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BUILDING E-LOYALTY TOWARDS ONLINE FOOD DELIVERY APPS: A SERIAL-MEDIATION MODEL

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ABSTRACT

This study analysed the mechanism to generate e-loyalty among customers through e-service quality regarding OFD (OFD) apps. It examined the indirect influence of e-service quality on e-loyalty through the mediation of e-trust and e-satisfaction of customers. The serial mediation approach was used to test the proposed model of the study. Data was obtained through a self-administered structured questionnaire filled by 261 respondents from north India. The model hypotheses were tested by applying variance-based partial least squares in software SmartPLS 3. All the results were found to be statistically significant, and all proposed hypotheses were accepted. The results revealed that e-service quality positively contributed to building e-loyalty among customers of OFD apps. Furthermore, the results of the mediation effect suggested that e-trust and e-satisfaction strengthened the relationship between e-service quality and customers' e-loyalty and therefore, that restaurants using OFD apps should try to provide the best online services to build trust along with satisfaction among their customers to increase loyalty to their online platforms. Theoretical implications for scholars and practical implications for the marketer are discussed.

Keywords: e-loyalty, e-service quality, e-satisfaction, e-trust, OFD apps

INTRODUCTION

In today's modern world, internet technology is growing that has boosted e-commerce activities in fulfilling the needs of both consumers and firms. Online shopping platforms are enabling consumers to shop easily, compare their products, services and prices effectively as well as manage the delivery of products as per their convenience (Chang et al., 2014; Yeo et al., 2017). A report by the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) (BCG, 2020) showed that India's online spending is increasing and expected to rise at 25% over the next five years to reach USD130 billion. Consumers nowadays prefer to conduct transactions online, such as booking tickets, buying clothes, and booking hotels as well as getting ready-made meals delivered at their doorstep with a few simple taps. It is very convenient for them to place an order through OFD apps with few clicks only rather than driving or walking outside to get their food or shopping. According to Barhate (2019), food delivery is one of the fastest-growing segments in India providing a good platform for online food ordering apps to grow their business. This presented a big opportunity for growth in the future. It is projected that by 2022, the Indian OFD business will show a revenue growth of 10.6% to achieve USD8 billion market (BCG Report, 2020). In a report by Statista (2020), there is 1 billion people in India and a middle class whose number is rising while the OFD segment is expected to have 241.0 million users by 2024. The top OFD apps in India are Zomato, Swiggy, UberEats, Foodpanda, Dominoes, Pizza Hut Delivery, and McDelivery among others.

Customer loyalty towards OFD apps is important. Restaurants or food chains doing business through the online platform are paying great attention to customer loyalty towards their business. Previous studies have found the need for developing e-loyalty and the indicators behind it. Among all the indicators of loyalty, literature found that the development of e-loyalty is mainly based on e-trust (Reichheld & Schefter, 2000; Wilis & Nurwulandari, 2020) and e-satisfaction (Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003; Al-Khayyal et al., 2020; Wilis & Nurwulandari, 2020) of customers towards e-commerce. These two factors play a role in building e-loyalty (Kim et al., 2009; Anderson, 2011; Fang et al., 2011; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2016; Wilis & Nurwulandari, 2020; Ghali, 2021). Scholars have identified the influence of both e-trust and e-satisfaction on e-loyalty separately in relation to e-commerce sites. Although many studies have focused on service quality and loyalty towards e-commerce in various countries, only a few have focused on OFD apps. Abou-Shouk and Khalifa (2017), Suhartanto et al. (2019), and Yusra and Agus (2020) stated there was a need to understand these variables thoroughly. In the growing technological world, the e-commerce business is growing exponentially in every sector. Similarly, OFD sites are also growing over time (Kedah et al., 2015; Yeo

et al., 2017; Das, 2018; Gupta, 2019) but surprisingly there is a lack of relevant literature to understand the behaviour of customers towards these apps/websites concerning their services and loyalty formation. Some previous studies (Yeo et al., 2017; Kaya et al., 2019; Tech, 2020) reported that e-service quality substantially affects the customer purchasing experience in the restaurant and OFD context. Despite the importance of e-service quality, there is a lack of studies that address the impact of e-service quality on customer e-loyalty, especially in OFD services. This study is the first, to the best of the current authors' knowledge, to examine the impact of the e-service quality of OFD apps on the e-loyalty of customers in India. Its main aim was to examine the serial/sequential mediation effect of e-trust and e-satisfaction on e-service quality and e-loyalty which was previously studied separately. This research's used e-trust and e-satisfaction as a mediator like some earlier studies (Lewin, 2009; Liao, 2012; Giao et al., 2020; Haq & Awan, 2020; Quan et al., 2020). However, exploring serial mediation of e-trust and e-satisfaction is a unique contribution, namely in building customer e-loyalty in the context of OFD business. These two mediating variables (e-trust and e-satisfaction) play a very important role in predicting e-loyalty (Kim et al., 2009; Anderson, 2011; Fang et al., 2011; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2016; Wilis & Nurwulandari, 2020; Ghali, 2021). The findings of this study suggested potential avenues for businesses dealing in OFD to strengthen their strategic decisions to focus on their market growth by building e-loyalty among their customers.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

E-Service Quality

It is easy to assess product quality due to its special features but it is difficult to access the quality of service for a customer. Generally speaking, service quality is defined as a comparison of perceived expectation from a service and its actual performance (Choudhury, 2013). Based on this, Parasuraman et al., (1988) proposed a SERVQUAL model to measure service quality with five dimensions, namely reliability, tangibles, responsiveness, empathy, and assurance. As technology replaced human interaction, it became very important to study the technical interface of website quality in the virtual environment. This study focused on OFD apps and therefore, e-service quality was used. Electronic or e-service quality refers to the efficiency, effectiveness, and performance of a website to facilitate in shopping and easy delivery process (Zeithaml et al., 2002; George & Kumar, 2014). It leads to greater satisfaction of customer needs without physical interaction with them so they have to rely on online technology while making online transactions (Zeithaml et al., 2002). In this study, modified SERVQUAL

model as per Parasuraman's (2005) E-S-QUAL having four dimensions: efficiency, requirement fulfilment, system availability, and privacy and security, were used to assess the e-service quality of OFD apps/websites.

E-Service Quality and E-Loyalty

In today's competitive environment, the key to the success of a business is its loyal customer base. Loyalty is a deep commitment by customers for repeat purchase of goods and services from the same seller despite situational influences and marketing efforts (Oliver, 1999). E-loyalty is an expansion of that term involving technology for online business, and it can be defined as a favourable consumer attitude and repeat consumer satisfaction shopping through an e-commerce platform (Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003; Hur et al. 2011; Quan et al., 2020; Suariedewi & Suprapti, 2020). Abou-Shouk and Khalifa (2017) and Kim et al. (2009) defined e-loyalty as the loyalty of customers towards the online app/website showing their interest in revisiting the app and initiating transactions as well as recommending it to others. The current study focuses on OFD apps/websites, and hence the loyalty of customers can be described as the commitment of consumers towards OFD apps. Scholars (Wolfinbarger & Gilly, 2003; Chang et al., 2009; Tsai et al., 2014; Iqbal et al., 2018; Suariedewi & Suprapti, 2020; Wilis & Nurwulandari 2020; Azhar et al., 2021) found a positive significant effect of e-service quality on consumer loyalty. Previous studies (Kim et al., 2009; Suhartanto et al., 2018) confirmed that loyal customers are more likely to engage in repeat purchase compared with new customers. There is a need to provide quality service to consumers to generate loyalty among them. Amin (2016) and Kaya et al. (2019) stated that in online business, a high level of e-service quality is directly proportional to higher customer retention. Customers using OFD apps tend to switch behaviour due to ease of information and service features among others. Therefore, in OFD services, there is a great need to enhance the quality and reliability of services. Thus, the shopping done from OFD apps will generate customer loyalty if the service provided is aligned to their expectations, which include online processing systems and easy delivery systems. (Kedah et al., 2015; Yeo et al., 2017; Khan et al., 2019). Therefore, the current study formulates the following hypothesis:

H1: E-service quality has a positive significant effect on customer e-loyalty towards OFD apps/websites.

E-Trust as a Mediator

Trust between two parties is very important to initiate any business transaction. In the context of e-commerce, this is known as e-trust. E-trust is a set of beliefs and

expectations of customers or attitudes of consumers regarding the features related to the trust of the seller or to accept he susceptibilities during the online transaction from the seller (Gefen et al., 2003). Various researchers have analysed trust as a critical factor for building a relationship between buyers and sellers (Singh & Sirdeshmukh, 2000; Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002; Verhoef et al., 2002; Baskara & Hariyadi, 2014). The key to the success of e-trust is if the seller can provide accurate and clear information to consumers which helps to generate trust in the former. However, any decline in e-trust can also lead to a decline in consumer buying interest. The quality of a website in influencing the level of e-trust is important. Many researchers have examined the mediation effect of e-trust on the quality of a website and consumers' buying intention from the online platform (Rostika, 2011; Chang et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2015). Similarly, Lien et al. (2014) and Suariedewi and Suprapti (2020) stated that service quality has a positive impact on customer trust. Online customers are more sensitive in terms of revealing their personal information. Therefore, online transactions can only happen between trusted parties. A consumer will be more comfortable shopping with a trusted e-commerce platform. Kim et al. (2009) and Wilis and Nurwulandari (2020) documented that e-trust is an important factor to generate e-loyalty. Giao et al. (2020) found the mediating role of e-trust between service quality and loyalty. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: E-trust significantly mediates the relationship between e-service quality and e-loyalty of customers towards OFD apps/websites.

E-Satisfaction as a Mediator

E-satisfaction can be defined as the satisfaction of consumers with prior shopping experiences generated with an online business (Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003). According to Kim et al. (2009), e-satisfaction can also be termed as a sum of consumer satisfaction attained on every online transaction and experience to consume the goods and services purchased from online platforms. They showed e-service quality has a positive effect on e-satisfaction. Wolfinbarger and Gilly (2003) and Chang et al. (2009) found e-service quality can increase customer satisfaction and Chen et al. (2013) stated that e-service quality showed a positive effect on customer e-satisfaction and e-loyalty towards online business. Scholars (Jeon & Jeong, 2017; Goutam & Gopalakrishna, 2018; Khan et al., 2019; Al-Khayyal et al., 2020) found that better service quality provided to customers will generate a high level of satisfaction among them. Customer satisfaction is an important aspect because a satisfied customer provides various benefits to the business-like loyalty, customer retention, forming positive word-of-mouth that will enhance the growth of the online business. Similarly, Anderson and

Srinivasan (2003) and Zeithaml et al. (1996) documented that a satisfied customer will repurchase and recommend the business to others. Anderson (2011), Al-Khayyal et al. (2020), and Wilis and Nurwulandari (2020) also found the positive relationship between e-satisfaction and e-loyalty and they also pointed to e-service quality having a positive effect on e-satisfaction and thus, a significant effect on e-loyalty through e-satisfaction (Lewin, 2009; Liao, 2012; Giao et al., 2020; Haq & Awan, 2020; Quan et al., 2020). Based on previous literature, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: E-satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between e-service quality and e-loyalty of customers towards OFD apps/websites.

Serial/Sequential Mediation

The current study proposed that service quality, e-trust, and e-satisfaction play a great role in building e-loyalty towards OFD apps. Previous studies have shown that the service quality of e-commerce sites has a positive impact on generating trust among customers. Greater trust in the company can lead to enhanced customer satisfaction which may increase the level of loyalty among them towards the company (Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003; Zeithaml et al., 1996; Suariedewi & Suprapti, 2020). Ghali (2021) found that e-trust and e-satisfaction stimulate e-loyalty. When the customers are offered excellent service quality, it leads to a high level of trust towards business (Lien et al., 2014; Baskara & Hariyadi, 2014; Suariedewi & Suprapti, 2020). Security about personal information and payment system is the main issue in online business. Proper security given to customers about their database will build their trust in the company (Singh & Sirdeshmukh, 2000; Alam et al., 2016). A customer having high trust in e-commerce will be more satisfied with the services provided (Jimenez et al., 2016; Suariedewi & Suprapti, 2020; Wilis & Nurwulandari, 2020). Hence, trust leads to greater customer satisfaction. It is found that trust is the predictor of e-satisfaction in e-commerce (Jin & Park, 2006). In the online business, trust can be the base for retaining customers on a long-term basis by providing them quality services to satisfy their needs (Berraies et al., 2015; Wilis & Nurwulandari, 2020). Anderson (2011), Al-Khayyal et al. (2020), and Wilis and Nurwulandari (2020) found a positive relationship between e-satisfaction and e-loyalty. According to Fang et al. (2011), a satisfied customer will interact more with the site, recommend it to others and become a loyal customer in the future. Those customers who have trust in business and are satisfied with the services will become loyal to the company (Ghali, 2021). In this study, building a trustworthy relationship with customers is very important to maintain their loyalty towards OFD apps/websites. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H4: E-trust and e-satisfaction serially mediate the relationship between e-service quality and e-loyalty of customers towards OFD apps/ websites.

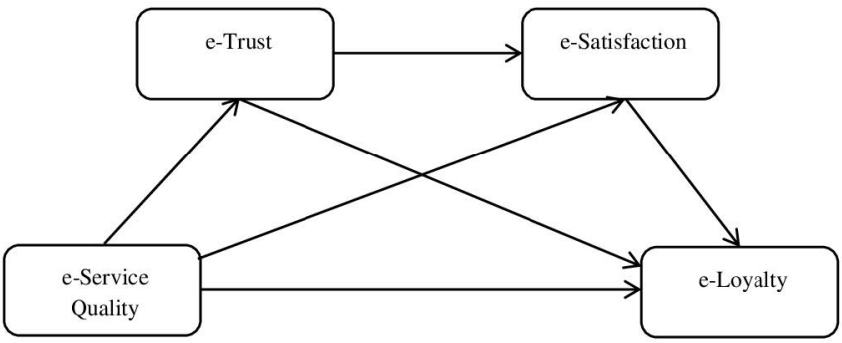

Figure 1. Conceptual framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Participants

Selected consumers from north India who use OFD apps were the research participants of this study. Convenience sampling, part of the non-probability sampling technique, was used to collect data since the sampling frame was anyone using OFD app. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to 300 participants electronically through Google Form and particular links shared via emails and social media platforms. A total of 285 questionnaires were returned and only 261 were found to be suitable for data analysis. Data was collected between March and April 2021. The "ten times rule" was used to determine the minimum sample size from the largest number of structural paths (Richter et al., 2016). In addition, the reasonable or minimum sample size to test the model using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was between 100 and 150 samples (Rezaei, 2015). Other researchers have noted favourably the effect of larger sample sizes to give higher accuracy (Delice, 2010).

Measurement Instrument

A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect the data. E-service quality of OFD apps/websites was measured by 12 items adapted from the modified E-S-QUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 2005). The item: "The OFD app/website it easy to find what I need" measured the trust level of customers in online food ordering apps/websites, and hence a scale was adopted from (Ribbink et al., 2004). The item: "I am OK to provide personal information to the OFD app/website" assessed e-satisfaction of participants, and hence, a scale developed by McKinney et al. (2002) and Anderson and Srinivasan (2003) was employed. The sample item: "I am satisfied with OFD app/website's features" was measured with 5 items of a scale adapted from Anderson and Srinivasan (2003) and Zeithaml et al. (1996). This was aimed at determining their e-loyalty towards the app. The sample item "In future years, I would still often purchase from OFD app/website" was assessed on a five-points Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). All the scales have been validated in various previous studies.

Factor analysis with varimax rotation was applied to re-check the suitability of the scale. Factor loading of two items from the e-service quality scale and one item from the e-loyalty scale was below 0.50 (minimum prescribed limit), so they were removed from further analysis. Table 1 shows the Measure of Sampling Adequacy Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. KMO value greater than 0.8 which meant the sample for the study was adequate. Bartlett's test shows a p-value < 0.001, meaning that factors that form the variable are significantly satisfactory.

Table 1
KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	0.895
Approx. Chi-Square	3848.413
Df	276
Sig.	0.000

Common Method Bias Testing

The current study used self-reported data collected through a survey questionnaire, which meant a potential for a common method bias (CMB) problem as each participant responds to a survey. Therefore, the current study adopted Harman's Single factor test as it is the most widely used test to assess CMB. In the study, the variance explained was calculated at 33.621%, less than the 50% criterion

suggested by Harman (1976). Statistical results showed that CMB was not a concern in the current study.

DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data was coded and saved in SPSS version 23 and SmartPLS 3 was used to examine the proposed hypotheses and structural model (Ringle et al., 2015). The SPSS was used to find out the demographic results and factor analysis was performed to check the dimensionality of scale items for this study Hair et al. (2010). SmartPLS was used to analyse the measurement model by applying confirmatory factor analysis using variance-based PLS. The PLS enables a researcher to assess latent constructs using a small and medium sample size and non-normality distributed data (Ali et al., 2018). The PLS-SEM is a recommended technique to analyse serial mediation and path coefficients in the structural model (Hair et al., 2016). However, SEM analysed in analysis of moment structures (AMOS) does not show the specific indirect effects for serial mediation analysis. The PLS-SEM as a multivariate technique is more suitable for exploratory or extension-based studies (Sarstedt et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2019). The PLS-SEM is further believed to be an appropriate data analysis technique as (i) the current study proposed to examine the predictive relationship between independent and dependent variables, and (ii) new constructs, and structural paths were added as serial mediators into the conceptual model.

RESULTS

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 2 shows the demographic profile of participants based on their gender, marital status, age, occupation, and disposable income.

Table 3 shows the mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis, and inter-correlation of the variables. The values depict that all the variables are positively significantly correlated with each other.

Table 2
Demographic profile of respondents

Demographic variables	Categories	Frequency	Valid percentage
Gender	Male	127	48.7
	Female	134	51.3
Marital Status	Married	121	46.4
	Single	140	53.6
Age	Below 20	65	24.9
	20–30	134	51.3
	30–40	58	22.2
	40–50	4	1.5
Occupation	Student	122	46.7
	Working	93	35.6
	Non-working	46	17.6
Disposable Income	Below 10K	86	33.0
	10–20K	114	43.7
	20–30K	51	19.5
	30–40K	8	3.1
	40–50K	2	0.8

Table 3
Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations among variables

No.	Variables	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	1	2	3
1.	e-service quality	3.52	0.58	0.049	1.133			
2.	e-trust	3.58	0.56	–0.578	1.40	0.367**		
3.	e-satisfaction	3.84	0.46	–0.345	1.37	0.355**	0.507**	
4.	e-loyalty	3.77	0.53	0.227	1.527	0.333**	0.431**	0.558**

Note: N = 261, **$p < 0.01$

Measurement of Model Analysis

To assess the measurement model, first, the study conducted confirmatory factor analysis with a cut-off value of factor loadings 0.50 (Kline, 2015). Second, the inter-item reliability of items was measured through Cronbach's alpha with a cut-off value of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Thirdly, average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability were measured to examine the convergent validity of the study by maintaining a threshold of 0.50 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988) and 0.70 (Gefen et al., 2000; Hair et al., 2010), respectively. Table 4 presents the results of the measurement model.

Table 4
Measurement model (items loading, reliability, and convergent validity)

Variables	Items	Loadings	AVE	CR	rho_A	Cronbach's alpha
e-service quality	EFF_1	0.749	0.595	0.936	0.934	0.925
	EFF_2	0.789				
	EFF_3	0.702				
	F_1	0.802				
	F_2	0.789				
	P_1	0.805				
	P_2	0.748				
	P_3	0.749				
	SA_1	0.767				
	SA_2	0.804				
e-trust	eT1	0.803	0.681	0.895	0.881	0.846
	eT2	0.820				
	eT3	0.804				
	eT4	0.872				
e-satisfaction	eS1	0.830	0.639	0.914	0.896	0.887
	eS2	0.787				
	eS3	0.785				
	eS4	0.818				
	eS5	0.820				
	eS6	0.754				
e-loyalty	eL1	0.816	0.664	0.883	0.833	0.831
	eL2	0.825				
	eL3	0.794				
	eL4	0.823				

Source: SmartPLS output

The results of discriminant validity was checked using heterotrait-monotrait ratio of the correlations (HTMT) method (Henseler et al., 2015) with a value of not more than 0.85 (Kline, 2005). Table 5 shows that all HTMT values met the given criteria of < 0.85.

Table 5
Discriminant validity (HTMT)

Variables	e-SQ	e-T	e-S	e-L
e-service quality				
e-trust	0.203			
e-satisfaction	0.394	0.581		
e-loyalty	0.378	0.477	0.657	

Note: HTMT = Heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations; e-SQ = e-Service Quality; e-T = e-Trust; e-S = e-Satisfaction; e-L = e-Loyalty

Source: SmartPLS output

Structural Model Analysis

The results of the PLS-SEM algorithm and the bootstrap procedure included the direct, the total indirect effect, and the specific indirect effects. Following the satisfactory results of the measurement model, the next step was to assess the structured model through PLS-SEM. Before the model assessment, the collinearity issue of constructs was checked. As shown in Table 6, the variance inflation factor (VIF) value of variables is less than 2.0, indicating no issue of collinearity by maintaining a threshold of 5.0 (Ringle et al., 2015).

Table 6
Checking of collinearity issues

Construct	VIF
e-service quality	1.157
e-satisfaction	1.557
e-trust	1.396

Succeeding the collinearity test, 5,000 bootstrapping procedure was used for assessing path coefficients. The study used the Normed Fit Index (NFI) and standardised root-mean-square residual (SRMR) to check if the model fit the study. The results showed that SRMR value 0.075 (SRMR < 0.08) and NFI value 0.902 (NFI > 0.9) indicating the goodness of model fit (Hair et al., 2016). In addition to this, the explanatory power of the model was examined through the coefficient of determination (R^2). As shown in Table 7, all R^2 values constructs were above the suggested cut-off value 0.10 (Falk & Miller, 1992).

Table 7
The explanatory power of the model

Variables	R-Square (R^2)
e-trust	0.236
e-satisfaction	0.358
e-loyalty	0.363

Further, the path coefficients were assessed to check the proposed hypotheses. Path coefficients with direct effects of variables are described in Table 8 showing all values of *t*-statistics were more than 2.0 and statically significant indicating the acceptance of hypotheses predicting the direct impact of independent variables on dependent variables. Table 9 also describes the indirect effect of the tested variables. Hypothesis 1 predicted the positive impact of e-service quality on e-loyalty and it was supported by the results of both direct and indirect effects shown in Tables 8 and 9. The results revealed that along with the positive significant direct effect of e-service quality on e-loyalty ($t = 2.446$, $p < 0.05$), the indirect effect ($t = 4.754$, $p < 0.05$) was also statistically significant. However, the *t*-value in indirect effect is increased revealing that e-trust and e-satisfaction strengthened the effect of e-service quality on e-loyalty. Table 9 shows all the direct and indirect effects of variables. Results are also shown in Figure 2.

Table 8
Path coefficients with direct effects

	Direct effect			Indirect effect		
Relationships	Beta coefficient	*t*-statistics	*p*-values	Beta coefficient	*t*-statistics	*p*-values
e-SQ → e-L	0.151	2.446	0.014	0.190	4.754	0.000
e-SQ → e-T	0.189	2.636	0.008			
e-SQ → e-S	0.275	5.103	0.000	0.091	2.666	0.008
e-T → e-L	0.147	2.689	0.007	0.209	5.983	0.000
e-T → e-S	0.482	10.950	0.000			
e-S → e-L	0.437	6.946	0.000			

Note: e-SQ = e-service quality; e-T = e-trust; e-S = e-satisfaction; e-L = e-loyalty

Source: SmartPLS output

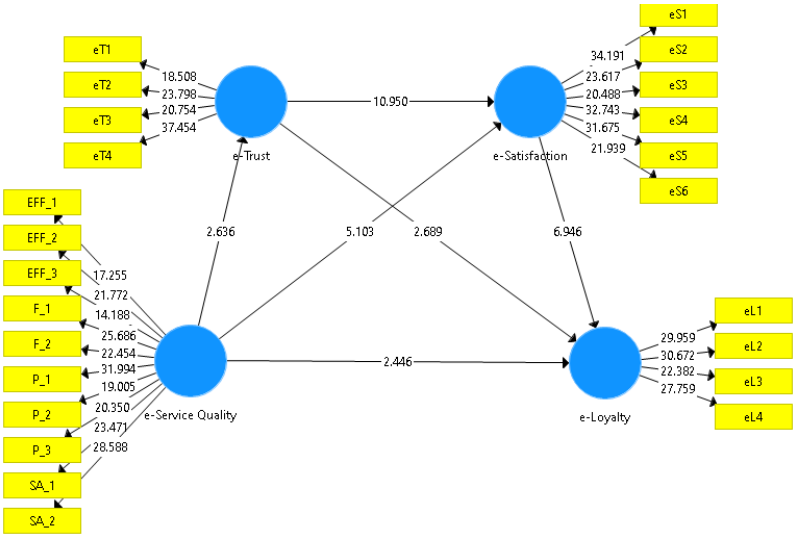

Figure 2. Structural model

Serial Mediation

Table 9 shows the specific indirect effects of serial mediation of the variables which explains the relationship between e-service quality and e-loyalty through both e-trust and e-satisfaction. Simple mediation analysis predicted in hypotheses 2 and 3 was also supported by the results that both e-trust ($t = 2.772$, $p = < 0.05$) and e-satisfaction ($t = 4.229$, $p = < 0.00$) and mediating the relationship of e-service quality and e-loyalty of customers towards OFD apps/websites. The results of serial mediation predicted in hypothesis 4 were also significant ($t = 2.394$, $p = < 0.05$) leading to the acceptance of the hypothesis. As expected all the results were found to be statistically significant and therefore, all hypotheses were accepted.

Table 9
Specific indirect effects

Relationships	H	Original sample	*t*-statistics	*p*-values	Decision
e-SQ → e-L	H1	0.152	4.754	0.000	Accepted
e-SQ → e-T → e-L	H2	0.028	2.772	0.005	Accepted
e-SQ → e-S → e-L	H3	0.121	4.229	0.000	Accepted
e-SQ → e-T → e-S → e-L	H4	0.040	2.394	0.017	Accepted

Note: e-SQ = e-service quality; e-T = e-trust; e-S = e-satisfaction; e-L = e-loyalty

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The current study was an attempt to scrutinise the influence of e-service quality on the e-loyalty of customers towards OFD apps/websites. Although the demand for OFD is growing, the role of e-service quality to build e-loyalty among customers has not been explored thoroughly in India. The results of the present study reveal some important findings.

The study examined the direct and indirect effect of the e-service quality of OFD apps/websites on customer loyalty. It found that e-service quality is an important factor influencing the loyalty of customers towards OFD apps/websites. The results suggested that the e-service quality of OFD apps has a positive significant impact on customer e-loyalty consistent with the findings of earlier studies (Wolfinbarger & Gilly, 2003; Chang et al., 2009; Tsai et al., 2014; Iqbal et al., 2018; Suariedewi & Suprapti, 2020; Wilis & Nurwulandari, 2020; Azhar et al., 2021). Both direct and indirect effects of e-service quality was found to be statistically significant. The finding pointed to efficient operations of the app/website, fulfilment of needs, system availability and privacy, and security at the site play a great role to influence the customers to revisit the site.

The study also examined the role of e-trust and e-satisfaction as mediators. As expected the results were found to be positively significant. Both direct and indirect effect of e-service quality was found to be statistically significant. However, the indirect effect was more than the direct effect, indicating the role of e-trust and e-satisfaction in building e-loyalty among customers. The customers needed to have trust in the app and must be satisfied with the services provided by the apps. The study contributes to existing literature on the (Singh & Sirdeshmukh, 2000; Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003; Zeithaml et al., 1996; Alam et al., 2017) relationship between e-trust and e-satisfaction with e-service quality and e-loyalty. The study predicted the mediation effect of e-trust and the results showed the significant effect of e-trust as a mediator between e-service quality and e-loyalty. The results echoed Wang et al. (2015) and Wilis and Nurwulandari (2020). This explains that the quality of the services provided to customers helps in building customer trust and faith in the online site. A high level of e-trust among customers will influence the loyalty of customers to use OFD apps again and recommend them to others. This proves customer trust in services offered by the OFD app affects the loyalty of customers towards the app. Similarly, the study predicted the role of e-satisfaction as a mediator in influence the impact of e-service quality on the e-loyalty of OFD apps and the results confirmed this association. This is supported by earlier studies (Kim et al., 2009; Lewin, 2009; Liao, 2012; Giao et al., 2020; Haq & Awan, 2020; Quan et al., 2020) namely the importance of e-satisfaction as a mediator in the above

relationship. Consistent with previous studies, this study found a significant effect of e-satisfaction, namely the more satisfied the customer is with services offered by the OFD app, the greater their loyalty to it and desire to use the app again. It can be said that with the increase in the level of online service provided, there will be a boost in the satisfaction level of customers to ultimately build greater loyalty towards the app. Further, the results revealed that both the variables were found to be statistically significant in influencing the impact of e-service quality on e-loyalty towards OFD apps/websites. This finding is very important as no previous study has examined this issue. In short, the higher the level of online services provided to customers, the higher will be their trust in the app (Lien et al., 2014; Suariedewi & Suprapti, 2020). It will raise their level of satisfaction (Jimenez et al., 2016; Suariedewi & Suprapti, 2020; Wilis & Nurwulandari, 2020), which will ultimately lead to generation of customer e-loyalty (Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003; Anderson, 2011; Zeithaml et al., 1996; Ghali, 2021). The study therefore, showed that e-trust and e-satisfaction strengthened the relationship between e-service quality and e-loyalty.

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the existing literature by listing the main indicators for the success of OFD apps in India. First, it discussed the important elements for measuring the service quality of OFD apps. Efficient operations, system availability, requirement fulfilment, and privacy were found to be the main element for measuring the quality of services provided by OFD apps. Another focus of the study was to examine the loyalty of customers through their e-trust and e-satisfaction on OFD apps. This study offers an important contribution by validating the sequential mediation role of both e-trust and e-satisfaction between e-service quality and e-loyalty. Indeed, previous studies have examined these variables in isolation but not simultaneously on OFD apps. In addition, the model tested in this study expanded the existing knowledge that quality (Tsai et al., 2014; Iqbal et al., 2018; Suariedewi & Suprapti, 2020; Wilis & Nurwulandari, 2020; Azhar et al., 2021), trust (Rostika, 2011; Kim & Lennon, 2013; Chang et al., 2014; Wilis & Nurwulandari, 2020) and satisfaction (Kim et al., 2009; Lewin, 2009; Liao, 2012; Giao et al., 2020; Haq & Awan, 2020; Quan et al., 2020) are the building blocks of online loyalty in the context of OFD services.

Practical Implications

The study also provides practical and managerial implications about OFD apps/ websites. E-service quality was found to be an important element in determining customer e-loyalty towards OFD apps. This finding can be helpful to restaurants offering OFD services to improve their e-services for business growth. It explains that excellent e-service quality plays an essential role in the success of the online business. In order to increase the level of trust of the customers, complete information, easy access, easy ordering process, and privacy and safety to their personal information and payment system should be provided to customers. The OFD apps should be customer friendly and easy to operate. This will maximise their level of satisfaction and hence their loyalty towards the app. The study found that when customers are given quality services at an online platform, it influences them to engage in repeat purchase at that particular site.

Limitations And Scope For Future Research

This study contributes to literature on e-service quality and e-loyalty towards OFD apps. However, there are some limitations. First, a cross-sectional approach was adopted to obtain data, which meant the researchers were unable to capture the responses of customers with the change of time. Therefore, a longitudinal study can be adopted by future studies to represent the changes in the relationship of variables more accurately across a period. Second, this study was based on limited data set focusing on north region of India, and thus the generalisability of the study is limited. This can be tackled by replicating the model with a larger sample size in other regions. Third, this study has not adopted any well-established theoretical model of user acceptance of technology, e.g. Technology Acceptance Model (Davis et al., 1989). Based on earlier studies, researchers have come up with a conceptual framework, which might not be applicable in different countries, due to language and cultural differences. Future work can use Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as the base model and studying the role of consumer attitude towards purchase decisions made on social media. Finally, the study identified only e-service quality as an influencing variable on other variables. Future research can also examine food quality, involvement, and e-word of mouth among others.

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to provide an understanding of the e-service quality of OFD apps in India. It examined the role of e-trust and e-satisfaction in shaping the loyalty of customers towards OFD apps. It was found e-service quality is an important determinant influencing the behaviour of customers using OFD apps. The results of mediation analysis suggested that both e-trust and e-satisfaction play a very important role in strengthening the relationship between e-service quality and e-loyalty. Quality service to customers help to build their trust and increase their level of satisfaction and e-loyalty. These findings can be very helpful for marketers.

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