

The Role of E-Service Quality in Enhancing User Satisfaction and Driving Customer Loyalty in Food Delivery Applications

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Abstract:

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the role of e-service quality in enhancing user satisfaction and driving customer loyalty in food delivery applications by examining key dimensions of e-service quality. The study also explores the impact of e-service quality on user satisfaction and user loyalty. The results of this study will enhance comprehension of effective approaches for enhancing user experiences underneath the fiercely competitive food delivery services sector.

Design/Methodology/Approach:

Structural Equation Model was used in the study with the focus to evaluate the role of e-service quality in enhancing user satisfaction and driving customer loyalty. The current study used a deductive approach using quantitative data.

Findings:

The study found e-service quality is reflected through efficiency, fulfilment, reliability, responsiveness and security. It is also seen that e-service quality influences user satisfaction, and user satisfaction influences user loyalty

Societal Benefits:

Enhancing e-service quality can lead to more efficient, reliable, and satisfying food delivery services, improving daily life convenience for users. Satisfied customers contribute to the growth of food delivery businesses which can lead to job creation and support to the local economy. Improved e-service processes can promote eco-friendly practices such as minimizing packaging waste, reducing delivery emissions, and encouraging sustainable consumption habits. Enhancing service quality can bridge the digital gap, ensuring a broader section of society, including remote or underserved communities, benefits from accessible and reliable food delivery services.

Originality/Values:

There are many studies conducted on factors reflecting E-service quality However very few studies have been conducted concerning Food Delivery Applications(FDAs). Also, this study will analyze impact of E-service quality on Users satisfaction & Loyalty

Keywords: *E-Service Quality, User Satisfaction, User Loyalty*

Introduction:

Information technology has advanced significantly during the past ten years. Through the application of digital technology, its progress has hastened digital transformation (Niu et al., 2023), leading to significant changes in industry and society (Vial, 2019). Simply put, a new era of digital features is dawning on the economic community (Chen & Xu, 2022). These characteristics have upended many elements of human existence, such as the way individuals place food and drink orders due to the availability of online food delivery (Melián-González, 2022). When customers purchase food from restaurants online, it's referred to as online meal delivery (Shankar et al., 2022). Instead of having to go to restaurants in person to enjoy food or beverages, customers may now place orders using smartphones or other compatible devices from the comfort

of their own homes. As a result, customers may easily obtain food that is ready to eat (Pillai et al., 2022) and can choose from a convenient menu and enjoy convenient delivery and payment options. With all of the features and promos available, this food delivery service app can save you money and time in addition to providing convenience Laetitia et al. (2023).

Developing and maintaining customer loyalty is essential to succeeding in the online meal delivery market. Several businesses are making a lot of effort to use their resources to develop and retain customer loyalty as well as to evaluate and research the elements that drive it (Li et al., 2017). Loyalty has a vital part in increasing company performance (Hwang et al., 2021). Increasing client loyalty is another practical strategy for enhancing business performance (Li et al., 2017). Consequently, big businesses are still having trouble figuring out how to cultivate a loyal consumer base (Boakye et al., 2017).

Food delivery applications:

Applications for food delivery have completely changed how customers obtain meal services by providing efficiency and convenience to fit into today's hectic, modern lifestyles. Technological developments have contributed to the growth of these platforms, which allow customers to easily make orders via mobile devices from a variety of restaurants and cuisines (Ray et al., 2019).

India's most popular and practical online food ordering and delivery service is Swiggy. In 2014, Bangalore-based Swiggy, a meal delivery business, was founded. The business had operations in 100 Indian locations as of March 2019. In early 2019, Swiggy Stores were introduced as an addition to their standard goods delivery service. In September 2019, Swiggy introduced its rapid pick-up and drop-off service, Swiggy Go. A broad variety of items, such as laundry and paper products or package deliveries to both business and retail customers, are picked up and delivered by the service. (Pon Sankar, P.)

Zomato was founded in 2008 under the name Foodiebay, and on January 18, 2010, it changed its name to Zomato Media Pvt. Ltd. In 2011, Zomato grew to include Delhi NCR, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, Pune, Kolkata, and Mumbai. With offices in the United Arab Emirates, Sri Lanka, the United Kingdom, the Philippines, and South Africa, the company increased its global reach in 2012. With websites and applications available in Turkish, Portuguese, Indonesian, and English, Zomato started operating in New Zealand, Turkey, Brazil, and Indonesia in 2013. Zomato launched in April 2014, initially in Portugal. In 2015, it was released in Canada, Lebanon, and Ireland. (Wikipedia)

E-service Quality

Efficiency is the degree to which consumers can navigate and complete their orders quickly and easily, directly impacting their overall experience (Zeithaml et al., 2002). Reliability depends on the service's ability to work consistently and dependably, guaranteeing that orders are supplied on time (Parasuraman et al., 2005). User trust and engagement are increased by responsiveness, or the timely resolution of consumer questions or difficulties (Fassnacht & Koese, 2006). Building confidence in the platform requires security, which protects users' money and personal information (Kim et al., 2008). Lastly, fulfillment guarantees that customer expectations are satisfied, which is a critical component in satisfaction and loyalty. Fulfillment is the precision and prompt delivery of the correct things (DeLone & McLean, 2003).

User Satisfaction

A subjective evaluation of a product's performance about the expectations of the customer prior to consumption is called satisfaction. Suhartanto et al. (2019) describe customer satisfaction as the consumer's view of having many wants, objectives, goals, and other factors met, and feeling satisfied after attaining this. Customers will be satisfied if they believe a product or service performs better than they had anticipated.

User Loyalty

A customer's loyalty demands a great deal of commitment. Consumers are more likely to make future purchases of goods or services from the same place (Mansouri et al., 2022). Customer loyalty is frequently explained by actions or attitudes. According to Kim and Kim (2018), conduct is linked to both intended and actual purchase behaviour, whereas attitude is a measure of a customer's ongoing commitment to the company. Customer loyalty can take many forms and incorporate several facets of behaviour and attitudes towards a service, product, brand, or business (Kimura, 2022). Several studies claim that advantages including higher profitability, improved performance, and a competitive edge come with this strong client commitment to make repeat purchases. Thus, cultivating loyal customers is an essential first step on the road

to economic success. A lot of companies concentrate their marketing efforts on developing and strengthening client loyalty (Cakici et al., 2019).

Review of Literature:

Impact of E-Service Quality on Customer Loyalty and Satisfaction

Various studies have explored the influence of e-service quality on customer loyalty and satisfaction across different online platforms. **Ghifari et al. (2024)** found that e-service quality and food quality positively impacted perceived value, customer loyalty and food quality in the context of Shoppe-food delivery. However, food quality alone did not significantly affect customer satisfaction or loyalty. **Archana et al. (2024)** discovered that elements like efficiency, fulfillment, privacy, and system availability played a critical role in enhancing loyalty within the Super App ecosystem. **Dhiya et al. (2024)** highlighted the significant role of website design, customer service, and security in fostering customer satisfaction and repurchase intention in the McDonald's app. These studies indicate that e-service quality directly influences customer satisfaction and loyalty, with elements like design and security emerging as key drivers.

Role of Mediators in Strengthening E-Service Quality and Loyalty

The studies also emphasize the role of mediators, such as customer satisfaction and trust, in the relationship between e-service quality and loyalty. **Laetitia et al. (2023)** and **Siti et al. (2024)** both found that e-service quality significantly influenced e-trust and e-satisfaction, which, in turn, positively impacted customer loyalty. Similarly, **Navneet (2023)** confirmed that e-trust and e-satisfaction mediated the relationship between e-service quality and loyalty, particularly in the case of Online Food Delivery (OFD) platforms. The findings suggest that fostering highly competitive environments. **Anik et al. (2023)** also supported these findings by demonstrating that customer satisfaction with app interface and delivery quality leads to greater loyalty in online grocer delivery.

Factors impacting online food delivery services

Several studies focused on online food delivery services further highlight specific factors that contribute to customer satisfaction and loyalty, **Karawita et al. (2024)** identified that interaction, environment, and food quality were key contributors to loyalty in online food delivery services during the pandemic. Additionally, **Nishant and Neha (2020)** demonstrated that perceived service quality directly impacted behavioral intention in online food ordering service. **Durant et al. (2021)** explored the role of food quality, safety measures, and e-service quality, noting that safety measures played a critical role in customer retention. Finally, **Mahasweta and Mukhrejee (2022)** and **Rina et al. (2022)** found that customer inspiration and satisfaction, driven by e-service quality, were significant predictors of customer loyalty, further emphasizing the importance of tailored customer experiences in online food delivery platforms.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To evaluate the role of e-service quality in enhancing user satisfaction and driving customer loyalty in food delivery applications
2. To give appropriate suggestions to food delivery applications to enhance customer satisfaction and foster long term loyalty.

Hypotheses

Ha1: E-service Quality of food delivery applications is reflected through Efficiency.

Ha2: E-service Quality of food delivery applications is reflected through Fulfilment.

Ha3: E-service Quality of food delivery applications is reflected through Reliability.

Ha4: E-service Quality of food delivery applications is reflected through Responsiveness.

Ha5: E-service Quality of food delivery applications is reflected through Security.

Ha6: E-service Quality of food delivery applications significantly impacts User Satisfaction.

Ha7: User Satisfaction of food delivery applications significantly impacts User Loyalty.

Research Methodology:

Table No: 1 Research Methodology	
Aspect	Details
Sample Size	225 Users of Food Delivery Applications (Minimum necessary sample size: 188)
Effect Size	0.3
Statistical Power	0.9
Number of Latent Variables	8
Number of Observable Variables	26
Probability Level	0.05
Sampling Method	Non-random purposive sampling
Data Gathering Methods	Primary and secondary data
Analytical Method	Structural Equation Model (SEM)
Analytical Tool	SMART PLS

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Table No: 2 Demographic Profile of the Respondents			
Category	Variables	Frequency	Percent
Age	Under 25	54	24.00
	25-34	51	22.67
	35-44	46	20.44
	45-54	49	21.78
	55 and above	25	11.11
Gender	Male	133	59.11
	Female	92	40.89
Food Delivery Application used?	Swiggy	91	40.44
	Zomato	96	42.67
	Uber Eats	38	16.89
How often do you order food online	Daily	65	28.89
	A few times a Week	61	27.11
	Weekly	49	21.78
	A few times a Month	50	22.22

Under 25 years old make up the largest age group among respondents (24% of the sample). Those in the 25–34 age group, who make up about 22.67% of the respondents. With users between the ages of 35 and 44 making up 20.44% and 45 and 54 making up 21.78% of the user base, respectively, the age distribution shows a comparatively young user base. The age group 55 and above makes up the smallest portion (11.11%), suggesting that younger people are more likely to employ meal delivery services. Male respondents had a higher engagement rate than female respondents, with 59.11% of respondents identifying as male and 40.89% as female. Zomato is the most popular option, with 42.67% of respondents saying they would rather use it over other food delivery services followed closely by Swiggy, at 40.44%. With a smaller market share of 16.89%, for Uber Eats. A significant dependence on food delivery services for daily meals is evident from the fact that almost 28.89% of respondent's order food daily. 27.11% of the respondent's place food orders a few times each week, while 21.78% place weekly orders. Furthermore, 22.22% of those surveyed said they place a few monthly food orders.

Table No: 3 Measurement model		
Statements and items		Citations
	Efficiency	
1	The app loads quickly when I open it.	Parasuraman, & Malhotra (2002).
2	The app is easy to navigate and use.	
2	The app allows me to place orders quickly	
4	I can find the information I need without much effort.	
	Reliability	
1	The app delivers my food as promised	Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Malhotra (2005)
2	The app correctly processes my order every time	
3	I can rely on the app for accurate order tracking	
4	The app rarely crashes or experiences downtime	
	Responsiveness	
1	The app provides quick responses to my inquiries.	Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry (1988)
2	The customer support is available and easy to reach when I need help	
3	I receive timely updates about my order status	
4	The app informs me immediately when there are any delays	
	Security	
1	I feel secure using my payment information on the app.	McKnight, Choudhury, & Kacmar (2002)
2	The app protects my personal data from unauthorized access	
3	I trust the app to handle transactions securely	
4	The app provides secure login methods to prevent unauthorized access	
	Fulfillment	
1	The app always delivers my order on time	Wolfenbarger & Gilly (2003).
2	The app delivers the correct items I ordered.	
3	The food arrives in good condition and matches the description	
4	The app fulfills its delivery promises consistently	
	User Satisfaction	
1	I am satisfied with the overall experience of using this food delivery app	Oliver (1999)
2	I am happy with the quality of food delivered through the app.	
3	The app meets my expectations for food delivery services	
	User Loyalty	
1	I will continue to use this food delivery app in the future.	Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman (1996)
2	I prefer this app over other food delivery services.	
3	I am likely to recommend this app to friends and fam	

Figure – SEM model

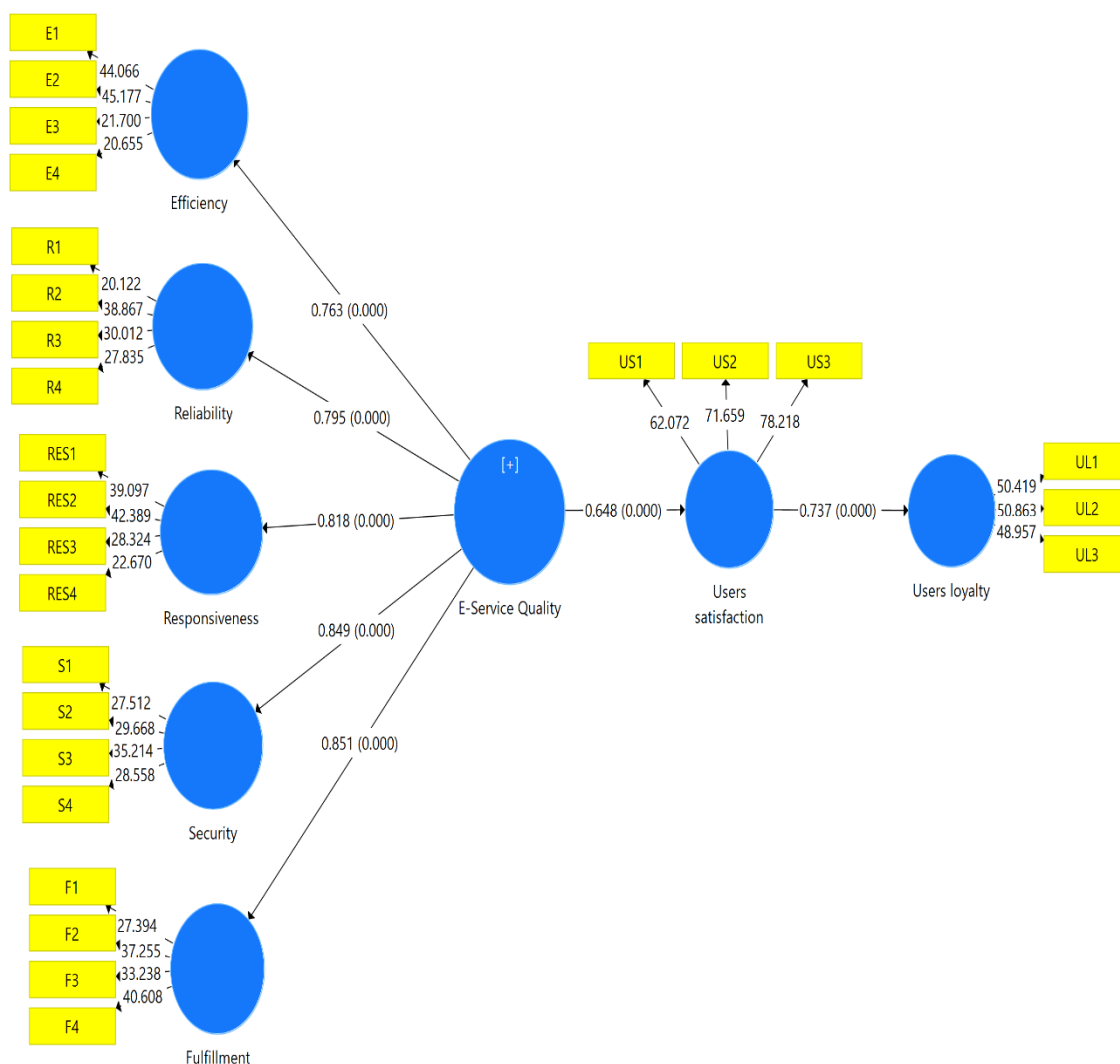


Table No: 4 Reliability and validity

Path	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
E-Service Quality	0.922	0.922	0.573
Efficiency	0.766	0.770	0.558
Fulfillment	0.813	0.813	0.521
Reliability	0.780	0.781	0.573
Responsiveness	0.786	0.787	0.581
Security	0.771	0.771	0.458
User Satisfaction	0.838	0.838	0.633
User Loyalty	0.884	0.884	0.717

As all the values are as per the recommended criteria of Hair et al we can conclude that there exist an adequate reliability and convergent validity.

Table No: 5 Hypothesis testing

Path	Beta Coefficient	T-Statistics	P-Value
E-Service Quality → Efficiency	0.763	25.729	0.000
E-Service Quality → Fulfillment	0.851	42.839	0.000

E-Service Quality → Reliability	0.795	37.841	0.000
E-Service Quality → Responsiveness	0.818	36.965	0.000
E-Service Quality → Security	0.849	42.723	0.000
E-Service Quality → User Satisfaction	0.648	18.982	0.000
E-Service Quality → User Loyalty	0.737	26.317	0.000

P (value) < level of significance 5% thus Ho is rejected and H1 is accepted in all the cases indicating significant impact of efficiency, fulfillment, reliability, responsiveness, security, user satisfaction, and user loyalty on e-service quality.

Table No: 6 Summary of Hypothesis Testing	
Alternative	Results
E-service Quality of food delivery applications is reflected through Efficiency.	Supported
E-service Quality of food delivery applications is reflected through Fulfilment.	Supported
E-service Quality of food delivery applications is reflected through Reliability.	Supported
E-service Quality of food delivery applications is reflected through Responsiveness.	Supported
E-service Quality of food delivery applications is reflected through Security.	Supported
E-service Quality of food delivery applications significantly impacts User Satisfaction.	Supported
User Satisfaction of food delivery applications significantly impacts User Loyalty	Supported

Conclusion:

The results of this study highlight how important e-service quality is to raising customer loyalty and improving user satisfaction in food delivery applications. This is consistent with other research that shows how several aspects of e-service quality—such as effectiveness, dependability, fulfilment, security, and responsiveness—have a big influence on how customers think and act. Ghifari et al. (2024) found a significant association between customer loyalty and the quality of e-services, emphasising the role that perceived value plays in this relationship. Similar to this, Archana Singh et al. (2024) stressed the value of efficiency and fulfilment in generating customer emotions, which are essential for establishing loyalty. Dhiya et al. (2024) also showed that aspects such as customer service and website design have a direct impact on consumer satisfaction, which emphasises the need of high-quality e-services. According to research by Karawita et al. (2024), interactions and results greatly increase customer loyalty in online meal delivery services, indicating that sustaining client involvement is essential.

According to Laetitia et al. (2023), e-satisfaction and e-trust also mediate the relationship between e-service quality and customer loyalty, implying that enhancing service quality can raise consumer satisfaction and trust levels, which can then encourage loyalty. This is supported by Siti Yolanda et al. (2024), who highlighted the mediating function of customer pleasure in enhancing e-consumer loyalty. The study's findings are in line with previous research, confirming that raising the calibre of e-services is crucial to raising customer satisfaction and loyalty in meal delivery apps. The results of this study imply that, in the highly competitive food delivery business, stakeholders should give e-service quality aspects top priority to build a devoted clientele and enhance overall user experiences.

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