What Makes Customers Choose Certain Courier Services Over the Others?

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Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic has proliferated courier service companies due to increasing customer demand. Customers prefer some courier service companies over others because of certain factors, including timeliness, order discrepancy, personal contact quality, order condition, and operational information sharing. The study investigates the factors contributing to customer satisfaction when choosing courier services. A survey questionnaire was distributed to customers to gauge their overall level of satisfaction and assessment of potential contributing factors. Respondents were selected from those who have experience using the courier service. From the results of multiple regression analysis, four factors, timeliness, personal contact quality, order condition, and operational information sharing, significantly influence customer satisfaction when choosing courier service. Order discrepancy does not significantly influence customer satisfaction because customers trust the courier service providers to provide the service as expected. The implications of the study are discussed in the paper.

Keywords: *Customer satisfaction, courier service, logistics, service quality*

1. Introduction and Background

The courier service arranges and executes last-mile delivery of packages and goods. At the helm of this operation are courier managers, who oversee the arrangement of order deliveries, assignment to couriers, and management of operations while couriers are on the road. They also play a crucial role in making strategic recommendations for future planning. Depending on a company's size and complexity, courier management may include vehicle control, fuel management, and courier expense approvals. Many courier service companies in Malaysia include JNT, POS LAJU, DHL, FedEx, Ninja Van, etc. Customer satisfaction is critical in measuring a company's success through the company's services. Customer satisfaction is characterized as the customer`s evaluation of a product or service regarding whether that product or service has addressed the customer's needs and expectations (Bungatang & Reynel, 2021). Customer satisfaction is measured to guarantee that customers continue to purchase, increase their purchases, and suggest service providers based on service quality.

Nowadays, courier services companies do not take the quality of services seriously. What has happened lately has made people lose trust in some services. For example, the viral video about the JNT employees who threw the customer's parcel, slow delivery by POS LAJU, and so on made their customers lose trust and choose the other services instead. To get their customers' attention back, the company should improve its services to regain public trust. Since courier services have become one of the critical services in Malaysia, a good reputation should be cared for by the companies to catch the spotlight in the industry.

This study was conducted to investigate factors influencing customer satisfaction in the courier service industry and to determine whether customers are satisfied with the service they receive from courier companies. The study focused on several factors or dimensions that determine customer satisfaction: timeliness, order discrepancy, personal contact quality, order condition, and operational information sharing.

2. Literature Review

Customer Satisfaction
Customer satisfaction is a central concept in marketing literature and is an essential goal of all business activities. Today, companies face their toughest competition because they move from a product and sales

philosophy to a marketing philosophy, which gives a company a better chance of outperforming the competition (Paley, 2021). Customer satisfaction with courier services needs to be improved by the customer service team to ensure that the customer feels satisfied (Libo-on, 2021). Satisfaction can be measured through the service quality dimensions, the higher rate of the service quality dimensions, and the level of satisfaction that could be attained by the service provider (Bungatang & Reynel, 2021). In terms of services, customer satisfaction will be measured by the service quality that is delivered to the customer (Uzir et al., 2021). Customer satisfaction is vital to fulfilling customer perceptions of the service provided. Customers will keep purchasing the products or services if they benefit from them. Courier service providers need to predict critical features that lead to customer satisfaction. The dependent variable for this study is customer satisfaction, which refers to the central problem the researchers focus on.

The best theory to explain an evaluation framework for logistics service quality is the SERVQUAL model, developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988). This model focuses on five dimensions of service quality: reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness. In logistics service quality, these can map to timeliness, order accuracy, employee interaction, and information sharing. The SERVQUAL model is widely used to assess gaps between customer expectations and perceived service, making it ideal for frameworks measuring performance in logistics and supply chain contexts.

The Supply Chain Operations Reference (SCOR) model by Huan et al. (2004) can also complement this SERQUAL model by focusing specifically on supply chain performance metrics such as reliability and responsiveness. Both frameworks emphasize customer satisfaction through consistent and efficient service delivery. Based on the SERVQUAL model, five factors are identified to measure customer satisfaction in using courier services. The factors comprise timeliness, order discrepancy, personal contact quality, order condition, and operational information sharing.

Timeliness
Timeliness is the responsiveness of a system or resource to a user request. Traditionally, information availability has primarily been measured by the time an information resource is processed (uptime and downtime). Uvet (2020) conceptualized physical distribution service quality with three dimensions: timeliness, availability, and condition. Time utility is the most traditional and crucial feature of logistics service quality, and the creation of place utility is based on the perception of logistics service quality (Kaswengi & Lambey-Checchin, 2020; Uvet, 2020; Uvet et al., 2024). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed about the influence of timeliness on customer satisfaction. This timeliness refers to factors that lead to the problem, and the customers emphasize it as the quality of services.

Order Discrepancy
Order discrepancy handling is how logistics firms deal with differences in orders after arrival (Akturk et al., 2022). Logistics companies' performance in correcting discrepancies, such as wrong items and poor quality, significantly impacts customers' perception of the logistics service quality (Akil et al., 2022; Uvet, 2020). Order discrepancy is also a critical feature that leads to customer satisfaction, which courier service providers must focus on. It is crucial to avoid customer conflict that can decrease their trust in the service quality of courier services.

Personal Contact Quality
The quality and skill of communication of courier service personnel are the first meeting point of customers when they contact the business (Uzir et al., 2021). Personal contact quality is essential and leads to customer satisfaction (Ali et al., 2021). Customers will observe how the organizations handle and communicate with them because contact quality is essential. It shows that providing good personal contact quality to customers will give other opportunities to retain customers to use the services (Supriyanto et al., 2021).

Order Condition
This study hypothesizes a direct relationship between order condition and customer satisfaction because of the importance of order condition on the perception of satisfaction in the literature (Uvet, 2020). As one of the most critical dimensions of physical distribution service quality, order condition refers to damaged orders during delivery (Akil et al., 2022; Uvet, 2020; Uzir et al., 2021). Order conditions are critical to customers

because the condition of the items that they receive must be good. Satisfaction with the services will increase if customers are pleased with the condition of the delivered order.

Operational Information Sharing
Information sharing can be defined as the voluntary act of making information possessed by one another (Jäger-Roschko & Petersen, 2022). This operational information sharing depends on the organization's performance to deliver through their service delivery quality. According to Parasuraman et al. (1985), Uvet (2020), and Jamkhaneh et al. 2022), the logistics information systems used lately by logistic enterprises enable logistics services to increase their perception of service quality. The logistics information systems consist of internal and external information sharing (Hou et al., 2021). While the internal exchange of information in logistics services makes it possible to increase service quality by increasing the timeliness and accuracy of orders in service, external information sharing, which includes real-time information sharing with the customers, makes it possible to close the gap between clients' expected service quality (Wetzel & Hofmann, 2020). The service delivery process is essential in terms of expectations as much as the outcome of a service.

3. Research Methodology

The methodology is the specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, process, and analyze information about the topic. For this study, a data collection method has been used to gain actual data from the customers who had used courier services like JNT, POS LAJU, and DHL. The data collection method is collecting information from all the relevant sources to find answers to the research problem, test the hypothesis, and evaluate the outcomes. This study used a primary data collection method via social media to distribute the questionnaire. The questionnaire was generated using Google Forms and then distributed to people using the WhatsApp application. Respondents were free to choose the score that relates to them on that Google form.

The study was conducted using a quantitative method or, specifically, a correlational design because we needed to collect and gain data related to our study. For that, a questionnaire on Google Forms was made. The period of gaining massive responses from respondents was open from November 2021 to December 2021, making it enough to be used in the study. From the data we obtained from respondents, 105 responses were received from the people who answered the questionnaire. It is enough as the target population was only focused on the ones that used courier services such as JNT, POS LAJU, DHL, etc.

This study focuses on various courier services in the industry, such as JNT, POS LAJU, DHL, and so on, and customer satisfaction with these services. Thus, this study only needs respondents with experience using courier services, which can be any random public. A population is defined as a group of individuals related to the study's objective; meanwhile, according to Lakens (2022), a population is an entire group you want to generalize the study's outcome. Thus, the population of this study is open to the public who use courier services. For the random numbers of the population for the respondents, the sample size that has been needed for the study is only 105.

Such considerations would help qualitative researchers select sample sizes and designs most compatible with their research purposes. Despite this study being focused on the public who have used the courier service, the sampling technique for this study is purposive sampling, which means that those who experienced using the service will be selected to answer the questionnaire.

4. Results

Based on the demographic profile, the number of respondents participating in the study was 105. These four parts of the demographic section start with age, gender, occupation, and academic status. For the age of the respondents, there are 16 (15.2%) respondents aged 18-21 years old, 77 (77.3%) respondents are in the range of age 22-25 years old, and 5 (4.8%) respondents are 26-29 years old. Besides, only one respondent (1.0%) was aged 30-33, and 6 (5.7%) were 34 years old and above. The total number of male respondents is higher than female respondents; 56 (53.3%) and 49 (46.7%) are female. Most respondents are unemployed, with 71 (67.6%) respondents being full-time workers, 23 (21.9%) respondents being part-time workers, and 11 (10.5%) respondents being part-time workers. Based on the academic status part, there are 5 (4.8%) freshmen,

2 (1.9%) sophomores, and 8 (7.6%) juniors. Most of the respondents are seniors, with a total number of 59 (56.2%), followed by 22 graduates (21.0%). Table 1 displays the demographic profile of respondents.

Table 1: Demographic and Geographic Information

Variables	Descriptive	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	56	53.3
	Female	49	46.7
Age	18 - 21 years old	16	15.2
	22- 25 years old	77	73.3
	26 - 29 years old	5	4.8
	30 -33 years old	1	1.0
	34 years old and above	6	5.7
Occupation	Full-time work	23	21.9
	Part-time work	11	10.5
	Unemployed	71	67.6
Academic Status	Freshman	5	4.8
	Sophomore	2	1.9
	Junior	8	7.6
	Senior	59	56.2
	Graduate	22	21.0
	Did not study	3	2.9
	Others	6	5.7

Table 2: Demographic and Geographic Information

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
The time between placing the requisition and receiving delivery is short. (TL1)	.819				
Deliveries arrive on the date promised. (TL3)	.810				
The amount of time a requisition is on backorder is short. (TL2)	.591				
Correction of delivered quality discrepancies is satisfactory. (OD1)		.830			
The reporting discrepancy process is adequate. (OD2)		.788			
The response to order discrepancies is satisfactory. (OD3)		.686			
Contact employees can resolve product/service problems. (PCQ2)			.873		
Contact employees to try to understand my situation (PCQ1)			.766		
The service knowledge/experience of contact employees is sufficient. (PCQ3)			.719		
Order damage rarely occurs because of the transport mode. (OC2)				.826	
Order damage rarely occurs because of the transport carrier handling. (OC3)				.801	
The information is accurate, timely, and formatted to facilitate use. (OIS3)					.822
Services have an adequate ability to share both standardized and external information with customers. (OIS2)					.700
% of variance explained (79.13)	17.74	17.69	16.83	17.74	17.69
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.					.854
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square					757.452
df					78
Sig.					.000
MSA					.757-901

Notes: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

According to the result of factor analysis, as shown in Table 2, five factors are identified as independent variables: timeliness, order discrepancy, personal contact quality, order condition, and operational information sharing. The first factor explained 17.74%, the second explained 17.69%, and the third explained 16.82%. Next, the fourth item explained 14.07%, and the last factor was 12.83% with two items. The total variance explained in the model is 79.13%, which is considered good. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) is 0.854, which is adequate for conducting factor analysis. Other than that, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is 757.452, which also shows an adequacy of the correlation matrix for factor analysis. MSA values in the range of 0.757 to 0.901 also show sampling adequacy for every factor. The first factor, timeliness, contained item loadings between 0.591 and 0.819, and the second factor, an order discrepancy, contained item loadings in the range of 0.686 to 0.830. Moreover, the third factor, personal contact quality, contained the item loadings between 0.719 and 0.873, and the fourth factor, the order condition, contained the item loadings between 0.801 and 0.826. The last factor, operational information sharing, contained the item loadings in the range of 0.700 to 0.822. Finally, a few items were discarded because they did not form the component according to the original conceptualization.

Table 3: Result of Factor Analysis for the Dependent Variable

		Component
		1
How Satisfied are you with the logistics service provider? (SAT3)		.891
Which words best describe your feelings toward a logistics service provider? (SAT2)		.838
What is your general impression of the logistics service provider? (SAT1)		.773
% of variance explained		69.75
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.657
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	95.196
	df	3
	Sig.	.000
MSA		.611-.746

Notes: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

According to the table above (Table 3), the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) is sufficient with a value of 0.657. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity result is 95.196, a sufficient correlation matrix for factor analysis. Furthermore, the MSA Value that ranged from 0.611 to 0.746 indicates that the samples are adequate for each item. As the table shows, the percentage of variance explained is 69.75%, which is adequate for the model. Based on the table, we can see the item loadings for the customer satisfaction factor from 0.773 to 0.891.

Table 4: Results of Reliability and Correlation Analyses

No	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Timeliness	3.97	.74	(.840)					
2	Order Discrepancy	3.99	.76	.567**	(.827)				
3	Personal Contact Quality	4.15	.67	.577**	.548**	(.843)			
4	Order Condition	4.15	.80	.492**	.510**	.380**	(.753)		
5	Operational Information Sharing	4.10	.73	.628**	.580**	.453**	.563**	(.751)	
6	Customer Satisfaction	4.06	.63	.552**	.630**	.548**	.621**	.617**	(.774)

As shown in Table 4, for Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, 0.9> a >0.8 is excellent internal consistency, while 0.8> a > 0.7 is acceptable. The table above shows three values of > 0.8, which is good, and three values of >0.7, which is acceptable internal consistency. Thus, it shows that the items measuring the intended variables are reliable to be used.

The correlation table above (Table 4) shows that all the mean and standard deviation values can be considered high. The lowest mean value of the variable is timeliness, with 3.97. From the previous table, Cronbach's Alpha of all variables exceeds 0.7, indicating that all the items and variables are significantly reliable. From the above table, the lowest correlation value between the independent and dependent variables is between order condition and customer satisfaction (r=0.548; p<0.01). For the highest correlation, it is between personal

contact quality and customer satisfaction (r=0.630; p<0.01).

Table 5: Result of Multiple Regression Analysis

Variables	Std Beta Coefficients
Timeliness	.031
Order Discrepancy	.234**
Personal Contact Quality	.195**
Order Condition	.296**
Operational Information Sharing	.207**
R	.764
R^2	.583
Adjusted R^2	.562
F value	27.722
Sig. F value	.000
Durbin Watson	2.062

Table 5 shows the results of a multiple regression analysis. Referring to the table, the R^2 value is 0.583, showing a 58.3% variance of the dependent variable, customer satisfaction, influenced by the independent variables: timeliness, order discrepancy, personal contact quality, order condition, and operational information sharing. Besides, based on the table, it can be determined that the model is significant (F=27.733, p< 0.01). Next, the Durbin Watson's value shows 2.062; thus, it is free from autocorrelation issues. The multiple regression analysis results show that four variables significantly influence customer satisfaction. The highest or the most significant independent variable is the ordering condition (β = 0.296, p < 0.01), followed by order discrepancy (β = 0.234, p < 0.01) and operational sharing information (β = 0.207, p < 0.01). Next, personal contact quality (β = 0.195, p < 0.01) and timeliness (β = 0.031, p > 0.05) have the lowest beta coefficient. This shows that order condition is the most significant variable influencing customer satisfaction. This differs from a previous Uvet (2020) study, which stated that timeliness and order conditions lead to two dimensions of physical distribution service quality.

Limitations
The first limitation of the study is that the questionnaires were given to the public and random persons. The study's population was huge because it is very general and not specific to those who only use courier services. The study will affect the findings because people with less experience using this courier service also answered the questionnaire. They want better information from their frequent experience using this service.

The second limitation of the study is that it focuses on courier services in Malaysia. It is common knowledge that many courier service companies in Malaysia provide delivery services. Each courier service company has its advantages and disadvantages. The study findings can also disadvantage general courier service companies because if a service courier company provides poor service and does not satisfy customers, the same effect will also harm other service courier companies.

The study's third limitation is time limitations in exploring previous research and collecting data. The time to study the research problem and collect data is limited. Appropriate use of time is essential to fulfill this research study before the deadline. The respondents were not interested and took a long time to answer the questionnaire form because the many questions caused the respondents to feel bored and only answered the questions with random answers. This study can affect the results of the study to obtain accurate data. The fourth limitation of the study is limited movement. It is common knowledge that the COVID-19 pandemic hit the country. Therefore, the study could not distribute the questionnaire to respondents and interview them more closely due to concerns over the health status of researchers and respondents who feared they could be affected by COVID-19.

Another possible limitation of this study is the data collection process. It is not easy to get cooperation from the selected respondents, and it takes time to meet the expected number of them for this research. Other than that, there is a lack of previous research studies. In collecting data, finding prior evidence of research related to courier service in Malaysia is quite challenging.

5. Recommendations and Implications

As for the recommendation for future researchers, it is proposed that the study must have its target respondents. To achieve more accurate findings, surveys need to be conducted by identifying who the respondents will be selected and having distinctive targets, such as focusing on online sellers like Shoppe or individuals who frequently use courier services at least 3-4 times a week. This is because the respondents, who consist of online merchants who always use the courier service, are more aware of the quality provided. Some respondents who only use the service courier service 1-2 times a month cannot answer questions and give an accurate picture of the quality provided by the service courier because they rarely use this service.

Time management is very important when conducting a study. Researchers must use time wisely, and each plan must have its target. For future researchers, the time required to obtain data and information from respondents must have its time frame so that each activity can run smoothly. The researcher must set the number of respondents required in a day to obtain the results without delay.

The researcher is also advised to focus on one service courier only to conduct this study. This is because if this study focuses on all the courier services available in Malaysia, the recorded results give inaccurate information and wrong pictures. For example, suppose a courier service such as JNT Express does not meet customer satisfaction requirements regarding goods guaranteed. In that case, it also harms other courier services such as POS LAJU, DHL, and so on because this study focuses on all courier service companies.

Lastly, it is expected that the researcher can use the interview method with the respondents to obtain additional information and more accurate data. If using the questionnaire, the respondent does not have other options to answer but must choose one of the given options, which reduces the richness of the data. In this matter, we can conclude that the data and information are not accurately recorded. Researchers must use the interview method to obtain more detailed data and information.

Implications of the Study
In a nutshell, this study has explained courier service in Malaysia from every perspective and has provided good knowledge to the researcher. This study has made researchers better understand the subject matter. One of the contributions that can be made is that customers can find out how courier services can affect customer satisfaction and what perspectives customers see when they use courier services. Customers will have different perspectives, so the researcher must analyze them carefully to ensure that each perspective can be considered and interpreted correctly. Researchers can also improve on this study, identify current issues or problems that customers may face in the future, and be sure whether the courier services selected in this study have improved customer satisfaction.

Furthermore, the contribution that can be made from this study is the contribution to the service courier companies in Malaysia. Any service courier company in Malaysia can take this study as one of the references so that these organizations can improve the services they deliver to their customers and increase customer satisfaction daily. In addition, any management of courier service companies in Malaysia can use this study to identify more about employees and organizations. Managers can create training to improve employee skills or hire mystery shoppers to understand customers' feelings about the service. From this, managers can build new strategies to resolve the complaints they receive from customers and find ways to ensure customers are satisfied with the services provided.

Finally, this study has contributed to the community as the community will take this matter seriously and provide honest feedback on the courier services industry. The public will benefit from the courier services industry if they understand how they can influence courier services because they have different service levels. The community sets the benchmark for the courier services industry to perform well and gain customer satisfaction. In this study, the community will also know other customers' issues and problems and continue doing business with such courier services.

Conclusion
The present study was conducted to investigate the factors that contribute to customer satisfaction using

courier services. It was found that three factors or variables highly influence customer satisfaction towards courier service: order discrepancy, order condition, and operational information sharing. It shows that a customer is concerned about the accuracy of the order delivered to them; the parcel's condition is good, not damaged, and all the information, such as tracking number status, is accurate. According to the result, order discrepancy is the most substantial variable influencing customer satisfaction. So, the courier service industry needs to focus on its operations, especially in the packing and delivering process, to prevent inaccurate orders because order discrepancy is the most influential variable influencing customer satisfaction with courier services. Although from this study, timeliness and personal contact quality are among the lower variables, it does not mean these variables are not critical for the courier service industry; some customers may have different perspectives. Thus, the organization must focus on all aspects to increase customer satisfaction.

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