

## **ABSTRACT**

In Kenya, the supermarket sector has experienced tremendous growth in the last decade due to changing supermarket customer tastes and preferences. This has posed tight competition among the supermarkets as well as from the traditional grocery stores. Consequently, supermarkets have appreciated the importance of attracting and retaining a loyal customer base through provision of superior service quality. It is evident from marketing literature that studies on the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty are mainly based on the SERVQUAL model, have been done in markets outside of Kenya, or in industries other than the retail industry. To address this gap, the present study seeks to investigate the relationship between various retail service quality dimensions and customer loyalty using the Retail Service Quality Scale (RSQS) model as well as explore the significance of each dimension in predicting customer loyalty among major supermarkets in Kisumu City, a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural cosmopolitan city, the third largest city in Kenya. The study will be based on the Expectation - Disconfirmation Theory that seeks to explain purchase intentions as a function of customer expectations, perceived performance, and disconfirmation of beliefs. Operationalization of service quality is done using the RSQS model while customer loyalty is operationalized using the Dick and Basu model. The study will adopt a descriptive survey design with the aim of establishing relationships among the study's variables. The target population of the study will be made of four supermarket stores from the four leading supermarkets in turnover in Kisumu City. The study will utilize primary data from the field as well as secondary data from financial records and industry publications. Guided by Kothari's sample size formula, simple random sampling technique will be used to collect information from respondents. Primary data will be collected through questionnaires administered to customers at the supermarket store exit. Validity and reliability of the questionnaire will be established by being checked thoroughly by selected experts; three academics and three retail industry professionals, and suggestions for improvement made. In addition, questionnaire pretesting will be conducted with a group consisting of twenty supermarket customers. The questionnaire will be self-administered, helping to improve on reliability. Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) will be used to analyse the data using descriptive statistics and presented using tables.