Service Quality, Price, and Electronic Word of Mouth as Determinants of Gojek Customer Satisfaction in Surabaya

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ABSTRACT
Customer satisfaction is a central issue in app-based transportation services because users can easily compare service performance, prices, and online reviews across platforms. This study examines the effects of service quality, price, and electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) on Gojek customer satisfaction in Surabaya. A quantitative explanatory design was employed using a structured questionnaire distributed to 100 Gojek users who had experience using online motorcycle taxi services in Surabaya. The data were analyzed using validity and reliability tests, classical assumption testing, multiple linear regression, t-test, F-test, coefficient of determination, and Spearman correlation as a non-parametric supporting analysis. The findings show that service quality, price, and e-WOM have positive and significant effects on customer satisfaction. The regression model explains 84.2% of the variation in customer satisfaction, with price emerging as the strongest predictor. These results indicate that Gojek customer satisfaction depends not only on operational service performance but also on perceived price fairness and the credibility of digital consumer reviews.

***Keywords**: Service quality, price, electronic word of mouth, customer satisfaction, Gojek.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has changed the structure of service consumption in Indonesia, particularly in urban transportation. Mobile applications make transportation services more accessible, measurable, and comparable because consumers can order services, evaluate drivers, monitor prices, and share experiences through digital platforms. In this setting, online transportation providers compete not only through service availability but also through service consistency, perceived value, and reputation formed by user-generated reviews.

Gojek is one of the most widely recognized online transportation platforms in Indonesia. The thesis data show that Gojek maintained a strong position in the online transportation category during 2021-2025. However, a strong brand position does not automatically guarantee customer satisfaction. In highly competitive digital service markets, customers may still experience delayed pick-ups, mismatches between pick-up points and actual locations, unclear additional fees, application disruptions, or inconsistent driver behavior. These experiences may reduce perceived satisfaction even when the brand remains dominant.

Customer satisfaction refers to the evaluation that customers make after comparing expected and perceived service performance. The expectation-disconfirmation perspective explains that satisfaction is formed when perceived performance meets or exceeds prior expectations (Oliver, 1980). In service marketing, satisfaction is especially important because the product is experienced during the interaction process, and unfavorable experiences are difficult to reverse. For online motorcycle taxi services, satisfaction may be shaped by the convenience of the application, driver responsiveness, travel safety, punctuality, price transparency, and digital reputation.

Service quality has long been considered an important antecedent of satisfaction. The SERVQUAL perspective emphasizes reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles as dimensions that determine how customers evaluate service performance (Parasuraman et al., 1988). In app-based transportation, service quality is manifested through accurate pick-up, driver professionalism, route reliability, application usability, safety during the trip, and the provider's ability to respond to complaints. Ahmed et al. (2023) also highlight that customers' perceptions of service quality are closely related to satisfaction and loyalty evaluations.

Price is another critical factor because online transportation users are sensitive to fare changes and can compare prices among competing applications. Zeithaml (1988) argues that consumers evaluate price by comparing sacrifice

with perceived quality and benefits. In the Gojek context, a price that is affordable, transparent, competitive, and proportional to service benefits may strengthen customer satisfaction. Conversely, prices that are perceived as inconsistent, unclear, or not aligned with service performance can weaken satisfaction.

Electronic word of mouth is also increasingly relevant in digital service evaluation. Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) define e-WOM as consumer statements made available through the internet, while later digital marketing studies emphasize that review quality, review quantity, and review credibility influence how consumers evaluate a brand or service. For Gojek users, online reviews, ratings, comments, and recommendations can shape expectations before service use and reinforce evaluations after service use. Therefore, this study examines whether service quality, price, and e-WOM significantly influence Gojek customer satisfaction in Surabaya.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a quantitative explanatory approach to test causal relationships among variables. The independent variables were service quality (X1), price (X2), and e-WOM (X3), while the dependent variable was customer satisfaction (Y). The population consisted of Gojek users who had used online motorcycle taxi services in Surabaya. Because the exact population size was unknown, the sample size was determined using the Lemeshow formula with a 95% confidence level, a 0.5 population proportion estimate, and a 10% margin of error. The calculation produced a minimum sample of 96 respondents, which was rounded to 100 respondents for data collection.

Respondents were selected using purposive sampling. The criteria were: being a Gojek application user, having used Gojek online motorcycle taxi services, being at least 17 years old, having experience in evaluating service quality, price, and digital information about Gojek, and being willing to complete the questionnaire based on personal experience. Primary data were collected through a closed-ended questionnaire using a Likert scale, which allowed respondents' perceptions to be converted into numerical scores for statistical analysis.

Service quality was measured through tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Price was measured through affordability, price-quality suitability, price-benefit suitability, and price competitiveness. e-WOM was measured through intensity, valence of opinion, and content. Customer satisfaction was measured through expectation conformity, intention to reuse, and willingness to recommend. Data were analyzed using SPSS. The analysis included validity tests, reliability tests, normality and other diagnostic checks, Spearman correlation, multiple linear regression, t-tests, F-test, and coefficient of determination.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The respondent profile indicates that the sample was relevant to the study context. Of the 100 respondents, 56% were female and 44% were male. The largest age group was 21-25 years old (49%), followed by 17-20 years old (17%), 26-30 years old (13%), other age categories (11%), and 31-35 years old (10%). In terms of occupation, students dominated the sample (54%), followed by private employees (25%), other occupations (13%), entrepreneurs (5%), and civil servants (3%). Regarding usage frequency, 45% used Gojek occasionally, 25% frequently, 16% rarely, 9% very frequently, and 5% very rarely. This profile shows that the respondents were largely young, mobile, and digitally familiar consumers who were able to evaluate online transportation services based on actual experience.

The instrument test supported the adequacy of the measurement model. All questionnaire items were valid because the item-total correlation values exceeded the r-table value of 0.195. The reliability test also demonstrated strong internal consistency. Cronbach's Alpha was 0.912 for service quality, 0.931 for price, 0.846 for e-WOM, and 0.928 for customer satisfaction. These values indicate that the indicators used in this study consistently measured their respective constructs. This is important because service quality, price perception, e-WOM, and satisfaction are perceptual variables; therefore, the quality of the instrument strongly affects the credibility of the empirical findings.

The diagnostic analysis showed that the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test produced a significance value of 0.023, suggesting that the residuals were not perfectly normally distributed. However, visual inspection through histogram and P-P plot indicated that the residual pattern generally followed the expected distribution line. Considering the sample size of 100 respondents, the regression model remained interpretable, while Spearman correlation was also reported as a supporting non-parametric association test. The Spearman results showed positive and significant relationships between each independent variable and customer satisfaction, with rho values of 0.644 for service quality, 0.799 for price, and 0.703 for e-WOM, all at $p < 0.001$. These results provide preliminary evidence that improvements in the three predictors are associated with higher customer satisfaction.

Table 1. Summary of regression and supporting correlation results

Variable/Model	B	t/F	Sig.	Spearman rho	Decision
Service quality (X1)	0.375	t = 5.336	< 0.001	0.644	Supported
Price (X2)	0.468	t = 6.738	< 0.001	0.799	Supported
Electronic word of mouth (X3)	0.330	t = 2.615	0.010	0.703	Supported
Model summary	R = 0.918; R2 = 0.842; Adjusted R2 = 0.837	F = 170.388	< 0.001	-	Model significant

Source: Primary data processed, 2026.

The multiple regression equation obtained from the analysis is Y = 1.330 + 0.375X1 + 0.468X2 + 0.330X3. The positive coefficients indicate that service quality, price, and e-WOM move in the same direction as customer satisfaction. The coefficient of determination shows that the model explains 84.2% of the variance in customer satisfaction, while the remaining 15.8% may be explained by other factors outside the model, such as promotion, brand image, trust, application usability, perceived safety, loyalty, or competitor strategy. The high R-square indicates that the selected predictors are highly relevant for explaining Gojek customer satisfaction in the Surabaya context.

Service quality has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction (B = 0.375; t = 5.336; p < 0.001). This result means that better application usability, punctual pick-up, driver responsiveness, safety, and attention to customer needs are associated with higher satisfaction. From the SERVQUAL perspective, service quality is not limited to physical or technological attributes but also includes reliability, assurance, empathy, and responsiveness (Parasuraman et al., 1988). In online transportation, customers do not merely purchase a ride; they purchase a complete service process that starts from ordering, confirming the driver, waiting for pick-up, taking the trip, paying the fare, and evaluating the experience. A failure at any stage can reduce satisfaction.

The finding on service quality is consistent with Na'im and Wiyadi (2024), who found that service quality significantly influenced Gojek customer satisfaction, and with Sa'adah and Prapanca (2024), who showed that service quality contributed to satisfaction among Gojek users. The implication is that customer satisfaction in digital transportation is strongly experiential. Customers may tolerate occasional fare changes when the trip is safe, timely, and professional, but repeated service failures can weaken satisfaction even if the application remains popular. Therefore, Gojek should continuously manage driver service standards, improve location accuracy, maintain application stability, and accelerate complaint handling.

Price has the strongest positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction (B = 0.468; t = 6.738; p < 0.001), and the Spearman coefficient also shows the strongest relationship with satisfaction (rho = 0.799). This indicates that customers in Surabaya are highly sensitive to perceived price fairness. In app-based transportation, price is visible before the transaction and can be compared quickly with competing platforms. Consequently, customers evaluate not only whether the fare is low, but also whether the fare is reasonable relative to travel distance, service speed, safety, convenience, and additional fees. This supports Zeithaml's (1988) argument that price is part of perceived value because consumers compare monetary sacrifice with benefits received.

This result confirms Sa'adah and Prapanca (2024), who reported that price was a significant determinant of Gojek customer satisfaction. However, it differs from Na'im and Wiyadi (2024), who found that price was not always significant as a partial predictor. The difference may be explained by the characteristics of the present respondents, who were dominated by students and young users. This group may be more price-sensitive because online transportation is often used for routine mobility and because alternative platforms are easy to access. The dominance of price in this study suggests that fare transparency, promotional relevance, and proportionality between price and service benefits are crucial for maintaining satisfaction.

Electronic word of mouth also has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction (B = 0.330; t = 2.615; p = 0.010). This finding demonstrates that digital reviews, ratings, comments, and recommendations influence customer evaluations. e-WOM can reduce perceived risk because consumers often rely on other users' experiences when judging whether a service is safe, reliable, and worth using. Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) argue that online opinion platforms allow consumers to articulate experiences and influence other consumers beyond face-to-face communication. In the Gojek context, positive reviews can strengthen confidence, while negative reviews may create doubt before and after service use.

The effect of e-WOM is consistent with Itasari et al. (2020), who found that e-WOM and service quality influenced customer satisfaction, and it is also aligned with studies emphasizing the role of digital communication in purchase and service decisions (Immanuel & Merlin, 2022; Habibatullah et al., 2025). Nevertheless, the coefficient of e-WOM is smaller than the coefficients of price and service quality. This suggests that online opinions matter, but customer satisfaction is still more strongly determined by the direct experience of paying for and receiving the service. In other words, e-WOM may shape expectations and reinforce perceptions, but actual service performance and price fairness remain more decisive in forming satisfaction.

The simultaneous test confirms that service quality, price, and e-WOM jointly affect Gojek customer satisfaction ($F = 170.388$; $p < 0.001$). This result shows that satisfaction should be managed as an integrated outcome rather than as the result of a single factor. A technically reliable service without transparent pricing may still produce dissatisfaction. Similarly, low prices without safe and responsive service may not sustain satisfaction. Positive online reviews may attract and reassure customers, but they cannot fully compensate for poor service experiences. Therefore, the three variables should be understood as mutually reinforcing components of customer value creation.

Theoretically, the findings extend the expectation-disconfirmation view of satisfaction by showing that expectations in digital transportation are formed through three connected sources: prior service experience, perceived price fairness, and online social information. Practically, the results suggest that Gojek should prioritize price fairness and service reliability while also managing digital reputation. Price fairness can be strengthened through clearer fare breakdowns, consistent information about dynamic pricing, and promotional policies that do not confuse customers. Service quality can be improved through driver training, safety monitoring, application stability, and faster problem resolution. e-WOM can be strengthened by encouraging satisfied customers to share experiences and by responding constructively to negative reviews.

The relatively high explanatory power of the model also needs to be read in relation to the nature of app-based transportation services. Unlike many conventional services, Gojek customers interact with both the digital interface and the driver partner. The application provides information, price estimation, ordering convenience, and payment support, while the driver provides the human component of the service. Satisfaction therefore emerges from the integration of technology-mediated convenience and interpersonal service quality. This explains why service quality remains significant even when price is the dominant variable.

From a managerial perspective, the result on price should be interpreted through the concept of perceived value rather than nominal price alone. Customers may accept higher fares during peak demand if the fare is clearly explained, if pick-up is fast, and if the trip is safe and comfortable. However, dissatisfaction can arise when customers perceive that the fare increase is not accompanied by better service or when additional fees are not clearly understood. Thus, price communication becomes as important as price level. Transparent fare components, clearer information about dynamic pricing, and consistent promotional mechanisms can reduce uncertainty and strengthen satisfaction.

The findings also indicate that e-WOM should not be treated merely as promotional noise. Online reviews and ratings function as social evidence that helps customers evaluate the reliability of a service whose quality cannot be fully assessed before use. In service industries, information asymmetry is common because customers only know the actual quality after the service is completed. e-WOM helps reduce this asymmetry by allowing potential and current users to learn from other users' experiences. Therefore, the company needs to monitor review patterns, identify recurring complaints, and convert digital feedback into operational improvement.

Another important point is the interaction between e-WOM and service quality. Positive e-WOM is more sustainable when it is supported by actual service performance. If the service experience is inconsistent, digital reviews may become negative and spread quickly. Conversely, when drivers are punctual, polite, and responsive, satisfied customers are more likely to provide favorable ratings or recommendations. This indicates that reputation management should begin with the improvement of operational quality. Digital communication can amplify satisfaction, but it cannot replace service reliability.

The findings also provide a useful explanation for the profile of young and student respondents in this study. Young consumers are generally accustomed to comparing applications, reading online reviews, and responding quickly to price changes. Their satisfaction is therefore shaped by a combination of economic rationality and digital information behavior. For this segment, affordability and value for money may be particularly important because many of them use online transportation for education, work, and daily mobility. At the same time, their familiarity with digital platforms makes e-WOM a relevant source of confirmation.

Theoretically, the study supports the argument that customer satisfaction in digital services is multidimensional. The expectation-disconfirmation model emphasizes the comparison between expectation and perceived performance (Oliver, 1980), while SERVQUAL emphasizes performance quality across several service dimensions (Parasuraman

et al., 1988). The present results connect these perspectives with perceived value and e-WOM. Customers evaluate whether the service meets expectations, whether the price is worth the benefits, and whether online social information confirms their own experience. Thus, satisfaction in online transportation is not a single-stage evaluation but a cumulative assessment that begins before ordering and continues after the trip.

For the online transportation industry, the results imply that competition cannot rely only on promotion or brand awareness. Sustainable satisfaction requires the alignment of three managerial areas. First, operations must ensure safety, punctuality, application stability, and driver professionalism. Second, pricing must be transparent, competitive, and proportional to service benefits. Third, digital reputation must be actively managed through review response, complaint resolution, and encouragement of authentic positive experiences. When these areas are aligned, customers are more likely to feel that the platform delivers consistent value.

Overall, the findings indicate that Gojek customer satisfaction in Surabaya is a value-based evaluation. Customers feel satisfied when they perceive that the service is reliable, the price is fair, and the digital reputation supports their confidence in using the service. The strongest role of price should not be interpreted as meaning that customers only seek cheap fares. Rather, customers expect the fare to be transparent and proportional to the benefits received. This interpretation is important for strategic decision making because sustainable satisfaction requires a balance between operational excellence, fair pricing, and credible digital communication.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that service quality, price, and e-WOM positively and significantly affect Gojek customer satisfaction in Surabaya, both partially and simultaneously. Among the three predictors, price is the strongest determinant, followed by service quality and e-WOM. The model explains a large proportion of customer satisfaction, indicating that the selected variables are highly relevant in the online transportation context.

The findings suggest that Gojek should maintain customer satisfaction by strengthening service reliability, driver professionalism, travel safety, application usability, and responsiveness to complaints. At the same time, the company should ensure that fares are transparent, competitive, and aligned with the benefits received by customers. Because e-WOM also affects satisfaction, Gojek should actively manage digital reputation through review monitoring, quick responses to complaints, and encouragement of positive customer experiences.

This study is limited to 100 respondents in Surabaya and focuses only on service quality, price, and e-WOM. Future studies may expand the sample, compare multiple cities or platforms, and include additional variables such as brand image, trust, perceived safety, promotion, application usability, and customer loyalty.

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