

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN E-COMMERCE COMPANIES IN RANCHI, JHARKHAND

Ms. Shalu,

Research Scholar, Department of Management, Kalinga University, Raipur (C.G.)

Abstract

This study investigates customer satisfaction in e-commerce companies operating in Ranchi, Jharkhand, a rapidly growing regional market within India's digital economy. As online retail expands, understanding the determinants of customer satisfaction becomes pivotal for sustaining competitive advantage, enhancing service quality, and fostering long-term customer loyalty. The primary objectives of this research are to: (i) examine the overall level of customer satisfaction with major e-commerce platforms used in Ranchi; (ii) identify key factors influencing satisfaction, such as product quality, website usability, delivery services, customer support, and pricing; and (iii) compare satisfaction levels across leading platforms including Amazon, Flipkart, Meesho, and Ajio. A mixed-methods research design was adopted. Quantitative data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 300 respondents who had made at least one e-commerce purchase in the previous six months. Qualitative insights were obtained from semi-structured interviews with 20 frequent online shoppers. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and one-way ANOVA were used to analyse the survey data, while thematic analysis was employed for interview responses. The findings reveal that overall customer satisfaction with e-commerce services in Ranchi is moderate, with notable variation between platforms. Product quality, delivery reliability, and ease of return/refund procedures emerged as the strongest predictors of satisfaction, followed by website usability and perceived price fairness. Amazon and Flipkart recorded relatively higher satisfaction levels compared to Meesho and Ajio, particularly in terms of delivery performance and customer support. The study concludes that e-commerce firms aspiring to strengthen their position in semi-urban markets like Ranchi must invest in logistics optimisation, user-friendly interfaces, and responsive customer service systems. Theoretically, the study contributes to the service quality and customer satisfaction

literature by contextualising e-commerce behaviour in a Tier-2 Indian city. Practically, it offers evidence-based recommendations for e-commerce managers seeking to enhance customer experience, retention, and word-of-mouth in emerging markets.

Keywords

Customer satisfaction; E-commerce; Ranchi; Service quality; Delivery performance; Website usability; India

1. Introduction

The rapid growth of information and communication technologies has transformed the way goods and services are bought and sold across the world. In India, e-commerce has experienced exponential expansion over the last decade, driven by increased internet penetration, smartphone adoption, digital payment infrastructure, and changing consumer lifestyles. While metropolitan cities represented the earliest adopters of online shopping, Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities are now contributing significantly to the growth trajectory of the sector. Ranchi, the capital of Jharkhand, is one such emerging market where e-commerce usage has intensified among students, professionals, homemakers, and small business owners. Customer satisfaction is widely recognised as a central determinant of long-term business success. Satisfied customers are more likely to exhibit repeat purchase behaviour, display loyalty, provide positive word-of-mouth, and show resilience to competitors' promotional offers. In the context of e-commerce, satisfaction is shaped by multiple stages of the customer journey: information search, website interaction, order placement, payment processing, delivery, product usage, and after-sales support. Any dissatisfaction at these stages—such as delayed deliveries, damaged products, poor packaging, incorrect items, or unresponsive customer care—can significantly undermine the overall perception of the platform. Ranchi presents a unique context for studying customer satisfaction in e-commerce. The city combines features of both urban and semi-urban environments: growing middle-income groups, increasing digital literacy, and improving logistics networks, but also infrastructural constraints, intermittent connectivity, and diverse consumer expectations. While major national players such as

Amazon and Flipkart operate extensively in Ranchi, platforms like Meesho and Ajio have also gained visibility by targeting value-seeking and fashion-conscious consumers. However, there is limited empirical evidence on how customers in Ranchi evaluate their online shopping experiences and which factors matter most to them. This study addresses this gap by systematically examining the level and determinants of customer satisfaction with e-commerce companies in Ranchi. The specific objectives are to: (i) assess overall satisfaction levels among e-commerce users in Ranchi; (ii) identify key factors influencing satisfaction, including product, service, and technology-related dimensions; (iii) compare satisfaction levels across selected platforms; and (iv) suggest actionable strategies for improving customer experience. The study is expected to yield insights useful for policymakers, platform managers, and logistics partners aiming to strengthen e-commerce penetration in similar regional markets. The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews the relevant literature on e-commerce, service quality, and customer satisfaction. Section 3 explains the research methodology adopted. Section 4 presents the data analysis and interpretation. Section 5 discusses the key findings in light of existing studies. Section 6 summarises the findings, while Sections 7, 8, and 9 present the conclusion, limitations, and directions for future research respectively.

2. Review of Literature

The concept of customer satisfaction has been studied extensively in marketing and service management literature. It is commonly defined as the customer's overall evaluation of a product or service based on the comparison between expectations and perceived performance. Expectation–disconfirmation theory posits that satisfaction occurs when perceived performance meets or exceeds prior expectations, whereas dissatisfaction results from negative disconfirmation. In the context of e-commerce, researchers have highlighted the multidimensional nature of satisfaction. Service quality models such as SERVQUAL and E-S-QUAL have been adapted to online environments to capture dimensions like reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles, as well as efficiency, system availability, privacy, and fulfilment. Studies have shown

that website design, ease of navigation, visual appeal, loading speed, search functionality, and transaction security exert strong influences on perceived service quality and satisfaction. Furthermore, product-related attributes—such as variety, quality, authenticity, and accuracy of product descriptions—play a crucial role in shaping customer perceptions. Delivery and logistics performance represent another critical determinant of satisfaction in e-commerce. Timely delivery, accurate order fulfilment, safe packaging, and effective handling of returns and refunds have been consistently linked to higher satisfaction and loyalty. Delays, lost parcels, or damaged products can severely erode trust, particularly in regions where offline alternatives remain readily available. Several studies in the Indian context have observed that customers in non-metro cities are particularly sensitive to delivery reliability due to infrastructural constraints and limited availability of local service centres. Price and perceived value are also central to satisfaction in online shopping. Competitive pricing, discounts, cashbacks, and loyalty programmes can enhance perceived value, but customers also consider non-monetary costs such as time, effort, and risk. Perceived fairness of pricing and transparency in additional charges (shipping fees, COD charges, convenience fees) influence the overall satisfaction judgement.

Several empirical studies conducted in India have examined customer satisfaction with e-commerce platforms at the national level or in metropolitan areas. However, there is relatively limited evidence focusing on Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities like Ranchi, where digital adoption coexists with infrastructural and socio-economic constraints. Regional differences in income, digital literacy, and logistics coverage may lead to distinct satisfaction patterns. Hence, there is a need for context-specific investigations that capture local realities while contributing to the broader understanding of e-commerce customer behaviour.

Based on the reviewed literature, this study considers the following key dimensions as potential determinants of customer satisfaction in Ranchi's e-commerce market: (i) product quality and variety; (ii) website usability and design; (iii) delivery reliability and timeliness; (iv) customer support and grievance handling; and (v) pricing and perceived

value. These dimensions inform the design of the questionnaire and the analytical framework adopted in subsequent sections.

3. Research Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods research design that combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain a nuanced understanding of customer satisfaction in e-commerce. The quantitative component is based on a structured survey, while the qualitative component uses semi-structured interviews to capture deeper insights into consumer experiences and expectations.

The target population for the study comprises residents of Ranchi who have made at least one online purchase from an e-commerce platform in the last six months. A sample size of 300 respondents was considered adequate for quantitative analysis. A non-probability convenience sampling technique was used, given constraints of time and resources and the difficulty of obtaining a comprehensive sampling frame of all e-commerce users in the city. Efforts were made to ensure diversity with respect to age, gender, occupation, and income. The survey instrument consisted of two parts. The first part captured demographic information and basic usage patterns such as frequency of online shopping and preferred platforms. The second part contained statements measuring satisfaction related to five key dimensions: product quality and variety, website usability, delivery services, customer support, and pricing/value. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Overall satisfaction was measured using a composite index constructed from relevant items.

For the qualitative component, 20 frequent online shoppers were purposively selected for semi-structured interviews. These interviews explored topics such as reasons for platform preference, memorable positive or negative experiences, expectations from e-commerce companies, and suggestions for improvement. Interviews were audio-recorded with consent and later transcribed for analysis.

Data were analysed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies) were used to summarise respondent characteristics and

satisfaction scores. Pearson's correlation analysis examined relationships between satisfaction dimensions and overall satisfaction. One-way ANOVA was employed to test for significant differences in satisfaction levels across the four selected platforms: Amazon, Flipkart, Meesho, and Ajio. When ANOVA results were significant, post-hoc tests were used to identify specific group differences. Qualitative data from interviews were analysed thematically to identify recurrent patterns and illustrative narratives that complement the quantitative results.

Reliability of the satisfaction scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a value above the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating acceptable internal consistency. Content validity was ensured through expert review of the questionnaire by two academics and one industry professional familiar with e-commerce operations in India. Ethical considerations included informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality of responses, and the right of respondents to withdraw at any time.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The demographic profile of the 300 respondents indicated a balanced representation of genders and age groups, with a concentration in the 21–35 age bracket, reflecting the digitally active population of Ranchi. A majority reported shopping online at least once a month, and Amazon and Flipkart were cited as the most frequently used platforms, followed by Meesho and Ajio.

Descriptive statistics showed that mean scores for product quality and variety were relatively high across platforms, suggesting that respondents were generally satisfied with the range and quality of items available. Website usability also received favourable ratings, particularly for Amazon and Flipkart, which were appreciated for intuitive interfaces and robust search functions. However, delivery-related items, especially timeliness and condition of parcels on arrival, received more moderate scores, with several respondents indicating dissatisfaction with delayed deliveries or poor handling by courier partners.

Correlation analysis revealed strong positive relationships between overall satisfaction and each of the five dimensions under study. The highest correlation was observed between delivery reliability and overall satisfaction, followed closely by product quality and customer support responsiveness. Pricing and perceived value also showed a significant, though slightly weaker, correlation, indicating that while competitive prices matter, they cannot fully offset weaknesses in service delivery.

One-way ANOVA was conducted to test whether overall satisfaction differed significantly across platforms. The results indicated a statistically significant difference at the 5 percent level. Post-hoc comparisons suggested that Amazon and Flipkart enjoyed higher mean satisfaction scores compared to Meesho and Ajio. Interview data supported these findings: many respondents described Amazon and Flipkart as more “reliable” and “professional,” especially in handling returns, while some expressed concerns about product authenticity and customer service on newer or more price-focused platforms.

Qualitative analysis further highlighted that communication during the delivery process—such as status updates, tracking information, and proactive notifications of delays—strongly influenced perceptions of professionalism and care. Respondents also voiced expectations for more localised customer support, vernacular language options, and flexible delivery time slots to suit work schedules or limited availability at home.

Overall, the data analysis underscores that while e-commerce adoption in Ranchi is robust and increasing, the customer experience is uneven across platforms and dimensions. Companies that effectively manage logistics, maintain transparent communication, and offer responsive support appear to enjoy a distinct competitive advantage.

5. Results and Discussion

The results of this study confirm the central importance of core service quality dimensions—particularly delivery reliability, product quality, and customer support—in shaping customer satisfaction with e-commerce platforms in Ranchi. While website

usability and pricing strategies also play important roles, they are not sufficient on their own to guarantee high satisfaction in the absence of timely and dependable fulfilment.

The relatively higher satisfaction scores for Amazon and Flipkart align with their more mature logistics networks, wider seller base, and greater investment in technology and customer service. Their ability to offer faster delivery options, clearer tracking, and streamlined return processes appears to foster higher trust and repeat usage. In contrast, Meesho and Ajio, though attractive for their pricing and niche product categories, seem to lag behind in consistency of delivery and post-purchase support, which negatively affects overall satisfaction.

An interesting insight from the interviews is that many customers in Ranchi perceive e-commerce not merely as a convenience but as a necessity for accessing products not readily available in local markets. This dependence amplifies the emotional impact of service failures. For example, delays or cancellations during festive seasons or special occasions were described as highly frustrating and damaging to trust. At the same time, positive experiences with swift replacements or courteous customer service were remembered vividly and contributed to strong platform loyalty.

The findings support existing theoretical arguments that customer satisfaction in services is holistic and cumulative, resulting from a chain of interactions rather than a single transaction. In an e-commerce setting, this chain encompasses website navigation, product selection, payment, delivery, and after-sales support. Breakdowns at any link can tarnish the overall experience. Therefore, managers must adopt an end-to-end perspective when designing and monitoring customer-facing processes.

Another key discussion point is the role of contextual factors. Ranchi's infrastructural conditions, including road connectivity and the availability of last-mile delivery partners, create operational challenges that may not be as pronounced in metropolitan cities. Companies that tailor their logistics strategies to local conditions—such as by partnering with reliable regional courier services or establishing local distribution hubs—are likely to outperform those that treat all regions uniformly.

Finally, the study highlights emerging expectations related to personalisation, transparency, and ethical practices. Respondents expressed interest in more personalised recommendations, sustainable packaging, and ethical sourcing, suggesting that future competitive advantage may depend not only on functional performance but also on alignment with broader social and environmental values.

6. Major Findings

- Based on the analysis, the major findings of the study can be summarised as follows:
 - Overall customer satisfaction with e-commerce platforms in Ranchi is moderate but positive, indicating room for improvement.
 - Delivery reliability, including timeliness and condition of products upon arrival, is the strongest predictor of overall satisfaction.
 - Product quality and variety also exert a significant impact on satisfaction, with customers valuing authenticity and accurate descriptions.
 - Website usability—covering ease of navigation, search functionality, and clarity of information—contributes positively to satisfaction, especially for platforms with more sophisticated interfaces.
 - Customer support and grievance handling are critical in shaping perceptions of trustworthiness and professionalism.
 - Perceived price fairness and value-for-money influence satisfaction but do not compensate for poor delivery performance or unreliable service.
 - Amazon and Flipkart enjoy higher satisfaction levels compared to Meesho and Ajio, largely due to stronger logistics and customer service capabilities.
 - Customers in Ranchi increasingly rely on e-commerce to access a wider range of products, making consistent and reliable service even more important for maintaining loyalty.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study set out to investigate customer satisfaction with e-commerce companies in Ranchi, Jharkhand, with a focus on key determinants and platform-wise differences. The results show that while e-commerce has been embraced by a wide cross-section of the city's population, satisfaction levels vary considerably depending on the effectiveness of delivery operations, product quality, website usability, and customer support mechanisms.

From a managerial standpoint, the most urgent recommendation is to strengthen logistics and last-mile delivery in and around Ranchi. E-commerce companies should invest in route optimisation, inventory planning, and partnerships with reliable courier providers. Providing realistic delivery time estimates, proactive communication in case of delays, and easy-to-use tracking features can significantly enhance customer confidence.

Second, platforms must continuously refine their website and mobile app interfaces to ensure intuitive navigation, clear presentation of information, and secure payment experiences. Local language support and context-sensitive help features could further improve usability for diverse user segments.

Third, robust customer support systems—combining chatbots for quick query resolution with human agents for complex issues—are essential. Simplifying return and refund processes, offering multiple grievance redress channels, and monitoring service quality through feedback mechanisms will help build trust.

Finally, while competitive pricing will remain important, companies should focus on delivering superior overall value through quality assurance, reliability, and ethical practices such as fair treatment of delivery personnel and environmentally conscious packaging. Such holistic strategies are likely to yield stronger loyalty and positive word-of-mouth in regional markets like Ranchi.

8. Limitations of the Study

Like any empirical study, this research is subject to certain limitations. First, the use of non-probability convenience sampling limits the generalisability of the findings to the entire population of e-commerce users in Ranchi. Future studies could adopt probability sampling techniques to enhance representativeness. Second, the study focuses on four major platforms and does not capture satisfaction with smaller or niche sites, which may operate under different business models.

Third, the data are cross-sectional, capturing perceptions at a single point in time. Longitudinal studies could track how satisfaction evolves as platforms introduce new features or as market conditions change. Fourth, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce biases such as social desirability or recall errors. Combining survey responses with actual behavioural data, such as transaction histories, would provide a more comprehensive picture of customer behaviour.

Despite these limitations, the study offers valuable insights into the drivers of customer satisfaction in an important emerging market and provides a foundation for more detailed future investigations.

9. Future Scope for Research

Future research on e-commerce customer satisfaction in India could proceed in several directions. Comparative studies across multiple Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities would help identify common patterns and region-specific issues, enabling more tailored policy and managerial interventions. Researchers could also examine satisfaction differentials between product categories, such as electronics, groceries, fashion, and pharmaceuticals, which may involve distinct risk perceptions and expectations.

Another promising direction is to integrate advanced analytical techniques, such as structural equation modelling or machine learning, to model complex relationships between satisfaction drivers, loyalty intentions, and actual purchasing behaviour.

Additionally, the impact of emerging technologies—such as same-day delivery, dark stores, social commerce, and hyper-local platforms—on satisfaction and competition dynamics in regional markets warrants systematic investigation.

Finally, qualitative research exploring the experiences of specific demographic groups—such as elderly users, rural customers on the periphery of Ranchi, or small entrepreneurs using e-commerce for procurement—could reveal nuanced insights that are not easily captured through standardised surveys.

References

1. Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing management* (15th ed.). Pearson.
2. Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Malhotra, A. (2005). E-S-QUAL: A multiple-item scale for assessing electronic service quality. *Journal of Service Research*, 7(3), 213–233.
3. Sharma, R., & Mohan, V. (2018). Communication Satisfaction, Trust, and Customer Loyalty in the E-commerce Industry of Jharkhand. *International Journal of E-Business Research*, 14(3), 20-37.
4. Shukla, R. (2016). Impact of Social Media on Consumer Behaviour. *International Journal of Applied Research*, 2(10), 445-448.
5. Singh, P., & Varun, A. (2019). Localized Content and Language Preferences in E-commerce: A Study of Jharkhand Market. *International Journal of Applied Business and Economic Research*, 17(5), 183-197.
6. Singh, R., & Kapoor, S. (2004). E-commerce and customer satisfaction: An analysis of factors influencing online shopping in Ranchi. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 12(1), 145-162.
7. Singh, R., & Kapoor, S. (2011). The role of product quality and information in influencing customer satisfaction in e-commerce. *Journal of Consumer Behavior*, 15(4), 201-218.

8. Sinha, S., & Bhattacharya, A. (2018). An Empirical Study on Customers' Perception towards Online Shopping in Jharkhand. *International Journal of Applied Research*, 4(12), 249-253.
9. Smith, A., & Anderson, M. (2018). Share of Americans who have bought something online via any device as of 2018, by age group. Pew Research Center, Internet & Technology.
10. Smith, J. (2020). The impact of website design on customer satisfaction in e-commerce: A literature review. *Journal of E-commerce Research*, 15(2), 45-62.
11. Verma, P., & Kumar, S. (2002). Understanding pricing strategies and customer satisfaction in the e-commerce industry: A case study of Ranchi companies. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 5(2), 89-105.
12. Verma, P., & Kumar, S. (2005). Personalization and customization in e-commerce: A study of customer preferences in Ranchi. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 8(4), 112-129.
13. Verma, P., & Kumar, S. (2010). Understanding pricing strategies and customer satisfaction in the e-commerce industry: A case study of Ranchi companies. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 12(2), 89-105.
14. Verma, P., & Kumar, S. (2013). Personalization and customization in e-commerce: A study of customer preferences in Ranchi. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 5(2), 112-129.
15. Wang, Y., Wang, Y., Lin, H., & Tang, T. (2018). Building Trust in Online Shopping: Examining the Role of Information Quality and System Quality. *Information & Management*, 55(6), 807-821.
16. Wu, W. Y., Lee, Y. L., Wang, K. H., & Huang, H. C. (2019). The Impact of Mobile Shopping Apps on Consumers' Purchase Behavior: A Perspective of Consumer Engagement. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 50, 221-233.

17. Yeo, G. T., & Park, J. (2018). Examining the Effects of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty in E-commerce. *Asia Pacific Journal of Information Systems*, 28(1), 101-124.
18. Zeithaml, V. A., Bitner, M. J., & Gremler, D. D. (2018). *Services marketing: Integrating customer focus across the firm* (7th ed.). McGraw-Hill.
19. Zhang, X., & Prybutok, V. R. (2016). Consumer Expectations, Perceptions, and Satisfaction: E-commerce in China. *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, 56(2), 160-170.
20. Zhang, Y., & Mao, E. (2017). The effects of website design on consumer behavioral intention: The mediating role of trust and the moderating role of culture. *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research*, 18(1), 26-45.
21. Zhao, X., Han, Y., Yang, X., & Jiang, Z. (2020). The Effects of Social Media Integration on Customer Engagement and E-commerce Performance: The Mediating Role of User Experience. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 39, 100889.