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A Study on Customer Experience and Satisfaction with E-Commerce Platforms for Pet Food

Dr. R. Sankar Ganesh[1], Saadhika K[2]
[1]*Associate Professor, Department of Management Studies, Vel Tech Rangarajan Dr. Sagunthala R&D Institute of Science and Technology, Avadi, Chennai – 600 062*
[2]*Student, II – M.B.A, Department of Management Studies, Vel Tech Rangarajan Dr. Sagunthala R&D Institute of Science and Technology, Avadi, Chennai – 600 062*

Abstract: ***This research explores the multifaceted dimensions of customer experience and satisfaction in the context of e-commerce platforms that specialize in pet food, with a focused case study. As the digital transformation of consumer markets accelerates, businesses must align their strategies with evolving customer expectations and behaviour. In the pet food industry, which combines emotional attachment with health and nutritional considerations, ensuring high customer satisfaction is both a necessity and a competitive differentiator. E-commerce platforms are increasingly becoming the go to choice for pet owners seeking convenience, variety, and value-added services. However, success in this domain is contingent upon the quality of service provided, user interface, product variety, support services, and delivery experience. This study employs a structured research approach using questionnaires and statistical tools such as ANOVA, Correlation, and Independent Samples T-Test to analyse data from 116 participants. Respondents were selected through convenience sampling and represented diverse demographics. The results highlight the significant impact of electronic service quality (E-SQ) on overall satisfaction. Key drivers included ease of website navigation, prompt customer service, order fulfilment efficiency, and the availability of specialized pet food. In addition to identifying these drivers, the study examines consumer preferences, pain points during online transactions, and customer expectations for digital improvement. The research proposes actionable recommendations including enhancing UI/UX design, offering tailored product lines, and providing Realtime customer interaction support. The conclusion emphasizes that understanding and meeting the needs of pet owners can significantly boost loyalty, retention, and brand equity in the digital marketplace.***

I. INTRODUCTION

The evolution of digital technology has brought transformative changes across industries, none more visible than in the e-commerce sector. As digital natives become a growing proportion of the consumer base, expectations for seamless online experiences, especially in sectors like pet care, have intensified. E-commerce platforms have become the primary channel for buying pet food, accessories, and supplements, driven by consumer desires for convenience, accessibility, and efficiency. A pioneer in India's pet food industry, represents an ideal case to study how customer experience impacts satisfaction in the digital realm. While legacy lies in its high-quality products and ethical manufacturing practices, it now faces the challenge of adapting to new-age digital consumer behaviour. The company's e-commerce strategy must not only ensure product quality but also focus on the delivery experience, platform usability, trust-building measures, and after-sales support. This paper explores how the digital infrastructure of a platform supports or hinders customer satisfaction. We investigate how consumers perceive their interaction with the platform—from searching for products to placing orders and post purchase communication. Particular focus is given to whether the user interface is intuitive, how well delivery meets expectations, and whether the platform builds sufficient trust and engagement. The introduction also examines global e-commerce trends in the pet industry. Pet humanization, premiumization of products, and personalization of services are reshaping how consumers engage with brands. As customers seek organic, grain free, and vet-approved foods, platforms must enable easy discovery and transparent product information. Simultaneously, rapid delivery, interactive customer service, and loyalty rewards are no longer optional but expected.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The academic and industrial literature on e-commerce and customer satisfaction reveals a complex matrix of factors that influence the online consumer journey. Parasuraman et al. (2005) introduced E-S-QUAL, a multidimensional scale for assessing electronic service quality. It covers aspects like efficiency, system availability, fulfilment, and privacy, and remains a cornerstone in evaluating e-commerce platforms.

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Anderson and Srinivasan (2003) emphasized e-satisfaction as a precursor to e-loyalty, noting that even minor lapses in service can drive away digital consumers. This concept is echoed by Kim et al. (2009), who established that perceived quality, trust, and satisfaction are major determinants of customer retention.

In the context of pet care, Xu and Jackson (2019) highlighted that emotional attachment to pets amplifies expectations from brands. Their study on pet food e-commerce emphasized perceived value, reliability of ingredients, and tailored nutrition as key satisfaction drivers. Ho and Chen (2020) studied interface design and product diversity, linking user-friendliness and category variety to improved user satisfaction.

Chiu et al. (2009) observed that platforms offering interactive features like customer reviews, FAQs, and live chat enhance transparency and consumer confidence. The importance of support systems is reiterated in the work of Lee and Choi (2021), who demonstrated how real-time assistance and peer support communities mitigate user frustration.

Other notable works include Zhao and Yuan (2022), who addressed digital fatigue and the need for gamified experiences, and DeLone and McLean (2003), whose IS success model integrates user intention, satisfaction, and system quality into a cohesive evaluation framework.

Collectively, this literature points to a multi layered strategy for e-commerce success—one that integrates technical performance with emotional resonance and service personalization.

III. RESULTS

The survey data revealed several important trends:

1) Demographics: Most respondents were in the age group 25–40, with over 60% owning either a dog or a cat. Monthly income varied, but a majority spent between ₹1000–₹3000 on pet food monthly.
2) Platform Preferences: 48.3% purchased pet food online monthly, with Amazon and Flipkart as top platforms. 49.1% found navigation very easy, while 37.9% valued product categorization and relevant recommendations.
3) Service Quality: 65% of users believed fast delivery and good packaging significantly influenced satisfaction. Around 78% rated product quality as more important than price.
4) Correlation Analysis: Significant positive correlation was found between satisfaction and variables like navigation ($r=0.68$, $p<0.01$), delivery performance ($r=0.52$, $p<0.01$), and customer support ($r=0.45$, $p<0.05$).
5) ANOVA Results: Satisfaction varied significantly across income levels ($F=3.89$, $p=0.02$) and pet types owned ($F=4.15$, $p=0.01$). Pet owners with multiple pets reported higher expectations and lower tolerance for delays.

The data suggest that **E-SQ dimensions** are strong predictors of satisfaction and that customized services based on user demographics could significantly improve retention.

IV. SUGGESTIONS

1) Redesign User Interface: Improve layout, search filters, and category visibility for easier navigation across desktop and mobile versions.
2) Specialized Product Categories: Offer vet approved, breed specific, and organic pet food variants with detailed ingredient disclosures.
3) Subscription Services: Launch flexible subscription models for regular deliveries with discounts and loyalty benefits.
4) Strengthen Customer Support: Implement 24/7 chatbot integration, multilingual support, and faster query resolution mechanisms.
5) Enhance Delivery Logistics: Partner with local courier networks to ensure 1–2 day delivery across metro cities and improved packaging to prevent damage.
6) Engage via Content Marketing: Use blogs, newsletters, and influencer partnerships to educate pet owners on nutrition and product usage.
7) Feedback Loop: Use post purchase surveys and real time feedback features to capture customer sentiment and evolve services accordingly.

V. CONCLUSION

This study underscores the growing importance of digital service quality in determining customer satisfaction in the pet food industry. While excelling in product quality, must optimize its e-commerce platform to meet rising consumer expectations shaped by convenience, speed, and personalization.

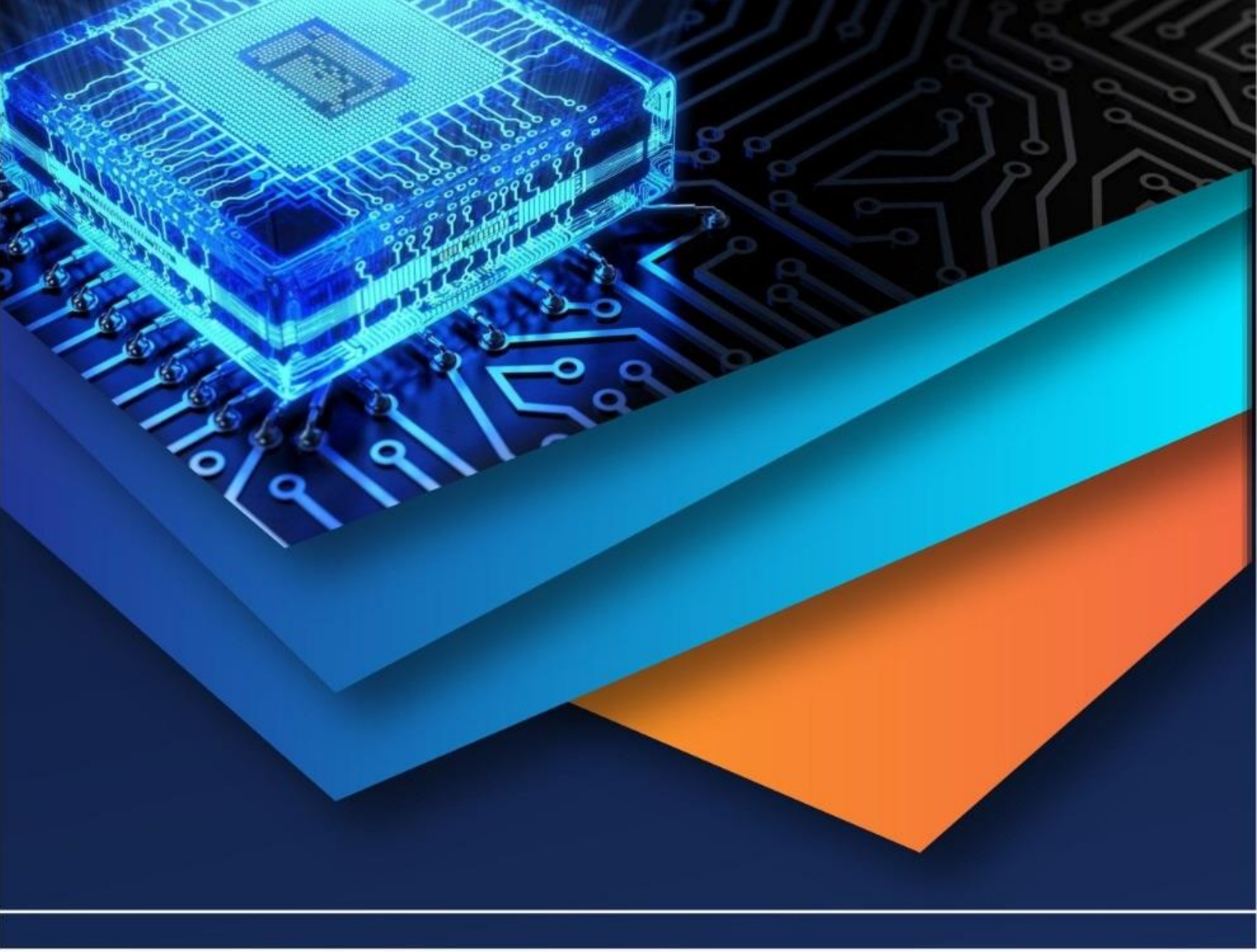
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The findings affirm that factors like platform usability, product discovery ease, delivery efficiency, and support responsiveness directly impact user satisfaction. In a competitive market, these elements are critical in differentiating the brand and building customer loyalty. The study concludes that a holistic, user-centric approach to e-commerce one that combines product excellence with superior digital experience will empower to thrive in the digital first pet care landscape.

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