

## Implementation of Service Quality to Increase Customer Satisfaction at Arascarf in Malang City

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**Abstract.** *This study aims to analyze the implementation of service quality to improve customer satisfaction at Arascarf MSMEs in Malang City. The researcher uses the SERVQUAL model as an analytical framework to evaluate five dimensions of service quality, namely physical evidence, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. This study was conducted with a qualitative case study approach. The researcher obtained data through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation. The researcher found that the dimensions of responsiveness and empathy have a dominant influence on positive consumer perceptions. Consumers consider that fast service and friendly attitudes from MSMEs create a sense of comfort and trust. However, the researcher also found that in the dimensions of physical evidence and assurance, there are still shortcomings that need to be fixed. Overall, consumer attitudes towards Arascarf services are positive, but still require improvement in aspects of professionalism and quality consistency. This study concludes that strengthening the five dimensions of SERVQUAL in a balanced manner can be an effective strategy to build customer satisfaction and loyalty sustainably.*

**Keywords:** Arascarf UMKM, Consumer Attitude, Consumer Perception, Customer Satisfaction, Service Quality

### 1. INTRODUCTION

MSMEs are one of the most important pillars in the Indonesian economy. Based on data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, the number of MSMEs currently reaches 64.2 million, with a contribution to GDP of 61.07% or 8,573.89 trillion rupiah. The contribution of MSMEs to the Indonesian economy includes the ability to absorb approximately 117 million workers or 97% of the total workforce, and can collect up to 60.4% of total investment (Junaidi, 2024). This contribution underlines that being an MSME player is not only playing an active role in the economic sector, but also trying to increase the welfare of the community, which generally helps in a more balanced economic distribution (Malik et al., 2024). One of the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises sectors that has experienced rapid development is the Muslim fashion sector, especially hijab and fabric-based crafts, which have shown their presence in Malang City. Malang City is known as a city of education and tourism, which has a potential market from students, university students, to foreign and domestic tourists. This sector has a very important role not only in economic growth, but also in maintaining local civilization and culture. One of the businesses engaged in this field is Arascraf, a brand that was founded in Malang City and pioneered by Arma Rohmatul Ayu, a student from Malang, in May 2020. This business produces various types of products, such as

bergo, pashmina, square headscarves, Muslim clothes, as well as products with high artistic value and unique characteristics marked by the presence of Arascraf's distinctive logo. Arascraf products are in great demand by various groups, especially those looking for products with local characteristics that can be used as souvenirs or gifts from Malang City. In facing market dynamics and increasing customer expectations, Arascraf needs to develop a service strategy that prioritizes customer satisfaction to maintain customer loyalty and expand market reach. Therefore, the implementation of service quality is a very important aspect to maintain Arascraf's competitive advantage amidst local and national Muslim fashion market competition.

The increasingly competitive Muslim fashion market is a challenge for Arascraf. Many local and national brands offer similar products with a more aggressive marketing approach, especially through social media and influencer marketing. Therefore, differentiation through service quality is an aspect that cannot be ignored. By providing superior service, Arascraf can build long-term relationships with its customers and create a loyal customer base (Issalillah et al., 2021). Service quality is a multidimensional concept that shows the extent to which customer expectations match their perceived service experience (Sembiring, 2020). The SERVQUAL model introduced by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) is one of the tools often used to measure service quality based on five main dimensions, namely physical evidence, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Jamal, 2012). The application of the SERVQUAL model in the context of MSMEs can provide an overall picture of customer perceptions to improve service quality and aspects that need to be improved to increase customer satisfaction (Gunawan, 2017). MSMEs in the Muslim fashion sector must adapt by building strong relationships with their consumers, especially in terms of consumer perception and consumer attitudes which are crucial elements in determining business sustainability (Risna Nona et al., 2021).

Customer perception plays a key role in measuring service quality. Perception involves the internalization process where perception involves sensing and interpreting something that is felt by the stimulus received from the customer (Remiasa & Lukman, 2018). Customer perception of the service provided by Arascraf will determine their attitude in the form of cognitive evaluation and emotional response (Muhtarom et al., 2022). Consumer attitude is an individual's tendency to react consistently to an object or phenomenon, which in this case is the service provided by Arascraf. If the perception of the service is positive, then the consumer attitude tends to be positive and will encourage loyal behavior such as repeat purchases, positive word-of-mouth, and willingness to pay more (Hasibuan et al., 2022). Consumer

perception of a brand is not only formed by the quality of the product, but also by the experience of interacting, the value offered, and the social image attached to the business (Daru & Anwar, 2019). When consumers view an MSME positively, for example, as a business that cares about the environment, empowers local communities, or has consistent quality (Issalillah et al., 2021). Then this perception will strengthen supportive attitudes, such as loyalty, trust, and emotional attachment (Sulistiyowati et al., 2020). This formed attitude becomes the main basis for consumer decision making, including the decision to repurchase, recommend to others, or even act as an active supporter on social media (Safitri & Hartiakan, 2022). On the other hand, if the perception formed is negative, either due to bad experiences, inconsistent quality, or lack of communication of business values, then consumers tend to be passive or even avoid the product (Siregar, 2023). Therefore, understanding how consumer perceptions and attitudes are formed and how both influence purchasing behavior is very important for the sustainability of MSMEs such as Arascraf amidst increasingly dynamic market competition (Reppi et al., 2015).

Understanding consumer perceptions and attitudes towards Arascraf plays an important role in building a strong and competitive local brand. Local brands that can build emotional resonance with consumers tend to be more resilient in the face of globalization, which is often dominated by foreign-branded products (Gunawan, 2017). Arascraf has great potential to become a local icon that not only offers products but also conveys social, cultural narratives, and empowerment values that are its advantages in the minds of consumers. This study aims to explore the implementation of service quality carried out by Arascraf in its efforts to improve customer satisfaction in Malang City. The main focus of this study is on consumer perceptions and attitudes towards Arascraf services, using the SERVQUAL model as an analytical framework (Risna Nona et al., 2021). This study is important to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the service dimensions provided and provide strategic recommendations that can be implemented by Arascraf in improving the quality of its services. Thus, this study not only provides a practical contribution for Arascraf in designing a better service strategy, but also provides a theoretical contribution in the development of service models in the Muslim fashion MSME sector in Indonesia. This study is expected to be a reference for other MSME actors in increasing competitiveness through a customer-focused approach, so that the researcher raised the title "Implementation of Service Quality to Increase customer satisfaction at arascraf in Malang City".

## **2. LITERATUR REVIEW**

### **Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Arascarf**

According to Gyimah and Adeola (2021) Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are pillars of the economy that contribute significantly to employment, economic development, and poverty reduction. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are sectors that play an important role in the global economy that contributing to job creation, but also become drivers of innovation and economic resilience, especially on a local and national scale (Mittal et al 2025). Loo et al (2023) also stated that Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are small to medium-scale businesses that play an important role in the country's economy, especially in creating jobs, increasing innovation, and driving economic growth. From several definitions, it can be concluded that Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are small to medium-scale business sectors that play a major role in increasing business competitiveness and accelerating technological adaptation in various industries.

Arascarf was founded by a young entrepreneur named Arma Rohmatul Ayu in Malang City in 2020. Arascarf entrepreneurs started this business with the idea of empowering local women through the production of handicraft products, especially hijab products and accessory fabrics that have high aesthetic value. This business started from household activities that were carried out independently by utilizing the internet as a promotional and marketing medium (Jinadi, 2023). In the early stages, Arascraf produced hijabs with unique designs in small quantities made by local craftsmen. Customers loved the uniqueness and superiority of the products offered. As market demand increased, Arascraf expanded its product line and hired additional local workers to meet production demands. This business gradually developed into a micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) unit with a more organized management system (UMM, 2022).

### **Quality of Service**

Service quality is one of the crucial dimensions used in building competitive advantage, especially for MSMEs who want to create customer satisfaction and loyalty. According to Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), service quality is the level of service excellence provided in order to adjust to consumer expectations. If the service feels in accordance with or exceeds consumer expectations, then the service is considered high quality.

In the SERVQUAL theory, service quality is measured based on five main dimensions, namely:

1. Physical Evidence: includes physical facilities, equipment, and employee appearance.
2. Reliability: the ability to provide promised services dependably and consistently.
3. Responsiveness: employees' readiness to serve customers and provide service quickly.
4. Safety and Security: includes employee knowledge and courtesy, and the ability to instill customer confidence.
5. Personal Relationship: Individual attention is shown to customers.

These five dimensions are widely applied in assessing customer perceptions of the services they receive. In the context of Arascarf, these dimensions serve as the foundation for examining how service quality is implemented by MSMEs to their consumers.

### ***Perception Factors***

According to Tan et al (2024), Perception factors are factors that refer to factors that shape an individual's perception of the effectiveness of an institution in implementing a particular policy or program, that influence how individuals respond to and participate in the policy. Lin et al (2017) state that perception factors are elements that form customers' views of the authenticity of a restaurant, which are formed from experience, expectations, and environmental elements. Perception factors are elements that form customers' views of the authenticity of a restaurant (Agarwal & Singh, 2023). From several definitions, it can be concluded that perception factors are a set of factors that influence how customers view a product or service, which are influenced by their experience, anticipation, and contextual variables that include service quality, reliability, authenticity, compliance with standards, and the institution's ability to meet individual or customer needs. Factors that influence consumer perception include:

#### **1. Personal factors**

This personal factor is related to individual characteristics that influence how to respond to information and form perceptions. Usually, this perception is influenced by past experience, which is an individual's experience with an institution or service that influences how they respond to certain policies or programs. Lin et al (2017) In addition, it is also influenced by knowledge & awareness that the more someone knows about a service or product, the better they can evaluate it (Kotler & Keller, 2013).

#### **2. Social & Cultural Factors**

This factor includes the social environment that shapes how consumers view a phenomenon. Such as social & cultural norms that perception can be influenced by

cultural values and norms that apply in an environment (Hofstede, 1984). In addition, it is also influenced by media & public opinion that information is obtained from social media or online reviews, so that it affects how consumers view a service.

### **3. Organizational & Contextual Factors**

This factor includes elements of the organization or service that are perceived by an individual. This element includes service quality & reliability, which are factors such as timeliness and accuracy of diagnostic services that greatly affect customer perceptions of the accountability of the diagnostic center. In addition, it is also influenced by technology & innovation, as the use of the latest technology in health services or other industries can increase positive customer perceptions (Davis, 1989).

### **4. Situational Factors**

Situational factors refer to external conditions that can influence a person's perception. Such factors as price & availability, which are a customer's perception of a product or service, are also influenced by its price and availability in the market. In addition, it is also influenced by direct vs indirect experience. People who experience the service directly may have different perceptions from those who only hear from others (Kotler & Keller, 2013).

## **Customer Attitudes**

According to Chikazhe et al (2024) Customer attitudes are a person's internal evaluation of a product, service, brand, or behavior that is formed through individual experiences, expectations, and external factors such as marketing and promotions. Thuy et al (2024) also states that customer attitudes are customer assessments of products, either in the form of positive or negative attitudes. Saut & Song (2025) also states that customer attitudes are customer assessments that are influenced by how they view social and environmental contributions. From several definitions, it can be concluded that customer attitudes are customer attitudes referring to customer evaluations or assessments of products, services, or brands, which are formed by personal experiences, expectations, and external influences such as marketing, promotions, and social or environmental factors. Factors that influence consumer attitudes Ela (2018), among others:

#### **1. Family Influence**

Family plays a significant role in shaping individual attitudes and behavior. As the closest environment, family is the most intense and consistent place of interaction in daily life. The results of various studies show that there is a strong correlation between consumer

attitudes towards a product and the attitudes shown by their parents towards the same product.

## **2. Hands-on Experience**

An individual's attitude toward an object can be formed through direct experience gained over time. This experience provides an opportunity for individuals to personally evaluate an object, which then contributes to the formation of certain attitudes.

## **3. Peer Group Influences**

Peer groups have a significant influence in the process of attitude formation, especially during adolescence. The tendency to gain social acceptance from the peer environment makes individuals more susceptible to group influence compared to other sources of influence.

## **4. Direct Marketing**

Direct marketing practices that are increasingly being implemented by companies also contribute to the formation of consumer attitudes. Although its influence is not always direct, this strategy is still able to create certain perceptions and preferences for the products or services offered.

## **5. Personality**

Individual personality characteristics are important determinants in the formation of attitudes. Personality aspects such as values, motivations, and lifestyles influence how individuals respond to certain objects and situations.

## **6. Mass media**

Mass media plays an important role as an agent of forming public attitudes. Therefore, marketers need to understand the types of media that are most accessed by the targeted market segment. Through the use of appropriate media and effective message delivery, positive attitudes towards an object or brand can be formed strategically.

## **Customer satisfaction**

Customer satisfaction is a condition in which consumer expectations of a product or service are met or even exceeded. According to Oliver (1997), customer satisfaction is the result of evaluating the difference between expectations and the reality of the service received (Sinollah & Masruro, 2019). If the service meets expectations, then consumers will feel satisfied. If the service exceeds expectations, then consumers will feel very satisfied, and vice versa. Satisfied users have strategic significance in the context of business continuity because satisfied users tend to show loyalty, make repurchases, and endorse others. For MSMEs like

Arascraf, cultivating user satisfaction can turn into a potential differentiation that is different from competitors, especially Muslim fashion products.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative case study approach, which aims to explore in depth the factors that influence consumer perceptions and attitudes towards Arascarf UMKM in Malang City (Dewi & Hidayah, 2019). Data were obtained through in-depth interviews with four purposively selected informants, namely individuals who have direct experience as consumers of Arascarf products. The informants consisted of students at the Al-Barokah Islamic Boarding School in Malang City, who have diverse social backgrounds and shopping experiences. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner so that researchers could explore answers flexibly, but still referring to the main theme of the study, namely perception factors (visual, social values, product quality, communication, and service experience) and consumer attitudes (loyalty, pride, recommendations, or dissatisfaction).

**Table 1. Informant Data**

No	Name	Age	Status
1	The Greatest of the Faithful	22 years	Students of Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University of Malang
2	Sister Mursyidatul Mahsunah	25 years	Lecturer at Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University of Malang
3	Wisdom	28 Years	Lecturer at Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University of Malang
4	The Greatest of the Great	20 years	Students of State University of Malang

Data processed: Interview Process

The data collection process was conducted over three weeks, through direct interviews. All interview results were recorded and transcribed to be analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. This analysis involves identifying key patterns and themes from each informant's narrative related to their perceptions and attitudes towards Arascarf. Data validity was strengthened through source triangulation and member checking, where the transcript results were reconfirmed with each informant to ensure data accuracy. By using this approach, the study not only describes consumer perceptions and attitudes descriptively but also reveals the relationship between consumer experiences and the values carried by the brand. This



qualitative case study approach allows for an in-depth understanding of how consumers form judgments, express attitudes, and make decisions about local social-based products such as Arascarf.

#### **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Based on the results of interviews conducted with four informants, a picture was obtained regarding consumer perceptions and attitudes towards Arascarf UMKM in Malang City. The first informant, Sister Fahimmatul Ilma Nadini (22 years old), got to know Arascarf through Instagram social media while looking for a unique gift for her friend. She said that her first impression of Arascarf was very positive. This is due to the aesthetic, personal, and exclusive product design even though it comes from the UMKM sector. The visual aspect and appearance of the product are the main factors that shape her perception. She said that the way the product photos, packaging, and narratives are presented are able to arouse curiosity and interest. Furthermore, she considered that Arascarf has a strong social image because it often displays local housewife empowerment activities in its production process. For Fahimmatul, this adds to the social value of the product and fosters a sense of concern for others.

Fahimmatul's attitude towards Arascarf is demonstrated through real actions, such as routinely purchasing products including bergo, pashmina, and ciput and recommending them to friends and family. She feels proud to use local products that have a strong identity and are different from mass products. She said that she often gets questions about the origin of the products she wears, and this is a source of pride for her because she can introduce quality local products. Thus, a positive perception is formed through an attractive visual appearance, strong social values, and empathetic communication from Arascarf. The attitude of consumers who are loyal, proud, and active in supporting the brand reflects Arascarf's success in building meaningful relationships with its consumers.

The second informant, Sister Mursyidatul Mahsunah (25 years old), got to know Arascarf through the UMKM bazaar activity held at Malang Olympic Garden (MOG) in 2021. She was interested in one of the hand-knitted products on display because it was considered to have high artistic and aesthetic value. The direct experience of seeing and touching the product formed her initial perception. She felt that the products offered showed character and quality that were on par with well-known brands. She explained, "When I held the product directly, I could feel that it was handmade and not carelessly made. The finishing is neat, the design is contemporary, but still thick with local nuances."

Mursyidatul's attitude towards Arascarf is very positive. She has purchased various products, such as Bella Square, motif scarves, and knitted jackets, for personal use or as souvenirs for guests from out of town. In addition, she also uses Arascarf as an example in discussions about local branding in lectures and often recommends it to colleagues. This shows that her support is not only in the form of personal consumption, but also in educational and professional contexts. Thus, the positive perception of Arascarf is formed by product quality, unique design, and strong social narratives. Her loyal and supportive attitude is reflected in her active involvement, both as a consumer and as an informal promoter in academic and social circles.

The third informant, Sister Hikmiyyah (28 years old), stated that she views Arascarf as an MSME that can compete with other local fashion brands because it has a strong visual identity. According to her, each product has a story that makes it more personal and unique. She felt more emotionally connected after seeing the product description on Instagram and watching the manufacturing process displayed in the form of reels. For Hikmiyyah, buying Arascarf products is not just about getting goods, but also a form of appreciation for the creative process behind it.

Hikmiyyah's attitude towards Arascarf is very positive. She actively promotes Arascarf products through her social media, even creating unboxing content and short reviews on the TikTok platform, which then received many positive responses from her followers. She feels proud to use Arascarf products because, in addition to being attractive and high-quality, the products show that local brands can be classy and have added value. Her attitude as a young consumer is influenced by the ethical values carried by Arascarf. Thus, her positive perception is formed by the attractive visual appearance, strong ethical values, and enjoyable digital experience. Her positive attitude is reflected in her loyalty, voluntary promotion, and active involvement in supporting local products through social media.

The fourth informant, Sister Latifatul Hasanah (20 years old), said that she had bought an Arascarf product in the form of a square hijab as a birthday present. Her interest began with the appearance of the product design on social media, which looked aesthetic and unique. However, when she visited the store in person, she was disappointed because the color of the product did not match what was displayed on social media, and the materials used did not meet her expectations. This lowered her perception of the quality of Arascarf products.

In terms of attitude, Latifatul stated that she had no intention of making repeat purchases, although she still appreciated the efforts of local MSMEs. She felt that the inconsistent service and the result that did not meet expectations made her reluctant to

recommend the product to others. Although she did not express criticism openly, her passive attitude reflected the importance of consistent quality and communication in building consumer loyalty, especially for consumers who are sensitive to service experiences. Overall, the interview results showed that positive perceptions of Arascarf were influenced by the product's visual appearance, physical quality, social narrative, and emotional experience. The first three informants perceived Arascarf as an aesthetic, socially meaningful, and quality brand. They showed an attitude of loyalty, pride, and active support for the brand, by the theory of attitudes, which includes cognitive (product knowledge), affective (positive feelings), and conative (real actions such as buying and recommending) aspects. In contrast, the negative perception of the fourth informant revealed that the mismatch between expectations and reality of the service can reduce consumer satisfaction and loyalty. This supports the reliability and tangibles dimensions of SERVQUAL as the strongest indicators in building the right perception.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of interviews with the four informants, it can be concluded that consumer perceptions and attitudes towards Arascarf UMKM in Malang City are greatly influenced by several key factors, including the visual appearance of the product, physical quality, social narrative, shopping experience, and communication from the seller. Three informants, namely Fahimmatul Ilma Nadini, Mursyidatul Mahsunah, and Hikmiyyah, showed very positive perceptions of Arascarf. This positive perception was formed through the unique visual appeal of the product, the social values carried by the brand (such as women's empowerment and handmade production), and the quality of the product, which is considered good and valuable. Their attitudes also show loyalty and active support, both in the form of repeat purchases, recommendations to others, and voluntary promotions on social media and academic spaces.

On the other hand, one informant, Latifatul Hasanah, showed a perception and attitude that tended to be negative. The discrepancy between expectations and the reality of the product received, especially regarding color and material, as well as the service experience that was considered inconsistent, were factors that formed her negative perception. The attitude shown was also passive, where she was not interested in making repeat purchases or recommending the product to others. This shows that although Arascarf has succeeded in building a positive image in the eyes of most of its consumers, consistency in product quality and service remains a crucial factor that determines the sustainability of consumer loyalty. Therefore, MSMEs such

as Arascarf need to continue to maintain and improve product quality and communication transparency to maintain and expand a loyal and supportive customer base.

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