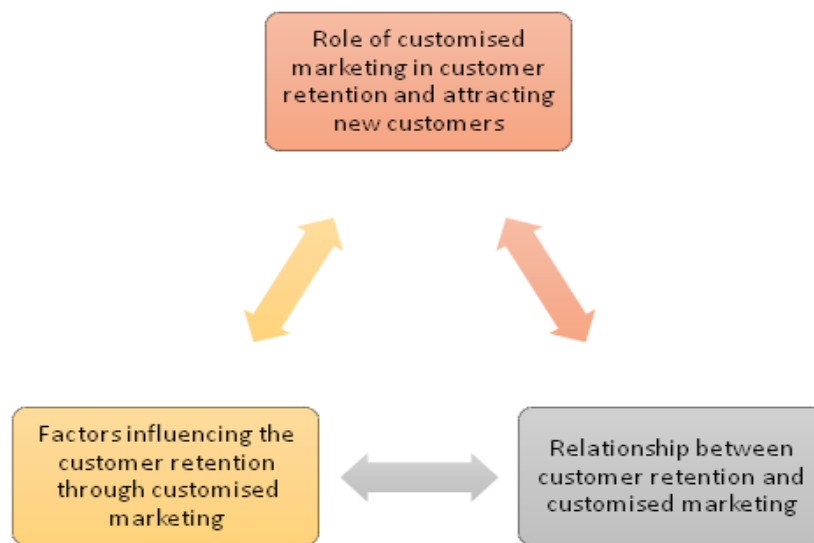
Conceptual Framework

After reviewing the literature, it was found that the previous literature in context of Oman lacks the understanding of the role of customised marketing in customer retention as well as attracting new customers. The researcher has identified the relationship between the customised marketing techniques for customer retention and the factors influencing the customer retention through customised marketing.

3.2. Hypotheses

Null hypotheses, H0: There is no relationship between customized marketing and retaining of customers

Alternate hypotheses, H1: There is a positive relationship between customized marketing and retaining customers.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current research will focus on quantitative approach, it will include the number of respondents that are required for establishing a significant result statistically. This approach will be informed by a

positivism physiology and can be used for investigating numerous social phenomenon that includes subjective and feeling viewpoints. It can be effectively used for large number of respondents available and where the data might be measured effectively the survey will be done.

The data sources used for this research include both primary and secondary data. The primary data is calculated based on the results of questionnaire and the customer feedbacks. The secondary data incorporates the review of literature already done from peer-reviewed sources from various trusted database, journals and websites.

Descriptive statistics is used for analysing the primary quantitative data collected from 100 respondents. SPSS software has been used to analyse collected data regarding both dependent and independent variables. Normality test has been done in order to test developed hypotheses. In addition, correlation, mean, mode and median have been done. At the end of statistical analysis, result of hypothesis test has been explained.

The current research has used random sampling method. Inclusive sampling technique will be used for including the relevant data and exclusive sampling will be used for excluding the irrelevant data.

4.1. Research Analysis and Findings

Research analysis and findings has presented the analysis that has been done through descriptive statistics with the help of SPSS and the primary quantitative data has been collected by conducting a survey on 100 customers of the Taj Hypermarket.. The survey questionnaire (5 Point scale) closed ended questions used in collecting data from customers. The quantitative primary analysis helped in understanding the overall research. The questionnaire is annexed for the reference and understanding of research.

4.2. Normality test of customized marketing

Based on the above table, p value or significance level in kolmogorov test for both in this variable is 0.0001, which is less than the standard accepted value of 0.05. Hence, this indicates that obtained data has deviated from normal range and null hypothesis in this study cannot be accepted. On another hand, shapiro wilk test results shows that p value is 0.0001, which is also less than standard value of 0.05. Hence, null hypothesis of this study needs to be rejected. In addition, alternative hypothesis of this research must be accepted. Hence, there is a positive relationship between customized marketing and retention of customers. Taj hypermarket needs to give more emphasis on different customized marketing strategies for enhancing customer retention.

Normality Test of Customer Retention (Dependent Variable)

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
question10_DV	.295	100	.000	.724	100	.000
question11_DV	.303	100	.000	.691	100	.000
question12_DV	.277	100	.000	.739	100	.000
question13_DV	.286	100	.000	.669	100	.000
question14_DV	.295	100	.000	.682	100	.000
question22_DV	.289	100	.000	.754	100	.000
question23_DV	.306	100	.000	.717	100	.000
question25_DV	.282	100	.000	.711	100	.000
question29_DV	.289	100	.000	.701	100	.000
question30_DV	.309	100	.000	.731	100	.000
question31_DV	.314	100	.000	.730	100	.000
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

4.3. Normality Test of Customer Retention

In the above table, value of Kolmogorov test has come 0.0001, which is less than that of standard value. Hence, it can be stated that data has deviated from normal range and null hypothesis needs to be rejected in this study. Moreover, test of null hypothesis is also done by the help of shapiro wilk test. Df in this test refers to degree of freedom that is nothing but total number of respondents. This value is 100 for all factors in these variables. In addition, p value is 0.0001 that is much less than

standard value according to thumb rule, which is 0.05. Hence, alternative hypothesis of this study is accepted, which means there is a relationship between customized marketing and retention of customers.

4.4. Correlation

In this study, test of correlation has also been performed to measure the strength of relation between the given two variables. Moreover, this test has also helped the researchers to measure the direction of relationship between the provided variables of this study. Values of a correlation coefficient generally come between +1 and -1. This value represents the degree of relationship between the variables. If the value comes close to 0, the degree of association between variables will be weak. On another hand, if value comes close to +1 then strength of association will be large. In this test, Pearson correlation is used that can help to measure degree of relationship between the independent and dependent variable. In this part of study, Kendall rang test of correlation has also been done to measure degree of dependence between the two given variables. If value of this test comes to +1, then one variable is highly dependent on another.

Correlation Analysis of Customized Marketing (IV) and Customer Retention (DV) using Pearson Correlation

		question2_IV	question1_IV	question10_DV	question11_DV
question2_IV	Pearson Correlation	1	.974**	.958**	.928**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100
question1_IV	Pearson Correlation	.974**	1	.978**	.948**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100
question10_DV	Pearson Correlation	.958**	.978**	1	.965**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	100	100	100	100
question11_DV	Pearson Correlation	.928**	.948**	.965**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	100	100	100	100

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the above statistical table of correlation, it can be seen that all values have come close to +1. Correlation values in this test are 0.958, 0.928, 0.978 and 0.948 respectively. Average value of correlation in this part is 0.953, which indicates that strength of correlation or relationship is higher in this case. This means that positive correlation has happened in this case. Customized marketing strategies if implemented properly then retention of rate of customers can increase. These two factors are closely related with each other. Taj hypermarket needs to give more focus in designing different personalized marketing strategies like email marketing, WhatsApp marketing in order to hold current consumer base and attract new customers.

Correlation Analysis of Customized Marketing (IV) and Customer Retention (DV) using Kendall Rank Correlations

			question2_IV	question1_IV	question10_DV	question11_DV
Kendall's tau_b	question2_IV	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.964**	.936**	.861**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	100	100	100	100
	question1_IV	Correlation Coefficient	.964**	1.000	.943**	.860**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	100	100	100	100
	question10_DV	Correlation	.936**	.943**	1.000	.905**

		Coefficient			
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	100	100	100	100
question11_DV	Correlation Coefficient	.861**	.860**	.905**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
	N	100	100	100	100

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Mode of dependent variables has been calculated and represented in the above-mentioned table. This table is showing that mode values for each of the data set have come 1 as most of the respondents have strongly agreed with the questions asked to them regarding dependent variables. It can be considered that these mode values are the most often values in the sets of collected data.

4.5. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing helps to evaluate whether there is positive relationship between dependent and independent variable of research. It is determined by evaluating sigma value found through statistical analysis. Sigma value lower than .05 indicates that independent variable can influence dependent variable effectively. In this case customized marketing is independent variable and customer retention. The statistical analysis of this research is showing that the sigma value is less than .05.

		Customized Marketing	Customer Retention
Customized Marketing	Pearson Correlation	1	.052
	Sig. (2-tailed)		000
	N	50	50
Customer Retention	Pearson Correlation	.052	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	000	
	N	50	50

It can be seen in the normality test of collected data. From this finding, it can be stated that the alternative hypothesis of this research is acceptable, and researcher must reject the null hypothesis. It means there is positive relationship between Customized Marketing and Customer Retention

5. CONCLUSION

It can be summarised that on conducting the primary data, analysis it has been found that majority of the customers belonged to the age group between 25 to 50. 25% however, belonged to the age group of 18 to 25 and 15% belonged to the age above 50. It was also found that majority of the respondents that is the consumers were emreployed. Approximately 20% were unemployed and the rest of the 20% was a student. Around 25% of them were a businessperson and the consumer of Taj Hypermarket. Customized marketing can improve customer loyalty was also agreed upon by most of the customers. Customers also felt that customer interaction must be enhanced to better understand customer preferences along with the use of social media being inevitable to enhance interaction with the customer. Consumers also though that proper implementation of marketing techniques can show a hike in the number of customers. Customized marketing enables the managers even to target their customer as per their requirements and choices and hence they successfully attract their customers as well as retains their existing customer.

Customized marketing helps to increase satisfaction level of consumers and this helps in retaining customers. From the above process of data collection and analysis, it can be concluded that customer service helps in retaining consumers and helps to enhance their loyalty. It was also found that Taj hypermarket can retain customers through the help of customized marketing. However, majority of respondents have stated that this market can improve customized marketing for obtaining better results. From the analysis, it was found that most consumers prefer to buy personalized products through the internet. Hence, improvement in technical communication is essential in this sector. Positivism philosophy of research has been applied in this study and quantitative approach is mainly done in this study for collecting data. This has helped researchers to collect fresh data from consumers.

Majority of customers are belonging from lower age group. Hence, target consumers of customized marketing are mainly youth. Majority of respondents stated that they are aware of different strategies conducted by Taj hypermarket. Different personalized marketing strategies like WhatsApp marketing and email marketing are conducted by Taj hypermarket that has increased satisfaction rate. Moreover, majority of respondents agreed that retailers with various effective marketing strategies help in promotion of buying. Customized marketing helps in creation of long-term relationship between customers and sellers. Different information about personal preference and buying behavior can be known by the help of this strategy. Loyalty of customers also increases as buying experience gets improved. Hence, it can be stated that relationship is the base of customized marketing and benefits like greater revenue can be earned by applying this strategy. Customers of Taj hypermarket agreed that good has been maintained by this market and Taj hypermarket can be recommended for customers of all ages.

RECOMMENDATION

Majority of respondents in data collection process have stated that customer interaction process needs to be enhanced. This can help retail market to build a better understanding of consumer preference. This can be done by providing proper training to customers and increasing their essential skills communication.

SMART factors	Description
Specific	Improving the process of customer interaction can help to achieve better information about consumer preference and needs. Hence, tools of customized marketing can be implemented in a proper way to retain consumers.
Measurable	Skills of salesperson can be measured by applying different tools like survey. This measurement can help to design training program to fulfill gaps in employees.
Achievable	Designing and organizing training program for employees of retail firms like Taj hypermarket can help to improve the process of customer interaction.
Relevant	This recommendation is relevant because improvement of customer interaction process can help to increase satisfaction rate of customers. This can also guide to frame customized marketing strategy for increasing their loyalty.
Time-bound	Six month time required to fulfill this recommendation.

FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

In this study, different roles of customized marketing have discussed that impact on loyalty of consumers. In addition, impact of personalized marketing on customers is also discussed in detail. However, in future role of customized marketing in changing motivation of customers can be reached. Different customized marketing channels can be used to increase motivation level of customers and change their buying behavior. Different theories and research articles can be reviewed to collect information about this area. In addition, automation of marketing and how can it help in personalized marketing can be discussed in the future. Automation of different processes helps in improving customized marketing and the pace of this process can be increased.

LIMITATION OF RESEARCH

This research has been performed in a proper way that has helped to gain desired objectives. There are different limitations to this research that needs to be mentioned. Different customized marketing techniques of competitors of Taj hypermarket are not researched. Collection of information about competitors regarding this process can help in proper comparison. Hence, lack in this process of marketing of Taj can be known in a proper way. Moreover, less emphasis was given on the interview process of managers, which has deprived in achieving details information regarding future.

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is Jabir Abdu Rahim studying MBA-IT at Middle East College of Information and Technology, Oman. This survey is done as a part of a research titled, "A Study on Role of Customized marketing in Retaining Customers – A Case Study of Taj Hypermarket Suwaiq, Oman" to understand how customized marketing can used retain customers. No personal information shall be disclosed under any circumstances.

Part A:

Name of the Respondent (*optional*): _____

Age:

18-25	25-35	35-50	Above 50

Profession:

Student	Businessman	Employed	Unemployed

Gender:

Male	Female

Nationality:

Omani	Non-Omani

Average monthly income (in Omani Riyals):

Below 100	100-200	200-300	Above 300

Average spend at Taj Hypermarket in a month (in Omani Riyals):

Below 20	20-50	50-100	100-200	Above 200

Number of members in your family:

Less than 5	5-10	More than 10

How long have you been shopping with Taj Hypermarket?

Less than a year	1-3 years	More than 3 years

Part B:

Q1. Marketing is important concept for retaining consumers.

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q2. Retailers with effective customized marketing strategies promote buying.

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q3. Are you aware of the marketing methods used by Taj Hypermarket?

Yes	No

Q4. Marketing methods used by Taj Hypermarket enhances buying experience.

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q5. Customized marketing is an effective tool of marketing.

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q6. Taj Hypermarket uses customized marketing to attract customers.

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q7. Customized marketing used by Taj Hypermarket is effective

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q8. Customized marketing used at Taj Hypermarket focus on customer preferences.

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q9. Customized marketing at Taj Hypermarket has very less flaws.

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q10. Taj Hypermarket can retain its customers using customized marketing.

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q11. Customer retention has a higher significance compared to customer acquisition.

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q12. Customer service plays an important role in customer retention.

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q13. Customer service at Taj Hypermarket enhances shopping experience.

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q14. Fair reputation of Taj enhances customer retention?

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q15. Taj Hypermarket can improve customized marketing to retain more customers.

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q16. Taj Hypermarket can enhance customer service through customized marketing.

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q17. Customized marketing at Taj Hypermarket is one of its competitive advantage.

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q18. Customized marketing at Taj Hypermarket needs more focus on pricing.

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q19. Customized marketing can attract potential customers to Taj Hypermarket.

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q20. Customized marketing can improve customer loyalty.

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q21. Customer interaction must be enhanced to better understand customer preferences.

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q22. Use of social media during interaction can help in customer retention

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q23. Proper implementation of marketing techniques helps to retain customers

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q24. Customized marketing builds personalized relation with customers.

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q25. Taj Hypermarket maintains good relationship with customers for retaining existing customers

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q26. Customized marketing by Taj Hypermarket is satisfactory.

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q27.Taj Hypermarket is recommendable for customers of all ages due to its customized marketing approaches.

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q28. Taj Hypermarket can improve customized marketing.

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q29. Taj Hypermarket can be considered as best retailers as they are able to retain customers

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q30. Taj Hypermarket always satisfies its customers for gaining loyalty.

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

Q31. Taj Hypermarket is always the best preference for shopping.

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)

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