

Impact of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction in Online Food Delivery Services: Evidence from Bangladesh

Sadia Nur Habib¹ , Tarannum Islam² * , Mst. Helen Parvin³ ,
S. M. Rifat Hassan⁴ , & Asaf-Ud-Daula⁵ 

¹ Department of Management, Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University, Dinajpur, Bangladesh.

² Department of Marketing, Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University, Dinajpur, Bangladesh.

³ Department of Accounting, Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University, Dinajpur, Bangladesh.

⁴ Department of Business Administration, European University of Bangladesh, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

⁵ Department of Business Administration, Northern University of Business and Technology, Khulna, Bangladesh.

* Corresponding author: Sadia Nur Habib (09snhpri@gmail.com)

Abstract

This study aims to determine the impact of various service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction and loyalty when ordering food online and dining at home from restaurants in Bangladesh. It also seeks to identify which of the five service quality dimensions is most significant in ascertaining overall customer satisfaction. Employing a quantitative research methodology on Bangladeshi customers who have bought food online, this study utilizes an anonymous questionnaire survey to collect primary data based on a seven-point Likert scale. The findings reveal how the service quality dimensions—tangibility, reliability, assurance, empathy, and responsiveness—affect customer satisfaction and loyalty. The study findings can be invaluable for restaurant managers, especially as the restaurant industry continues to thrive and people are becoming more comfortable with online services due to the fast pace of life, highlighting the importance of understanding the key variables influencing service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty.

Keywords: Online food delivery, Service quality, Customer satisfaction, SERVQUAL, Restaurant industry.

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Introduction

The advancement of digital technology has made it possible to create new businesses or change the traditional way of business through the creation of new modes and models of interactions between and among companies, customers, and suppliers (Wang, 2022). It has enabled

customers to easily access a wide range of products within minutes and compare quality and cost with little effort (Sinha et al., 2021). People in big cities where life is hectic and time is money want easy and convenient food; this has greatly influenced the food and restaurant industry and has undergone many transitions during the last four decades (Arunan, 2020). The widespread use of smartphones and other Online-to-Offline (O2O) services emerged as a result of mobile devices and the growth of mobile payment infrastructure, which also contributed to the quick expansion of online meal delivery platforms (Wang, 2022). In 2019, Frost & Sullivan forecasted that by 2025, the output value of Online food delivery (OFD) would be USD 200 billion (Cheng et al., 2021). However, this growing industry was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, when in 2020, governments implemented worldwide lockdowns and social distancing (Zibarzani et al., 2022). Later in 2021, these embargoes were relaxed as restaurants were allowed to offer only takeaway food. This is when online food delivery became the mode of business for the food industry even in developing countries like Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, etc., which saw a sharp rise in OFD (Koay et al., 2022). Even after the pandemic, people's eating habits have changed as people prefer take-away food more than dine-in (Zibarzani et al., 2022). The scenario was almost identical for Bangladesh, a developing country, where online delivery was not popular, but nowadays its market value is rising sharply (Uzir et al., 2021). So, the ability of the service providers to close the service quality gap between clients' expectations and the company's actual service delivery performance is essential to the success of such a business to ensure consumer satisfaction and survival (Kim, 2021). Here come three important constructs of consumer behaviour research: service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty, to learn and develop themselves as an organisation to sustain in the market. So, it is worthwhile to investigate the relationship between service quality dimensions, customer satisfaction, and loyalty. Also, the phenomenon of online food delivery services has received much attention by researchers as the easy access to a broader range of products and services puts enormous pressure on the service providers as they are faced with more and more challenges and competition (Roh et al., 2019; Uzir et al., 2021).

The online-to-offline platform for food delivery can operate in two modes: (a) Restaurant-to-Consumer delivery mode (R2C), and (b) Platform-to-Consumer delivery mode (P2C) (Li et al., 2020, Pal et al., 2022). In the restaurant-to-consumer mode, the relevant apps or well-developed websites are operated by the owner, and food chains like KFC, Domino's, and McDonald's have this to deliver directly from the restaurant. In Platform-to-Consumer mode, the smartphone apps are operated and the delivery is done by third-party intermediaries (Pal et al., 2022). Studies have tried to determine customer satisfaction regarding the quality of service provided by online food delivery providers. However, there is very little inquiry regarding the take-away food supplied by customers, whether home delivered by the restaurant itself or shipped through a third party, as many restaurants in Bangladesh do that, or customers order through a third party. Still, ultimately, the service is created by the restaurant personnel until it is packaged and delivered to the third party. As many people are taking the service, it is essential to know about customer satisfaction regarding take-away food, customer satisfaction, and loyalty. To understand the aforementioned construct of knowledge, this study would like to search for the answer to the following queries-

1. Assess the impact of service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction regarding food ordered online and restaurant services in Bangladesh.
2. Determine the level and impact of customer loyalty regarding the online services of restaurants in Bangladesh.

Literature Review and Hypothesis of the Study

The present study intends to investigate how service quality affects customers' satisfaction regarding their purchase experience online from restaurants using either their website or social media page, and the impact of their satisfied experience on their loyalty, if there is any relationship.

Service quality and customer satisfaction

Parasuraman et al. (1988, p. 14) have defined service quality as “*the discrepancy between consumers’ perceptions of services offered by a particular firm and their expectations about firms offering such services*”. In restaurants, personal interactions between customers and staff are deemed service encounters (Bitner et al., 1990; Nguyen, 2018). In Shostack's (1985, p. 243) words, “*a service encounter is a period during which a consumer directly interacts with a service*”. Maintaining the service quality is difficult, as constructing a high service quality perception may take several positive encounters. However, one bad experience can destroy that high service quality image. Measuring service quality is also challenging, as service quality assessment is conducted both during the service delivery process and after the service is completed (Nguyen, 2018). Organisations can obtain a bigger competitive advantage by providing higher levels of service quality; this is why service quality has been extensively explored in marketing and management literature (Su et al., 2022). Service quality is a vigorous factor for consumer-centric business as it is the prime factor for customer satisfaction (Kim, 2021; Uzir et al., 2021).

The SERVQUAL Model is used to measure and record the level of service quality that clients get in different service sectors, such as on-demand home service (Sivathanu, 2019), hotel businesses in Indonesia (Priyo, 2018), the life insurance industry in Malaysia (Al Halbusi et al., 2020), and restaurant businesses in Korea (Kim, 2019). Service quality has been found to have a positive and significant relationship with customer satisfaction (Uzir et al., 2021). The popular model is consisted with five dimensions of quality Empathy (paying attention individually and passionately), Responsiveness (being willing to serve on time), Tangibility (physical appearance of service or surrounding of service to feel its existence), Reliability (the consistency and dependability of performance), and Assurance (the increase of trust and confidence (Kim, 2021). The SERVQUAL model in online food delivery focuses on assessing service quality from the customer dimension by measuring the gap between expectations and service performance (Koay, K. Y. et. al., 2022). Food delivery from restaurant to dine in at home includes the app's and web-based (UI and UX) user interface and user experience through timely and accurate order delivery, immediate customer support, trust in the platform, deliveryman, and customised service (Madhuritha & Nedumaran, 2025). By applying SERVQUAL, restaurants can identify areas where service quality falls short, make data-driven improvements, and enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty in the following industry (Arli, D. et. al., 2024). Oliver (1981, p. 27) defined customer satisfaction as the “*summary psychological state resulting when the emotion surrounding confirmed or disconfirmed expectation is coupled with the consumer’s prior feelings about the consumption experience.*” Restaurants and other food service providers compete fiercely in the food processing and supply industries. Customer satisfaction is essential for businesses to win over recurring business and client loyalty (Uddin, 2019). Service quality is a key factor in determining customer satisfaction. Studies have found a positive relationship between the five dimensions of service quality and customer satisfaction (Ahmed et. al., 2023; Nguyen, 2018). It is claimed that customer satisfaction in a service factory is positively correlated with service quality and that service quality accurately reflects consumer satisfaction levels. After getting or using a service, customers evaluate its quality immediately and compare their experiences to what they had anticipated. Perceptions of the anticipated service level determine levels of satisfaction or discontent, the quality of the service, and the difference between these two (Ahmed et al., 2023; Nguyen, 2018; Uzir et al., 2021; Uddin, 2019). So, the following hypothesis would be checked in this study-

H1a: *Responsiveness positively impacts customer satisfaction in online food delivery services.*

H1b: *Reliability positively impacts customer satisfaction in online food delivery services.*

H1c: *Tangibility positively impacts customer satisfaction in online food delivery services.*

H1d: *Assurance positively impacts customer satisfaction in online food delivery services.*

H1e: *Empathy positively impacts customer satisfaction in online food delivery services.*

Customer satisfaction and customer loyalty

The philosophy of customer loyalty is essential in business literature; it has been defined by T. O. Jones & Sasser (1995, p. 94) as “*Customer loyalty is the feeling of attachment to or affection for a company’s people, products or services*” (Kim, 2011). Service providers try to please their customers by providing them with greater value. In general, happy consumers become devoted ones, which is reflected in their mindset and actions such as making further purchases and encouraging other to purchase and spends more time and money with the organisation (Carranza et al., 2018; Espinosa et al., 2018; Nguyen et al., 2018; Uddin, 2019,). Numerous studies have already been published on the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty, demonstrating that loyalty is highly predicted by customer satisfaction (Han et al., 2018). According to other studies, numerous examples of the positive correlation between customer happiness and loyalty exist. Customer satisfaction influences customer loyalty, especially in online food delivery services (Annaraud & Berezina, 2020; Yusra & Arawati, 2020). Because restaurants in Bangladesh operate in highly competitive environments and provide services, it is still worthwhile to investigate the relationship between customer happiness and loyalty. So the following hypothesis is developed-

H2: *Customer satisfaction impacts customer loyalty of online food delivery services of restaurants in Bangladesh.*

Research Methodology

This study uses a quantitative approach to investigate hypotheses based on the SERVQUAL model's service quality dimensions, the impact of these dimensions on customer satisfaction, and the impact of customer satisfaction on loyalty. It is anonymously sampled from customers who order online all over Bangladesh using a mobile app or a website. A questionnaire survey design is used to collect primary data from January to March 2023 from 300 respondents. After data screening, 200 responses, which are shown in Table 1, were found suitable for the study analysis using SPSS 25. To measure the specific query of this particular study, some minor adjustments and modifications are made based on the understanding and experiences of the researchers to the existing literature items to develop the questionnaire. Tangibility items are adopted from Suksrimuang & Ongkunaruk (2022); reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy items are adopted from Nguyen et al. (2018) and Dandis et al. (2021). Satisfaction and loyalty are adapted from Dandis et al. (2021). The data are measured using Likert’s seven-point scale with one signifying "strongly disagree" and seven signifying "strongly agree" (Balinado et al., 2021).

Data Analysis

Demographic Profile of the Respondent

Table 1. Demographic Profile

Variables	Items	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	110	55.0
	Female	90	45.0
	Total	200	100.0
Age	Below 20	2	1.0
	20-25 years	136	68.0
	26-30 years	29	14.5
	31-35 years	9	4.5
	35-40 years	16	8.0
	More than 40 years	8	4.0
	Total	200	100.0
Profession	Business	40	20.0
	Service Holder	21	10.5
	Student	104	52.0
	Housewife	23	11.5
	Others	12	6.0
	Total	200	100.0
Prefer Type	Conventional Food	42	21.0
	Chinese Food	42	21.0

Fast Food	98	49
Contemporary items	7	3.5
Café/Others	11	5.5
Total	200	100.0

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Satisfaction	200	2	7	4.95	1.067
Tangibility	200	2	7	5.22	1.029
Reliability	200	2	7	5.01	1.088
Responsiveness	200	2	7	4.83	.961
Assurance	200	1	7	4.92	1.099
Empathy	200	1	7	4.87	1.131
Loyalty	200	1	7	4.87	1.085
Valid N (listwise)	200				

Table 2 shows the mean customer satisfaction is 4.95, with a standard deviation of 1.067. The typical customer satisfaction rating exceeds the neutral score of 3.5. In this case, the loyalty mean and standard deviation are 4.87 and 1.085, respectively.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The AMOS version 18 is used to perform the Confirmatory Factor Analysis. The model is assessed for reliability, convergent, and discriminant validity. Following is the graphical representation of the CFA initial model and the final calculated model, followed by the results in Table 3

Table 3. Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Items	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Cronbach's Alpha
Tangibility	T5	1.000				0.80
	T3	1.018	.090	11.352	***	
	T2	1.121	.094	11.876	***	
	T1	1.166	.090	13.022	***	
	R4	1.000				
Reliability	R3	1.023	.082	12.457	***	0.81
	R2	1.044	.079	13.239	***	
	R1	1.005	.083	12.175	***	
	Res5	1.000				
Responsiveness	Res4	1.140	.102	11.205	***	0.79
	Res3	1.248	.103	12.059	***	
	Res2	1.101	.098	11.266	***	
	A5	1.000				
Assurance	A4	1.053	.081	12.929	***	0.82
	A3	1.161	.084	13.774	***	
	A1	.932	.080	11.615	***	
	E5	1.000				
Empathy	E4	.943	.057	16.582	***	0.88
	E3	.907	.055	16.562	***	
	E2	.940	.058	16.187	***	
	E1	1.025	.059	17.330	***	
	S5	1.000				
Satisfaction	S4	1.065	.053	19.994	***	0.87
	S3	.906	.060	15.138	***	
	S2	.857	.056	15.307	***	
	S1	.955	.055	17.474	***	
	L5	1.000				
Loyalty	L3	.786	.060	12.994	***	0.83
	L2	.874	.060	14.585	***	
	L1	.944	.065	14.483	***	

Model Fitness: RMSEA=.047, RMR=.106, GFI=.893, CFI=.944

The result of CFA in Table 3 shows that the model has good fit statistics, including RMSEA of 0.047, CFI of .944, except RMR of 0.106. The recommended values are provided in the bracket based on

the guidelines of Hu and Bentler (1999) and Browne and Cudeck (1992) (RMSEA<.08, RMR<.05, CFI>.90). All items' standardised factor loading are above 0.60, so it is an indication of good convergent validity (Sarstedt et. al., 2017). Both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability for each variable are above 0.70, which shows that the following variables are reliable.

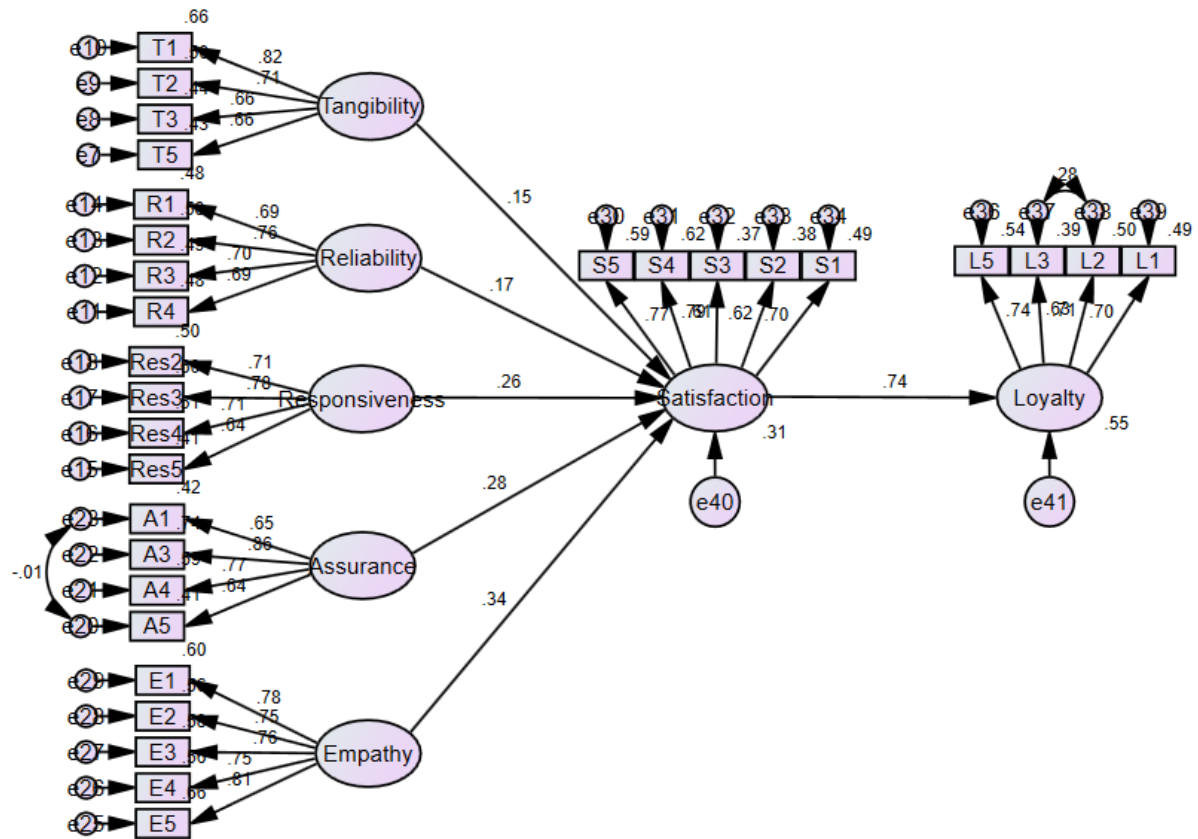


Figure 1. Hypothesis Testing (Structural Model)

Table 4. Regression Weights:

H. no.	Paths	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Remarks
H1a.	Satisfaction <--- Responsiveness	.252	.054	4.644	***	Supported
H1b.	Satisfaction <--- Reliability	.154	.048	3.180	.001	Supported
H1c.	Satisfaction <--- Tangibility	.149	.051	2.907	.004	Supported
H1d.	Satisfaction <--- Assurance	.258	.051	5.024	***	Supported
H1e.	Satisfaction <--- Empathy	.278	.044	6.373	***	Supported
H2.	Loyalty <--- Satisfaction	.780	.071	11.037	***	Supported

Model Fitness: RMSEA=.083, GFI=.771, CFI=.822

***<.05, **<.01, *<.001

The results in Table 4 of using AMOS 18 for SEM (Structural Equation Model) indicated a good fit for the model presented, including a GFI of .771, CFI of .822, and RMSEA=.083. Hypotheses resulting based on path analysis shows that satisfaction and responsiveness positively and significantly associated ($\beta=.252$, $P<.05$). Satisfaction is positively and significantly associated with reliability ($\beta=.154$, $P<.05$). Satisfaction is positively and significantly associated with tangibility ($\beta=.149$, $P<.05$). Satisfaction is positively and significantly associated with assurance ($\beta=.258$, $P<.05$). Satisfaction is positively and significantly associated with empathy ($\beta=.278$, $P<.05$). Satisfaction is positively and significantly associated with loyalty ($\beta=.780$, $P>.05$). Based on these findings, researchers accept all of the chosen hypotheses. The research shows that online food delivery businesses may perform consistently and react swiftly to customer requests by using

technology effectively, which boosts customer satisfaction. The findings supported prior research by Balinado et al. (2021), Agnihotri et al. (2016), and Etemad-Sajadi et al. (2023), demonstrating that the dimensions of SERVQUAL (responsiveness, reliability, tangibility, assurance, and empathy) have a significant impact on customers' satisfaction with food ordered online to become a loyal association with the restaurant. Moreover, it indicates that customer satisfaction impacts customer loyalty, consistent with the earlier study (Noyan & Şimşek, 2014; Hassan et al., 2015).

Conclusion and Implications

This study has contributed to understanding the impact of service quality dimensions on consumers' satisfaction with food ordered online and delivered to the home, which impacts customer loyalty. The study presents several points that advance the theory in light of these findings. First, in the context of developed countries, earlier studies looked at the impact of the quality of online food delivery services on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (Koay et al., 2022; Yusra & Arawati, 2020; Muharam et al., 2021). Findings offer a greater understanding of perceived service quality, its influencing factors, and how they impact customers. Moreover, this study demonstrated that online restaurant ordering should emphasise service quality dimensions to boost customer satisfaction with service. Hence, restaurants should monitor customer comfort and confidence, secure transactions, and the consistency of fresh food, healthy food, food taste, etc. Also, customers will be more satisfied if restaurants improve their empathy and responsiveness skills. They should be aware of how to address customer needs properly and wants, feel special, sympathetic, and reassured when something goes wrong, receive individualised attention from staff, and have the customer's best interests in mind, inform customers of new menu items, staff handle problems as they arise, effectively handle customer complaints, provide prompt service in general and value-conscious customers in particular. This study has crucial industry implications. It investigated the service quality of restaurants when providing service for food ordered online from a developing country perspective. Also, the study confirms that customer satisfaction is a valuable predictor of loyalty and has a noticeable impact on why jaded city dwellers are mainly prone to ordering food online and dining in restaurants.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

A larger sample size could have made our findings more representative. Though quite challenging to implement, a larger sample could show that the whole geographical coverage made the findings of this study more convincing. This paper has some limitations that offer opportunities for additional research despite the significant theoretical and managerial implications. First, as satisfaction is measured based only on five service quality dimensions, other factors, such as security, price, maintenance of meal hygiene, brand perception, consumer taste, and traceability, have not been examined in this concept. Second, the sample was limited to consumers from a single country, making it difficult to generalise the findings. The online marketplace is becoming more complex as new competitors emerge with new resources and capabilities. Therefore, relevant study findings at a particular point will likely become short-lived and often demand new studies with new research designs in contemporary settings. Therefore, future research should use a more balanced and diversified sample to understand better the link between the five service quality factors and customer loyalty.

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