

The Factors of Customer Satisfaction Driving Purchase in Textile Business: The Case study of Denim Garments from Pakistan

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between determinants (Quality, Cost, Appearance, Lead time, and Flexibility) and bulk buyers' satisfaction while buying Denim products in Pakistan. The strategic objectives include the influences of various factors on the buying preferences, followed by recommendations for the management to further excel in Pakistan's garment industry. The sample size for present study is 75, which is 62.5% of the targeted population in Karachi. Moreover, researchers have used in-depth face-to-face open-ended interviews with 5 managers and matrix based semi-structured survey questionnaire as research instrument. Findings revealed that quality and cost have significantly strong relationship with customer's satisfaction whereas there is weak relationship between flexibility, appearance, and lead time and customer satisfaction. T-test confirmed the impact and correlation's significance revealed that P (value) for quality and cost is 0.153, thus $0.153 > 0.05$ means that these two variables are linked significantly with buyers' satisfaction. Moreover, the correlation between these variables is 0.86 therefore quality and cost are strong significantly linked with customer's satisfaction. Test also revealed that other determinants are not significantly linked with customer satisfaction.

Keywords: Bulk buyer's satisfaction, buying decision preferences, quality, price, appearance, garments

JEL Classification: L25, L29, M11, M19

1. Introduction

It is often perceived that the key component that drives any business to success is the customer satisfaction. The notion is frequently discussed through marketing and has been a measuring scale for companies to observe their product's performance and its capability to meet the consumer expectations (Alauddin, Tanvir and Mita, 2013). In global terms, it is often perceived as an indicator of company's performance. Due to the highly intense global competitive environment, consumer satisfaction can be a crucial element of differentiation, success and competitiveness. In Pakistan's garment industry, the companies are primarily focused on the fulfillment of the customer expectations, as negative reviews and ratings can lead to significant decline in company's sales as well as profitability. When the customer needs and desires are fulfilled, these contributes in enhancing the extent of consumer loyalty towards the brand, providing an outcome of sales boost of the company in Pakistan's industry as a whole, on the basis of the evidence that loyal customers incline to consume more products (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2007).

The customer satisfaction is perceived as a segment of an assessment conducted by the customer before the purchase (Suroto, Fanani and Nugroho, 2013). Sumaedi, Bakti and

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Metasari, (2011) have revealed several factors such as product quality, price, and its distribution which all has been witnessed to have an impact on the buyer's level of satisfaction. When a purchase product or service exceeds the level of expectation, once purchased by the customer, the customer is likely to have in mind, brand's positive perception.

Pakistan's foremost industries are apparel and textile. There has been a tremendous focus placed in recent years on the industry's productivity and product quality. These industries have contributed approximately 67% towards the export earnings and total of 46% in manufacturing revenues (TA, 2011). In Pakistan, the Denim garment has undergone through tremendous modification, where significant work has been done to enhance the Denim fabric's comfort extent as a garment along with its aesthetic aspects. With the apparent changes in the appearance and quality, Denim garment has demonstrated inclined sales (Memon, 2011). As per Islam, Khadem and Sayem (2012) Denim's appearance, quality, and its texture are some of the vital aspects in influencing customer's perception and satisfaction in the market apparel wear, which has presented an outcome in the form for influencing consumer purchase pronouncements.

For the present research, chosen industry is closely associated with the clothing sector precisely the Denim garments. The Denim garment has been acknowledged as one of Pakistan's leading in clothing sector, nationally as well as internationally (Memon, 2011).

1.1 Statement of Problem

In Pakistan's industry what are some of the critical determinants that enhances customer satisfaction and motivate bulk buyers to purchase Denim garments?

With the successful competition of the research, the researcher attempts to recognize and identify the outcome for the above stated statement. Through the identification of the solution researcher effectively address the vital aspects of the customer satisfaction that contributes to the procurement of Denim garments in Pakistan.

1.2 Significance of the study

The present research successful conclusion provides significant assistance to the industry's policy makers and managers. In addition, the study lends support to marketer in order to better comprehend the vital factors that drives the consumer's buying decision. Furthermore, the research provides industry's policy makers with reference to alter any strategies if the need arises. Moreover, it assists in the correspondence process to determine the customer's level of satisfaction through research's reviewed and documented information. Most importantly the present research is highly beneficial for entrepreneurs and managers alike as it discusses and identifies critical factors that result in firm's high productivity. Moreover, the current study is beneficial for the academicians as it contributes by providing additional knowledge on the current issue.

1.3 Scope and Delimitations

The present research study covers Pakistan's garment industry due to the broader extension of the selected context to a single country. The current study is restricted to the practices and production of Pakistan's Denim industry. In addition, the study has limitations in terms of selection of the company and country due to the study's outcome dependence on a single perspective.

2. Literature review

This segment critically evaluates past studies to generate hypotheses.

2.1 Customer Satisfaction

Rahman (2011) explains customer satisfaction as customer's perception in concerning the product or service's performance relevant to his or her expectations. In accord, Kotler and Keller (2012) define satisfaction as a sense of pleasure or disappointment that emerges as an outcome of the comparison of the product performance of the product and individual's expectations. For an organization or company to attain success and competitive edge, one of the most significant elements it considers customer satisfaction. On the other hand, Abdallat and Emam (2006) argues that customer satisfaction is a process that starts before buying decision and eventually appears after availing product or services. Alauddin, Tanvir and Mita (2013) acknowledged that enhanced satisfaction level is significant in boosting company's sales, on the bases of belief that loyal customers are more inclined to purchase product. In addition, Bai, Law and Wen (2008) affirms that the loyal customers tend to stay insensitive to the product or service price and pay little attention to competitors' advertisement campaigns.

Jamal and Naser (2003) put forwards an additional reason that the company proficiently provides its existing customers with services, since the customer were content with the past purchase, and therefore, has acquire a certain familiarity with the firm's offering. When a customer experiences an exceptional level of product or service, beyond their expectation, they have inclination to spread a positive word-of-mouth, providing a unique and free marketing to the firm. In the presence of Texas (2001) study, every customer is crucial and valuable for the firm due to their purchase capability as it contributes in generating revenue. The study further explains that contented customers are the foundation of positive promotion for firm's services or products as they have ability to further recommend the same in their network or group. As per Decker, (2001) buyer's satisfaction is primarily associated with various aspects as it has significant association with the product quality.

2.2 Significance of Customer Satisfaction

Fornell, et al., (2006) study enlightened that for an organization customer's satisfaction is of tremendous importance as it plays a crucial role in facilitating entrepreneurs in generating higher profitability and sales. Furthermore, the customer's needs and desire fulfillment is portrayed through customer satisfaction as firms often perceive the notion as extremely significant. The study conducted by Gustafsson, Johnson and Roos (2005) argues that customer satisfaction works as an indicator of customer's loyalty and their intention of repurchase. Customer satisfaction illustrates that likeliness of customer's use of service or product purchase. Customer satisfaction direct towards customer loyalty which is recognized as an effectual tool which enables marketers to generate higher sales and productivity. In addition, Decker (2001) research works argues that customer satisfaction is fundamentally a differentiation point as it demonstrates customer's interest and preferences towards a certain product. On the other hand, Texas (2001) supplementary explains that customer churn decreases with customer satisfaction as it differentiates firm's customers in two distinct groups. Moreover, customer satisfaction is a vital tool which permits customers to minimize the negative word of mouth as content customers are incline to communicate in a positive manner about the relevant product in their varied social circles and often are able to play a vital role in attracting greater number of potential customers that eventually contributes in generating revenues for firm and market its product and services.

The research conducted by Luo and Bhattacharya (2006), reveals that existing customer retention through customer gratification is cheaper in comparison to attaining new customers with the assistance of promotions and advertisements. Nevertheless, Jamal and Naser (2003) explains that maintaining customer satisfaction is vital for business due to its ability of having significant influence on business' performance. Entrepreneurs can analyze their market position

through their customer satisfaction evaluation. Furthermore, Gustafsson, Johnson and Roos (2005) suggested that attaining feedbacks through customer surveys assists firms to comprehend their customer's level of satisfaction which further provide them with guidance in altering and modifying their business strategies and practices.

2.3 Factors Influencing Customer Satisfaction

As per Schiffman and Kanuk (2007), various factors can have an impact of the extent of consumer satisfaction, thus leading to the impact on the purchase decision as well for instance; Alauddin, Tanvir and Mita (2013) suggests that product quality, production cost, the acceptable quality level, product security measurement, on time shipment, communication and services, product sampling and employee expertise are few of the aspects that are crucial for attaining customer satisfaction. In addition, Shirani, et al., (2014) suggests that when these aspects are well-matched with the customer satisfaction, they develop a positive association with the brand, persuading the purchase decision of buyer. The customer's attainment of a particular product can be defined as buying or purchasing decision (Suroto, et al., 2013). Thomson, Anderson and Wynstra (2000) presented an initial view; the commencement of buyer's purchase decision emerges from the identification for need. This recognition could be due to the internal stimuli such as (hunger or thirst) or an external stimuli indicator (for instance advertising). Additionally, Suroto, Fanani and Nugroho, (2013) suggested that once the buyer identifies the need, he or she then explore information to observe and categorize sources relevant to purchasing decision.

Once the information is obtained, the consumer moves to product evaluation on the basis of their distinctive attributes, and ultimately makes a decision on a service or product that meets the criteria. The final step in the post-purchase behavior assist firm, business and companies to retain their existing customers, given that, at this stage customers tend to compare the products with their established expectations, and is then either satisfied with the outcome or dissatisfied. The supply chain process has a vital role in the process of production and affecting purchase behavior (Kot, Haque, & Kozlovski, 2019a; Kot, Haque, & Kozlovski, 2019b). Supply chain management is quite important management tool in corporations, however it seem to be more used in small and medium enterprises as well (Kot, Haque & Baloch, 2020). Therefore, it is an ultimate step in the evaluation conducted post choice of purchase decision process which relates to the customer satisfaction identification. The study conducted by Rajput, Kesharwani and Khanna (2012) describes customer satisfaction an influence through product availability. The authors consider that product availability at the right time automatically satisfy customer and relate with good or service satisfaction. Moreover, the product availability leads to the customer satisfaction along with the satisfaction with goods or service. Gustafsson, Johnson and Roos (2005) argued that in addition to these factors, various other factors have an ability to persuade the extent of customer satisfactions in the garments industry. Some of these factors are product lead time, and production speed in the garments industry. However, the acceptable production speed and lead will automatically generate higher level of satisfaction customers. Decker (2001) suggested that for each and every business, customers' satisfaction is a vital element; therefore, it is critical for entrepreneurs to reflect and evaluate the aspects that have capability to influence the buyer satisfaction. Product flexibility is one of the elements that have ability to influence buyer purchase decision as they feel content with the good or gadget with the flexibility.

Quality

As per Rajput, et al., (2012), product quality is vital as it is a fundamental element that influences customer's consumption or buying decisions. Haque & Oino (2019) argued that there are several types of challenges faced by managements related to work, worker, and

workplace. Thus, the quality could be a challenge. Furthermore, it is suggested that quality is a decisive factor in influencing individuals' satisfaction. In addition, quality excellence is worth mentioning as it plays a vital role in enhancement of organization's productivity. Garment or clothe quality is essential as it enhances customer's perception in relevance to the clothes' purchase. The research work of Allwood, et al., (2008) clarifies that clothes quality assist customer in deciding on product's purchase. As suggested by Sondhi and Singhvi (2006) the quality is a multi-dimensional phenomenon in garment due to its aspect relationship with garment texture, its production and comfort. Comparatively, garment quality is interrelated with the garment's effectiveness and comfort. In garment industry, customer satisfaction is evaluated through product quality due to customer's conscious towards the product they dress in. The garment requires being suppling effectual and effective but most importantly being available in attracting colors as it assists in developing customer satisfaction.

On the other hand, Kim and Johnson (2007) assert that garment quality is superlatively acceptable when there is an absence of rough hemming, faulty zippers, limp buttons, unusual edges, coarse button holes, rough pieces, fabric dissimilarities and inappropriate adornment. As Niinimäki (2010) argue that Denim Garment's quality is primarily of a focus due to the company's vision and mission declaration that is also management's preference of offering its customer with the best products. It has vital influence on product quality. Separate staff is included in the management for identifying product or piece's defects and defaults. As per Rahman (2011), Denim's product quality assists in sustaining customer's satisfaction extent.

Cost

As per Bruce and Daly (2006), product cost is one of the highly influential elements in impacting customer's satisfaction. The customer buying decision experiences strong influence from the pricing strategy as it impacts their level of satisfaction. Furthermore, with the right product price the customer are highly likely to feel satisfied and related with the product which leads to the higher sales and revenue for the organization. Li and Cai (2009) work further explains that pricing strategy plays a crucial role in drawing customers towards the product due to their price and cost consciousness. In addition, Birtwistle and Moore (2007) study also explains that there is mere influence of pricing element on customer satisfaction. Moderately, product price is primarily considered by the customer when making a purchase decision. The product quality is measured by the product cost as customers are highly likely to pay for product with exceptional quality. In addition, for business the pricing strategy is critical as it is preliminary element on which consumer base their buying decision and shapes their purchase behavior. The study of Park and Stoel (2005) suggests that customer satisfaction is powerfully influenced by the product's price. The firm will experience loyal customer and develop long terms association with the consumer, once the customers are content with the product price. As per Nathan Group (2009), in denim market the product cost matters significantly due to the dependency of cost management on customer satisfaction. According to the statement of Memon (2011) in sector of Denim clothing, the price is maintained according to the level of product quality which further assists in attracting potential customer.

Appearance

Moreover, Park and Stoel (2005) confirmed that in garment industry, customer satisfaction is influenced by the product appearance as well. Customers have certain appeal towards apparel design and style due to their consciousness of social appearance within in the society. It is general understanding that every individual desire to dress in sophisticated and trendy attire worldwide. In similar regards, individuals are highly conscious of their personal charisma and their appearance in public. Due to this particular reason, individuals use alternate means to enhance their overall image and establish unique identity. As per Salimullah, et al., (2009)

work, that apparel style and design has emerge as a necessity for consumer to the current trend dressing in sophisticated and fashionable wear and accessories with modern and stylish accessory. The apparel's appearance is a fundamental indicator in assessing customer gratification with the merchandise. As per Rahman (2011), distinct size and apparel look has tendency to influence customer's awareness as various past studies concluded the same. However, the study of McDonalds et al., (2008) strongly argues that appearance is not always a leading factor for customer satisfaction. In Denim clothing, the critical focus is on the style due to its designs and ability to be altered for the present-day varying design.

On-time shipment

Lead time has a significant impact on the vendors and wholesalers' overall satisfaction (cited from Alauddin, et al., 2013). The benefit of this is that it involves vendors who are linked with customers in direct manner, so their satisfaction leads to have impact on consumer in creating positive perception about product. Moreover, the buyers will not be able to entertain customers rightly if the products in available on time, thus automatically will have impact on the overall performance of business. As per Rahman (2011), apparel appearance and size assortments possess the ability to influence interest of consumers as past research have shown that buyer's figures are influenced by it. Nevertheless, lead time is most essential factor as delay in delivery or shipment will change perception. In addition to that, style is crucial in Denim clothing, as trends and fashion is significant in creating impact on the buyer's perception.

Flexibility of product and volume

The study of Alauddin, et al., (2013) revealed that various factors create impact on the buying decision in the garment industry, out of such, flexibility and volume is significant determinants as it motivates buyers to avail and deliver things on the basis of flexible time. The study of Gustafsson, et al., (2005) showed that innovative products attracts customer more. However, the quality is considered as one of factor linked with flexibility as higher is flexibility, higher is quality of product. Thus, developing flexible products is vital for sellers which also include pricing strategies, as more flexible approach will tend to create impact on the buying behavior of customers. As per Park and Stoel (2005) state that product's price influences the tendency of wholesalers' level of satisfaction as the amount paid for the product will determine the tendency of interest. Thus, it is again linked with the flexibility. More flexibility will enhance the loyalty of the buyers in long term towards the company.

2.4 Hypotheses

Below are hypotheses that have been designed through theoretical framework:

H₁ (Null Hypothesis): "There is significantly strong relationship between quality, cost, and customer satisfaction that motivates bulk buyers in Pakistan industry's Denim garment to purchase".

H₁' (Alternative Hypothesis): "There is no significantly strong relationship between quality, cost, and customer satisfaction that motivates bulk buyers in Pakistan industry's Denim garment to purchase".

H₂: (Null Hypothesis): "There is significantly strong relationship between flexibility, appearance, lead time and customer satisfaction that encourages bulk buyers in Pakistan industry's Denim garment to purchase".

H₂': (Alternative Hypothesis): "There is significantly no strong relationship between flexibility, appearance, lead time and customer satisfaction that encourages bulk buyers in Pakistan industry's Denim garment to purchase".

3. Research Methodology

This research is designed by following Saunders research onion. As per Sekran and Bougie (2011) philosophy of research lays foundation to investigate research in certain manner. Positivism, Interpretivism, and Realism are main types of research philosophy (Saunders et al., 2011). Since this research is qualitative in approach therefore interpretivism philosophy is considered in this study. According to Burns and Bush (2007) descriptive and exploratory are two basic strategies to construct research design. Since this is exploratory research as it intent to explore correlation between research variables in the Pakistan clothing industry therefore cross-sectional research design is considered for this study. The rationale for cross-sectional design is that this study completes within six months. This comparative cross-sectional research comes under scientific paradigm thus, have critical realism ontology and objective epistemology to numerically express the social reality (Kot et al. 2019a; Haque, Kot, Imran, 2019).

As per Waliman (2001) qualitative approach is used by researcher to explore qualitative aspects linked with research problem whereas quantitative approach is used to explore quantitative aspects. Since research is interpretive therefore qualitative approach is undertaken. Furthermore, this research contains hypotheses testing therefore hypothetico-deductive model is used as this research considered deductive method to attain research outcome.

The research is commenced in the Pakistan clothing industry, targeting bulk consumers as targeted audience therefore 75 participants are considered as sample size from 120 vendors dealing in Denim at Karachi. This means that 75 sample set is 62.5% of the population size of Karachi. As per Sekaran and Bougie (2010) probability is type of sampling where all events have equal chance for selection while non-probability sampling technique means that there is no equal chance for all events in the sample to be selected. In this study, convenience sampling (non-probability) sampling technique is undertaken as it is cost-effective and targeted audience is approached on the basis of their convenience. Since participants are bulk consumers therefore it has been further categorized into five groups (a) Buyer Denim, (b) Assistant Buyer Denim, (c) Sourcing Manager, (d) Product Manager Denim, and (e) Senior Product Manager respectively.

As per Polit and Hungler (1997) a questionnaire is “set of question in a sequential pattern used to collect information regarding beliefs, feelings, knowledge, attitude, and behavior from the participants” (P. 466). Since this research is exploratory in nature and based on interpretive philosophy, qualitative aspects are explored therefore researchers have considered two distinctive research instruments (a) self-administered survey questionnaire, and (b) in-depth face-to-face interviews with the managers respectively (Faizan et al. 2019). The self-administered survey questionnaire is matrix based with five degrees (5 LIKERT Scale), ranging from 1 = Strongly Agree and 5 = Strongly Disagree. This questionnaire is based on ordinal scale where frequencies are presented in percentages. The in-depth face-to-face interviews with five managers are open-ended semi structured five questions that explore management's perspective regarding correlation between independent and dependent variables. The interview session lasted for 20 minutes in which views from the experts in the field were availed.

In present study, secondary data constitute official website and Annual report of Denim Pakistan, International Journals related to Marketing, consumer's satisfaction, and buying preferences, Blogs and Marketing Magazines to develop theoretical framework and background from relevant literature review. In primary sources, researchers were directly involved case study by circulating survey questionnaire among vendors, and in-depth face-to-face interviews with managers. The participants' name and details were kept confidential as part of ethical consideration. These participants were selected after pilot study so that reliability

and validity of respondents can be maintained throughout research process.

The data collected through survey questionnaire is sorted through Ms. Excel. Data is feed on spreadsheet where filter is used to measure the responses of participants. Pie-chart is created by selecting data and in terms of percentages it is presented by following ordinal scale technique. Furthermore, the hypothesis is tested by Data Analysis tab under Data option. The correlation option is selected by running Data Analysis t-Test to measure the correlation between research variables.

4. Results, Findings and Discussion

This is the fourth chapter of present research project that mainly discusses the actual findings gathered from research instruments, following primary data collection process. This chapter is split into two parts; (a) survey questionnaire, and (b) Interviews with the management respectively.

4.1 Survey Questionnaire

Survey questionnaire contains two parts. The first part conatins questions related to demographic description to ensure the validity and reliability of the participants. The second part contains questions related to attitude and behavior, reflecting research problem. The results of questions are presented through pie-chart showing the percentages of responses related to research question.

Demographic Description (Part A)

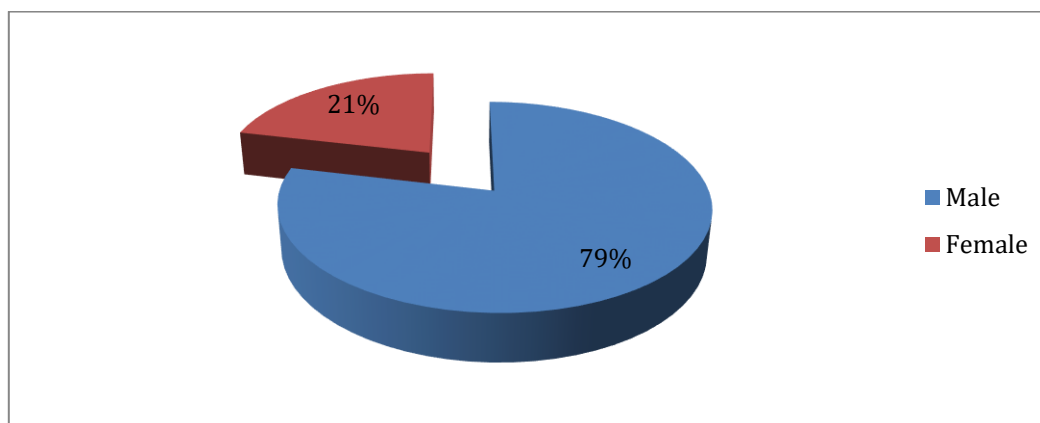


Figure 1: Gender of respondents

Table 1: Gender	
Male	59
Female	16

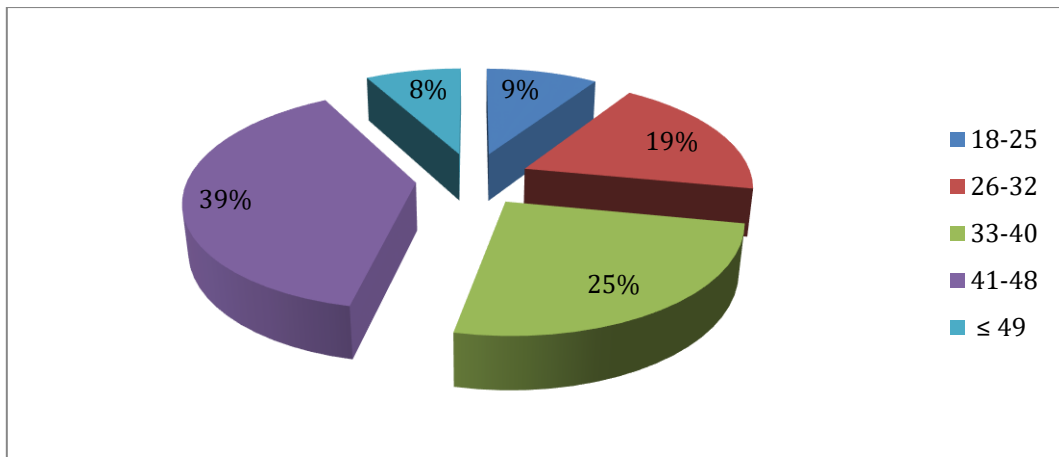


Figure 2: Age of respondents

18-25	7
26-32	14
33-40	19
41-48	29
≤ 49	6

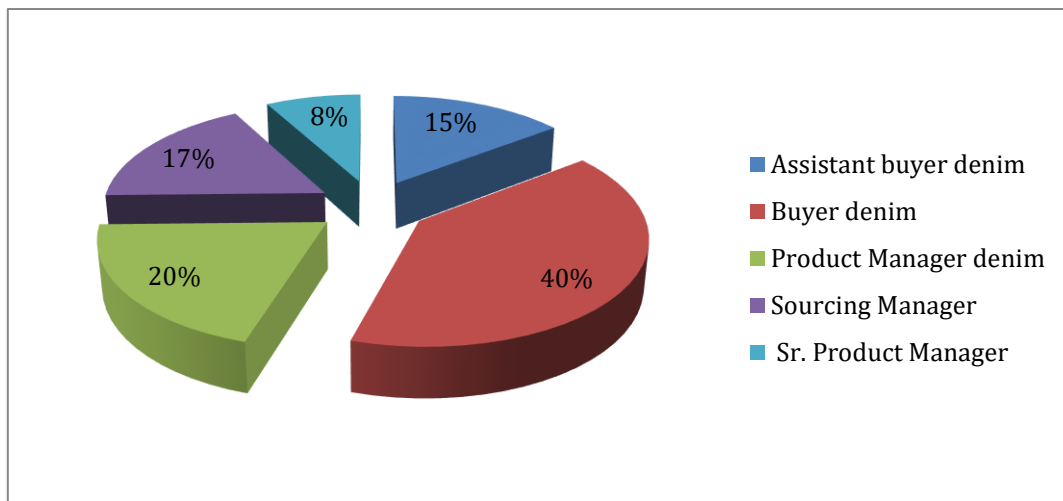


Figure 3: Designation of respondents

Assistant buyer denim	11
Buyer denim	30
Product Manager denim	15
Sourcing Manager	13
Sr. Product Manager	6

In the demographic description, gender analysis has revealed that in present study, male participants constitute approximately 79% whereas female respondents make 21% respectively. Furthermore, in age bracket high number of participants lies in (41-48) with 39%, followed by 25% (33-40), 19% (26-32). However, the smallest participants lie in above 49 age brackets. In addition to that, the designation of participants in this study revealed that majority

of the respondents (40%) Buyer Denim, followed by 20% product managers Denim, 17% Sourcing Managers, 15% Assistant Buyer Denim, and lastly 8% constitute of Senior Product Managers.

Part B:

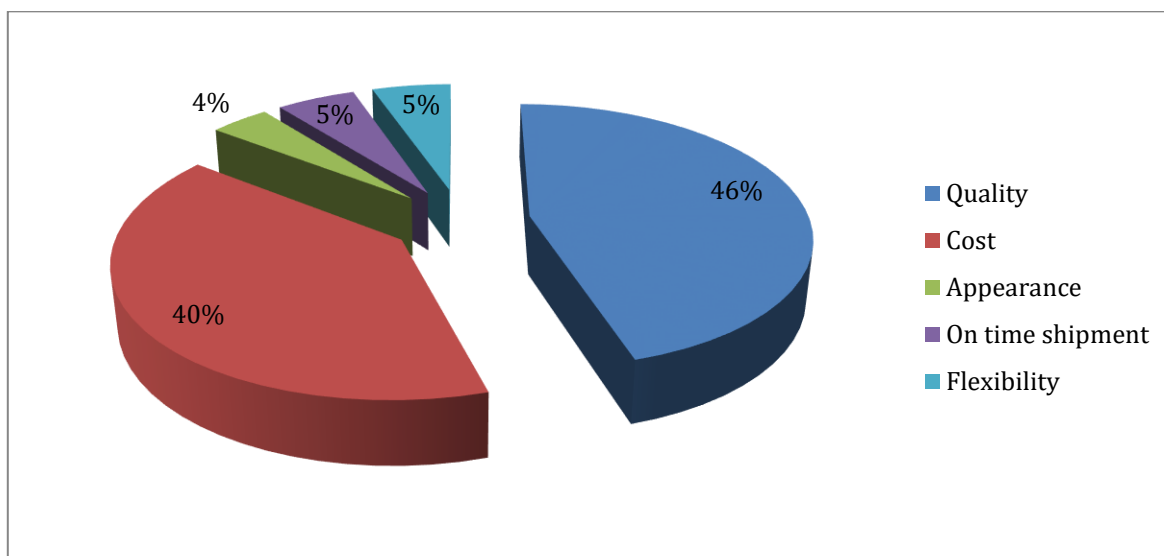


Figure 4: Driving force behind customer satisfaction

Table 4: Components forcing customer satisfaction

	Quality	Cost	Appearance	On time shipment	Flexibility	
What is the main driving force behind Bulk Customer's satisfaction	34	30	3	4	4	
No.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Satisfaction of Product and volume's flexibility is linked with apparel.	4	6	5	21	39
2	Transparency in cost and reasonable prices increases bulk customer's overall satisfaction.	3	2	7	31	32
3	On time shipment enhances level of	6	4	51	8	6

	satisfaction.					
4	High quality-oriented product increase general satisfaction.	56	12	1	3	3
5	Buying behaviour of the consumers is influenced by style, price, and trends.	53	10	3	4	5

Bulk Customers were asked about the driving forces that develop strong satisfaction towards purchasing of Denim as a garment in the Pakistan clothing industry, and it is evident from the findings that quality is the most important driver of all factors as it constitutes 46%. The second most important factor is cost which is 40%. Furthermore, Flexibility and on time shipment is 5% each whereas appearance is the weakest of all determinants because it constitutes 4%. This contradicts work of Faizan & Haque (2015) that bullwhip effect affects the cost due to bulk customers.

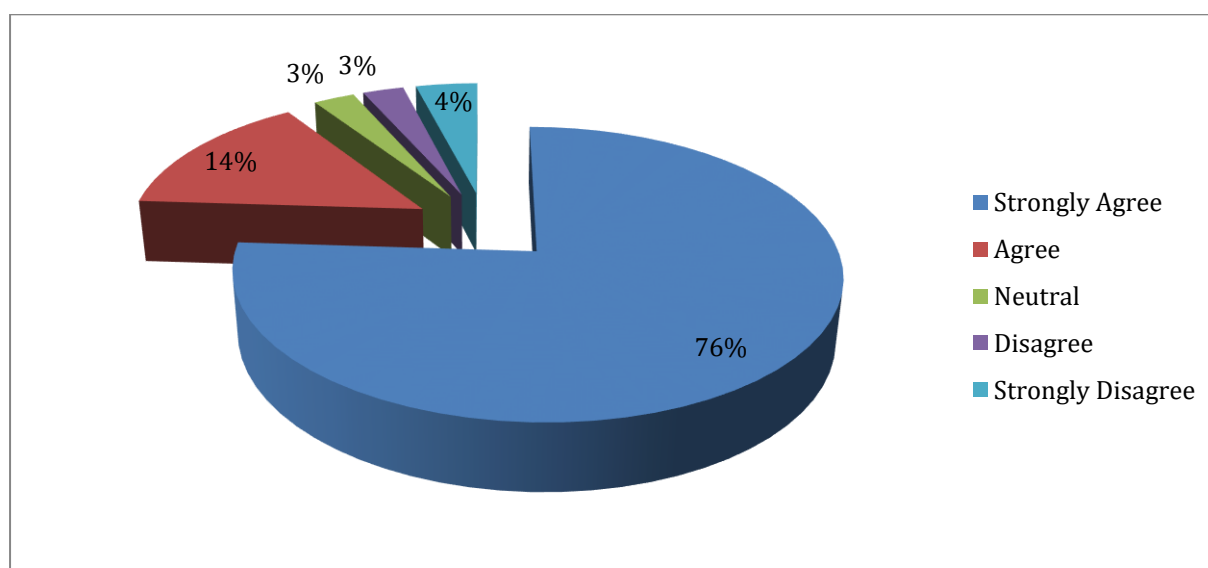


Figure 5: Quality linkage with overall satisfaction

Table 5: Linkage between quality and customer satisfaction

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Quality is vital for all types of products that are being consumed or used.	57	11	2	2	3
2	Quality develops a taste in general masses to consume for comfort that eventually leads to satisfaction.	48	21	1	3	2
3	Quality of product is main notion behind recommending it to customers.	58	11	2	1	3
4	Quality oriented products last longer and develops strong brand image therefore quality serves basis for recommendation.	51	16	3	3	2
5	All marketing decisions are based mainly on the quality aspects.	55	14	2	3	1

In response to questions regarding quality of the product as a significant factor that increase bulk customers' satisfaction, it is evident that there is significantly strong linkage between quality and level of consumers' satisfaction. Overall, 90% agreed that quality develops a taste

for preference, a source behind recommending to others, forms a strong brand image, and vendor's marketing decisions heavily rely on the aspects of quality related to purchasing and dealing in it. Conversely, it is found that only 7% disagreed to some extent whereas only 3% remain undecided.

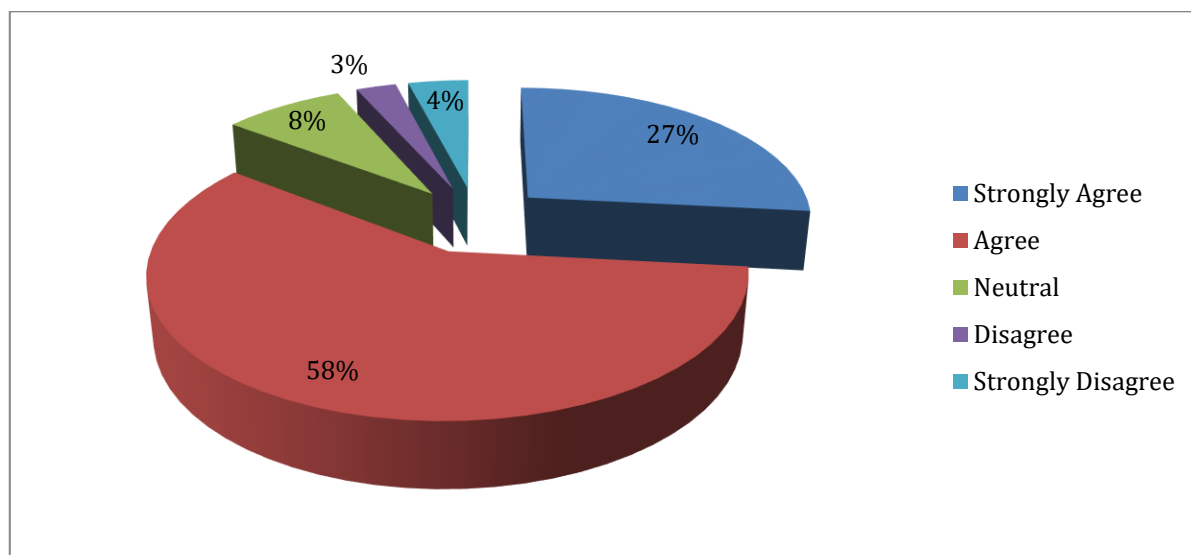


Figure 6: Cost of product

Table 6: Factors of product cost

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	From brand selling perspective, affordability in terms of price significantly matters.	20	44	6	2	3
2	In the determination of quality, price is significant as estimating indicator.	26	42	2	1	4
3	Bulk volume buying decision is made after product const consideration.	17	48	3	5	2
4	Price comparison is preferred when purchasing bulk volume Within same region or China or Bangladesh.	21	47	4	2	1
5	Customer satisfaction regarding product is significantly influenced by price factor.	15	53	1	4	5

The findings of present study revealed that "Cost" is the second most significant factor that is considered by bulk customers. The findings showed that approximately 85% of participant believed that cost is linked with level of satisfaction as it is key indicator in the determination of quality. Furthermore, from selling of brand, bulk consumers' perspective, affordability is linked with satisfaction as price is compared in specific regions to ensure that good quality is availed by paying high price. Those who responded in negative formed only 7% whereas 8% remain neutral.

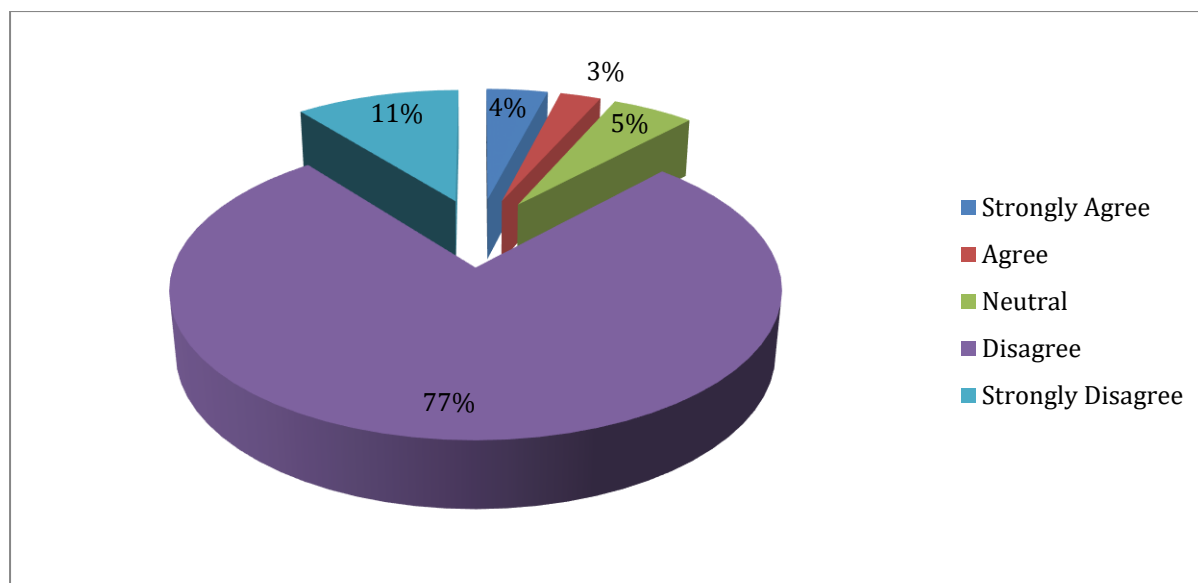


Figure 7: Appearance

Table 7: Appearance related characteristics

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	In-fashion cloths are part of buying preferences.	3	2	4	58	8
2	Satisfaction related to product is largely due to garment's appearance.	4	2	3	59	7
3	Stylish products are preferred as such Garments' appearance brings more satisfaction.	1	1	5	54	14
4	Apparently attractive outlooks are preferred to wear by large number of customers.	3	2	3	55	12
5	Wearing stylish brand and attractive cloths increase overall satisfaction.	1	2	1	53	18

In relation to appearance, results revealed that appearance has little to do with bulk customers' satisfaction as large number of participants (88%) disagreed to correlation between appearance and customer's satisfaction. Approximately above 75% disagreed that in-fashion cloths are part of vendor's buying preference, overall satisfaction related to product due to garment's appearance, and mass consumer prefer wearing stylish and attractive apparels. Only 7% agreed that fashion and appearance is their choice that increases their satisfaction whereas only 5% decided to remain indifferent.

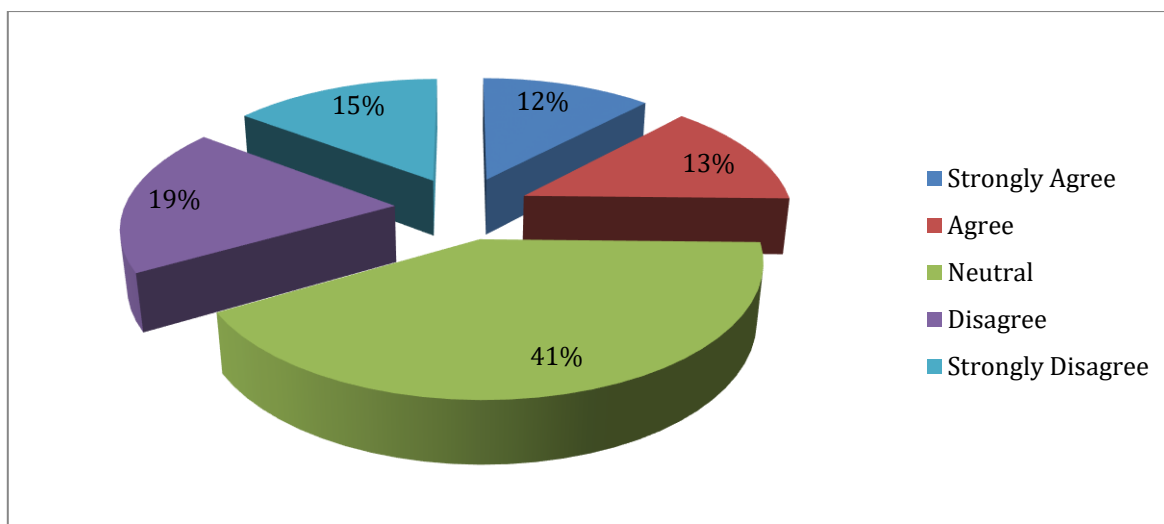
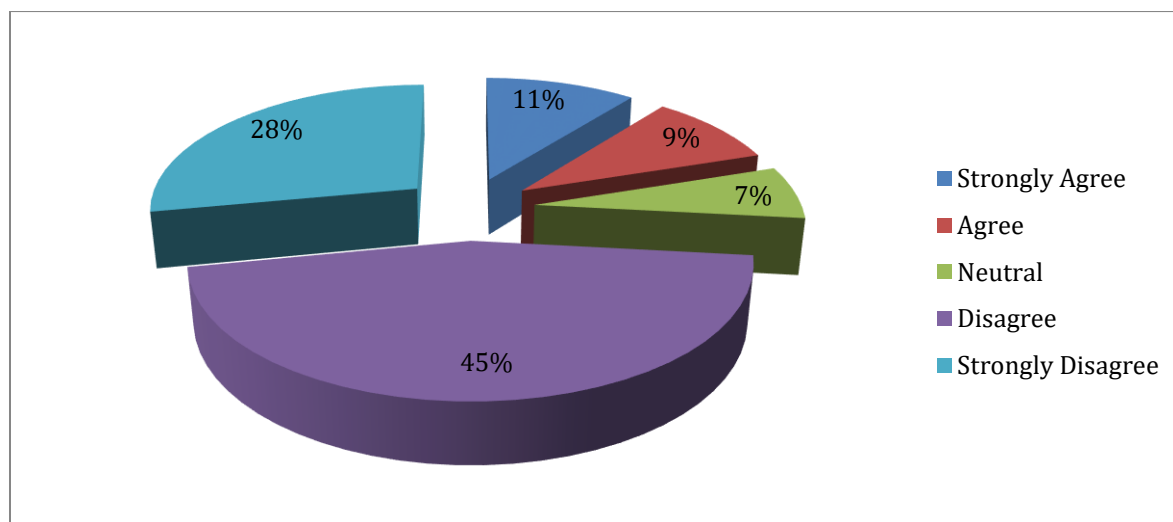


Figure 8: Time lead required

Table 8: Features of time lead

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Venders who are committed to shipment dates and lead time are preferred choice to bought products from.	9	10	31	14	11
2	Those vendors who manages shipment without delays, increases buyer satisfaction.	8	12	37	8	10
3	Level of satisfaction enhances due to on time approvals regarding wash/fabric/trims with no delays by vendor.	5	17	23	12	18
4	On time delivery of shipment increases level of overall satisfaction.	15	12	28	11	9
5	Lead time and strong follow up by vendor increase level of satisfaction.	12	10	32	13	8

To measure online shipment and lead time as an important determinant in relation to bulk customer's satisfaction. Majority of participants remained undecided as 41% which reflects that there is moderate relation between on-time shipment and consumer's satisfaction. In other words, there is no absolute evidence that certifies that there is neither strong nor weak relation between these two variables. Only 25% of the sample agreed to some extent whereas 34% disagreed to it.

**Table 9:** Flexibility feature**Table 9:** Features of flexibility

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Flexibility in bulk volume is important consideration in buy behavior.	8	7	5	34	21
2	Innovation and product friendly items increase satisfaction towards bulk volume purchases.	11	9	3	40	12
3	Flexibility in style and product appearance is vital in making preferences and enhancing satisfaction.	17	6	3	28	21
4	Vendor's flexibility in volume increases bulk buyers' level of satisfaction.	4	5	6	41	19
5	Vendor's flexibility in product enhances level of satisfaction.	6	19	1	38	11

The last determinant of set of variables is flexibility in this study to examine its relation with customer's satisfaction. The findings showed that 73% disagreed to certain extent that flexibility is associated with consumer satisfaction. Furthermore, findings revealed that to bulk customer, innovation and product friendly items are not always a reason for their satisfaction. Moreover, flexibility in style and appearance is not always the case to make preferences nor flexibility in volume is a leading factor in increasing overall satisfaction. Only 20% of vendors feel that flexibility is essential in enhancing their overall satisfaction whereas those who were undecided were only 7%.

4.2 Interview Analysis

To further analyze the qualitative aspect related to research problem at hand, researchers have conducted open ended semi structured interviews with managers of five Denim selling product companies. The analysis of interviews is discussed below:

Question 1: "Do you think that quality matters for the customers?"

In face-to-face interview with managers, first question was asked about the quality's significance and one of the managers responded that, "quality is the first thing consumer look in product" (Appendix A). Another manager added that, "the most significant contributor in every business' success is quality" (Appendix A). Remaining three managers shared their

experiences by stating that consumer's satisfaction and buying preferences are linked with quality of product. Thus, this study supports the previous study of Rahman (2011) that quality is essential part of business nowadays as customers consider it before buying it.

Question 2: "Discuss the satisfaction of customers with your products?"

The researcher explored the qualitative management's perspective regarding vendor as consumers and their satisfaction about Denim garments of Pakistan Industry. Managers responses include, *"Indeed Denim offers best quality which increases consumer's satisfaction because the prices are not too high"*, *"At affordable prices, Denim offers exceptional quality that is reason for higher satisfaction in the vendor's market"*, *"The rate of satisfaction among buyers of Denim product is high due to reasonable prices which adds to high level of satisfaction"*. Thus, from these responses, it is evident that high quality and reasonable prices are factors that has improved satisfaction among the buyers. This means that present study supports the statement of Kotler and Keller (2012) that consumer's level of satisfaction increases when high quality products are given to them in affordable prices. Moreover, the perception of buyer is highly influenced by quality and price of product.

Question 3: "Do you think that you offer the best quality in best price?"

One of the managers replied that *"the reason behind the successful operation inside Pakistan and across the border is top quality in best prices"*. Another manager also confirmed by stating that, *"High number of consumers in Pakistan is due to best quality in best prices"* whereas one manager also stated that, *"We offer great quality in reasonable prices therefore consumers' are satisfied with our products"*. Thus, this confirms that level of consumer satisfaction regarding Denim garments is due to provision of best quality in best price. This means that this study finding are aligned with the work of Alauddin et al., (2013) that states that most essential factor behind Denim largely operating as successful brand in Pakistan's garment industry is due to high satisfaction among consumers with the quality and prices of product.

Question 4: "What is your opinion about appearance of the product and customers satisfaction?"

Experts were asked about their opinion regarding appearance of product and consumer's satisfaction. One manager stated, *"To some extent, appearance and satisfaction of consumer are linked closely"*, another manager said, *"In present era, consumers are more concerned about appearance as stylish and attractive outfit are driving force behind customer's satisfaction"*. One of managers argued that, *"not always consumer satisfaction is due to appearance as quality is more linked with satisfaction"*. From these different responses, it can be concluded that appearance is one of critical factors affecting the consumer's preferences however it is not always the leading cause behind overall consumer satisfaction. Thus, this study opposes the previous studies of Gustafsson, et al., (2005) and Jamal and Naser (2003) that considers style and appearance is most significant factor in increasing the overall satisfaction of customers.

Question 5: "According to you what is a key factor that makes your customer feel satisfied with your products?"

All five factors were stated to managers and asked their responses that which is the most significant contributor among all that is linked with customer satisfaction. First manager stated that, *"Customer satisfaction is never product of always one factor but in case of Denim, quality is the most important of all factor that is directly linked with customer satisfaction and buying decision"*. Another manager said, *"Cost is most essential consideration"*, Third manager stated, *"Quality and Cost are difference making factor for Denim that is enhancing customer satisfaction"*. Fourth manager also emphasized on quality, whereas the fifth manager replied

that, "In order of preference, quality is first, followed by cost, appearance, on-time shipment, and lastly flexibility are considered while making buying decision and are closely linked to improve customer satisfaction". Therefore, it can be concluded that quality and cost are most essential factors that enhances customer satisfaction. Thus, this study is similar to the work of Decker (2001) that argues that though all factors are essential but quality and price is most crucial of all factors but speed, flexibility, design, appearance, and lead time are all significant contributors toward increasing customer satisfaction.

4.3 Hypotheses Test Analysis

Table 10: Chi-square test

C-I	F	X	F(X)	(X-x')	(X-x') ²	F(X-x') ²
18-25	7	21.5	150.5	-13.852	191.877	1343.145
26-32	14	29	406	-6.352	40.3479	2686.291
33-40	19	34.6	657.4	-0.752	0.56550	3645.68
41-48	29	44.5	1290.5	9.148	83.6859	5564.459
≤ 49	6	24.5	147	-10.852	117.765	1151.267
	75		2651.4			14390.84
Mean	35.352					
Variance	191.8779					
S.D	13.852					
α	0.05					
CV	2.353					
DF	3					
Level of Significance	95%					

H1 (Null): Quality and Cost have strong significant correlation with customer satisfaction

H0 (Alternative): Quality and Cost have no strong significant correlation with customer satisfaction.

t-Test: Paired One Sample for Mean

	2	
	6	
	5	
	1.	
	4	14390.4
	3	
	5.	
	3	
	5	
Mean	2	105.056
	1	
	9	
	1.	
	8	
	7	
	7	2657.88
Variance	9	2

Observations	5	5
	0.86877	
Pearson Correlation Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	3	
	3.861	
t Stat	0.15365	
	0.15365	0.05
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.15365	
	0.3073	
t Critical one-tail	0.3073	
	0.3073	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.3073	
	0.6146	
t Critical two-tail	0.6146	

P (value) = 0.15365

Critical Value = 0.05

P (value) > Critical Value

0.15365 > 0.05

Pearson Correlation = 0.86877

** Since P (value) is 0.1535 whereas critical value is 0.05 thus we do not reject Null hypothesis. Furthermore, the correlation between variables is 0.86 thus there is significantly strong relationship between selected variables

H2 (Null): Appearance, Flexibility, and on-time shipment have strong significant correlation with customer satisfaction
 H2 (alternative): Appearance, Flexibility, and on-time shipment have no strong significant correlation with customer satisfaction

Table 11: T-test results

t-Test: Paired One Sample for Mean

	<i>2651.4</i>	<i>14390.84</i>
Mean	35.352	105.056
Variance	191.8779	2657.882
Observations	5	5
Pearson Correlation	0.427286	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	3	
t Stat	3.861081	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.015355	0.05
t Critical one-tail	1.96	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.030711	
t Critical two-tail	2.182446	

P (value) = 0.015355**Critical Value = 0.05****P (value) < Critical Value****0.015355 < 0.05****Pearson Correlation = 0.427286**

** Since P (value) is 0.015355 whereas critical value is 0.05 thus we reject Null hypothesis. Furthermore, the correlation between variables is 0.427286 thus there is no significantly strong relationship between selected variables

5. Conclusion

From primary investigation, it is evident that quality is the most important factor that is considered by vendors and bulk buyers when making buying decisions. Furthermore, the level of satisfaction improves among customers when they have top quality brand like Denim which is available at affordable prices. In addition to that, cost is second significant determinant that influences buying decision and bulk customers' preferences. Though, other factors are also crucial in the determination of enhanced customer satisfaction, such factors include style, flexibility, availability of product, speed, lead time, appearance, and effectiveness of product has strong impact on the customer satisfaction. The hypothesis test results showed that quality and cost are strongly significantly linked with customer satisfaction as the derived value is $0.153 > 0.05$ critical value thus we do not reject hypothesis (H1). In addition to that, Pearson's correlation derived value is 0.86872 which reflects that there is significantly strong correlation between research variables. Therefore, it can be concluded that in the Pakistan garment industry, cost and quality are two determinants that are strongly linked with customer satisfaction when Vendors are making buying decision regarding Denim.

Moreover, in second hypothesis test, the correlation between customer satisfaction, appearance, flexibility, and on-time shipment have no significant strong linkage as P Value is 0.015 whereas as critical value is 0.05. In other words, $0.015 < 0.05$ and Pearson correlation value is 0.427286 thus the correlation between these variables is weak. Therefore, there is no significant relation. In addition to that, the findings of survey questionnaire also revealed that 90% of participant agreed that quality is essential and more than 70% considered cost as

significant determinant in creating customer satisfaction. There is moderate correlation established between appearance, flexibility, and lead time, and customer satisfaction as there is some evidence but no strong relationship. However, at no cost all these three variables can be ignored while making business decision. Despite this argument, cost and quality are two determinants that have strong impact on the customer's buying decision in comparison to flexibility, lead time, and appearance. Thus, on the basis of majority it can be stated that cost and quality are more preferred by buyers rather than lead time, appearance and flexibility.

Therefore, this study supports the findings of Alauddin et al., (2013) that considered quality as key factor. Furthermore the work of Kotler and Keller (2012) considering price (cost), Rahman (2011) considering quality, Decker (2001) quality as well cost is confirmed by present study whereas study of Jamal and Naser (2003) and Gustafsson, et al., (2005) are opposed in this study that takes in flexibility and appearance as major contributor towards customer satisfaction. Similarly interviews with management also confirmed that cost and quality are more in preference in comparison to flexibility, appearance, and lead time. Therefore, considering qualitative aspect, for Denim in Pakistan's garment industry, these two variables (cost and quality) has more strong linkage with customer satisfaction and buying decision's preference than other determinants. Thus, it is concluded that there is strong significant relationship between cost, quality, and customer satisfaction whereas weak relation between customer satisfaction, flexibility, on-time shipment, and appearance.

Recommendations

The recommendations are made to the management of Denim regarding improving vendor's buying preferences and overall satisfaction. Recommendations are as following:

The Denim's management needs to encourage "phase-in Multi-fiber agreements" with its vendors. This will increase the confidence of bulk buyers as they will be able to have precise estimation of prices and the quotas under international trade agreements. As there will be fair and transparent process from marketing to point of selling, thus the confidence of buyers will improve, leading to increase their level of satisfaction and buying preferences related to Denim garments. Denim's management needs to develop a marketing unit that have strong softer skills such as communication, negotiation, etc so that Denim's marketing with vendors is more in multi-dimension rather than focusing on one single demographic region.

Since on time shipment and flexibility is not as considerable by the vendors thus there is need by management to enhance its R&D operations to enhance on-time shipment and flexibility in operations. For this reason, Denim's management need to ensure that supply chain management follows JIT (just-in-time) approach. This way flexibility and on-time shipment will become more critical in buyer's decision-making process.

Research Limitations and future implications

Though researchers have ensured that research is carried out in righteous manner however there are some limitation. Considering those limitations, future implications are made to future researchers. The biggest limitation of present study is time constrain as there was limited time to complete this research therefore researchers opted for cross-sectional design. Future researchers should consider longitudinal study by conducting penal study to measure the responses in two different points of time so that there are more concrete and comprehensive results. Furthermore, present study had small sample size but future researchers should consider large sample size in order to have more generalization. In addition to that, in this study non-probability sampling technique was considered which is subject to limitation but future researchers should opt for stratified sampling technique so that there is equal chance in different regions to select respondents. Moreover, in this study face-to-face interviews were only done

with management, future researchers should consider focus group interviews with experts from the field along with vendors and management on same panel. This will bring more accuracy in findings and in-depth analysis will help in bringing improvement in overall satisfaction among vendors while making buying decisions.

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