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Article

EVALUATING E-SERVICE QUALITY AND ITS IMPACT ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: EVIDENCE FROM ONLINE CONSUMERS IN CHENNAI

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Abstract: This study examines the impact of electronic service quality (e-service quality) on customer satisfaction in the context of online retailing among consumers in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. With the rapid growth of digital commerce and increasing consumer reliance on online platforms, service quality has emerged as a critical factor influencing customer experience and retention. The study adopts the E-S-QUAL framework to evaluate key dimensions such as efficiency, system availability, reliability, responsiveness, security, service failure, and service recovery. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire from 524 online consumers using purposive sampling. Statistical tools including Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), correlation analysis, and multiple regression were employed to analyse the relationships among variables. The findings reveal that e-service quality significantly influences customer satisfaction, with system availability and efficiency being the most impactful dimensions. Reliability, responsiveness, and security also contribute positively to customer satisfaction, while service failure negatively affects it. However, effective service recovery plays a crucial role in mitigating dissatisfaction and restoring customer confidence. The study concludes that maintaining high-quality online service performance and implementing effective recovery strategies are essential for enhancing customer satisfaction and fostering long-term customer relationships in the e-retailing sector. The findings provide valuable insights for online retailers to improve service delivery and customer-centric practices.
Keywords: E-service quality; Customer satisfaction; Online retailing; E-retailing; Service recovery; Service failure; Structural Equation Modelling (SEM);Consumer behaviour; Chennai.

1. INTRODUCTION

The expansion of internet technologies and digital commerce has significantly transformed consumer purchasing behaviour across the world. Electronic retailing (e-retailing) has emerged as an important channel through which consumers purchase products and services due to convenience, accessibility, time efficiency, and broader product availability (Christopher, 1983; Jayakrishnan, 2015). The growth of online retailing has accelerated the transition from traditional retail models toward digital platforms supported by technological advancement and increased internet usage (Thenmozhi et al., 2022).

Service quality has been identified as one of the most influential determinants of customer satisfaction and continued usage in online environments. According to Yang (2001), service quality in internet-based commerce plays a critical role in shaping customer perceptions and determining business success. Similarly, Parasuraman, Zeithaml,

and Malhotra (2005) emphasized that electronic service quality consists of dimensions such as efficiency, fulfilment, responsiveness, reliability, privacy, and recovery mechanisms that influence user evaluations of online services.

Customer satisfaction in online retailing is closely associated with consumers' evaluation of service experiences during and after online transactions. Studies have shown that customers tend to assess online service quality through website usability, information quality, responsiveness, security, and reliability (Trocchia & Janda, 2003; Ribbink et al., 2004; Swaid & Wigand, 2009). In addition, service recovery following service failure has been identified as an important mechanism that influences post-purchase satisfaction and loyalty (Collier & Bienstock, 2006; Holloway & Beatty, 2003).

In the Indian context, consumer participation in online shopping has increased substantially with the adoption of digital technologies and changing purchasing patterns. Previous studies reported that Indian consumers evaluate online shopping based on perceived risks, service quality, website characteristics, and purchasing convenience (Mishra & Riya, 2013; Philip et al., 2003). However, despite increasing adoption of online retail platforms, limited empirical studies have examined how dimensions of online service quality affect customer satisfaction at a city-specific level.

Chennai, one of the major metropolitan cities in Tamil Nadu, has experienced rapid adoption of internet services, digital payment systems, and online retail activities. Understanding customer perceptions in this regional context may provide more localized insights for improving e-retailing practices. Therefore, this study aims to examine the impact of online service quality on customer satisfaction among consumers in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, and to examine the role of service recovery in influencing customer satisfaction following service failure.

The findings of this study are expected to contribute to service quality literature and provide practical implications for online retailers in designing effective customer-oriented strategies to improve satisfaction and strengthen long-term customer relationships (Zeithaml et al., 2002; Emel, 2015).

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The rapid expansion of electronic commerce has transformed customer expectations and increased the importance of service quality in online retail environments. Unlike traditional service settings, online transactions depend largely on website performance, digital interaction, accessibility, and customer support mechanisms (Rowley, 2006). As online purchasing behaviour continues to evolve, service quality has emerged as one of the strongest determinants of customer satisfaction and long-term customer retention.

Electronic service quality has been extensively examined through the E-S-QUAL framework proposed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Malhotra (2005), which identified efficiency, fulfilment, responsiveness, privacy, and recovery as key dimensions affecting customer evaluation of online services. Their study demonstrated that customer satisfaction improves when online platforms deliver reliable and convenient service experiences. Supporting this framework, Ribbink, Liljander, and Streukens (2004) found that website usability, assurance, responsiveness, and customer trust significantly influence satisfaction and behavioural intention in online environments.

Several studies have examined the relationship between online service quality and customer satisfaction across electronic retail settings. Trocchia and Janda (2003) reported that accessibility, communication effectiveness, and transaction reliability influence customer evaluation of internet retail services. Similarly, Jun and Cai (2001) emphasized that service quality dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, and communication quality directly affect consumer perceptions toward electronic services.

Researchers have also focused on website functionality and technological performance as important predictors of customer satisfaction. Ho and Lin (2010) observed that internet-based service quality is significantly influenced by website efficiency and system performance. Likewise, Loiacono, Watson, and Goodhue (2007) developed the WebQual approach and concluded that website design and ease of interaction contribute substantially to customer evaluation and satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction has consistently been identified as an outcome of superior service delivery. Herington and Weaven (2009) argued that improvements in electronic service quality positively affect customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Similar findings were reported by Agyapong (2010), who found that higher service quality contributes directly to improved satisfaction outcomes across service sectors. Munir (2015) further demonstrated that effective management of service quality dimensions increases customer satisfaction in electronic banking environments.

Service failure and service recovery have gained considerable importance in online retail literature. Holloway and Beatty (2003) suggested that service recovery creates opportunities for organizations to restore customer trust after service failure. Similarly, Collier and Bienstock (2006) emphasized that successful complaint handling and recovery mechanisms improve satisfaction and future purchase intentions. Marimon, Yaya, and Casadesus (2012) additionally reported that effective recovery strategies strengthen customer loyalty in electronic service environments.

Studies conducted in India have also examined customer perceptions regarding online retail services. Mishra and Riya (2013) observed that Indian consumers evaluate online shopping through perceived risk, trust, website attributes, and convenience factors. Jayakrishnan (2015) further explained that increasing adoption of e-retailing in India has strengthened the importance of maintaining high-quality digital services and customer support.

More recent studies continue to reinforce these established findings. Recent research and industry observations indicate that consumer expectations in digital commerce increasingly focus on reliability, personalization, seamless digital experiences, and service responsiveness in online platforms (Deloitte Digital Consumer Trends, 2023). Contemporary retail analyses further indicate that service quality and customer experience remain major drivers of customer retention and platform competitiveness in digital markets (Digital Commerce Industry Reports, 2025–2026).

Although substantial literature has explored online service quality and customer satisfaction, relatively limited studies have examined these relationships in a city-specific context within Tamil Nadu. Therefore, the present study adopts the established service quality framework and applies it to examine customer satisfaction among online consumers in Chennai.

3. CONCEPTUAL MODEL & HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Theoretical Framework

The present study is based on the E-Service Quality (E-S-QUAL) framework developed by A. Parasuraman, Valarie A. Zeithaml, and Arvind Malhotra (2005). The framework explains that customer satisfaction in online environments is determined by customers' evaluation of electronic service quality.

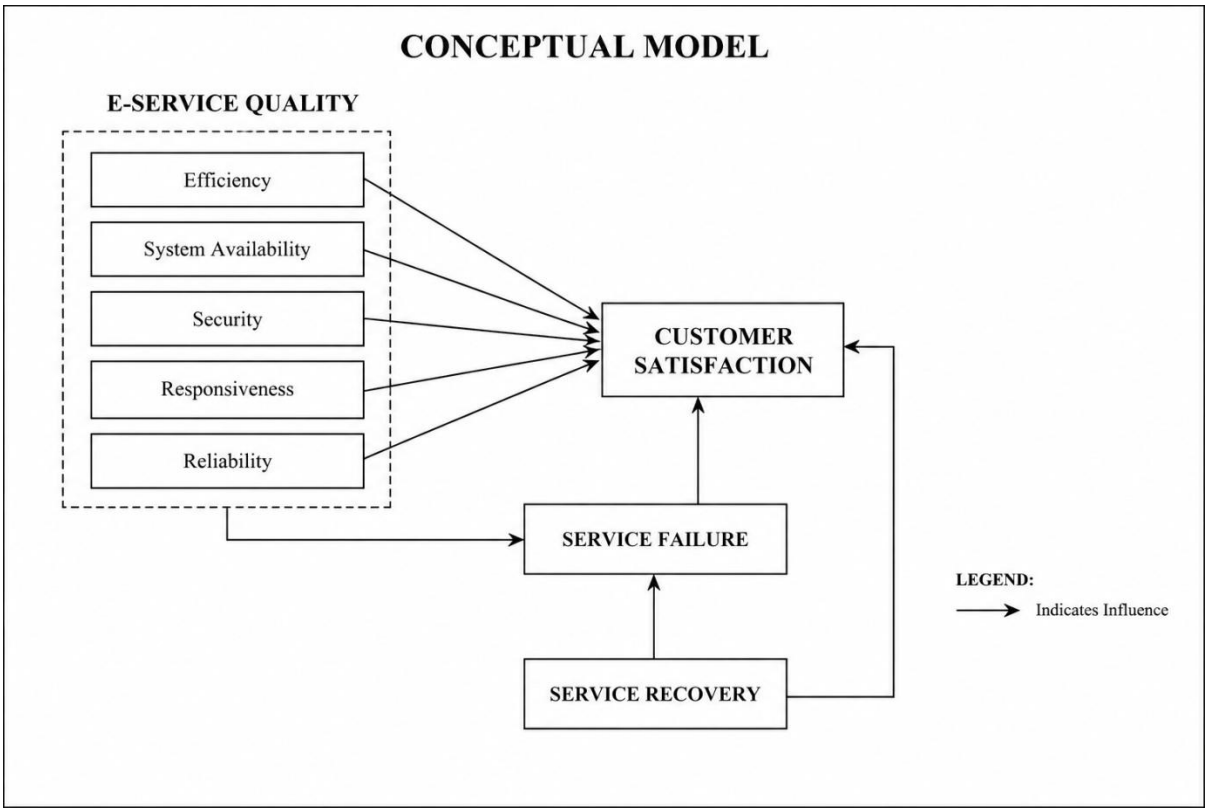
The model proposes that dimensions such as Efficiency, System Availability, Security, Reliability, and Responsiveness influence customer satisfaction. Further, Service Failure and Service Recovery affect customer perceptions and overall satisfaction.

Conceptual Model

The conceptual model explains the relationship between e-service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction among online consumers in Chennai.

Independent variables include Efficiency, System Availability, Security, Responsiveness, Reliability, Service Failure, and Service Recovery**,** whereas Customer Satisfaction is considered the dependent variable.

Conceptual Model of the Study



This conceptual model is developed based on the theoretical foundation of E-S-QUAL and is used to examine the proposed relationships among the study variables.

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT:

The quality of services delivered through online platforms has been recognized as an important factor influencing customer satisfaction and behavioural outcomes in electronic retailing. Previous studies have demonstrated that customers evaluate online retailers not only based on successful transaction completion but also through service performance dimensions and post-purchase experiences.

Electronic service quality refers to customers' overall assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of online service delivery (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Malhotra, 2005). Researchers have identified several dimensions including efficiency, system availability, reliability, responsiveness, privacy, and service recovery as major determinants of customer satisfaction (Ribbink et al., 2004; Swaid & Wigand, 2009).

Efficiency refers to the ease and speed with which customers access and complete transactions through online platforms. Earlier studies reported that efficient service systems positively influence satisfaction because consumers value convenience and reduced effort during online purchasing (Parasuraman et al., 2005; Ho & Lin, 2010). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Efficiency has a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction.

Responsiveness represents the willingness and capability of online retailers to provide timely responses and support to customers. Studies have indicated that prompt communication and quick issue resolution improve customer perceptions toward online services (Jun & Cai, 2001; Herington & Weaven, 2009).

H2: Responsiveness has a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction.

Reliability refers to the ability of an online retailer to perform promised services accurately and consistently. Research findings suggested that reliability contributes positively toward satisfaction because customers expect dependable transactions and consistent service outcomes (Yang, 2001; Collier & Bienstock, 2006).

H3: Reliability has a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction.

System availability reflects the technical functioning and accessibility of online platforms during customer interactions. Previous studies emphasized that website performance and uninterrupted access influence overall user evaluation and satisfaction levels (Parasuraman et al., 2005; Loiacono, Watson, & Goodhue, 2007).

H4: System availability has a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction.

Security and privacy have been identified as important concerns in online environments because customers expect their personal and financial information to remain protected. Studies demonstrated that trust and security perceptions significantly influence attitudes toward online shopping behaviour (Ribbink et al., 2004; Mishra & Riya, 2013).

H5: Security has a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction.

Service failure may occur when customer expectations are not fulfilled during service delivery. However, effective service recovery practices can reduce dissatisfaction and rebuild customer confidence. Earlier studies concluded that successful recovery mechanisms improve post-service evaluations and increase customer satisfaction (Holloway & Beatty, 2003; Marimon, Yaya, & Casadesus, 2012).

H6: Service failure has a significant relationship with service recovery.

Service recovery refers to corrective actions taken by service providers to address customer complaints and restore confidence after service failure. Existing literature indicated that recovery initiatives strengthen satisfaction and increase the likelihood of continued customer engagement (Collier & Bienstock, 2006; Munir, 2015).

H7: Service recovery has a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction.

The present study applies these hypotheses to examine the relationship between online service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction among online consumers in Chennai. Recent digital commerce developments continue to reinforce the importance of service experience and customer-centred online engagement in urban retail markets (recent digital commerce observations, 2025–2026).

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology provides the overall framework for conducting the study and ensures systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. The present study adopts the same methodological approach used in the source framework to examine the impact of online service quality on customer satisfaction in e-retailing.

4.1 Research Design

The study follows a descriptive and analytical research design. The descriptive approach is used to understand customer perceptions regarding online service quality dimensions, while the analytical component evaluates the relationship between service quality variables and customer satisfaction. Previous studies have widely adopted descriptive and analytical approaches for examining service quality and customer behaviour in electronic environments (Parasuraman et al., 2005; Collier & Bienstock, 2006).

4.2 Area of Study

The study is conducted in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. Chennai was selected as the study area because of increasing internet usage, online purchasing activities, and the growing adoption of digital retail services among consumers. The study focuses on respondents residing within Chennai and evaluates their perceptions regarding online retail service quality.

4.3 Population of the Study

The target population consists of consumers who actively engage in online shopping activities. Respondents were selected from the identified study area based on their experience with online retail platforms and their ability to evaluate service quality dimensions.

4.4 Sampling Technique

The study adopts purposive sampling to identify respondents who possess experience in using online retail services. Purposive sampling is appropriate when respondents are selected based on predefined characteristics relevant to the objectives of the study (Hair et al., 2010).

4.5 Sample Size

The study follows the same sample structure adopted in the source framework. A total of 600 questionnaires were distributed to respondents, and after data screening and validation procedures, 524 usable questionnaires were considered for final analysis.

4.6 Data Collection

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed based on established service quality literature and previous measurement scales. Questionnaire items were designed to measure dimensions associated with online service quality, service recovery, and customer satisfaction.

Secondary data were collected through journals, books, published research articles, and scholarly sources related to electronic service quality, customer satisfaction, online retailing, and service recovery.

4.7 Measurement of Variables

The study measures online service quality through dimensions adopted from previous literature including efficiency, responsiveness, reliability, system availability, security, service failure, and service recovery. Customer satisfaction is treated as the dependent variable.

4.8 Reliability and Validity

To ensure consistency and appropriateness of the measurement instrument, reliability and validity assessment procedures were adopted. Internal consistency of constructs was evaluated before conducting further statistical analysis. The conceptual framework and measurement items were derived from established studies in electronic service quality literature (Parasuraman et al., 2005; Ribbink et al., 2004).

4.9 Tools Used for Data Analysis

The collected responses were analysed using statistical techniques consistent with the original study framework. The following analytical tools were used:

- Percentage Analysis
- Descriptive Statistics
- Pearson Correlation Analysis
- Multiple Regression Analysis
- One-Way ANOVA
- Paired Sample t-test
- Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) using AMOS

These tools were used to examine demographic characteristics, evaluate relationships among variables, test hypotheses, and assess the overall model fit.

4.10 Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework proposes that dimensions of online service quality influence customer satisfaction directly, while service recovery acts as a mediating construct between service failure and customer satisfaction. This framework is grounded in established electronic service quality literature and forms the basis for hypothesis testing in the present study.

5.DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the responses collected from online consumers in Chennai. The analysis follows the established framework used to examine the relationship between e-service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction. Statistical techniques including Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), Pearson Correlation Analysis, and Multiple Regression Analysis were used for interpretation.

5.1 Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was employed to examine the relationship between e-service quality and customer satisfaction and to validate the proposed conceptual framework.

SEM was selected because it enables simultaneous examination of multiple relationships among latent variables and observed indicators. Maximum Likelihood Estimation was adopted for estimating the parameters of the model.

Table 5.1

Goodness of Fit Indices for the Model

CMIN/DF	CFI	IFI	TLI	RMSR	GFI	AGFI	PGFI
2.294	0.901	0.901	0.899	0.059	0.878	0.858	0.755

NFI	RFI	PNFI	PCFI	PRATIO	RMSEA	HOELTER (0.05)	HOELTER (0.01)
0.834	0.819	0.762	0.820	0.913	0.050	252	262

Interpretation

The goodness-of-fit indices indicate that the structural model achieved acceptable fit levels. The values of CMIN/DF, RMSEA, CFI, IFI, and GFI demonstrate that the proposed model adequately fits the observed data and supports further structural analysis.

Table 5.2

Maximum Likelihood Estimates Weights: Standardized & Unstandardized (Default Model)

Factors	Path	Factors	Unstandardized Estimate	Standardized Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	R^2 Values
Service Failure	←	E-service Quality	1.521	0.809	0.447	3.406	***	0.654
Service Recovery	←	Service Failure	0.942	0.879	0.091	10.353	***	0.772
Customer Satisfaction	←	E-service Quality	1.000	0.502	–	–	–	–
Efficiency	←	E-service Quality	1.923	0.877	0.562	3.421	***	0.770
Responsiveness	←	E-service Quality	1.674	0.868	0.495	3.382	***	0.754
Reliability	←	E-service Quality	1.621	0.869	0.480	3.381	***	0.754
System Availability	←	E-service Quality	1.639	0.880	0.487	3.369	***	0.775

Factors	Path	Factors	Unstandardized Estimate	Standardized Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	R^2 Values
Security	←	E-service Quality	2.044	0.818	0.596	3.427	***	0.670
Customer Satisfaction	←	Service Failure	-0.515	-0.486	0.334	-1.543	0.123	–

Interpretation

The SEM results indicate that e-service quality positively contributes to customer satisfaction. System Availability (0.880), Service Recovery (0.879), Efficiency (0.877), Reliability (0.869), and Responsiveness (0.868) recorded comparatively stronger standardized estimates.

Service Failure showed a negative direct influence on Customer Satisfaction (β = -0.486), indicating that customer satisfaction declines when service failures occur. However, Service Recovery demonstrated a strong positive influence, indicating its importance in restoring customer satisfaction.

Figure 5.1

Structural Equation Model (CB-SEM / AMOS Diagram)

Table 1. Goodness of Fit Indices for the Model

CMIN/DF	CFI	IFI	TLI	RMSR	GFI	AGFI	PGFI
2.294	0.901	0.901	0.899	0.878	0.878	0.858	0.755
NFI	**RFI**	**PNFI**	**PCFI**	**PRATIO**	**RMSEA**	**HOELTER (0.05)**	**HOELTER (0.01)**
0.834	0.819	0.762	0.820	0.913	0.050	252	262

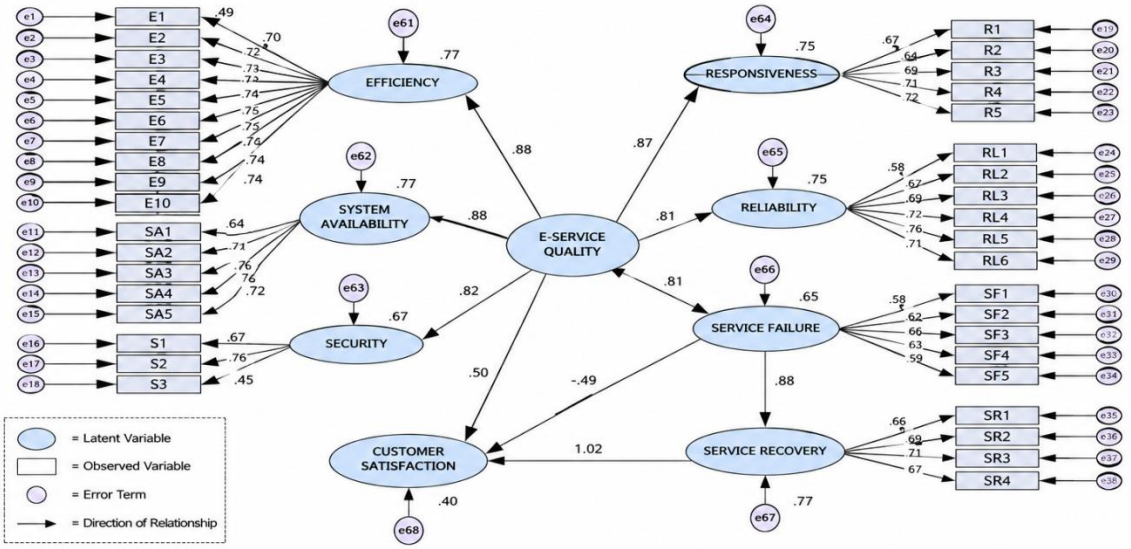


Figure 1. Structural Equation Modelling for e-service quality on customer satisfaction

5.2 Inter Correlation Analysis

Pearson Correlation Analysis was conducted to identify relationships among service quality factors and customer satisfaction.

Table 5.3

Inter Correlation between Service Quality Factors and Customer Satisfaction

Variables	Efficiency	System Availability	Security	Responsiveness	Reliability	Service Failure	Service Recovery	Customer Satisfaction
Efficiency	1	0.650**	0.555**	0.569**	0.595**	0.405**	0.567**	0.453**
System Availability		1	0.490**	0.529**	0.516**	0.390**	0.524**	0.332**
Security			1	0.501**	0.480**	0.383**	0.475**	0.401**
Responsiveness				1	0.602**	0.530**	0.554**	0.402**
Reliability					1	0.540**	0.576**	0.467**
Service Failure						1	0.586**	0.395**
Service Recovery							1	0.544**
Customer Satisfaction								1

Note: ** Significant at 1% level

Interpretation

The correlation values indicate statistically significant positive relationships among the service quality dimensions.

Efficiency and System Availability recorded the highest association (r = 0.650), followed by Responsiveness and Reliability (r = 0.602).

Service Recovery exhibited a positive relationship with Customer Satisfaction (r = 0.544).

5.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple Regression Analysis was carried out to identify the impact of service quality factors on customer satisfaction.

Table 5.4

Impact of Service Quality Factors on Customer Satisfaction

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Tolerance	VIF
Constant	0.908	0.517	–	1.756	–	–
f1	0.096	0.025	0.174	3.782***	–	–
f2	0.126	0.042	0.126	2.977***	–	–
f3	0.125	0.060	0.081	2.092	–	–
f4	0.077	0.033	0.099	2.295	0.480	2.08
f5	0.100	0.030	0.144	3.307***	–	–

f6	0.241	0.030	0.305	8.001***	–	–
f7	0.125	0.040	0.125	3.567***	–	–

Model Summary

Indicator	Value
F Value	93.415***
R^2 Value	0.520
Adjusted R^2 Value	0.515
Durbin Watson Value	1.809

Interpretation

The regression model was statistically significant.

The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.520$) indicates that 52% of customer satisfaction is explained by the service quality dimensions.

The Durbin–Watson value (1.809) suggests acceptable independence of residuals.

5.4 Overall Interpretation of Findings

The statistical analysis confirmed that online service quality significantly contributes to customer satisfaction.

Among all dimensions:

- System Availability showed stronger contribution.
- Efficiency demonstrated a major positive influence.
- Reliability and Responsiveness significantly supported customer experience.
- Service Failure negatively affected satisfaction.
- Service Recovery acted as an important corrective mechanism.

The findings suggest that maintaining effective online service delivery improves customer satisfaction among online consumers in Chennai.

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter analysed the relationship between e-service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction using Structural Equation Modelling, Pearson Correlation Analysis, and Multiple Regression Analysis. The findings demonstrated that e-service quality dimensions significantly influence customer satisfaction and support the proposed research framework.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Findings

The study examined the influence of e-service quality on customer satisfaction among online consumers in Chennai. Based on the statistical analysis, it was found that e-service quality significantly influences customer satisfaction.

Among the service quality dimensions, System Availability recorded the strongest contribution followed by Efficiency, Reliability, Responsiveness, and Security. The findings indicate that consumers prefer uninterrupted online service, reliable transaction performance, and efficient customer support during online purchasing activities.

The analysis also revealed that Service Failure negatively affects customer satisfaction. However, Service Recovery demonstrated a positive influence by reducing dissatisfaction and improving customer experience. The correlation analysis confirmed significant positive relationships among the selected variables.

Further, the regression results indicated that the selected service quality dimensions explained 52 percent of the variation in customer satisfaction. The Structural Equation Model supported the proposed conceptual framework and confirmed the significance of the relationships among the variables.

6.2 Suggestions

Based on the findings of the study, it is suggested that online retailers should continuously improve website efficiency and provide user-friendly interfaces to enhance customer experience. Organizations should ensure uninterrupted system availability and maintain reliable service performance during customer interaction.

Online platforms should strengthen customer support services by responding promptly to complaints and resolving service issues effectively. Greater attention should also be given to transaction security and privacy protection to improve customer confidence.

In addition, organizations should establish effective service recovery mechanisms to reduce the negative effects of service failure and maintain customer satisfaction over time.

6.3 Conclusion

The study examined the influence of e-service quality on customer satisfaction among online consumers in Chennai. The findings confirmed that e-service quality dimensions significantly affect customer satisfaction and influence customer evaluation of online retail services.

Efficiency, Reliability, Responsiveness, System Availability, and Security contributed positively toward customer satisfaction, whereas Service Failure negatively affected customer perceptions. Service Recovery emerged as an important mechanism that improves customer satisfaction following service disruptions.

The study concludes that maintaining effective online service quality contributes to stronger customer satisfaction and supports long-term customer relationships in online retail environments.

6.4 Scope for Future Research

Future studies may include additional dimensions related to digital customer experience and online consumer behaviour. Comparative studies may also be conducted across different geographical locations to provide broader insights. Researchers may further expand the model by incorporating additional variables and larger sample sizes to strengthen future empirical findings.

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