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Consumer Perceptions of Shopeefood Online Service Quality in the City of Yogyakarta Special Region

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Abstract

The transformation of digital services has profoundly influenced the consumption patterns of urban communities, particularly through the use of food delivery applications such as ShopeeFood. In Yogyakarta, while the platform has experienced rapid growth, maintaining high service quality remains a significant challenge in fostering consumer loyalty. This study aims to examine consumer perceptions of ShopeeFood's service quality through a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected via in-depth interviews with six informants, categorized based on usage intensity (regular, occasional, and new users), and analyzed using the theoretical frameworks of consumer perception, the SERVQUAL model, and digital consumer behavior. The findings indicate that elements such as the application interface and transaction security are perceived positively, whereas information reliability and customer service responsiveness still require improvement. Variations in perception were identified based on user intensity, with regular users exhibiting higher levels of engagement and expectations for more personalized services. This study highlights the need for empathetic, adaptive, and data-driven strategies in the management of digital services. The practical implications suggest the development of interactive features, improved information accuracy, and more targeted communication strategies. Furthermore, the research opens avenues for future investigations into the integration of emotional experiences in cultivating user loyalty on digital service platforms.

***Keywords**: Consumer Perception, Service Quality, ShopeeFood, Digital Services, Customer Loyalty*

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has brought significant changes to various aspects of society, including consumption patterns and social interactions. This transformation is clearly reflected in the emergence of numerous digital services that offer convenience and speed, in line with the increasing demand among urban communities for efficiency in managing daily activities. One sector that has experienced rapid growth is app-based food delivery services, which have now become an integral part of urban lifestyles (Putra 2020).

Yogyakarta, known as a student city with a large young population, is one of the regions with a high penetration rate of digital service usage, including food delivery services. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of these services, encouraging people to rely on digital platforms to meet their daily consumption needs. Even after the pandemic subsided, this behavior persisted and evolved into a new consumption pattern. One of the major players in this industry is ShopeeFood, which, despite being a relatively new entrant, successfully attracted consumer attention through aggressive marketing strategies and appealing promotional offers. ShopeeFood competes closely with similar services such as

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GoFood and GrabFood, and within this competitive landscape, service quality becomes a crucial factor in maintaining consumer loyalty (Irawati). Aspects such as application usability, delivery speed, and food quality serve as key indicators in evaluating overall service quality.

Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) data for ShopeeFood from 2021 to 2024 show a significant upward trend, particularly in 2023 and 2024 (Ahdiat, 2025). This indicates strong consumer interest and trust in the service across Indonesia, including in Yogyakarta.

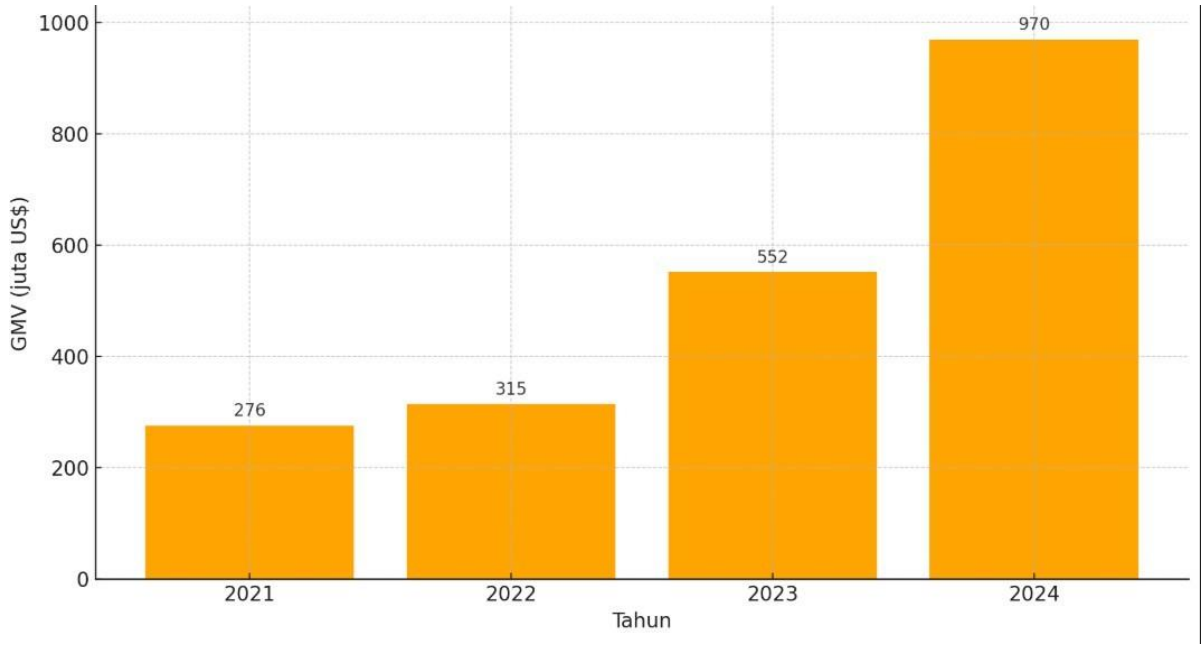


Figure 1. Gross merchandise value (GMV) data

Previous studies have explored various factors influencing customer satisfaction and loyalty in online food delivery services. For instance, a study by Amalia et al (2022) found that service quality has a significant impact on perceived value but does not directly affect customer satisfaction. This finding highlights the complexity of consumer perceptions in the context of digital services. Another study by Anjarini & Fernanda (2022) employed a perceptual mapping approach to compare the perceptions of Generation Z consumers in Yogyakarta toward GrabFood, GoFood, and ShopeeFood. The results showed that ShopeeFood ranked second after GrabFood in terms of perceived service quality. However, the focus of that study was more on inter-brand comparison and did not provide an in-depth examination of consumer perceptions specific to ShopeeFood. Other research has also emphasized the importance of digital service quality in determining user satisfaction and loyalty toward ShopeeFood, though these studies largely relied on quantitative methods. This reliance poses a limitation, as quantitative approaches often fail to capture the depth of consumer experiences and perceptions.

Based on the aforementioned discussion, there exists a critical research gap: the need for a deeper, qualitative understanding of consumer perceptions regarding ShopeeFood's service quality, particularly in Yogyakarta. A qualitative approach allows for a more nuanced exploration of consumer experiences, expectations, and the dynamics of perceptionelements often overlooked in quantitative studies.

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Therefore, the objective of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding of consumer perceptions of ShopeeFood's service quality in Yogyakarta, including the factors influencing their satisfaction and loyalty toward the service. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of communication science, particularly in the areas of digital marketing communication and consumer behavior. In addition, the results may offer strategic insights for ShopeeFood management and culinary business actors to improve their service quality. Ultimately, amid the rapidly evolving digital landscape, a comprehensive understanding of consumer perceptions is essential for ensuring the success and sustainability of digital services such as ShopeeFood in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at exploring and comprehensively describing consumer perceptions of ShopeeFood's service quality in Yogyakarta. This approach is selected for its ability to uncover the subjective meanings embedded in consumer experiences, which cannot be adequately captured through numerical data or statistics alone. Qualitative research offers space for researchers to understand the social and cultural contexts that shape consumer perceptions of digital services, particularly within the increasingly dynamic local digital economy ecosystem (Esrito & Yamit, 2023). The primary focus is not to test hypotheses, but rather to interpret consumer experiences from their own perspectives in real-life situations.

The primary data source in this research consists of active consumers of ShopeeFood services in the Yogyakarta area. Primary data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, allowing for flexibility in probing follow-up questions based on the direction of conversation and informant responses. The interview guide was developed based on key dimensions of digital service quality such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles, adapted from the SERVQUAL model and reinforced by recent studies on digital consumer behavior (Widyayanti, 2022). In addition to interviews, the researcher also conducted participant observations of consumer interactions with the ShopeeFood application interface—both directly and through digital documentation such as screenshots and screen recordings. Additional data were obtained from consumer reviews on social media and e-commerce platforms to enrich perspectives and enhance data validity through source triangulation (Manzilati, 2017). By integrating multiple data collection techniques, the researcher was able to capture the dynamics of consumer experience comprehensively, both from verbal and non-verbal perspectives.

The study's subjects consist of six individuals representing regular, occasional, and new users of ShopeeFood who reside in Yogyakarta. Informants were selected through purposive sampling, a technique that involves selecting participants based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. These criteria include: (1) active users of ShopeeFood within the past three months; (2) permanent residents or individuals who engage in routine activities within the Yogyakarta area; and (3) willingness to provide in-depth and reflective information about their experiences using the service. Purposive sampling enables the researcher to obtain informants with relevant knowledge and experience regarding the research topic (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The number of informants was not predetermined but followed the principle of data saturation that is, the point at which additional interviews no longer yield new or significant information relevant to the study's findings.

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Participants

NO	Informant Name	Age	Customer
1	Cristina Grace	24	regular
2	Antonio Putra Dinanta	23	Fixed
3	Dewi Andriani	22	medium/rare
4	Adi Putra Suseno	20	medium/rare
5	Putri Dinanti	22	New
6	M. Aidil Putra	23	New

The data obtained were analyzed using thematic analysis, a method developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) that is widely regarded as effective for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data. Thematic analysis in this study was conducted systematically through several stages. First, the interview data were transcribed verbatim. Second, the researcher reread the entire transcripts to gain a comprehensive understanding. Third, initial coding was performed by identifying significant quotes and segments. Fourth, these codes were categorized into overarching themes. Fifth, the identified themes were reviewed to ensure consistency and alignment with the data. Sixth, themes were named and interpreted critically to extract deeper meanings from the participants' experiences. Finally, the results of the analysis were compiled into a descriptive narrative that illustrates the dynamics of consumer perceptions toward ShopeeFood services.

The analytical process was carried out reflectively and iteratively, taking into account the social context and the individual narratives of each informant, in order to ensure that the final results authentically represent their lived experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The validity of the findings was reinforced through member checking, wherein selected results were returned to the informants for confirmation to ensure the accuracy of interpretations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

This study aims to understand consumer perceptions of ShopeeFood's service quality in the Special Region of Yogyakarta using a qualitative approach. The informants consisted of six individuals representing three categories of users: regular, occasional/infrequent, and new consumers. The findings were analyzed through three main theoretical lenses: Consumer Perception Theory, the SERVQUAL model, and Digital Consumer Behavior Theory.

Initial Perceptions of the Service

The majority of informants indicated that their primary reason for choosing ShopeeFood was the consistent availability of promotions and discounts. In addition, the pre-existing familiarity with the Shopee application facilitated a smoother adaptation process, thereby fostering a positive perception of the food delivery service integrated within the platform's ecosystem. This suggests that user convenience and interface familiarity play a crucial role in building trust and influencing the likelihood of repeat usage an observation that aligns with Huang and Benyoucef's (2013) study on trust and intention to reuse in digital systems.

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Service Evaluation Based on SERVQUAL Dimensions

From the perspective of the SERVQUAL dimensions (Abari, 2011), several key findings emerged:

Dimensions SERVQUAL	Observation Results
Tangibles	ShopeeFood is considered to have an attractive visual appearance, easy navigation, and adequate application aesthetics.
Reliability	There is a mismatch between estimated delivery and actual time; menu information is sometimes not updated. time; menu information is sometimes not updated.
Responsiveness	Customer service response is considered slow outside of business hours. response better during morning and afternoon operating hours.
Assurance	The use of ShopeePay gives a sense of security and control over digital transactions; there have been no negative experiences from respondents. digital transactions; there have been no negative experiences from respondents.
Empathy	The approach still seems formal and systematic; there is no sense of personalization in handling consumer complaints. personalization in handling consumer complaints.

These findings indicate that ShopeeFood excels in the tangible and assurance dimensions, yet still requires improvement in reliability and responsiveness, particularly in terms of time management and menu stock updates.

Digital Consumer Behavior in Service Usage

The active and reflective digital behavior demonstrated by the informants reflects a form of consumer engagement that is not passive in response to the content or promotions presented by platforms such as ShopeeFood. *Active* behavior refers to consumers who are intensively involved in information-seeking and processing; they do not merely receive information unilaterally but take the initiative to compare promotions, check user reviews, and verify restaurant ratings. This activity demonstrates a desire to make well-informed decisions based on available information, rather than relying on impulses or visual appeal alone. Meanwhile, *reflective* behavior indicates a deeper evaluative process. Consumers assess the service not based on a single aspect, but by considering multiple factors such as service consistency, information reliability, and the quality of past interactions. This reflective attitude signifies a logical and critical information-processing approach prior to making a final choice, which reflects a high level of cognitive involvement an essential element in the context of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

According to the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), persuasion occurs through two primary routes: the central route and the peripheral route. The central route is employed when individuals are both motivated and able to process information thoroughly. In the context of ShopeeFood, consumers who evaluate the service based on reviews, ratings, and personal experience fall into this category, resulting in decisions that are more logical, stable, and enduring. In contrast, the peripheral route is used when cognitive involvement is low, and consumers tend to rely on superficial cues such as visual appeal, popularity, or emotional testimonials. This is commonly observed in new or infrequent users who are attracted to the service mainly due to promotional offers without conducting a thorough assessment. Both

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routes may coexist depending on user characteristics and context; however, in this study, the combination of active and reflective consumer behaviors suggests a dominant use of the central route, which demands substantial informational and experiential quality.

Therefore, for service providers such as ShopeeFood, this presents a strategic opportunity to foster consumer loyalty by delivering information that is relevant, transparent, and contextually meaningful.

Perceptions Based on Usage Intensity

This study also found that perceptions of service quality vary according to the frequency of usage. Regular users tend to have higher expectations regarding the speed and quality of service. They are also more sensitive to minor changes within the system and expect more advanced personalization features. Meanwhile, users who utilize the service occasionally or infrequently tend to evaluate quality based on efficiency and application stability. These users are pragmatic and more likely to switch to alternative services if disruptions occur. On the other hand, new users focus more on first impressions and the ease of orientation when using the application. Their perceptions are still in the formative stage, shaped primarily by initial experiences.

Discussion

The findings of this study reinforce the notion that perceptions of digital service quality are shaped by a combination of initial expectations, actual service performance, and consumers' digital experiences. This is consistent with the Expectation Confirmation Theory (Bhattacherjee, 2001), which emphasizes that confirmation of initial expectations significantly influences user loyalty in digital services.

In the context of the SERVQUAL model, the *reliability* dimension emerged as one of the weaker aspects of ShopeeFood's service, as reflected in informants' complaints about inaccurate delivery time estimates and inconsistent menu updates. This information asymmetry creates a discrepancy between expectations and actual service, directly affecting customer satisfaction. This situation aligns with the Information System Success Model by DeLone and McLean (2003), which identifies information quality as a key determinant of digital system success. In contrast, perceptions of *tangibles* and *assurance* were generally positive. The application's intuitive interface and the integration of ShopeePay enhanced users' sense of security and convenience, especially among regular users who have developed habitual use. These findings support the concepts of *perceived ease of use* and *perceived usefulness* in digital user behavior.

However, imbalances were observed in the *responsiveness* and *empathy* dimensions. Slow customer service outside working hours and impersonal responses contributed to the impression that ShopeeFood has yet to address the emotional aspects of user experience. In digital marketing communication, empathetic engagement is crucial for strengthening emotional bonds. Thus, the development of AI-based systems that can recognize customer preferences and usage patterns could offer more personalized, adaptive, and contextual services.

Furthermore, when linked to usage intensity, the study identified differing perceptions among user groups. Regular users provided more critical and in-depth evaluations due to their higher emotional and functional engagement. They were more sensitive to changes in service quality and demanded more personalized features. In contrast, occasional users evaluated the service pragmatically, focusing on short-term efficiency and convenience. New users were

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more influenced by first impressions and visual promotions, reflecting the dominance of the *peripheral route* in persuasion processes, as explained by the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

These findings highlight that the *central route* of information processing where consumers evaluate services based on reviews, ratings, and personal experience is more dominant among high-intensity users. Therefore, information transparency, consistent system performance, and the presence of user-generated content are strategic elements in fostering long-term loyalty. Strategies such as introducing video review features, loyalty badges, or reward systems for active reviewers could encourage consumer participation in shaping a trustworthy service image.

In conclusion, this discussion underscores the importance of a holistic approach to understanding consumer perceptions of digital services one that accounts not only for system performance but also for emotional engagement, social context, and user involvement levels.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of how consumer perceptions are formed regarding the service quality of ShopeeFood in Yogyakarta, and how these perceptions influence loyalty and satisfaction within the context of digital services. The findings indicate that users' initial perceptions are generally shaped by attractive promotions and a familiar application interface. However, sustained usage is more strongly determined by service consistency, information accuracy, and the overall digital experience. These results reinforce the relevance of Expectation Confirmation Theory, which emphasizes the importance of alignment between initial expectations and actual performance in shaping continued usage decisions. Based on the SERVQUAL model analysis, ShopeeFood performs well in the dimensions of tangibles and assurance, such as app design and transaction security. However, it shows weaknesses in reliability and responsiveness, particularly concerning the accuracy of delivery time estimates and the responsiveness of customer service.

Moreover, the impersonal nature of the service presents a challenge in building emotional engagement, even though empathy and personalization are critical components in creating a memorable user experience. The study also reveals differences in perception based on user intensity: regular users tend to offer more critical and demanding evaluations, whereas new users are more influenced by visual impressions and initial promotions. These findings align with the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), which posits that users with high involvement tend to process information through the central route, while new users are more likely to rely on peripheral cues.

Based on these results, it is recommended that ShopeeFood strategically enhance the quality of in-app information and develop a more adaptive, contextual, and human-centered customer service system. Strengthening features that promote active user engagement such as multimedia-based review systems or preference-based recommendations may also help reinforce emotional attachment and increase service credibility. Therefore, to survive and thrive in an increasingly competitive digital ecosystem, ShopeeFood must balance technical efficiency with emotional connection to its consumers.

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AI Disclosure

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) and AI-assisted technologies were used solely to improve the readability and organization of the manuscript. All outputs generated through these tools were carefully reviewed, edited, and validated by the author to ensure accuracy, completeness, and alignment with the study's original content. The author assumes full responsibility and accountability for the integrity of the work, including its analysis, interpretation, and conclusions. AI tools were not used for data generation, data analysis, or as a substitute for scholarly judgment, and are not listed as authors or co-authors of this study.

Conflict of Interest Statement: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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