



# A Study on Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction in Online Apparel Shopping

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**ABSTRACT:** The rapidly digitising retail market has changed the way customers shop, especially in the area of online clothing. While change has occurred globally, there has been a breakdown in product and service quality. This study is investigating the importance of product quality, shipping effectiveness, and customer service response as it relates to customer satisfaction and trust.

Data were collected by using a survey to collect responses from 220 individuals. This data was statistically analysed to determine if there are any changes in customer attitudes regarding the service related to the purchase of apparel online. It was found that product quality failure is a primary condition of dissatisfaction, with late delivery and poor complaint processes also being significant. Customer trust is another variable that can influence a customer's decision to buy again.

The results of this study provide valuable information about how to improve the quality of the service and improve the relationship between the company and its customers in the online clothing market.

**KEYWORDS:** Customer Satisfaction, Product Quality, Delivery Efficiency, Customer Trust, E-commerce

## I. INTRODUCTION

E-commerce has changed how we shop for clothes as retail and e-commerce intersect around the world. Now consumers want everything at their fingertips - more choices, cheaper prices, ease of use and quick delivery - all while being able to count on the quality of the product they purchased.

In the online clothing shopping business, people cannot physically feel products prior to buying them, and therefore the importance of trust and perceived quality becomes the key factors of satisfaction. Factors such as:

- Accurate product descriptions
- Fabric quality
- Proper sizing and fitting
- Timely delivery
- Responsive customer service play a significant role in shaping customer experience.

In spite of the technology, a significant number of companies are unable to ensure operational consistency. Service failures do not only cause dissatisfaction but also generate negative word-of-mouth, negative reviews, and loss of customers.

This paper will deal with these issues by discussing the correlation between customer satisfaction and service quality.

## II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The online apparel sector faces a critical issue of declining customer satisfaction and trust, primarily caused by:

- Inconsistent product quality across orders
- Delays in delivery timelines
- Inefficient customer support systems

- Poor handling of customer complaints

These challenges create a gap between customer expectations and actual service performance, leading to dissatisfaction, reduced loyalty, and negative brand perception.

### **III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

#### **Primary Objective:**

To critically examine the relationship between product quality, service quality, customer satisfaction, and trust in online apparel retail.

#### **Secondary Objectives:**

- To analyze how delivery performance influences customer satisfaction
- To evaluate the effectiveness of complaint resolution systems
- To identify key drivers of customer trust
- To assess the impact of satisfaction on repeat purchase intention

### **IV. LITERATURE REVIEW:**

#### **4.1. Product and Service Quality Influence on Satisfaction and Loyalty**

##### **Authors: Cronin and Taylor (1992):**

This paper analyses the correlation between the quality of services, consumer satisfaction, and loyalty. The authors contend that quality of services can be gauged on the basis of performance and not expectations. Their results show that an increased product and service quality leads to a high level of customer satisfaction, which also increases customer loyalty. The research points at the fact that the drop in the level of satisfaction can be directly related to the drop in the quality of products or the quality of services delivered, and consistency is the issue that is crucial in terms of being able to retain customers in the long run.

#### **4.2. Trust as a Key Mediator in Relationship Marketing**

##### **Authors: Morgan and Hunt (1994):**

This study proposes the Commitment-Trust Theory, where trust is a primary component in the management of customer relationships. The authors conclude that trust and satisfaction are directly related to service quality. Lack of customer expectations that are not fulfilled by the organization leads to destruction of trust and hence poor customer relationship and a decline in customer loyalty. The results have indicated that trust is a mediating factor between service quality and customer engagement in the long term.

#### **4.3. Service Quality Dimensions and Customer Perception (SERVQUAL Model)**

##### **Authors: Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996):**

This paper presents SERVQUAL model, which has five dimensions of service quality that are identified namely reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. The authors show that the dimensions have a combined impact on customer satisfaction and perception. Reliability (prompt delivery) and responsiveness (customer response) are important in the online retail context. The research has come up with the conclusion that the better these dimensions are, the better the level of satisfaction and better customer relationship.

#### **4.4. Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction: A Literature Review**

##### **Authors: Seth, Deshmukh, and Vrat (2005):**

This document includes an extensive review of previous studies about service quality and customer satisfaction, and the authors state that service quality is positively related to customer satisfaction in a variety of industries. However, the authors found several gaps in the research, especially the importance of including trust in the service quality models. The paper also indicates that if firms provide customers with low-quality services, eventually, this will result in customer dissatisfaction and negative behaviors by customers.

**4.5. The Impact of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty in Hospitality****Authors: Ramanathan and Ramanathan (2011):**

This paper concentrates on the hospitality sector and looks at the connection between customer satisfaction and loyalty and the level of service quality. The results show that trust and satisfaction are mediating factors by which service quality influences the loyalty. The research indicates that customers will lose trust in the brand when they believe that the quality of service is low, and this undermines the intentions to make repeat purchases. Trust is found to be an important ingredient in customer relationship.

**4.6. Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction in Online Delivery Services****Authors: Chou, Chen, and Lin (2015):**

This study examines the relationship between service quality, perceived value and satisfaction with online service consumers. The study finds that the level of consumer satisfaction with an online store is related to the quality of service and performance of services related to delivery, efficiency and perceived value of products. Consumer trust is a moderator that influences consumer actions related to these concerns. This research is important for online apparel merchants because speedy product delivery and service interruptions can impact on consumer satisfaction and trust in an online store.

**V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:****Research Design:**

This research uses a descriptive design to describe customers' perceptions of service quality and satisfaction.

**Research Approach:**

A quantitative approach is used to ensure objective measurement of variables and statistical analysis.

**Population:**

Individuals who have experience purchasing apparel online.

**Sample Size:**

220 respondents

**Sampling Technique:**

Convenience sampling was used due to accessibility and time constraints.

**Data Collection Tools:**

- Structured questionnaire
- Likert scale (1–5)
- Multiple-choice questions

**Variables Considered:**

- Independent Variables: Product quality, delivery performance, customer service
- Dependent Variables: Customer satisfaction, trust, repeat purchase intention

**VI. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS:**

An analysis and interpretation of responses by 220 participants will be analysed within this section; the service quality & the customer satisfaction level of shopping for clothing via the internet is the primary function of this section. Charts will show primary highlights of research themes such as packaging quality on delivery date, the leading factors that influence total satisfaction, and how customers feel about receiving value for their money with their purchases. This analysis will help gain insight into customer's current perceptions, preferences, and expectations which will be useful to enhance product quality, service efficiency, and overall customer shopping experience.

### The packaging protects the product properly during delivery

220 responses

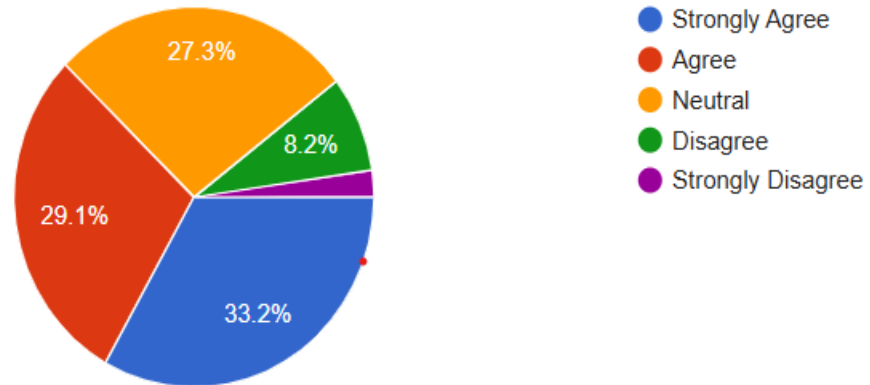


Figure 6.1: Packaging Protection During Delivery

In the chart above, 33.2% strongly agree and 29.1% agree that packaging protects the product, while 27.3% are neutral and around 10% disagree. This shows that most respondents are satisfied with the quality of packaging, though a significant percentage remain uncertain. So while packaging is mostly effective, improvements could further increase customer confidence and reduce uncertainty.

### Major factor influencing overall satisfaction is

220 responses

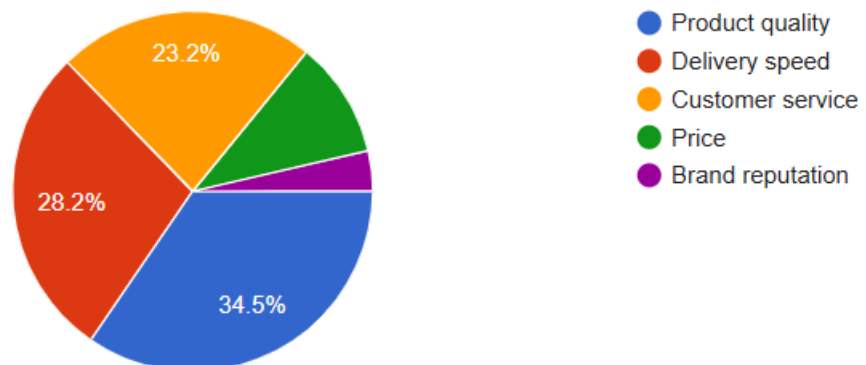


Figure 6.2: Major Factor Influencing Overall Satisfaction

This chart indicates that Product Quality (34.5%) is the most powerful, followed by Delivery Speed (28.2%), and Customer Service (23.2%). Price and brand reputation appeared to contribute less. This means that core product performance and speed are more important to customers than branding, and delivering better product quality (and improved delivery speed) is critical to an increase in overall customer satisfaction.

The product provides good value for money

220 responses

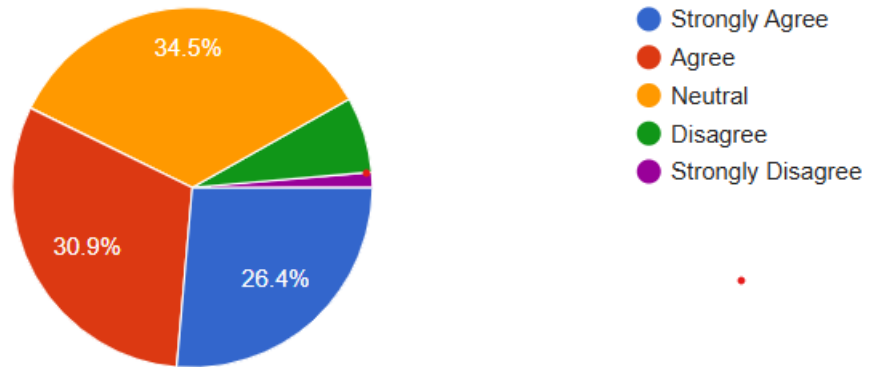


Figure 6.3: Product Value for Money

Some 26.4% strong agree, 30.9% agree that product is value for money, while 34.5% are indifferent and a small proportion disagree. This shows that although most customers feel that value exists, a significant number are not sure. Therefore, companies need to create value perception through improved price, quality or extra feature so a greater proportion of customers are satisfied.

### 6.1 Statistical Tests:

#### 6.1.1. Gender vs The Product Provides Good Value For Money

Table 6.1: ANNOVA Result for Gender vs The Product Provides Good Value For Money

#### ANOVA

Response	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.369	1	.369	.397	.529
Within Groups	202.881	218	.931		
Total	203.250	219			

Table 6.2: Chi-Square Result for Gender vs The Product Provide s Good Value For Money

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.188 <sup>a</sup>	4	.880
Likelihood Ratio	1.159	4	.885
Linear-by-Linear Association	.398	1	.528
N of Valid Cases	220		

### 6.1.2. Education vs Major Factor Influencing Overall Satisfaction

Table 6.3: ANNOVA Result for Education vs Major Factor Influencing

#### ANOVA

Factors	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.105	3	1.035	.582	.627
Within Groups	383.804	216	1.777		
Total	386.909	219			

#### Overall Satisfaction

Table 6.4: Chi-Square Result for Education vs Major Factor Influencing Overall Satisfaction

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.760 <sup>a</sup>	12	.997
Likelihood Ratio	2.774	12	.997
Linear-by-Linear Association	.696	1	.404
N of Valid Cases	220		

### 6.1.3. Age vs Packaging Protects the product during delivery

Table 6.4: ANNOVA Result for Age vs Packaging Protects the product during delivery

#### ANOVA

Response	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.699	3	.233	.206	.892
Within Groups	243.933	216	1.129		
Total	244.632	219			

Table 6.5: Chi-Square Result for Age vs Packaging Protects the product during delivery

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.017 <sup>a</sup>	12	.995
Likelihood Ratio	3.207	12	.994
Linear-by-Linear Association	.427	1	.513
N of Valid Cases	220		

## VII. DISCUSSION

According to the study results, it is clear that the different aspects of service quality, i.e., product quality, delivery performance, and customer service are extremely correlated and affect customer satisfaction and trust together. It can be seen that the lack of each of these aspects can have a harmful effect on the customer experience as a whole. As an example, although the quality of products may be satisfactory, delays in delivery or low level of customer service may decrease further the level of satisfaction. This underscores the interdependence of service quality elements in online apparel industry.

The literature reviewed supports the idea that product quality has an important impact on customer satisfaction. The way customers assess their experience of purchase is mainly dependent on whether the purchase meets their expectations concerning the overall material, durability and design of the product. The customer experience will also be impacted by the way they have received their product both in terms of efficiency of delivery and the level of customer support respond to the customer's request. The relationship of customers to their brands once the customer perceives that the brand is credible and dependable it will increase the likelihood that they will repeat their purchase. Therefore maintaining a balance of product quality and efficiency of service is vital to ensuring long-term customer satisfaction and loyalty.

## VIII. KEY FINDINGS

The research has provided some critical information about how customers view companies that sell clothes through the internet. One key finding is that many customers are still worried about the quality of products they buy because they find that the quality of items they purchase varies considerably among different purchases. Although around half of those surveyed are happy with their purchase and feel that the items were of good quality, about the same number of respondents feel that they will not be buying from the same seller again because they believe the quality will be different next time.

Another important discovery is that long delivery times lead to dissatisfaction among customers. More than 50% of the people surveyed had experienced prolonged delivery times and this adversely affected their view of the business as a whole. Slow response time from customer service representatives and poor resolution of complaints were also identified as major contributors to loss of customer confidence in the business.

Also stated in the article is that trust plays an essential role in retaining customers. If customers believe a brand is trustworthy, they will most likely continue making purchases from that brand. However, if customers encounter service failure(s) through that brand, they will go to a different website/platform for a similar product/service. Overall the study's conclusions indicate that both the performance of physical goods/products and overall customer service must be managed properly for successful customer satisfaction and loyalty over the long term.

## IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has yielded several recommendations to enhance the customers' satisfaction and confidence while buying products from an online clothing retailer. Companies in this industry could consider the implementation of standardised product measures to create a more uniform product (e.g., cloth, seams, sizing). Establishing strict inspection procedures and successful vendor relations will help establish these measures.

Additionally, the enhancement to the distribution and delivery process will reduce time delays. The procurement of goods on time can be improved with the help of better technology for tracking shipments and the supply chain. Being able to provide customers with the latest tracking information also increases transparency and will make it even better. Thirdly, it is important to improve the customer service. To overcome the challenge of quick replies to customer questions, it is possible to use artificial intelligence support (chatbots). Furthermore, instructing customer care employees to efficiently respond to customer complaints in an empathetic manner can be a good approach to customer satisfaction.

Also, businesses should have effective communication policies in place, where the product description, delivery time and return procedures are clearly communicated. This helps to set reasonable customer expectations and reduces complaints.

Finally, it is important to track the performance of service with key performance indicators (KPIs) such as delivery time, return rate and time taken to solve a complaint. This will assist the companies to understand the issues and take appropriate measures.

## X. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the present study has identified the customer satisfaction and trust as key factors in success for the online apparel retail industry. In the highly competitive markets, firms should strive to offer the products of consistent quality and service delivery in order to meet the evolving customer needs. This study has shown that inconsistent quality of product, delayed delivery and ineffective customer service may have a significant impact on customers' perceptions and customer retention.

Companies need to address their operational issues and evolve into customer-oriented companies to sustain growth in business. Organisations can build a long term relationships with their customers by improving their quality control processes, optimising their logistics system and being responsive to their customer service. Ultimately, the high levels of satisfaction and trust will create repeat purchases, better brand positioning and competitive advantages in virtual environment.

## XI. LIMITATIONS

This research has several limitations that impact its overall validity. First, the sample of 220 individuals is unlikely to properly represent the entire target consumer (online apparel shoppers) as well as being limited in external validity because of the convenience sampling method used to obtain subjects. Second, self-reported data is usually subjected to a certain amount of response bias; therefore, participants may have provided socially desirable responses and may not accurately remember their experience. Finally, the data for this entire study is only taken from one point in time (cross-sectional), so the results of this study may not represent continuing trends, since both consumer attitudes and market conditions are consistently changing. In addition, this study only focused on product/service quality; future studies should include additional important variables, such as price, brand image and competition to increase the understanding of online shoppers' behaviours as a whole.

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