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## The Role of the Product Quality and Price in Achieving Customer Satisfaction in Online Shopping

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### Abstract

Customer satisfaction in online shopping is becoming increasingly important for companies since it directly impacts their profitability. The comparison between expectations and experiences determines customer satisfaction. The customers will be satisfied if the delivery meets or exceeds their expectations. Many factors contribute to customer satisfaction in online shopping. Still, two fundamental problems with online shopping are the quality of the products and the high price for some of the products or services. Therefore, customer satisfaction in online shopping needs to be studied to understand these problems better. This study investigates the factors influencing customer satisfaction with online shopping among university students based on 98 sample respondents, university students based in Melaka, Malaysia. This paper uses a survey, SPSS and multiple regression analysis. The two dimensions, namely product quality and price, explained 46.6 per cent of the variance in customer satisfaction in online shopping. This study also evidences the significant relationship between product quality and price with customer satisfaction. This study contributes to the body of knowledge regarding the vital influence of product quality and price on customer satisfaction with online shopping among university students. This study will likely favour the growing online retail market by enabling researchers and businesses to comprehend the factors affecting customer satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Customer Satisfaction, Product Quality, Price, Online Shopping

### Introduction

In Malaysia, e-commerce has snowballed in popularity and is now a step ahead of brick-and-mortar businesses. According to the Official Website of the International Trade Administration (2021), e-commerce revenue in Malaysia reached \$4 billion in 2020 and by 2024, it will have risen to \$12.6 billion, making Malaysia a desirable market for e-commerce in Southeast Asia, owing to its dynamic economy and well-developed digital infrastructure.

Thus, ensuring that the market is satisfied with the online shopping experience is crucial since e-commerce significantly influences economic variables and growth rates.

Various factors influence customer satisfaction when shopping online, including satisfaction with the prices offered by the third-party platform, such as Shopee, Lazada, Zalora, etc., the quality of the product, the ease of use of the third-party platforms and many others. Customer satisfaction is measured by comparing expectations with experience, according to (Khristianto & Suyadi, 2012). The customer will be satisfied if the delivery meets or exceeds their expectations.

Chai et al (2018) argued that customer satisfaction is becoming increasingly important for companies since it directly impacts their profitability. It is because online customers expect higher service quality levels than traditional channel customers, making online customers easier to switch to other shops. Due to that, many companies use their limited resources and improve service quality to maintain customer satisfaction.

This research focuses on university students' satisfaction in UiTM Kampus Bandaraya Melaka. According to Musa et al (2015), university students have become one of the most important market segments in the e-commerce industry for two reasons; their shopping interests and the potential to earn a higher income than other market segments.

The problem with online shopping is the customers cannot physically look at the products. Because of that, the quality of the products is one of the risks when online shopping, and there is no guarantee of a product's quality, although the advertisement of the products is convincing (Musa et al., 2015). The customer's satisfaction eventually will be affected when they receive products not in the same condition as the products advertised by the seller, which are harmful and of poor quality.

Another problem is the high price of some products or services. Hence, customers are unsatisfied with their online shopping because of the high price of some products or services. Nowadays, it is easier to check the price with just one click. Usually, before making some purchases, customers will view the price and another customer review before deciding to buy it. The customer will be upset when they make a price comparison after making their purchases with the price with the other online shop that has a lower price with the familiar product. Compared to the retail shop, the customer can bargain the price with the seller and go to another nearby shop to make a price comparison or bargain. However, some customers also think high price refers to well-made products (Melanie, 2021). The customer will be upset if the expensive product is familiar with the cheap one.

Therefore, the objectives of this research are

- To investigate the relationship between product quality and customer satisfaction among university students.
- To examine the relationship between price and customer satisfaction among university students.

As for the research questions of this study are:

- i. What is the relationship between product quality and customer satisfaction among university students?
- ii. What is the relationship between price and customer satisfaction among university students?

## Literature Review

This study illustrates the determinants of customer satisfaction in online shopping among university students. This study provides a clear understanding of how product quality and price influence customer satisfaction.

### Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is often measured by how well the product meets the customer's expectations before the purchase and how well it performs after the purchase (Kim, 2012). Satisfaction is the consumer's fulfilment response. It is a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfilment, including levels of under or over-fulfilment (Ismail, 2021). Al Karim (2013) emphasised that trust, customer service, the price of products, and security encourage people to buy online products. Lin et al (2011) identified the most critical factors affecting online consumers' satisfaction: delivery quality, product quality, service quality, system quality, and a considerable perceived price level. Identifying the variables of customer satisfaction is significant as it acts as a benchmark of business performance and serves as guidelines for future improvement (Ludin & Cheng, 2014). The research and analysis show that customer satisfaction depends on how satisfied they are with what they have met with the stated need or expectation.

### Product Quality

Deming (1982) taught that organisations could improve quality and simultaneously reduce costs by fostering appropriate management principles. Addae-Korankye (2013) explained the objective of Total Quality Management is to develop and sustain a competitive advantage by achieving cost reduction and improving customer satisfaction. As Hoang et al (2010) described, TQM should be a set of practices by the company to deliver quality products and services.

Product quality is viewed as a product's capacity to perform its functions: product performance, durability, reliability, accuracy, ease of operation and repair, and other valuable attributes (Susanti & Jasmani, 2020). Hence, it connects well with customer satisfaction regarding product quality. Quality motivates customers to form strong ties with the company. In the long run, this kind of bond allows the company to carefully understand customer expectations and needs (Agustin et al., 2022).

Quality is one of the most fundamental of customer satisfaction and the key to success in competition. Thus, the company must always be alert to the quality of all products produced or owned to catch customers' eyes and make them feel impressed by the company products (Taufik et al., 2022).

There are five main aspects of product quality (Ghani, 2020). The first aspect was the quality of design, having a quality of design that matches the consumer's needs and interests. The second aspect was quality of conformance, which measures how far a product can meet the specified requirements and specifications. Thirdly, The product is reliable because it won't break after being used for a long time. The fourth aspect is security, or the measures taken to guarantee that the final product won't damage anybody who uses it. The next step is safe and secure storage, which requires careful packaging and maintenance. When the products have all these aspects, the products will influence intention to switch, intention among customers to repeat buy and use the products, customer loyalty, and customer satisfaction (Rahman & Sitio, 2019).

In the article “Impact of Product Quality on Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty,” the researchers indicated that product quality is a significant determinant of customer satisfaction and loyalty (Sambo et al., 2022). Top & Ali (2021) found that product quality drives consumer demand for safe products and customer satisfaction because of its endurance. According to Prahalad & Krishnan (1999); Leveson & Weiss (2009), quality efforts should not only focus on meeting specifications and eliminating defects but also on assuring the reliability of products once they reach the consumer’s hands. Improving insights into the quality of goods motivates customer satisfaction (Ifeoma et al., 2021). Hence, the quality of the product’s impact on customer satisfaction affects higher lifetime value for consumers and businesses. Therefore, there is a relationship between employee engagements based on leadership style.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between product quality and customer satisfaction in online shopping among university students.

### **Price**

Many studies have determined that pricing significantly values customer satisfaction (Cronin et al., 2000). Price is a critical factor in customer satisfaction since customers always consider price when evaluating the product and service value. According to Mittal (1989), a negative price perception can cause customers to become dissatisfied, causing them to become disloyal and switch brands. It is clear when more than half of customers switch from their favourite store to a different one because of the prices (Keaveney, 1995). This highlights that price significantly influences customer satisfaction when shopping online (Dillon & Reif, 2004).

Since customers can get the same product for a lower price, many have shifted to online shopping and shop less in the store (Biswas & Blair, 1991). The existence of discount coupons like Shopee, Lazada and eBay offered to customers has also aided in increasing the number of customers who prefer to shop online. As a result, customers can compare product prices across different websites and find the lowest among them after applying discount coupons, best deals and free shipping (Lim & Dubinsky, 2004).

According to Chen et al (2015), the price has benefits when it comes to products with high risks, particularly those without a brand name, and customers are unconcerned about the risk since the price advantage outweighs the risk and as long as the product performs its primary function. Customers can usually find these products on Shopee and Lazada, where an unofficial manufacturer imitates popular brand products but uses inferior materials before selling at a low price. Buying these types of products can be high uncertainty as some products successfully mimic the overall features and functions of original products, while others are of poor quality. Thus, these products are only suitable for price-sensitive customers and willing to bear risk.

Price is the main contribution for customers in deciding to purchase something. Customers were more likely to repurchase a product when it was priced reasonably, according to (Gustafsson et al., 2005). It clearly shows that price significantly impacts customer satisfaction, and service providers should focus on product pricing to attract customers, particularly those who are price sensitive.

According to Limakrisna & Ali (2016), the price significantly impacts customer satisfaction more than customer service. According to Bernarto & Purwanto (2022), price is the most critical component of customer satisfaction, and when prices fluctuate, customers transfer to

other service providers. Kee et al (2022) discovered that price and customer satisfaction had a favourable link. Furthermore, Primaturia & Berlianto (2022) believed that price significantly impacts customer satisfaction more than other factors. Customer satisfaction is also positively related to price and service quality (Ahmed et al., 2022).

Consumers use the Internet to purchase goods at a lower price than in stores due to better purchase conditions. Many customers anticipate that internet retailers would offer their products and services at a lesser cost than traditional stores. Discounts during purchases cause consumers to believe in prices, which affects their satisfaction. When people shop online, they can't see or try out the products, so they can't be sure that the one they get is the same as the one on the website. According to Mary & Nuangjamnong (2022), price appropriateness can boost customer satisfaction after obtaining the required customer benefits, encouraging customers to trust and make repeat purchases. A positive consumer perception will lead to satisfaction, whilst a wrong customer perception will lead to dissatisfaction.

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant relationship between price and customer satisfaction in online shopping among university students.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Design**

In this research, the method used is a quantitative research approach. Quantitative research allows researchers to collect and evaluate data and apply more hypothesis testing as one of its additional roles in determining the strength of the relationship between dependent and independent variables (Apuke, 2017). The researchers will conduct a descriptive research study to gather information and assess the existing state of affairs based on a previous understanding of the research problem. The purpose of the research is exploratory studies. It is to understand the problem's background and obtain clear clarifications. A correlational investigation is the sort of investigation used in this study. In a correlational relationship, at least two variables move simultaneously. The researcher interferes with occurrences that typically occur in the organisation and purposefully modifies some setting variables.

The study setting is non-contrived. As the independent variables are modified, the researcher does interfere moderately with the course of events as they naturally unfold. This research will be a cross-sectional design in collecting data. There will be three different program courses for semester five students to answer the questionnaire and survey. In this approach, the target population only provides one sample of respondents, and one-time data collection ensures accuracy. The unit of analysis in this research study is individual; it is necessary to collect this information from each person who engages in online shopping, influencing their satisfaction.

### **Population and Sampling**

This research decided to target Universiti Teknologi Mara, Kampus Bandaraya Melaka, focusing on part five students in three programs from the Faculty of Business and Management. In detail, three programs are involved: Bachelor of Business Administration (Hons.) Human Resources Management, Bachelor of Business Administration (Hons.) Finance, Bachelor of Business Administration (Hons.) International Business.

Consequently, the total estimated sample is 244 students for these three programs. For sampling, this study uses convenience/ accidental sampling, one of the non-probability

sampling types. Convenience sampling requires collecting the data through interviews, calls, emails, or WhatsApp.

The researchers choose the two as their primary sources for their data and questionnaire because the research written by them is closely related to the topic of this research study. The type of questionnaire in this research would be a structured questionnaire that uses scaling questions which follow the Likert scale. The questionnaire will be distributed among Faculty of Business and Management students in Universiti Teknologi Mara, Kampus Bandaraya Melaka, using an online platform, Google Form.

Most of the questions on the questionnaire would come from two major research studies that Al-Jahwari et al (2018) had already done. The questionnaire prepared in this research consists of five categories, A, B, C, and D, with 19 items. Section A consists of the respondents' demographic details, and section B comprises questions regarding the research's dependent variable, Customer Satisfaction. Sections C and D cover the independent product quality and price variables. Sections B to D use a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), adapted from previous research.

### Findings

The researchers successfully collected 98 data from respondents who answered the questionnaires over 244 total students, the response rate for this research being 40%. Table 1 displays the profiles of the survey respondents. Three-fourths of the survey respondents are female (75.5%), and the balance of 24.5% are male. Other than that, most of the respondents aged between 22-25 years old (87 respondents – 88.8%), ages ranging from 18-21 years (1%), 26-29 (6.1%) and only 4.1% of the respondents are 30 years old and above. It also indicates that most of the students are from the human resource management programme (68.4%); the rests are from finance (17.3%) and international business (14.3%).

Table 1

*Result of Demographic Analysis*

Item	Label	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	74	75.5
	Male	24	24.5
Age	18 – 21	1	1.0
	22 – 25	87	88.8
	26 – 29	6	6.1
	30 and above	4	4.1
Programme	Finance	17	17.3
	Human Resource Management	67	68.4
	International Business	14	14.3

Table 2 shows Cronbach's Alpha values, which proved that all the items are reliable in presenting the particular variables in this research. Henceforth, the items are appropriate to be used to express the variables. Below is a table displaying the results of reliability tests conducted on the dependent and independent variables used in this study. According to the results, customer satisfaction has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.845, which denotes a very

high level of reliability for the variable. Additionally, Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.747 and 0.783 for product quality and pricing show that the variables are in the high-reliability range. This result indicates that the 15 questionnaire items used to measure customer satisfaction in this research study are valid and reliable

Table 2  
*Result of Reliability Analysis*

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Customer Satisfaction	5	0.845	Good
Organisational Culture	5	0.747	Moderate
Compensation	5	0.783	Moderate

Table 3 illustrates the strength of the associations between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Product quality and price are independent variables. Customer satisfaction, on the other hand, is the dependent variable. Based on the table, all independent variables have a significant relationship with the dependent variable. It is based on the fact that the Pearson Correlation values for each variable are all positively correlated with one another.

A positive moderate uphill correlation ( $r = 0.496$ ) of a substantial relationship is between product quality and customer satisfaction. This relationship is significant at the 0.01 level. Moreover, the price and customer satisfaction have a positive moderate uphill correlation ( $r = 0.656$ ). The relationship is significant at the 0.01 level. It shows that the price (independent variable) influences customer satisfaction (dependent variable) the greatest of all two variables. Furthermore, the correlation between the independent variables (product quality and price) indicates no evidence of significant multicollinearity.

Table 3  
*Pearson Correlation*

		Customer Satisfaction	Product Quality	Price
Customer Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.496**	.656**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	98	98	98
Product Quality	Pearson Correlation	.496**	1	.509**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	98	98	98
Price	Pearson Correlation	.656**	.509**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	98	98	98

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 4 shows that the results show an F-value of 41.45 with a significance value of .000. This result means that the model is statistically fit and significant. However, the R-Square result indicates a value of  $R^2=0.466$ . Thus, this means that all two independent variables in this study: product quality and price, explain 46.6% of the variance in the dependent variable.

According to table 4, the standardised beta coefficient of product quality is 0.219, which is above the significance level of 0.05. It indicates that it is significant. In the meantime, the



standardised beta coefficient for the price is 0.545. It is also significant because it is greater than 5%. Nonetheless, the price influences customer satisfaction since it is the highest and strongest among all variables, which is 0.546.

Table 4 also indicates that the variable for product quality is significant as the p-value is .014, below the significant level of 0.05. Thus, this result explains that product quality is related to the dependent variable. Same as product quality, price is also related to customer satisfaction. It is because the p-value for the price is .000, which is below the significant level of 0.05. Therefore, price is related to the dependent variable.

Table 4

*Result of Multiple Regression*

<b>Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction</b>			
<b>Independent Variables</b>	<b>Standardised (BETA)</b>	<b>Coefficient</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Product Quality	0.219		0.014
Price	0.545		0.000
F-Value	41.45		
R-Square	0.466		

Two hypotheses, namely H1 and H2, were tested for this study. Based on the multiple linear regression, there are significant relationships among the predictors, namely product quality and price, with customer satisfaction at a significant level below 0.05. Hence, these hypotheses have been supported, summarising the results in Table 5. Based on the analysis from this research, the link between product quality and customer satisfaction is significant, and a significant relationship between price and customer satisfaction. Therefore, this shows that all the hypotheses are accepted in this research.

Table 5

*Hypothesis Summary*

<b>Hypotheses</b>	<b>Statement of Hypotheses</b>	<b>Result</b>
H <sub>1</sub>	There is a significant relationship between product quality and customer satisfaction in online shopping among university students in Malaysia.	ACCEPTED
H <sub>2</sub>	There is a significant relationship between price and customer satisfaction in online shopping among university students in Malaysia.	ACCEPTED

**Conclusion**

The research revealed a significant relationship between product quality and price with customer satisfaction in online shopping. These findings may contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between these two independent variables and the dependent variable. Online shopping is rapidly growing, and this study will likely contribute to that trend favourably in or e-commerce market by enabling researchers and businesses to comprehend the factors affecting customer satisfaction.

This research yields theoretical and contextual contributions. The major theoretical contribution of this study lies in validating the factors influencing customer satisfaction with online shopping namely product quality and price. This study also has gone some way in order to enhance the understanding of customer satisfaction with online shopping among university students. As a contribution to the context, this study performed experiments with the university students given their significance to the field of marketing research since the majority of people who use the internet are in their 20s; on average that spend eight hours a day on internet-related activities, with a half of those hours devoted to online shopping (Ayob et al., 2022). Thus, university students provide an insightful context for the investigation of research exploration.

### **Limitations of Study**

The limitations while conducting this research include respondent issues and variables chosen. Some issues regarding the respondent are still difficult to manage when the researcher has set their population and sample. For example, when the researcher distributes the questionnaires, there are minimal responses, and it needs to take several days to achieve the target, making it sufficient to continue the analysis. Hence, more respondents to the study would lead to more reliable results.

Secondly, one area where this study falls short is its use of variables. The researcher only indicated two independent variables: product quality and price, verified with customer satisfaction. Other characteristics might predict online shopping client satisfaction.

### **Recommendations**

Some recommendation for this study is that in the future, researchers can use various methods to collect data for this study. In addition to using Google Forms to send questionnaires, an interview may help with future research. A session of interviews can help the person understand more about the information the researcher wants to get from them. An interview approach also enables the researcher to convey a question to the interviewee. Next, increasing the number of variables is recommended for further studies and the sample size to learn more about factors influencing customer satisfaction. In the future, researchers could also use a longitudinal method to collect data and test it on a larger group of people from all faculties or levels of a programme. The more people participate in the study, the more information the researcher can get about factors influencing customer satisfaction with online shopping.

In conclusion, it would be interesting to learn more about the relationship between customer satisfaction, product quality and price. For future research on this topic, the researchers could look at the results of past tests and look for patterns in the data collected. The data findings may be used in the coming years to assist their research.

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