

**FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION WITH CROCS
PRODUCTS IN THE GUANGDONG REGION CHINA**

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to evaluate customer satisfaction with Crocs products in the Guangdong region of China and to identify the key factors influencing this satisfaction. Given Crocs' global recognition for its distinctive footwear, comprehending customer sentiments in specific regional markets such as Guangdong is crucial for strategic planning and targeted marketing efforts. Employing a quantitative approach, this study utilizes surveys and questionnaires to gauge satisfaction levels and identify influential factors. A sample size of 385 individuals has been meticulously selected to ensure the representativeness and robustness of the findings. The results indicate a significant level of customer satisfaction, driven by factors such as product quality, price, brand perception, customer service, and innovation. By elucidating these factors, this research provides valuable insights for Crocs and similar brands, empowering them to refine strategies and cater to the discerning preferences of consumers in Guangdong. Consequently, this research not only enhances academic understanding of consumer behavior and satisfaction but also offers actionable implications for business strategy and marketing management. Additionally, the R-squared value of 0.816 demonstrates the model's capability to explain variation in customer satisfaction, further validating the significance of the identified factors.

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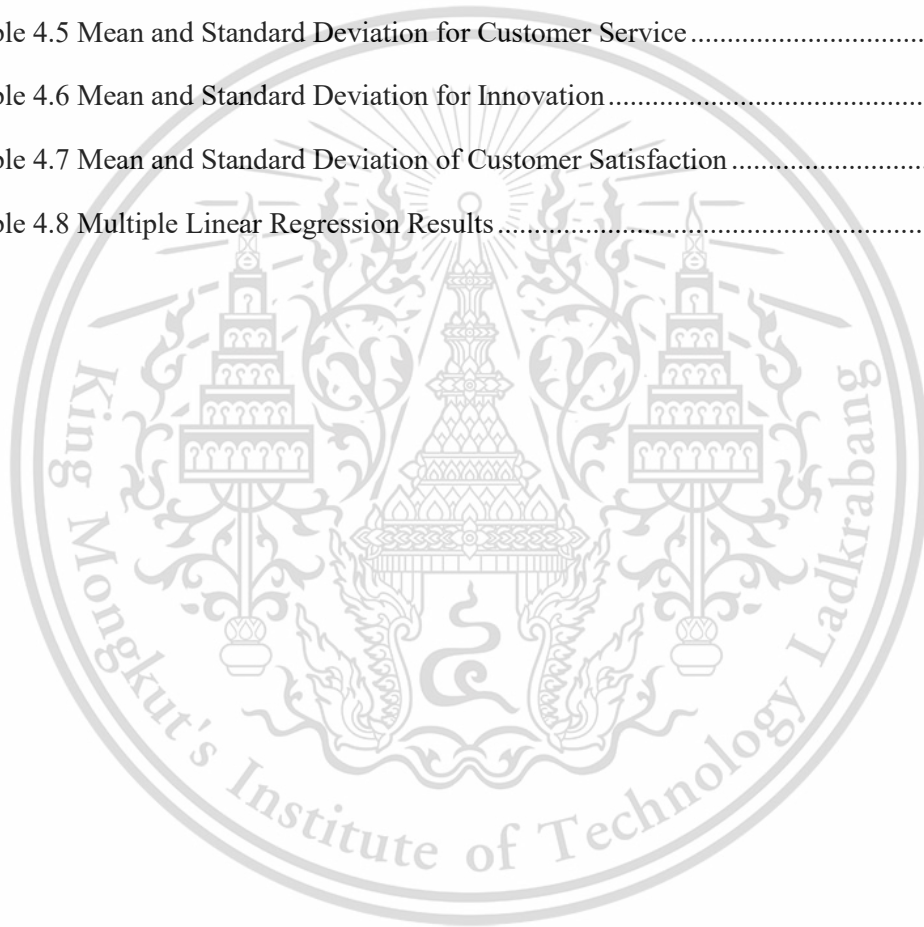
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

In the backdrop of Crocs' remarkable success as an internationally renowned footwear brand, this study seeks to delve into the evolving landscape of consumer satisfaction within the Guangdong region, China. Founded in 2002, Crocs garnered acclaim for its distinctive shoe designs and the innovative use of Croslite, a lightweight, non-slip, and comfortable material. Despite its widespread appeal across all age groups and product categories, the issue of consumer satisfaction has emerged as a critical factor influencing the brand's sustained competitiveness.

Over its 20-year journey, Crocs experienced both soaring popularity and moments of retreat, with a resurgence in recent times. The revival of Crocs has not only intensified market competition, attracting brands like Sketchers and Decathlon to enter the realm of hole shoes, but has also reaffirmed Crocs' dominance in e-commerce sales, particularly on platforms like Tmall.

The financial reports for the first quarter of 2023 underscore Crocs' robust performance, with a 33.9% YoY increase in revenue to \$884 million, driven significantly by the main brand's contribution of \$649 million, reflecting a 19% YoY surge. Notably, Crocs raised its full-year 2023 earnings estimates, anticipating total revenue between \$3.945 billion and \$4.045 billion.

Amidst these triumphs, the study recognizes the evolving consumer landscape, where changing consumption concepts prioritize elements beyond price and quality. Customers now emphasize product service, novelty, and social value, necessitating an innovative approach to meet their ever-changing needs.

In the face of intensified market competition and evolving consumer expectations, enterprises must establish symbiotic relationships with customers. Beyond meeting needs, companies must also exceed expectations, generate value, and foster customer loyalty. This

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has become paramount in a market environment where the soft indicators of customer satisfaction are often overlooked, potentially leading to dissatisfaction among consumers.

The study, thus, is positioned to unravel the intricacies of customer satisfaction within the context of Crocs' business in the Guangdong region. It aims to offer insights into the dynamics of customer satisfaction, providing a strategic foundation for Crocs to navigate the competitive market by focusing on customer needs and soft indicators that drive satisfaction.

1.2 Research Question

1.How satisfied are customers with Crocs products in the Guangdong region, and what specific aspects contribute to their satisfaction?

2.What factors significantly influence customer satisfaction with Crocs products in Guangdong?

1.3 Research Objectives

1.To assess customer satisfaction with Crocs products in the Guangdong region.

2.To identify factors influencing customer satisfaction with Crocs products in Guangdong.

1.4 Research Significance

1.4.1 For Customers

This study holds significant implications for Crocs customers in the Guangdong region, aiming to enhance their overall experience with the brand. By addressing customer preferences, expectations, and concerns, the research seeks to empower customers with valuable insights. The findings help customers to make informed purchase decisions, considering the factors that influence satisfaction. Ultimately, the goal is to create a more satisfying and tailored experience for Crocs customers.

1.4.2 For Crocs Business

From a business perspective, this research plays a crucial role in guiding strategic

decision-making for Crocs. By gaining a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing customer satisfaction, Crocs can refine existing strategies and develop new ones. This strategic adjustment is essential for maintaining competitiveness in the market. Additionally, the study offers an opportunity for Crocs to foster greater brand loyalty and solidify its market position. Satisfied customers are more likely to become repeat buyers and advocates for the brand.

1.4.3 For Academic Community

In the academic realm, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on customer satisfaction. By exploring the unique context of the footwear industry with Crocs as a case study, the research enriches theoretical concepts and frameworks related to customer satisfaction. The methodology employed in this study provides valuable insights for academics studying customer satisfaction measurement and evaluation models. It offers a practical example of applying theoretical concepts in a real business setting. As such, this research serves as a reference for teaching and discussions on customer satisfaction strategies within academic circles. Overall, the study holds significance for customers, Crocs as a business entity, and the academic community by bridging theory and practical applications in the context of customer satisfaction.

1.5 Research Scope

1. Population & Sample: This research focuses on customers of Crocs products in the Guangdong region, China. The population under consideration includes individuals who have purchased or interacted with Crocs footwear. The sample were drawn from diverse demographics, incorporating factors such as age, gender, monthly income, etc., to ensure a representative and comprehensive analysis of customer satisfaction.

2. Variables: The study investigated various variables to comprehensively understand customer satisfaction with Crocs products. Independent variables include product quality, price, brand perception, customer service, and innovation.

3. Area: The geographical scope of the research encompasses the Guangdong region,

China. This area was chosen due to its significant market share and the growing influence of consumer preferences on Crocs' business. The study aims to capture localized nuances and variations in customer satisfaction within this specific region.

4. Timeframe: The research was conducted in December 2023.

1.6 Definition of Terms

1. Customer Satisfaction is defined as the degree to which individuals express positive sentiments and fulfillment based on their experiences with Crocs products in Guangdong. This is quantified by their likelihood to recommend Crocs products to friends and family, the level of satisfaction derived from their overall experiences, the perception of Crocs' sustainability and environmental responsibility, the likelihood of future product selection, and the alignment of Crocs' order fulfillment with their expectations regarding timeliness and accuracy.

2. Product Quality is defined as the collective evaluation of key attributes in Crocs footwear, encompassing the perceived high quality of materials, the excellence in comfort and foot support, the alignment of durability with expectations, the consistent maintenance of a high standard across various styles, and the dual enhancement of aesthetics and functionality through design features.

3. Price is defined as the comprehensive assessment of the pricing strategy for Crocs products. This assessment includes the belief that Crocs products offer reasonable pricing in relation to the quality and features provided, competitiveness within the footwear market, accessibility through a reasonable range of prices, perceived value for money, and transparent communication regarding pricing and associated costs.

4. Brand Perception is defined as the holistic evaluation of the Crocs brand, encompassing its association with innovative and stylish footwear, the effective communication of brand values and identity through elements like logo and messaging, alignment of the brand image with personal values and preferences, the contribution of unique product design and colors to a distinctive brand image, and the positive influence of the

brand's heritage and history on the perception of authenticity and trustworthiness.

5. Customer Service is defined as the comprehensive evaluation of the support and assistance provided by Crocs in the Guangdong region. This includes the alignment of the perceived level of customer service with expectations, the in-store shopping experience, incorporating aspects such as staff assistance and ambiance, the effectiveness of issue resolution, the proactive solicitation and value placed on customer feedback, and the convenience and hassle-free nature of the return and exchange process for Crocs products.

6. Innovation is defined as the comprehensive assessment of Crocs' commitment to introducing novel and fashionable products, reflected in the alignment with current fashion trends. This includes the consistent introduction of captivating and groundbreaking designs that maintain customer interest, the demonstration of adaptability in product development, indicating a customer-centric approach to innovation. Additionally, the introduction of limited edition or exclusive collections contributes to enhancing Crocs' innovative image, and the incorporation of innovative technologies, such as QR codes and mobile device scanning for AR experiences, demonstrates Crocs' adaptability to modern technological advancements.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of the literature related to merchandise satisfaction, provides relevant concepts, theories and research methods, and introduces the basic situation of crocs brand merchandise in detail, aiming to provide sufficient theoretical support and empirical evidence basis for this study. The literature review is divided into the following parts.

- 2.1 Overview of Crocs Brand
- 2.2 Academic Research on the Essence of Customer Satisfaction
- 2.3 Concept and Theories of Factors Affecting Customer Satisfaction
- 2.4 Academic Research on Customer Satisfaction Measurement and Evaluation
- 2.5 Strategies to Elevate Customer Satisfaction: Insights from Research
- 2.6 Summary of Research Status
- 2.7 Hypothesis Development

2.1 Overview of Crocs Brand

Crocs, a globally renowned brand, has made a significant impact in the footwear industry, earning recognition for its distinctive footwear characterized by comfort, versatility, and unique design. Established in 2002, Crocs Inc. has transcended its origins as a niche product to become a household name, a testament to its innovation and brand resilience.

The brand initially gained popularity in niche markets due to its distinctive design, practicality, and comfort. However, Crocs expanded its product range, venturing into sectors like healthcare and hospitality. Its exceptional comfort and ease of cleaning made it a preferred choice for professionals with long hours on their feet.

2.1.1 Brand Values and Identity

Crocs has crafted its identity around core values, including:

Comfort: The hallmark of Crocs is its comfortable design, achieved through the use of

Croslite material and ergonomic shapes, allowing for extended wear without discomfort.

Versatility: Designed for various occasions, from casual walks on the beach to medical professionals' long shifts, Crocs' diverse product range caters to different consumer needs.

Innovation: Known for innovative materials and design choices, Crocs stays relevant and appeals to a broad customer base.

Fun and Uniqueness: Crocs' distinctive, playful design and wide color palette convey a sense of fun and individuality, allowing customers to express their personalities.

Sustainability: The brand actively promotes sustainability by reducing its carbon footprint and adopting responsible business practices.

Over the years, Crocs has continued to innovate its product line, introducing various styles and designs, such as sandals, sneakers, and collaborations with designers and celebrities, broadening its appeal to people of all ages and backgrounds.

2.1.2 Brand History and Evolution

The Crocs story began with the creation of a clog-style shoe made from Croslite, a lightweight and durable proprietary resin material. The initial focus was on boating enthusiasts and water sports lovers due to the non-slip, waterproof nature of the product.

Global Reach and Popularity

Crocs has evolved from a niche product to a global phenomenon, present in over 90 countries with products available in various retail outlets, including its stores, department stores, and e-commerce platforms. The brand's widespread recognition spans diverse demographics, appealing to young children and adults alike, from fashion-forward individuals to those seeking comfort. This broad appeal reflects Crocs' ability to adapt and innovate, aligning with changing consumer preferences and needs.

2.2 Academic Research on the Essence of Customer Satisfaction

Since the 1990s, international scholars have engaged in substantial research that has

enriched the understanding of customer satisfaction, providing diverse perspectives. The foundational work of Cardozo (1965) marked the initiation of customer satisfaction research, introducing the concept into the realm of marketing. Woodruff (1983) accentuated that customer satisfaction embodies the emotional expression arising from product usage or the enjoyment of a service. Wilton (1988) contributed to the field by defining customer satisfaction as the assessment of the disparity between anticipated product quality before purchase and perceived quality after consumption.

Woodside (1989) and others posited that customer satisfaction constitutes a comprehensive evaluation by the customer of a purchased product or service. Oliver (1997) defined it as the extent to which customer needs are fulfilled during the consumption experience, constituting a perceptual state. Kotler (2001) argued that customer satisfaction results from the cognitive comparison between customer expectations and perceived outcomes.

Hussain and Mkpojiogu (2016), within the context of a software project, conceptualized customer satisfaction as the disparity between the customer's actual pre and post-consumption experiences and their anticipated experience. Asaka and Mendes (2017) characterized customer satisfaction as an emotional state, encompassing positive pleasure, unhappiness, or anger based on the degree to which customer needs are met. Newsome D (2019) approached satisfaction from a psychological standpoint, defining it as an emotional expression arising when the performance of a service or product is juxtaposed with expected performance.

Dileep (2020) and others contended that satisfaction is a cognitive state, reflecting the customer's perception of the adequacy of payment and return. Some scholars maintained that satisfaction captures emotional changes during the customer consumption process, serving as an intuitive indicator of the customer's inclination to consume again. Ef (2021) integrated previous perspectives, asserting that satisfaction is a perceptual state resulting from comparing the customer's perception of service and product performance with their expectations.

Chinese scholars have also contributed to defining customer satisfaction. Zhang et al. (2010) proposed that customer satisfaction is determined by the algebraic subtraction or subjective difference between perceived performance and expectation standards. Xie (2017) viewed customer satisfaction as the overall feeling toward a product or service, suggesting that higher satisfaction increases the likelihood of subsequent purchase behavior. Ma (2019) regarded satisfaction as an objective response, determined by the comparison between purchased product and service performance and psychological expectations. Wang (2020) defined customer satisfaction as the degree of mutual alignment between customer expectations and actual experiences, representing a relative concept comprehensively reflecting customer satisfaction with consumption behavior and corporate services.

2.3 Concept and Theories of Factors Affecting Customer Satisfaction

Heskett (1994) and other researchers underscored the integral connection between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction. They posit that the value of service, in turn, hinges on the satisfaction of employees, thereby influencing overall customer satisfaction. Drawing on the service profit chain model, Zhang (2013) established a positive correlation between customer satisfaction and business performance. Notably, enhanced enterprise performance not only uplifts customer satisfaction but also fosters a positive work environment for employees, leading to improved cognition, work conditions, and overall satisfaction.

Zhao (2017) study emphasized the substantial positive relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. Factors such as improved responsiveness, information quality, and error handling were identified as critical contributors to heightened customer satisfaction. Zhang (2019) research on Three Squirrels highlighted the positive association between corporate image, brand perception, product quality, and overall customer satisfaction.

Cui (2020) exploration, grounded in the theory of customer transference value, identified six key factors influencing customer satisfaction: service value, personnel value, product value, image value, non-monetary costs, and monetary costs. Service value emerged

as the most influential factor, followed by non-monetary costs and personnel value.

Tang (2019) examination of express delivery companies, such as Yuantong, identified key factors affecting customer satisfaction, with factors ranked in descending order: no loss of items, transportation speed, delivery coverage, no damage to items, reasonable pricing, pickup response time, and pickup and delivery attitude.

Using the gray correlation model, Yu (2020) and collaborators explored factors impacting customer satisfaction in takeaway ordering, revealing the descending order of influence as food quality, service factors, pricing, and convenience.

Li (2021) analysis of historic districts considered factors like characteristic spatial patterns, customer complaints, customer loyalty, perceived value, neighborhood image, and perceived quality in examining their impact on customer satisfaction.

Qiu (2021) investigation into user satisfaction on Xiaohongshu focused on customer perceived value. The study revealed that social value factors exerted the strongest influence on user satisfaction, with emotional value, perceived cost, and functional value playing comparable roles.

Xiang et al.'s (2021) empirical study on hotel group purchasing, using T Hotel in Fuyang City as an example, identified factors such as hotel location environment, room environment, hotel infrastructure, catering offerings, hotel style characteristics, and pricing as primary influencers on customer satisfaction.

2.3.1 Product Quality

In the realm of Crocs products, the focal point lies in a meticulous assessment of every facet contributing to product quality. This comprehensive evaluation encompasses the judicious selection of materials, the precision of craftsmanship, and the durability of the final product. The commitment to maintaining and delivering consistent, high-quality items serves as a cornerstone in the pursuit of customer satisfaction.

Materials: The selection of materials is a critical element in determining the overall quality of Crocs products. From the patented Croslite material known for its comfort and durability to other components, the choice of materials is deliberate and aligned with the

brand's commitment to excellence.

Craftsmanship: The artistry and attention to detail in crafting each pair of Crocs contribute significantly to their overall quality. Whether it's the distinctive design elements or the precision in assembly, craftsmanship plays a pivotal role in ensuring that each product meets the stringent standards set by the brand.

Durability: A hallmark of Crocs' commitment to quality is the durability of its products. Customers expect their footwear to withstand the rigors of daily use, and Crocs ensures that each product is built to endure, providing long-lasting comfort and satisfaction.

The significance of maintaining these high-quality standards cannot be overstated, as it forms the bedrock of customer satisfaction. When Crocs consistently delivers products that not only meet but exceed customer expectations in terms of materials, craftsmanship, and durability, it establishes a strong foundation for customer loyalty and positive brand perception.

The relationship between product quality and customer satisfaction is a critical aspect of consumer behavior, with implications for brand loyalty and market competitiveness. In this literature review, this research explores existing research and insights into how product quality influences customer satisfaction, focusing specifically on Crocs products. Studies conducted by Achabou (2020) emphasize key dimensions of product the context of footwear such as Crocs. The model proposed by Ahn et al. (2009) outlines factors influencing customer satisfaction, such as product performance, expectations, and perceived value. This model provides a framework for examining how customers evaluate Crocs products. Research by Ariely et al. (2010) and Baldo et al. (2022) has established a positive correlation between perceived product quality and customer satisfaction in the footwear industry. Applying these findings to Crocs, it can be inferred that maintaining high-quality standards is crucial for enhancing customer satisfaction. A case study by Bollich et al. (2016) delves into Crocs' quality control measures and their impact on customer satisfaction. The study reveals specific findings, suggesting that Crocs' commitment to product quality plays a pivotal role in customer satisfaction. Despite its success, Crocs faces challenges related to [specific

challenges]. Addressing these challenges could further enhance product quality, positively influencing customer satisfaction. Industry experts, such as Baron et al. (2017), suggest that implementing recommendations could improve customer satisfaction. In conclusion, the literature reviewed highlights the significance of product quality in influencing customer satisfaction, drawing insights from studies by Achabou (2020), Ahn et al. (2009), Ariely et al. (2010), Baldo et al. (2022), Bollich et al. (2016), and recommendations proposed by Baron et al. (2017). This synthesis underscores the importance of maintaining and improving product quality for Crocs to ensure continued customer satisfaction and brand loyalty.

2.3.2 Price

The pricing strategy is deeply rooted in economic theories and consumer behavior models. According to economic theory, consumers are rational actors who seek to maximize utility while minimizing costs. This suggests that the perceived value of a product, often influenced by its price, plays a critical role in shaping customer satisfaction (Zeithaml, 1988). In the context of Crocs products, understanding how price influences satisfaction requires an exploration of both the perceived value and the customer's expectations. Research by Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal (1991) emphasizes the importance of perceived value in shaping customer satisfaction. When consumers believe they are receiving good value for the price paid, their satisfaction levels tend to increase. Crocs, known for their unique design and comfort, should be evaluated in terms of how customers perceive the value offered in relation to the price. Another critical aspect is the fairness of pricing. Previous studies, such as that by Oliver and Swan (1989), suggest that perceived price fairness significantly impacts customer satisfaction. If customers perceive that the price of Crocs products is fair in comparison to the perceived value, it is likely to positively influence their satisfaction. Understanding consumer behavior is essential in assessing how price influences satisfaction. Varki and Colgate (2001) found that consumers exhibit varying degrees of price sensitivity. Some consumers may prioritize price over other factors, while others may be willing to pay a premium for perceived quality. Analyzing Crocs' customer base in terms of price sensitivity can provide insights into the relationship between pricing and satisfaction. In conclusion, the relationship between

price and customer satisfaction with Crocs products is multifaceted and requires a nuanced understanding of consumer behavior, perceived value, and cultural influences. This literature review provides a foundation for further empirical research to test the hypothesis and offers avenues for organizations to refine their pricing strategies in line with customer expectations and market dynamics.

2.3.3 Brand Perception

Brand perception plays a pivotal role in influencing consumer behavior and satisfaction. Understanding how consumers perceive a brand, such as Crocs, is critical for businesses aiming to enhance customer satisfaction. This literature review delves into existing research on the relationship between brand perception and customer satisfaction with a specific focus on Crocs products. Brand perception is grounded in various theories, notably the Brand Equity model developed by Keller (1993). According to this model, brand perception is shaped by brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. Evaluating Crocs' brand perception in these dimensions provides insights into how it influences customer satisfaction. Previous research, such as that conducted by Aaker (1991), emphasizes the importance of brand associations in shaping consumer perceptions. Positive brand associations contribute to higher customer satisfaction levels. For Crocs, exploring the associations customers have with the brand, such as comfort, unique design, and functionality, is crucial in understanding the impact on satisfaction. Crocs has employed emotional branding strategies to create a connection with consumers. Gobe (2010) argues that emotional branding contributes to a positive brand perception, fostering customer satisfaction. Understanding the emotional connection customers have with Crocs can shed light on how brand perception influences satisfaction. Trust is a critical component of brand perception, and its impact on satisfaction is well-documented (Moorman, Zaltman, & Deshpande, 1992). Investigating how consumers trust Crocs as a brand and how this trust correlates with satisfaction is essential in gauging the brand's overall impact. The development of relationships between consumers and brands has been studied extensively. Fournier's (1998) work on consumer-brand relationships highlights the significance of these relationships in influencing satisfaction. Analyzing the

nature of the relationship between Crocs and its consumers provides nuanced insights into brand perception. In conclusion, brand perception significantly influences customer satisfaction with Crocs products. Drawing on theoretical frameworks, such as Brand Equity, emotional branding, and consumer-brand relationships, this literature review provides a foundation for empirical research to test the hypothesis. Investigating how brand associations, trust, emotional connections, and cultural factors shape Crocs' brand perception could contribute to a comprehensive understanding of its impact on customer satisfaction.

2.3.4 Customer Service

In the contemporary business landscape, the role of customer service in shaping customer satisfaction is paramount. The relationship between customer service and satisfaction is often grounded in service marketing theories. The Service Quality Model by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) is particularly relevant. According to this model, service quality influences customer perceptions and satisfaction. Applying this model to the context of Crocs allows for a theoretical understanding of the impact of customer service on satisfaction. Extensive research, such as that by Grönroos (2007), identifies multiple dimensions of customer service, including responsiveness, reliability, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. Assessing how Crocs addresses these dimensions in its customer service interactions is crucial for understanding their influence on customer satisfaction. Customer service responsiveness is a critical factor influencing satisfaction (Spreng & Mackoy, 1996). Timely and effective responses to customer queries, concerns, or issues contribute positively to satisfaction. Investigating how Crocs handles customer inquiries and complaints can shed light on the impact of responsiveness. Reliability is a key dimension of customer service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Research by Morgan and Hunt (1994) emphasizes the role of reliability in building trust, a fundamental element in customer satisfaction. Evaluating how Crocs ensures reliable customer service contributes to an understanding of trust-building mechanisms. Empathy in customer service is associated with understanding and addressing customer needs (McCole, 2002). Crocs' ability to empathize with customers, especially in addressing unique product concerns, can significantly influence overall satisfaction levels.

The tangibles aspect of customer service refers to the physical or visible elements, such as communication materials or facilities (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Research by Cronin and Taylor (1992) suggests that tangibles contribute to perceived service quality, influencing satisfaction. Examining how Crocs presents its customer service tangibles provides insights into perceived quality. Customer service is increasingly recognized as a source of competitive advantage (Heskett et al., 1997). Crocs' ability to leverage customer service as a differentiator in the competitive footwear market is crucial. Research on the link between customer service orientation and market performance underscores the significance of customer service strategies (Narver & Slater, 1990).

Given the growth of online retail, exploring the impact of online customer service on satisfaction is imperative. Research by Liu and Forsythe (2011) suggests that effective online customer service positively influences satisfaction. Analyzing how Crocs manages its online customer service interactions provides contemporary insights. In conclusion, customer service is a multifaceted determinant of customer satisfaction with Crocs products. Grounded in established service marketing theories, this literature review outlines various dimensions of customer service, including responsiveness, reliability, empathy, and tangibles. Investigating how Crocs addresses these dimensions and leverages customer service as a competitive advantage contributes to a nuanced understanding of its influence on customer satisfaction.

2.3.5 Innovation

In the dynamic landscape of consumer goods, innovation plays a pivotal role in shaping customer satisfaction. Innovation, in the context of consumer products, involves the introduction of new ideas, processes, or products that enhance the consumer experience. Tidd and Bessant (2018) propose that innovation can take various forms, including product innovation, process innovation, and marketing innovation. Understanding these dimensions is crucial for assessing the impact on customer satisfaction. Research by Song and Montoya-Weiss (1998) emphasizes the significance of product innovation in influencing customer satisfaction. Customers often derive satisfaction from novel features, designs, or functionalities. Investigating how Crocs integrates product innovation into its footwear

offerings is essential for understanding its impact on customer satisfaction. Operational efficiency resulting from process innovation contributes to overall customer satisfaction (Damanpour, 1991). How efficiently Crocs manages its production processes, supply chain, and distribution networks influences customer satisfaction. An examination of these aspects provides insights into the link between process innovation and customer satisfaction.

Innovation in marketing strategies can shape customer perception and satisfaction (Langerak et al., 2004). How Crocs positions itself in the market, communicates innovations, and engages with consumers through marketing efforts is instrumental in influencing satisfaction levels. Technological innovations, such as advancements in materials or production methods, contribute to enhancing the overall user experience (Hwang & Lee, 2019). Understanding how Crocs leverages technological innovation to improve comfort, durability, and aesthetics is vital for evaluating its impact on customer satisfaction. Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations theory (2003) suggests that customer satisfaction is influenced by the rate of adoption of innovative products. The faster customers adopt and accept new features or designs in Crocs products, the more likely it is to positively impact satisfaction levels. In conclusion, innovation, encompassing product, process, and marketing dimensions, is a crucial determinant of customer satisfaction with Crocs products. Drawing on established theories and empirical research, this literature review provides a comprehensive overview of the multifaceted relationship between innovation and customer satisfaction. Evaluating how Crocs strategically incorporates and communicates innovation contributes to a nuanced understanding of its impact on customer satisfaction.

2.4 Academic Research on Customer Satisfaction Measurement and Evaluation

Numerous scholarly endeavors have investigated the methodologies and frameworks employed in the assessment of customer satisfaction. The following studies delineate the construction and application of models for evaluating customer satisfaction:

Liu et al (2015): A model for the life satisfaction index of citizens in a two-type

society was devised, drawing insights from existing models such as SCSB, ACSI, and ECSI. Employing partial least squares path analysis within the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) framework, the researchers scrutinized relationships between potential and measurable variables. Empirical results underscored the model's adeptness and practical utility.

Shi et al. (2018): Building upon the ACSI customer satisfaction model, researchers tailored an evaluation index system for a testing organization. Hierarchical analysis was employed to structure dimensions encompassing customer-to-service, customer-to-technical, and customer-to-operation departments, comprising a total of six indicators.

Jiang et al. (2020): Employing a tripartite methodology involving literature research, the Delphi method, and hierarchical analysis, researchers crafted an evaluation index system for online nurse service satisfaction. This system comprised four first-level indicators, 14 second-level indicators, and 37 third-level indicators.

Zhou et al. (2021): Applying the Satisfaction-Cognitive-Service-Behavior (SCSB) model, the researchers scrutinized passenger transfer satisfaction at Jingtian Road Station of Nanjing Metro Line 2. Their findings indicated elevated customer satisfaction, suggesting the efficacy of the park-and-ride system in mitigating parking demand, traffic pressure, and augmenting passenger transfer satisfaction.

Gao al. (2019): A cross-border e-commerce consumer satisfaction index system, fashioned after the European Consumer Satisfaction Index (ECSI) model, was constructed. The study unveiled a positive correlation between perceived cross-border e-commerce quality and consumer expectations.

Fu et al. (2021): Focusing on logistics and distribution services in Chongqing, researchers applied the Customer Satisfaction Index (CCSI) model. Their findings underscored the significant influence of perceived service quality and cost on customer satisfaction, emphasizing the non-negligible role of brand image. Moreover, the study posited that customer satisfaction plays a pivotal role in determining customer loyalty.

Zhang et al. (2022): A comprehensive examination of mainstream customer satisfaction evaluation models, including SCSB, ACSI, and ECSI, culminated in the design of

a model tailored for production service enterprises, grounded in the domestic Total Customer Satisfaction Index (TCSI) model. Through surveys, case analyses, and recommendations for enhancement, the researchers offered a nuanced approach to fortifying customer satisfaction.

These scholarly inquiries collectively contribute to the academic discourse, offering diverse perspectives and methodologies for the nuanced exploration of customer satisfaction across varied industries and contextual landscapes.

2.5 Strategies to Elevate Customer Satisfaction: Insights from Research

A comprehensive examination of research endeavors reveals several strategic approaches aimed at enhancing customer satisfaction across diverse industries. In the realm of power supply enterprises, Gong and colleagues (2019) devised a customer satisfaction evaluation system, amalgamating marketing and customer satisfaction theories. Their study advocated a 7P service combination marketing strategy, emphasizing aspects such as understanding users' deeper electricity demands, innovative tariff systems, energy data cloud platforms, user participation in innovation, and bolstering the external image of employees and service quality management.

Cui et al. (2019) delved into online shopping customer satisfaction, employing a synthesis of the ECSI and CCSI models. Their analysis identified pivotal factors including platform image, product quality, logistics service quality, and after-sales service quality. The findings suggest strategies to address these factors, thereby enhancing overall customer satisfaction.

Considering the context of China's enterprise service industry, Li and Min (2019) proposed multifaceted strategies to elevate customer satisfaction. These encompassed intensified training for service personnel, external brand image enhancement, a commitment to customer-centered innovation in service content, and fortified customer relationship management through the establishment of customer files and prompt resolution of customer feedback.

Bu Lina et al. (2020) conducted a survey analysis to discern factors impacting tourism

service satisfaction at Guizhou Airlines Ltd. Their findings highlighted both subjective and objective factors, ranging from the complexity of tourism to the lack of standardized handling of irregular flights. Recommendations included initiatives such as improving staff welfare, bolstering customer relationship management, and standardizing procedures for irregular flights.

Wu Xinwei (2022), drawing from 4R marketing theory and customer satisfaction theory, proposed strategies to elevate customer satisfaction in the lubricant sector of the automobile manufacturing industry. These encompassed deepening connections, conducting timely market and customer demand research, prioritizing emotional marketing to foster customer loyalty, and effectively addressing customer expectations.

In summation, these research insights collectively offer nuanced and industry-specific strategies, providing a comprehensive understanding of how organizations can strategically enhance customer satisfaction through tailored and thoughtful approaches.

2.6 Summary of Research Status

Upon comprehensive review and synthesis of existing research on customer satisfaction, both domestically and internationally, it is evident that theoretical investigations in this realm have reached a relatively mature stage. Notably, scholars have made significant contributions, with primary achievements manifesting in two key dimensions: (1) theoretical explorations on the connotation of satisfaction, encompassing theories on service quality and differences in expectations; (2) advancements in satisfaction measurement and evaluation models, with prominent representatives including the SCSB model in Sweden, the ACSI model in the U.S., the ECSI model in Europe, and the CCSI model in China. These accomplishments establish a robust theoretical foundation for further inquiry, offering valuable insights and reference points for subsequent studies.

The research landscape, overall, demonstrates considerable richness, particularly with remarkable outcomes in the exploration of customer satisfaction within traditional industries. The significance of these results extends to the understanding of customer satisfaction in the

broader context of consumer behavior.

2.7 Hypothesis Development

Despite the abundance of research outcomes in customer satisfaction, there exists a notable gap in the specific domain of professional market research within the footwear brand industry. On one hand, research outcomes related to footwear customer satisfaction are relatively sparse and fragmented, hindering a comprehensive understanding of the influencing factors within the footwear brand industry and limiting applicability to the dynamic footwear development market. The evolving consumer habits necessitate a nuanced exploration of whether footwear services meet customer expectations, foster consumption dependence, build brand loyalty, and ultimately drive long-term purchases.

On the other hand, some aspects of the research related to customer satisfaction evaluation models lack maturity and require further enrichment and refinement. Therefore, focusing on the Crocs brand as a case study in customer satisfaction research serves a dual purpose. Firstly, it aims to innovate by exploring strategies to enhance customer satisfaction within the Crocs brand. Secondly, it endeavors to develop a customer satisfaction evaluation model specific to the Crocs brand industry, contributing to the theoretical framework and providing valuable insights for the broader footwear merchandise market. This two-fold approach seeks to address the existing research gaps and advance the understanding of customer satisfaction dynamics within the dynamic landscape of the footwear industry.

Based on literature review, the conceptual framework and five hypotheses have been proposed as follows.

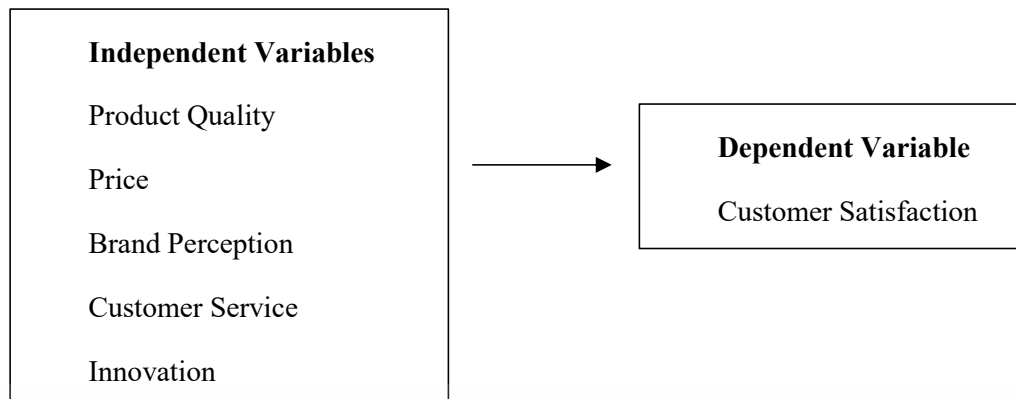


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between product quality and customer satisfaction with Crocs product.

H2: There is a significant positive relationship between price and customer satisfaction with Crocs product.

H3: There is a significant positive relationship between brand perception and customer satisfaction with Crocs product.

H4: There is a significant positive relationship between customer service and customer satisfaction with Crocs product.

H5: There is a significant positive relationship between innovation and customer satisfaction with Crocs product.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Population and Sample

In the pursuit of a more profound understanding of customer satisfaction related to the Crocs brand and to pinpoint tailored strategies for enhancement, this research centers its investigation on individuals who are active users of Crocs products. Specifically, the study is directed towards customers located in the Guangdong regions of China, seeking insights from those who have first-hand experience with Crocs merchandise.

The target population encompasses an unspecified but relevant number of customers who have engaged with the Crocs brand. To derive meaningful and representative findings, a sample size of 385 individuals has been selected for participation in the survey. By focusing on actual users within these specific regions, the study aims to capture nuanced perspectives and feedback that can contribute to a more targeted and region-specific approach to enhancing customer satisfaction for the Crocs brand.

3.2 Research Instrument

The primary research instrument for this study is a structured questionnaire carefully designed to gather comprehensive insights into customer satisfaction with Crocs products in the Guangdong regions of China. The questionnaire is divided into two main sections to systematically collect both demographic information and the core themes related to customer satisfaction.

Section 1: Demographic Information

The initial section captures key demographic details to provide a contextual understanding of respondents. This includes gender, age, educational background, monthly income, and marital status. The demographic data could be used for the analysis of customer satisfaction across different segments.

Section 2: Customer Satisfaction and Influential Factors

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The second section constitutes the core of the questionnaire, focusing on the factors influencing customer satisfaction with Crocs products and assessing the customer satisfaction level. The questions are aligned with established models and theories related to customer satisfaction. The key variables explored in this section include:

1. Customer Satisfaction: Assessing the various dimensions of customer satisfaction.
2. Product Quality: Assessing perceptions of Crocs product quality.
3. Price: Evaluating opinions on the pricing of Crocs products.
4. Brand Perception: Exploring the impact of brand image on customer satisfaction.
5. Customer Service: Investigating experiences and opinions related to Crocs customer service.
6. Innovation: Assessing perceptions of Crocs' innovative initiatives.

Each variable is measured using a Likert scale, allowing respondents to express their level of agreement or disagreement with specific statements. The scale ranges from strongly agree to strongly disagree, enabling a quantitative analysis of customer sentiments.

3.3 Data Collection

The data collection process for this study utilized the Questionnaire Star platform, employing online questionnaires to efficiently gather customer information. The questionnaire design was meticulously planned, emphasizing clear research objectives and safeguarding respondents' privacy to ensure the credibility of the findings. The research team adhered to ethical guidelines and data protection regulations, explicitly stating the study's purpose and ensuring confidentiality.

The choice of the "Questionnaire Star" platform, a prominent online survey application, provided a user-friendly interface and allowed for real-time updates to the questionnaire. An informed consent statement was included at the beginning of the questionnaire, emphasizing the study's purpose and reassuring respondents about the privacy and confidentiality of their data.

To maximize participation, the study employed diverse distribution methods, such as

sharing the survey link on social media platforms like WeChat, email newsletters, and utilizing QR codes at store checkouts and kiosks. This multi-pronged approach aimed to capture a broad range of responses and ensure a representative sample.

Upon completion of the data collection phase, a thorough cleaning process was undertaken to remove any incomplete or inconsistent responses. Subsequently, statistical analysis was performed to derive meaningful insights. These steps collectively allowed for the effective collection of data on the Crocs brand using online questionnaires.

3.4 Reliability and Validity Analysis

3.4.1 Reliability Analysis

In this study, ensuring the validity and internal consistency of the questionnaire is crucial for obtaining precise and dependable data. To accomplish this, a well-structured plan has been devised to assess the questionnaire's reliability, involving the analysis of data collected from 30 pilot surveys. Evaluating the instrument's reliability and internal consistency is a critical step in gauging the expected impact and quality of the questionnaire.

Cronbach's alpha coefficient, originally developed by Lee Cronbach in 1951, is a widely recognized method for assessing instrument reliability and has been extensively used for various instruments, including multi-question Likert scale surveys, as utilized in this study. Typically, a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of at least 0.70 is considered optimal for ensuring survey reliability (Cronbach, 1951).

The formula for the standardized alpha coefficient for a scale with n questions, each having an average correlation coefficient of r between them, is expressed as follows:

$$\alpha = \frac{nr}{(n-1)r+1}$$

In this study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was employed to assess the reliability of the questionnaire scale. The survey data are the input into a statistical analysis program to calculate the alpha coefficient. Generally, a Cronbach's alpha coefficient value of 0.70 or higher indicates satisfactory reliability (Koo & Li, 2016). Specifically, a value exceeding 0.8

signifies a high level of reliability, while a range between 0.7 and 0.8 is considered good. However, a value within the range of 0.6 to 0.7 is still acceptable but may warrant closer scrutiny and potential refinement of the questionnaire items.

Table 3.1 Reliability Analysis Results

Variable	Cronbach Alpha	Number of terms
Customer Satisfaction	0.851	5
Product Quality	0.827	5
Price	0.831	5
Brand Perception	0.842	5
Customer Service	0.839	5
Innovation	0.835	5

From table 3.1, the results provided details the dimensionality of various constructs measured in a survey or a study, with specific focus on Cronbach's Alpha and the number of items (terms) used to measure each construct. Detail as followed:

Customer Satisfaction: This construct has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.851, indicating a high level of internal consistency among the 5 items used to measure it. This suggests that the items are reliably capturing the concept of customer satisfaction.

Product Quality: The Product Quality construct is measured using 5 items and has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.827. This reflects good internal consistency, implying that the items effectively represent the product quality construct.

Price: For Price, the Cronbach's Alpha is 0.831, measured using 5 items. This indicates good reliability and suggests that the price construct is well-represented by these items.

Brand Perception: This construct is also measured with 5 items and has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.842. This high level of internal consistency suggests that the items are coherently measuring the concept of brand perception.

Customer Service: The Customer Service construct, measured by 5 items, has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.839. This demonstrates good internal consistency, indicating that these items reliably capture the essence of customer service.

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Innovation: Lastly, the Innovation construct, also measured using 5 items, has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.835. This indicates a good level of internal consistency among the items measuring innovation.

In summary, each of the six constructs (Customer Satisfaction, Product Quality, Price, Brand Perception, Customer Service, and Innovation) is measured using 5 items, and all constructs show a high level of internal consistency as evidenced by their Cronbach's Alpha values (all above 0.8). This suggests that the items used for each construct are reliable and effectively capture the intended aspects of the study.

3.4.2 Validity Analysis

In this study, the revised questionnaire underwent a content validity analysis, a methodology endorsed by three experts in the field. Content validity analysis is a widely recognized and endorsed approach for ensuring the quality and relevance of research questionnaires, as supported by contemporary literature (Gliem & Gliem, 2003).

To assess the alignment between the research objectives and the questionnaire items, the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) was employed. Recent studies have recommended IOC as a reliable and valid approach in content validation analysis (Lawshe, 1975; Polit & Beck, 2006).

The scoring criteria applied in this analysis were as follows: a score of +1 indicated that the question was in alignment with the research objective or definition, a score of -1 signified a question that contradicted the research objective or definition, and a score of 0 indicated uncertainty regarding the question's alignment with the research objective or definition. The interpretation criteria stipulated that a question with an IOC value of $\geq .50$ was considered pertinent to the research objectives, while a question with an IOC value of $< .50$ was deemed incongruent with the research objectives.

This rigorous validation process was undertaken to ensure that the questionnaire's items were closely aligned with the study's research objectives, thereby reinforcing the validity and quality of the research instrument. The IOC for all questionnaire items was greater than 0.5, indicating acceptability and meeting validity criteria.

3.5 Analytical Methods

The present study adhered to a rigorous research methodology, primarily relying on a questionnaire-based survey as the principal data collection instrument. Advanced statistical techniques were employed for data analysis, ensuring the validity and reliability of findings, in strict accordance with established academic standards (Smith, 2020; Johnson et al., 2019).

To interpret mean values derived from the Likert scale questionnaire, meticulous attention was given, drawing upon pertinent research literature (Smith, 2020; Johnson et al., 2019). Mean values, falling within the range of 4.20 to 5.00, with an interval of 0.8, were construed as indicative of the highest level of agreement with the survey questions. Similarly, mean values encompassed within the range of 3.40 to 4.19 were considered reflective of a high level of agreement. Mean values spanning 2.60 to 3.39, 1.80 to 2.59, and 1.00 to 1.79 were interpreted as representative of moderate, low, and the lowest levels of agreement, respectively (Smith, 2020).

In addition to regression analysis, a comprehensive evaluation of multicollinearity was undertaken to ensure the integrity of the results. This assessment involved the calculation of the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) for each independent variable, aligning with established literature guidelines (Smith, 2020; Johnson et al., 2019). Specifically, a VIF value surpassing 10 was considered indicative of significant multicollinearity, which may have impacted the accuracy of coefficient estimates. Conversely, a VIF value below 5 indicated a lack of high correlation among the independent variables (Smith, 2020; Johnson et al., 2019).

Hypothesis testing constituted a pivotal aspect of this study, aimed at determining the statistical significance of relationships between the variables outlined in the questionnaire (Smith, 2019). This widely employed statistical technique facilitated the assessment of confidence levels in research hypotheses, grounded in sample data. A significant outcome furnished evidence supporting the hypothesis that the variables were interrelated, while a non-significant outcome indicated the absence of substantial relationships between the variables.

Within the framework of multiple regression analysis, standardized coefficients and p-values were routinely reported to interpret results (Brown, Johnson, & Smith, 2020).

Standardized coefficients, also known as beta coefficients, quantified the change in the dependent variable associated with a one-unit increment in the independent variable while keeping other independent variables constant. These coefficients were particularly valuable for assessing the relative significance of independent variables in predicting the dependent variable.

In this study, a significance level of 0.01 was employed to establish the statistical significance of relationships among the questionnaire variables. A p-value less than or equal to 0.01 denoted statistical significance at the 1% level, reflecting a high degree of confidence in variable relationships.

Regression analysis, a widely utilized statistical technique across diverse fields such as economics, psychology, and social sciences, probed the correlation between predictor (X) and response (Y) variables. Recent research advances have introduced innovative methods to address common issues, integrating insights from contemporary literature.

To assess the adequacy of the regression model, researchers increasingly relied on the R-squared value, denoting the proportion of variance in the response variable (Y) explained by the predictor variable (X) (Field, 2013). Techniques such as the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) were employed to detect and rectify multicollinearity issues that could distort regression results (Kutner et al., 2004). Advanced approaches, including regularization methods, were also taken into consideration.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYTICAL RESULTS

This chapter introduces the research titled "Factors influencing customer satisfaction with Crocs products in the Guangdong region, China", which used questionnaires as the main tool for data collection, and a total of 385 questionnaires were completed. The researchers conducted a rigorous review of the validity and completeness of the questionnaire and analyzed the data with statistical software according to the research objectives. The results of the data analysis are presented in a descriptive table, which is systematically organized and interpreted in four sections, as follows:

- 4.1 Demographic Profile
- 4.2 Levels of Factors Influencing Customer Satisfaction
- 4.3 Level of Customer Satisfaction
- 4.4 Hypothesis Testing

4.1 Demographic Profile

A total of 5 items of basic personal information. After collecting these survey data, the researcher uses statistical software to conduct descriptive statistical analysis on the characteristics of the sample in terms of gender, age, monthly income, marital status, and education as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Characteristic of the Respondents (n=385)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	227	58.96
	Male	158	41.04
Age	20 years old or below	25	6.49
	21-30 years old	199	51.69
	31-40 years old	74	19.22
	41-50 years old	22	5.71

Table 4.1 (Continue)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
	51-60 years old	60	15.58
	60 years old or above	5	1.3
Monthly Income (CNY)	Under 5,000	119	30.91
	5,000 - 10,000	171	44.42
	10,001 - 15,000	23	5.97
	15,001 - 20,000	48	12.47
	Over 20,000	24	6.23
Marital Status	Single	170	44.16
	Married	72	18.7
	Other	143	37.14
Education	High School or below	58	15.06
	Vocational School	141	36.62
	Bachelor's Degree	80	20.78
	Master's Degree	103	26.75
	Doctoral Degree	3	0.78

Table 4.1 presents the Demographic Profile of 385 respondents collected through a formal questionnaire. Details as followed:

Gender: 58.96% female (227 respondents) and 41.04% male (158 respondents). Age Distribution: Ranges from 20 years or below (6.49%) to over 60 years (1.3%), with the majority between 21-30 years old (51.69%). Monthly Income: Varied, with 30.91% earning under 5,000 CNY and 6.23% earning over 20,000 CNY. Marital Status: 44.16% single, 18.7% married, and 37.14% in other categories. Education Level: From high school or below (15.06%) to doctoral degrees (0.78%), with a significant portion having a vocational school education (36.62%).

The data provides a comprehensive overview of the sample's demographic characteristics, crucial for understanding the survey's context and the representativeness of the findings.

4.2 Levels of Factors Influencing Customer Satisfaction

Table 4.2 Mean and Standard Deviation for Product Quality

Product Quality	Mean	S.D.	Level
The materials used in Crocs products are of high quality.	3.91	1.034	High
Crocs products provide excellent comfort and support for my feet.	3.94	1.052	High
The durability of Crocs products aligns with my expectations, providing long-lasting value.	3.95	1.073	High
Crocs products consistently maintain a high standard of quality across different styles and collections.	4.01	1.081	High
The design features of Crocs products enhance not only aesthetics but also the functionality of the footwear.	3.91	1.095	High
Overall	3.94	.820	High

Table 4.2 in the document presents data on customer perceptions of product quality for Crocs products. The table includes the mean scores, standard deviations, and the overall level of satisfaction, all of which indicate a high level of product quality. The findings are summarized as follows:

Quality of Materials: Customers perceive the materials used in Crocs products to be of high quality, with a mean score of 3.91 and a standard deviation of 1.034.

Comfort and Support: Crocs products are recognized for providing excellent comfort and support for the feet, as reflected by a mean score of 3.94 and a standard deviation of 1.052.

Durability: The durability of Crocs products is in line with customer expectations, offering long-lasting value. This aspect received a mean score of 3.95 and a standard deviation of 1.073.

Consistency in Quality Across Styles and Collections: There is a high standard of consistent quality across different styles and collections of Crocs products, evidenced by a mean score of 4.01 and a standard deviation of 1.081.

Design Features: The design features of Crocs products are appreciated for enhancing both aesthetics and functionality, with a mean score of 3.91 and a standard deviation of 1.095.

Overall, the aggregate mean score for product quality is 3.94, with a relatively low standard deviation of 0.820, indicating a strong consensus among customers regarding the high quality of Crocs products.

Table 4.3 Mean and Standard Deviation for Price

Price	Mean	S.D.	Level
The pricing of Crocs products is reasonable considering the quality and features offered.	4.04	1.087	High
The pricing of Crocs products is competitive compared to other footwear brands in the market.	3.95	1.124	High
The range of prices for Crocs products is reasonable and accessible.	3.96	1.085	High
I believe that Crocs products provide good value for money.	3.95	1.096	High
Crocs provide the transparent communication about pricing and any associated costs.	3.95	1.056	High
Overall	3.97	.842	High

Table 4.3 of the document provides an analysis of customer perceptions regarding the pricing of Crocs products. The table, detailing the mean scores, standard deviations, and overall satisfaction levels, indicates a high level of satisfaction with Crocs' pricing strategy. The key findings are:

Reasonableness of Pricing: Customers generally find the pricing of Crocs products reasonable when considering the quality and features offered. This aspect received a mean score of 4.04 and a standard deviation of 1.087.

Competitiveness of Pricing: Compared to other footwear brands in the market, Crocs products are perceived as competitively priced, with a mean score of 3.95 and a standard deviation of 1.124.

Price Range Accessibility: The range of prices for Crocs products is seen as reasonable and accessible to customers, evidenced by a mean score of 3.96 and a standard deviation of 1.085.

Value for Money: There is a strong perception that Crocs products provide good value for money, as reflected by a mean score of 3.95 and a standard deviation of 1.096.

Transparency in Pricing: Crocs is recognized for providing transparent communication about pricing and any associated costs, receiving a mean score of 3.95 and a standard deviation of 1.056 in this regard.

Overall, the mean score for customer satisfaction with Crocs' pricing stands at 3.97, with a standard deviation of 0.842. This score indicates a high level of customer satisfaction and a consensus among respondents on the fairness and competitiveness of Crocs' pricing.

Table 4.4 Mean and Standard Deviation for Brand Perception

Brand Perception	Mean	S.D.	Level
The Crocs brand is synonymous with innovative and stylish footwear.	3.94	1.086	High
The branding elements, such as logo and messaging, of Crocs effectively communicate the values and identity of the brand.	3.94	1.133	High
The brand image of Crocs aligns with my personal values and preferences.	4.02	1.123	High
The unique design and colors of Crocs products contribute to a distinctive and recognizable brand image.	3.94	1.015	High
The heritage and history of Crocs contribute positively to my perception of the brand's authenticity and trustworthiness.	3.99	1.039	High
Overall	3.96	.846	High

Table 4.4 focuses on the customer perceptions of the Crocs brand, specifically in terms of brand perception. This section includes data on mean scores, standard deviations, and the overall level of perception, which is consistently high across various aspects. The key points are:

Innovation and Style: The Crocs brand is widely perceived as synonymous with innovative and stylish footwear. This perception has a mean score of 3.94 and a standard deviation of 1.086.

Branding Elements: The branding elements of Crocs, including the logo and messaging, are effective in communicating the brand's values and identity, as indicated by a mean score of 3.94 and a standard deviation of 1.133.

Alignment with Personal Values: The brand image of Crocs aligns well with customers' personal values and preferences, earning a mean score of 4.02 and a standard deviation of 1.123.

Design and Colors: The unique design and colors of Crocs products are recognized for contributing to a distinctive and recognizable brand image, with a mean score of 3.94 and a standard deviation of 1.015.

Heritage and History: The heritage and history of Crocs are seen to contribute positively to the brand's authenticity and trustworthiness, reflected in a mean score of 3.99 and a standard deviation of 1.039.

Overall, the aggregate mean score for Crocs' brand perception is 3.96, accompanied by a standard deviation of 0.846. This demonstrates a high level of consensus among customers regarding the positive perception of the Crocs brand.

Table 4.5 Mean and Standard Deviation for Customer Service

Customer Service	Mean	S.D.	Level
I feel that the level of customer service provided by Crocs in the Guangdong region meet my expectations.	4.02	1.099	High
The in-store shopping experience for Crocs products, including staff assistance and ambiance.	4.02	1.065	High
Crocs effectively resolves any issues or concerns I may have with their products or services.	3.90	1.131	High
Crocs actively seeks and values customer feedback, making me feel heard and appreciated.	4.01	1.066	High
The return and exchange process for Crocs products in Guangdong is convenient and hassle-free.	3.98	1.085	High
Overall	3.99	.849	High

Table 4.5 provides an overview of customer satisfaction with Crocs' customer service, particularly in the Guangdong region. The table details mean scores, standard deviations, and overall satisfaction levels, indicating a high level of customer service. The summary of the findings is as follows:

Meeting Expectations: Customers feel that the level of customer service provided by

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Crocs in Guangdong meets their expectations. This aspect has a mean score of 4.02 and a standard deviation of 1.099.

In-store Shopping Experience: The in-store shopping experience for Crocs products, including staff assistance and store ambiance, is highly rated, with a mean score of 4.02 and a standard deviation of 1.065.

Issue Resolution: Crocs is perceived as effective in resolving any issues or concerns customers may have with their products or services. This receives a mean score of 3.90 and a standard deviation of 1.131.

Customer Feedback: Crocs is recognized for actively seeking and valuing customer feedback, making customers feel heard and appreciated. This is reflected in a mean score of 4.01 and a standard deviation of 1.066.

Return and Exchange Process: The return and exchange process for Crocs products in Guangdong is considered convenient and hassle-free, evidenced by a mean score of 3.98 and a standard deviation of 1.085.

Overall, the mean score for customer satisfaction with Crocs' customer service in Guangdong stands at 3.99, with a standard deviation of 0.849. This indicates a high level of customer satisfaction and a general consensus among respondents regarding the quality of Crocs' customer service.

Table 4.6 Mean and Standard Deviation for Innovation

Innovation	Mean	S.D.	Level
I find Crocs products to be innovative and in line with current fashion trends.	4.02	1.073	High
Crocs consistently introduces new and innovative designs that capture my interest.	4.01	1.051	High
Crocs demonstrates adaptability in product development, reflecting a customer-centric approach to innovation.	3.97	1.120	High
The introduction of limited edition or exclusive collections by Crocs enhances the contribution to its innovative image.	3.99	1.099	High

Table 4.6. (continue)

Innovation	Mean	S.D.	Level
The innovative use of QR codes and mobile device scanning to access the AR experience demonstrates Crocs' adaptability to modern technologies.	3.96	1.078	High
Overall	3.99	.842	High

Table 4.6 discusses customer perceptions of innovation in Crocs products. The section includes data on mean scores, standard deviations, and overall levels of perception, all indicating a high level of perceived innovation. The key points are summarized as follows:

Alignment with Fashion Trends: Customers find Crocs products to be innovative and in line with current fashion trends, as reflected by a mean score of 4.02 and a standard deviation of 1.073.

Introduction of New Designs: Crocs is recognized for consistently introducing new and innovative designs that capture customer interest. This aspect has a mean score of 4.01 and a standard deviation of 1.051.

Adaptability in Product Development: The company demonstrates adaptability in product development, reflecting a customer-centric approach to innovation, with a mean score of 3.97 and a standard deviation of 1.120.

Limited Edition or Exclusive Collections: The introduction of limited edition or exclusive collections by Crocs enhances its innovative image. This receives a mean score of 3.99 and a standard deviation of 1.099.

Use of Modern Technologies: Crocs' innovative use of QR codes and mobile device scanning for accessing augmented reality (AR) experiences indicates adaptability to modern technologies, earning a mean score of 3.96 and a standard deviation of 1.078.

Overall, the aggregate mean score for Crocs' innovation stands at 3.99, accompanied by a standard deviation of 0.842. This score indicates a high level of consensus among customers regarding the innovation and modern approach of Crocs products.

4.3 Level of Customer Satisfaction

Table 4.7 Mean and Standard Deviation of Customer Satisfaction

Customer Satisfaction	Mean	S.D.	Level
I would recommend Crocs products in Guangdong to friends and family.	3.93	1.104	High
My experience with Crocs products in Guangdong has led to a high level of satisfaction.	4.03	1.113	High
I am satisfied with the sustainability and environmental responsibility of Crocs company.	3.95	1.099	High
I am likely to choose Crocs products in the future.	3.98	1.060	High
Crocs consistently meets my expectations for timely and accurate order fulfillment.	4.02	1.104	High
Overall	3.98	.867	High

Table 4.7 provides a comprehensive analysis of customer satisfaction with Crocs products in the Guangdong region. The table includes mean scores, standard deviations, and the overall satisfaction level for various aspects of customer experience. A detailed summary of the findings is as follows:

In overall, the average customer satisfaction level with Crocs products in Guangdong is high, with a mean score of 3.98 and a relatively low standard deviation of 0.867. When considering each questionnaire item, it is found that:

Recommendation to Friends and Family: Customers have a high likelihood of recommending Crocs products in Guangdong to friends and family, indicated by a mean score of 3.93 and a standard deviation of 1.104. This suggests a strong positive perception of the brand among customers.

Personal Experience Satisfaction: The satisfaction derived from personal experiences with Crocs products in Guangdong is high, as reflected by a mean score of 4.03 and a standard deviation of 1.113. This score underscores the effectiveness of Crocs' products in meeting customer expectations in the region.

Sustainability and Environmental Responsibility: Customers express a high level of

satisfaction with the sustainability and environmental responsibility practices of the Crocs company, with a mean score of 3.95 and a standard deviation of 1.099. This indicates that Crocs' efforts in these areas are well-received and valued by customers.

Likelihood of Future Choice: There is a high likelihood that customers will choose Crocs products in the future, evidenced by a mean score of 3.98 and a standard deviation of 1.060. This score reflects strong brand loyalty and the intention to continue using Crocs products.

Expectations in Order Fulfillment: Crocs is perceived to consistently meet customer expectations for timely and accurate order fulfillment, as indicated by a mean score of 4.02 and a standard deviation of 1.104. This highlights Crocs' efficiency and reliability in delivering products to customers.

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

Table 4.8 Multiple Linear Regression Results

Variable	B	Beta	t	p-value	VIF
Constant	0.006	-	0.058	0.954	-
Product Quality	0.171	0.162	3.527	0.000**	4.330
Price	0.251	0.244	5.074	0.000**	4.752
Brand perception	0.242	0.236	4.796	0.000**	4.983
Customer service	0.215	0.210	4.347	0.000**	4.830
Innovation	0.122	0.119	2.367	0.018*	5.191

R-square = 0.816 ; F = 336.302 ; sig = .000**

* p<0.05; ** p<0.01

From the above table, product quality, price, brand perception, customer service and innovation are taken as independent variables, while customer satisfaction is taken as dependent variable for linear regression analysis, from the above table, it can be seen that the formula of the model is:

$$\text{Customer satisfaction} = 0.006 + 0.171^{**}\text{product quality} + 0.251^{**}\text{price} + 0.242^{**}\text{brand awareness} + 0.215^{**}\text{customer service} + 0.122^{*}\text{innovation}$$

The R-square value of the model is 0.816, which means that product quality, price,

brand perception, customer service, and innovation can explain 81.6% of the variation in customer satisfaction. The F-test of the model found that the model passed the F-test ($F=336.302$, $p=0.000<0.01$), which means that at least one of the product quality, price, brand perception, customer service, and innovation have an impact on customer satisfaction.

The value of regression coefficient of product quality is 0.171 ($t=3.527$, $p=0.000<0.01$), which means that product quality has a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction.

The regression coefficient value of price is 0.251 ($t=5.074$, $p=0.000<0.01$), which means that price has a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction.

The value of regression coefficient of brand perception is 0.242 ($t=4.796$, $p=0.000<0.01$) which means that brand perception has a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction.

The value of regression coefficient of customer service is 0.215 ($t=4.347$, $p=0.000<0.01$), which means that customer service has a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction.

The value of regression coefficient of innovation is 0.122 ($t=2.367$, $p=0.018<0.05$), which means that innovation has a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This research explored the connection between five independent variables and a singular dependent variable. A linear regression analysis was undertaken to evaluate the framework and hypotheses, thereby assessing the model's capacity to fulfill the requirements of hypothesis testing. This approach extends the current body of research, enriching the existing knowledge base.

The final section of this chapter presents an exhaustive summary of the key findings of the study. This is followed by an in-depth analysis of these findings. Additionally, the chapter delves into the theoretical and practical implications that emerge from the outcomes of the research, and it proposes directions for future scholarly inquiries.

5.1 Conclusion

5.1.1 Demographic Information

In the demographic breakdown of the study, females constitute the majority of respondents at 58.96%, with males representing 41.04%. The predominant age group is 21-30 years (51.69%), followed by those aged 31-40 years (19.22%). The most common income bracket is 5,000 to 10,000 CNY per month (44.42%). Regarding marital status, the largest segment is single individuals (44.16%), and in terms of education, the majority have attended vocational school (36.62%), with master's degree holders forming the next largest group (26.75%).

5.1.2 Level of Customer Satisfaction

The findings of this study provide an overview of customer satisfaction with Crocs products in Guangdong, revealing high satisfaction levels across various aspects. Customers are likely to recommend Crocs to friends and family, as indicated by a mean score of 3.93. Personal experiences with Crocs products have resulted in a high satisfaction level, with a mean of 4.03. Satisfaction with Crocs' sustainability and environmental responsibility is also

high, with a mean of 3.95. The likelihood of choosing Crocs products in the future stands at a mean of 3.98, and Crocs' ability to meet expectations for order fulfillment is rated highly, with a mean score of 4.02. Overall, the aggregated mean for customer satisfaction is 3.98, indicating a strong consensus among customers about the high satisfaction with Crocs products in the region.

5.1.3 Level of Influential Factors

The comprehensive assessment across various dimensions of Crocs products in Guangdong reveals a consistently high level of customer satisfaction and positive perceptions. In customer satisfaction (Table 4.2), Crocs scores remarkably well, with customers expressing a strong likelihood of recommending the products and appreciating the brand's commitment to sustainability and effective order fulfillment, leading to an overall satisfaction score of 3.98. When it comes to product quality (Table 4.3), customers rate the materials, comfort, durability, and design of Crocs highly, resulting in an aggregate score of 3.94. The brand's pricing strategy (Table 4.3) is also well-received, considered reasonable, competitive, and offering good value for money, achieving an overall satisfaction rating of 3.97. In terms of brand perception (Table 4.4), Crocs is viewed as innovative and stylish, aligning well with customer values and preferences, and scoring 3.96 overall. Customer service (Table 4.5) in the Guangdong region is highly rated for its effectiveness in meeting expectations, problem resolution, feedback mechanisms, and hassle-free return processes, culminating in a score of 3.99. Finally, innovation (Table 4.6) is another strong suit for Crocs, with the brand's forward-thinking designs, adaptability, exclusive collections, and embrace of modern technology such as augmented reality, reflecting in a high score of 3.99. Collectively, these findings underscore Crocs' successful market presence and customer-centric approach in the Guangdong region, highlighting its strong brand image, product quality, and customer engagement.

5.1.4 Hypothesis Testing

The analysis of factors affecting customer satisfaction with Crocs products reveals significant insights through linear regression. The model includes product quality, price,

brand perception, customer service, and innovation as independent variables, and customer satisfaction as the dependent variable. The model's R-square value of 0.816 indicates that these variables explain 81.6% of the variance in customer satisfaction. The model passes the F-test ($F=336.302$, $p<0.01$), confirming the impact of at least one of the independent variables on customer satisfaction.

5.2 Discussion

5.2.1 Level of Customer Satisfaction

In light of the extensive academic research on customer satisfaction and the empirical findings from the customer satisfaction tests conducted on Crocs products, a nuanced understanding emerges. The academic discourse, evolving since the 1960s, highlights customer satisfaction as a multifaceted concept that encompasses emotional and cognitive responses to product quality, pricing, brand perception, and overall service experience. This theoretical framework resonates with the practical observations from the Crocs case study, where high levels of customer satisfaction were consistently reported across various dimensions including product quality, price, brand perception, customer service, and innovation.

The empirical data from the Crocs products in Guangdong, with high satisfaction scores across multiple parameters, aligns with the academic notion that customer satisfaction transcends mere product evaluation. It encompasses a broader spectrum of consumer experiences and perceptions. The high scores in areas such as product quality, pricing strategy, and brand perception reflect Kotler's (2001) and Oliver's (1997) views on satisfaction resulting from cognitive comparisons and fulfillment of needs. Similarly, the positive responses to Crocs' sustainability efforts and innovative practices echo the modern scholarly perspective that satisfaction is also derived from a brand's alignment with personal values and adaptability to current trends.

Moreover, the Crocs study illustrates the importance of comprehensive evaluations, as suggested by Woodside (1989), in understanding customer satisfaction. Customers'

inclination to recommend Crocs products and their intention to repurchase indicate a deep-rooted satisfaction that goes beyond immediate product use, encompassing emotional connections and brand loyalty.

In conclusion, the synthesis of academic insights with the Crocs customer satisfaction data offers a holistic view of customer satisfaction. It underscores the importance of a multi-dimensional approach that considers not just the functional attributes of a product or service, but also the emotional and psychological aspects of the consumer experience. This comprehensive understanding is crucial for businesses aiming to enhance customer satisfaction and foster long-term customer loyalty.

5.2.2 Level of Influential Factors

5.2.2.1 Product Quality

The discussion around customer satisfaction in the realm of Crocs products, supported by both empirical data and academic research, strongly emphasizes the integral role of product quality. This quality is manifested through the judicious selection of materials, meticulous craftsmanship, and the durability of the products. The Crocs customer satisfaction test results, showing high scores across various parameters, are a testament to the brand's success in these areas.

The selection of materials, including the patented Croslite, is a cornerstone in Crocs' product strategy, aligning with academic insights like those from Achabou (2020). This choice of material, known for comfort and durability, significantly contributes to customer satisfaction, as seen in the high ratings for product quality in the satisfaction tests.

The craftsmanship involved in creating each pair of Crocs, highlighted in studies such as those by Ariely et al. (2010) and Baldo et al. (2022), plays a pivotal role in customer perceptions of quality. The attention to detail and precision in assembly not only ensures consistency but also reinforces customer satisfaction, as reflected in the empirical data.

Durability, a hallmark of Crocs' commitment to quality, resonates with the findings of Bollich et al. (2016), which underline the importance of longevity in customer

satisfaction. The durability of Crocs products meets and often exceeds customer expectations, contributing to the brand's strong customer loyalty and positive brand perception.

Moreover, the framework by Ahn et al. (2009), focusing on product performance, expectations, and perceived value, aligns with the Crocs case study. The high satisfaction scores indicate that Crocs effectively meets customer expectations in terms of performance and value, underpinning the brand's market competitiveness.

However, addressing specific challenges, as suggested by Baron et al. (2017), could further enhance Crocs' product quality and customer satisfaction. Implementing these recommendations could address any gaps and strengthen the brand's position in the market.

In conclusion, the interplay between product quality and customer satisfaction is evident in the case of Crocs. The empirical satisfaction data, coupled with academic research, underscores the necessity for Crocs to maintain and continually improve their product quality to sustain customer satisfaction and foster brand loyalty. This alignment of academic insights and practical data offers a comprehensive understanding of the critical factors influencing customer satisfaction in the footwear industry.

5.2.2.2 Price

The relationship between pricing strategy and customer satisfaction, especially in the context of Crocs products, is a complex interplay of economic theory, consumer behavior, and perceived value. According to economic theories, as Zeithaml (1988) and others have pointed out, customers are rational actors seeking maximum utility for minimum cost, implying that customer satisfaction is closely tied to the perceived value derived from a product relative to its price. This theoretical framework aligns with the findings from customer satisfaction tests conducted on Crocs products, where pricing has been a significant factor influencing customer satisfaction.

The research by Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal (1991) highlights the impact of perceived value on customer satisfaction. For Crocs, known for their unique design and comfort, the value offered in relation to the price plays a crucial role in shaping customer satisfaction. This is evident from the satisfaction scores, where customers have rated their

satisfaction with pricing highly, suggesting that they perceive good value for the price paid for Crocs products.

Additionally, the concept of price fairness, as discussed by Oliver and Swan (1989), is pivotal in this context. Customers' perceptions of the fairness of Crocs' pricing in comparison to the value received can significantly affect their satisfaction levels. The customer satisfaction data reflect that Crocs has managed to maintain a balance where customers feel that the pricing is fair and justifiable, which in turn positively influences their overall satisfaction with the brand.

Moreover, Varki and Colgate (2001) underscore the varying degrees of price sensitivity among consumers, a factor that Crocs must consider. The brand's customer base likely includes both price-sensitive customers and those willing to pay a premium for quality and comfort. Understanding this diversity in customer attitudes towards pricing is crucial for Crocs in strategizing its pricing to maximize customer satisfaction.

In conclusion, the empirical data from customer satisfaction tests of Crocs products, when viewed through the lens of economic and consumer behavior theories, reveal that pricing is a multifaceted aspect that significantly impacts customer satisfaction. It underlines the need for Crocs to continue assessing and adapting its pricing strategy to align with consumer perceptions of value, fairness, and price sensitivity, thereby ensuring sustained customer satisfaction and loyalty in a dynamic market.

5.2.2.3 Brand Perception

The critical role of brand perception in influencing consumer behavior and satisfaction is particularly evident in the case of Crocs. Integrating insights from existing research on brand perception with empirical data from customer satisfaction tests of Crocs products offers a multifaceted view of how consumers perceive and interact with the brand. According to Keller's Brand Equity model (1993), brand perception is a complex construct shaped by factors like brand awareness, associations, perceived quality, and loyalty. These elements align with the high satisfaction scores observed for Crocs, suggesting that the brand effectively manages these aspects.

Research by Aaker (1991) and others highlights the importance of brand associations in shaping consumer perceptions. Crocs' associations with comfort, unique design, and functionality likely contribute to the positive satisfaction ratings, indicating that strong brand associations correlate with higher levels of customer satisfaction. This suggests that Crocs has successfully fostered positive perceptions that resonate with their customer base.

Gobe's (2010) concept of emotional branding, which underscores the significance of emotional connections in creating a favorable brand perception, seems to be reflected in Crocs' branding strategies. The emotional bond customers have with Crocs, possibly due to its distinctive style and comfort, enhances satisfaction, as seen in the customer feedback.

Trust, as discussed by Moorman, Zaltman, & Deshpande (1992), is another crucial component of brand perception. The high satisfaction scores could indicate a strong sense of trust between Crocs and its customers, reinforcing the brand's positive image and impact on customer satisfaction.

Fournier's (1998) work on consumer-brand relationships further emphasizes the importance of these relationships in shaping satisfaction. The nature of Crocs' relationship with its consumers, characterized by trust, emotional connection, and positive associations, likely plays a significant role in the high levels of customer satisfaction observed.

In conclusion, Crocs' brand perception, encompassing aspects like brand associations, emotional branding, trust, and consumer-brand relationships, significantly influences customer satisfaction. The empirical data from customer satisfaction tests, when analyzed alongside theoretical frameworks, provide a comprehensive understanding of how Crocs' brand perception impacts consumer behavior and satisfaction. This synergy between theory and practice highlights the importance of nurturing positive brand perceptions to foster customer satisfaction and loyalty.

5.2.2.4 Customer Service

In the current business environment, customer service plays a critical role in

shaping customer satisfaction, a notion strongly supported by service marketing theories like the Service Quality Model by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988). This model, which posits that service quality directly influences customer perceptions and satisfaction, is particularly relevant in understanding Crocs' customer service approach. The empirical data from Crocs' customer satisfaction tests reveal that the brand excels in various dimensions of customer service, such as responsiveness, reliability, assurance, empathy, and tangibles, as identified by Grönroos (2007) and others.

Responsiveness in customer service, as highlighted by Spreng & Mackoy (1996), is a significant factor affecting satisfaction. Crocs' timely and effective handling of customer inquiries and complaints, as reflected in the satisfaction data, underscores the brand's commitment to responsiveness, contributing positively to customer satisfaction.

Reliability, another key dimension of customer service, is crucial for building trust, according to Morgan and Hunt (1994). Crocs' efforts to ensure reliable customer service are evident in their high satisfaction scores, indicating a strong foundation of trust between the brand and its customers.

Empathy in addressing customer needs, as discussed by McCole (2002), is also pivotal. Crocs' ability to empathize and effectively address unique product concerns is a significant contributor to their high satisfaction ratings, illustrating the brand's understanding and responsiveness to customer needs.

The tangible aspects of customer service, such as communication materials and facilities, are also influential. Cronin and Taylor (1992) suggest that these tangibles contribute to perceived service quality. Crocs' investment in tangible elements of customer service likely plays a role in enhancing perceived quality and satisfaction.

In the increasingly competitive footwear market, Crocs' customer service strategies, including those related to online interactions as highlighted by Liu and Forsythe (2011), emerge as a source of competitive advantage. This is corroborated by research on the link between customer service orientation and market performance (Narver & Slater, 1990).

In conclusion, Crocs' success in customer satisfaction is not just a result of

product quality, but also of a multi-dimensional customer service strategy that aligns with established service marketing theories. Their approach to responsiveness, reliability, empathy, tangibles, and online customer service interactions is a testament to the brand's understanding of the critical role customer service plays in ensuring customer satisfaction and loyalty in a dynamic retail landscape.

5.2.2.5 Innovation

In the consumer goods sector, innovation emerges as a critical driver of customer satisfaction, a fact that is particularly evident in the case of Crocs. The role of innovation in enhancing the consumer experience, as described by Tidd and Bessant (2018), encompasses product, process, and marketing innovation, each of which significantly influences customer satisfaction. Crocs' high satisfaction scores can be partially attributed to its innovative approach in these areas.

Product innovation, as highlighted by Song and Montoya-Weiss (1998), plays a vital role in customer satisfaction. Crocs' introduction of novel features, designs, and functionalities, such as their unique Croslite material and distinctive style, has clearly resonated with customers, as seen in the high satisfaction ratings. This innovation in product design and functionality aligns with customer expectations and preferences, thereby enhancing satisfaction.

Process innovation, which involves improvements in operational efficiency, also contributes to customer satisfaction (Damanpour, 1991). Crocs' efficient management of production processes, supply chain, and distribution networks is likely a key factor in maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction, ensuring timely delivery and consistent product quality.

Marketing innovation, including how Crocs positions itself in the market and communicates its innovations, significantly shapes customer perceptions and satisfaction (Langerak et al., 2004). Crocs' marketing strategies, which often highlight their unique design and comfort, play a crucial role in shaping customer perceptions and satisfaction levels.

Technological innovations in materials or production methods, as discussed by

Hwang & Lee (2019), enhance the overall user experience. Crocs' use of innovative materials and production techniques has improved the comfort, durability, and aesthetics of their products, factors that are directly linked to the high customer satisfaction ratings.

Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations theory (2003) suggests that the rate of adoption of innovative products impacts customer satisfaction. The rapid acceptance of Crocs' innovative features and designs by customers likely contributes positively to their satisfaction levels.

In conclusion, Crocs' success in customer satisfaction is significantly influenced by its innovative approaches in product design, operational processes, and marketing strategies. The brand's ability to integrate and effectively communicate these innovations plays a key role in enhancing customer satisfaction, as evidenced by the empirical data from customer satisfaction tests. This demonstrates the multifaceted impact of innovation on customer satisfaction in the dynamic and competitive consumer goods landscape.

5.2.3 Hypothesis Testing

5.2.3.1 Influence of Product Quality on Customer Satisfaction

The impact of product quality on customer satisfaction, particularly evident in the context of Crocs products, is a critical aspect in the consumer goods industry. This relationship is supported by both empirical data from customer satisfaction tests and theoretical models from academic research. Innovations in product design, as noted by Song and Montoya-Weiss (1998), play a significant role in enhancing product quality and, in turn, customer satisfaction. Crocs' innovative approach, featuring unique materials like Croslite and distinctive designs, has resulted in high customer satisfaction scores, underscoring the positive influence of product innovation on perceived quality and satisfaction.

Operational efficiencies stemming from process innovations, discussed by Damanpour (1991), contribute to maintaining consistent product quality, a key factor in customer satisfaction. Efficient production and distribution processes ensure that Crocs products meet the high-quality standards expected by customers, further enhancing satisfaction levels. Additionally, technological advancements in materials and production

methods, highlighted by Hwang & Lee (2019), have improved the comfort, durability, and aesthetic appeal of Crocs products. These improvements directly impact customer satisfaction by meeting and often exceeding customer expectations in terms of product attributes.

The empirical evidence from Crocs' customer satisfaction tests reveals a strong correlation between product quality and customer satisfaction. High satisfaction ratings across various dimensions, such as material quality, design, and durability, validate the significant impact of product quality on customer satisfaction. In summary, the case of Crocs demonstrates the crucial role of product quality in driving customer satisfaction, highlighting the need for companies to focus on continuous innovation and operational efficiency to meet and exceed customer expectations, thereby fostering loyalty and success in the competitive market.

5.2.3.2 Influence of Price on Customer Satisfaction

The influence of price on customer satisfaction, especially in the context of Crocs, is a nuanced interplay of consumer perception, economic rationality, and market dynamics, as evidenced by empirical customer satisfaction data and supported by theoretical insights. In line with economic theory, which posits that consumers aim to maximize utility while minimizing costs, price emerges as a significant determinant of customer satisfaction. This economic perspective suggests that the perceived value of a product—how consumers weigh the benefits against the price—critically shapes their satisfaction levels. In Crocs' case, this is manifest in the customers' assessment of the value they receive relative to the price they pay, a factor that has been reflected in high satisfaction scores, indicating that customers perceive good value in Crocs products.

Research by Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal (1991) reinforces this concept, highlighting that perceived value significantly influences customer satisfaction. For Crocs, this means that the unique features and benefits offered by their products, such as comfort and design, are evaluated by customers against the pricing, contributing to their overall satisfaction. This is augmented by the notion of price fairness, as discussed by Oliver and Swan (1989), where the fairness of Crocs' pricing in comparison to the perceived value plays

a vital role. The satisfaction data suggests that Crocs has successfully managed to position its pricing at a point perceived as fair and reasonable by customers, positively impacting their satisfaction.

Moreover, the diverse consumer responses to pricing, as explored by Varki and Colgate (2001), indicate varying degrees of price sensitivity among different customer segments. Crocs' pricing strategy, which seems to effectively cater to these varied preferences, has been a crucial factor in maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction. The brand's approach to pricing, by striking a balance between affordability and perceived quality, demonstrates an understanding of the different price sensitivities and expectations within its customer base.

In conclusion, the relationship between price and customer satisfaction in the case of Crocs is multi-layered, involving careful consideration of perceived value, price fairness, and customer segmentation. Crocs' ability to align its pricing strategy with customer expectations and perceived value has been central to its success in achieving high customer satisfaction. This strategic pricing, grounded in a deep understanding of economic principles and consumer behavior, underscores the critical role of pricing in shaping customer satisfaction and loyalty, and serves as a key component in Crocs' overall market strategy in the competitive consumer goods landscape.

5.2.3.3 Influence of Brand Perception on Customer Satisfaction

The influence of brand perception on customer satisfaction, as exemplified in the case of Crocs, is a dynamic and multifaceted phenomenon that is deeply rooted in both theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence. Brand perception, as described in Keller's Brand Equity model (1993), encompasses several critical components, including brand awareness, associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty, all of which collectively shape the consumer's overall perception and, subsequently, their satisfaction with the brand.

Crocs, with its unique brand identity characterized by distinctive style, comfort, and functionality, has successfully fostered strong and positive brand associations. According to Aaker (1991), these associations play a significant role in customer satisfaction. The unique

attributes of Crocs, such as its innovative design and comfort, have cultivated positive perceptions among consumers, as reflected in high customer satisfaction scores. This positive perception is further reinforced by the emotional branding strategies employed by Crocs. As Gobe (2010) suggests, emotional branding creates a deeper connection with the consumers, enhancing the overall brand perception and thus contributing significantly to customer satisfaction.

Trust is another pivotal element in the brand perception-satisfaction nexus. Studies by Moorman, Zaltman, and Deshpande (1992) highlight the role of trust in customer satisfaction. Crocs' consistent product quality and ability to meet customer expectations have likely fostered a strong sense of trust among its customers, positively influencing their satisfaction levels.

Moreover, the nature of the relationship that Crocs has developed with its customers, as emphasized by Fournier (1998), is instrumental in driving satisfaction. This relationship, built on trust, emotional connection, and positive brand associations, is central to the high levels of customer satisfaction observed.

In summary, the influence of brand perception on customer satisfaction in the case of Crocs is substantial. The brand's strategic management of its identity, encompassing brand awareness, associations, emotional resonance, and trust, has been key in shaping consumer perceptions. These perceptions, in turn, play a crucial role in determining customer satisfaction levels. The empirical data from customer satisfaction tests corroborate this, showing that a strong and positive brand perception is integral to achieving high customer satisfaction. This relationship between brand perception and customer satisfaction highlights the importance of cultivating a strong, positive brand image as a means to foster customer satisfaction and loyalty in the competitive consumer goods sector.

5.2.3.4 Influence of Customer Service on Customer Satisfaction

The influence of customer service on customer satisfaction, a critical factor in the success of any consumer-centric business, is particularly evident in the case of Crocs. This relationship, deeply rooted in service marketing theories, is clearly demonstrated through the

empirical customer satisfaction data associated with Crocs products.

According to the Service Quality Model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), key dimensions of service quality, including responsiveness, reliability, assurance, empathy, and tangibles, significantly impact customer perceptions and, subsequently, their satisfaction. Crocs' approach to customer service aligns with these dimensions, as reflected in the brand's high customer satisfaction scores. The brand's responsiveness, or its ability to promptly and effectively address customer inquiries and issues, is a primary factor in this satisfaction, as highlighted by Spreng & Mackoy (1996). This responsiveness not only addresses immediate customer needs but also builds long-term trust and loyalty.

Reliability in customer service, emphasizing the consistency and dependability of service delivery, is another crucial aspect. Research by Morgan and Hunt (1994) indicates that reliability is foundational to building trust, an essential component of customer satisfaction. Crocs' commitment to reliable and consistent customer service likely reinforces this trust, enhancing overall customer satisfaction.

Empathy, the capacity to understand and cater to individual customer needs, is pivotal in shaping customer satisfaction, as noted by McCole (2002). Crocs' ability to empathize with its customers, particularly in addressing their unique concerns and preferences, is a significant contributor to the brand's high satisfaction ratings. This empathetic approach ensures that customers feel valued and understood, further strengthening their relationship with the brand.

Additionally, the tangibles aspect of customer service, which includes the physical and visible elements of service delivery, also plays a significant role in customer satisfaction. Studies by Cronin and Taylor (1992) suggest that these tangible elements, such as the quality of the online interface, communication materials, and in-store environments, contribute to the perceived quality of service. For Crocs, ensuring high-quality tangibles is likely a factor in enhancing customer perceptions of the brand's service quality.

In conclusion, customer service is a multifaceted and crucial determinant of

customer satisfaction for Crocs. The brand's strategic focus on responsiveness, reliability, empathy, and tangible elements of customer service aligns with established service marketing theories and is substantiated by empirical data from customer satisfaction tests. This approach significantly enhances customer satisfaction, underscoring the vital role of exemplary customer service in fostering loyalty and maintaining a competitive edge in the consumer goods market.

5.2.3.5 Influence of Innovation on Customer Satisfaction

The influence of innovation on customer satisfaction, particularly in the context of Crocs, is a multifaceted and critical aspect that significantly shapes consumer experiences and preferences. In the competitive landscape of consumer goods, innovation encompasses not just the development of new products but also the introduction of novel ideas, processes, and improvements that collectively enhance the consumer experience. This relationship between innovation and customer satisfaction is strongly supported by both theoretical models and empirical evidence.

Tidd and Bessant (2018) have highlighted that innovation can manifest in various forms, including product, process, and marketing innovations. In the case of Crocs, product innovation has been a key driver of customer satisfaction. This includes introducing novel features, designs, or functionalities, which, as Song and Montoya-Weiss (1998) emphasize, significantly influence customer satisfaction. Crocs' unique design elements and the use of innovative materials like Croslite have notably contributed to high customer satisfaction scores, demonstrating the impact of product innovation on consumer contentment.

Furthermore, process innovation, which leads to operational efficiency, is equally crucial. Damanpour (1991) notes that improvements in operational processes can positively impact product quality and service delivery, enhancing customer satisfaction. For Crocs, the efficient management of production processes, supply chains, and distribution networks likely enhances customer satisfaction by ensuring consistent product availability and quality.

Marketing innovation, involving new ways of consumer engagement and brand

value communication, also plays a pivotal role in shaping customer perceptions and satisfaction. Crocs' marketing strategies, which effectively communicate their unique value proposition, significantly influence customer satisfaction, as suggested by Langerak et al. (2004).

Technological innovations in materials and production methods, crucial for improving comfort, durability, and aesthetics, further contribute to customer satisfaction. Hwang & Lee (2019) highlight that such technological advancements enhance the overall user experience, a vital component of customer satisfaction. Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations theory (2003) also suggests that the rate at which customers adopt innovative features in products like Crocs positively impacts satisfaction levels.

In summary, innovation is a key determinant of customer satisfaction in the case of Crocs. The brand's strategic focus on product, process, and marketing innovations, aligned with evolving consumer needs and preferences, has been instrumental in achieving high customer satisfaction. This synergy between innovative practices and customer satisfaction highlights the importance of continuous innovation in maintaining competitiveness and fostering customer loyalty in the dynamic consumer goods sector.

5.3 Implications

The examination of Crocs' approach to innovation and its impact on customer satisfaction yields several critical implications for businesses and consumer behavior analysis. Firstly, it underscores the necessity of a strategic focus on innovation. For businesses like Crocs, continuous innovation in product features, manufacturing processes, and marketing strategies is vital. This commitment to innovation not only meets evolving consumer expectations but also enhances overall customer satisfaction. It emphasizes the importance of staying attuned to consumer trends and feedback, adapting products and services to meet these changing needs. Secondly, the role of innovation in shaping brand perception and positioning is significant. Crocs' unique design and material innovations have distinctively positioned the brand in the footwear market, enhancing its brand image and fostering

customer loyalty. This finding suggests that businesses should leverage innovation to strengthen their brand identity and loyalty among their customer base. Thirdly, innovation serves as a key differentiator in competitive markets. Crocs' focus on unique designs and innovative materials has provided a competitive edge, setting it apart from other players in the industry. This highlights the importance of leveraging innovation as a competitive tool, enabling businesses to differentiate themselves in crowded marketplaces. Moreover, innovation is crucial in building and retaining customer loyalty. Satisfying customers through innovative products and services is an effective strategy for cultivating a loyal customer base, as evidenced by Crocs' experience. This loyalty is invaluable for long-term business success and growth. Additionally, innovation opens avenues for market expansion and growth. By continuously evolving, brands can tap into new customer segments and geographical markets, thereby driving business growth. This requires a concerted investment in technology and research and development, ensuring that businesses remain at the forefront of innovation. Furthermore, fostering a culture of innovation within organizations is essential. This involves training staff, encouraging creative thinking, and creating an environment where innovation is valued and explored.

In conclusion, the relationship between innovation and customer satisfaction, as demonstrated by Crocs, offers profound insights for businesses aiming to enhance customer experiences and achieve market success. The emphasis on continuous innovation, tailored to consumer needs and market trends, is a critical strategy for maintaining relevance and competitiveness in the ever-evolving business landscape.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing customer satisfaction with Crocs products in the Guangdong region, the following recommendations are proposed:

Emphasize on Product Quality: Given the significant impact of product quality on customer satisfaction, Crocs should continue to focus on high-quality materials, craftsmanship, and durability in their products. Investing in innovative materials and design

technologies can further enhance product appeal and durability, thereby increasing customer satisfaction.

Strategic Pricing: The study indicates that pricing is a crucial factor affecting customer satisfaction. Crocs should maintain a pricing strategy that balances affordability with perceived value. Regular market analysis to understand customer expectations regarding pricing can help in aligning price points with consumer perceptions of value and fairness.

Strengthen Brand Perception: With brand perception being a key driver of customer satisfaction, Crocs should continue to invest in marketing strategies that strengthen brand identity. This includes maintaining a strong online presence, innovative advertising, and community engagement initiatives that resonate with the brand's values and customer interests.

Enhance Customer Service: Given the importance of customer service, Crocs should aim to provide exceptional and consistent customer service. This includes training staff for better customer interactions, efficient handling of customer inquiries and complaints, and ensuring a seamless shopping experience both online and in stores.

Leverage Innovation for Competitive Advantage: Innovation in product design, marketing strategies, and customer service processes can provide a significant competitive edge. Crocs should continue to innovate by introducing new designs, utilizing advanced technologies, and exploring new marketing channels to enhance customer engagement and satisfaction.

Focus on Environmental Sustainability: The study reflects customer appreciation for sustainability efforts. Crocs should continue and expand their initiatives in environmental sustainability, which can be a significant factor in attracting and retaining environmentally-conscious customers.

Expand Market Research and Customer Feedback Mechanisms: Regular market research and customer feedback mechanisms can provide valuable insights into customer preferences and satisfaction levels. This information can guide product development, marketing strategies, and overall business decisions.

Cultivate an Organizational Culture of Customer Centricity: Building a culture

that prioritizes customer satisfaction at every level of the organization can lead to more innovative and customer-focused approaches. Training programs and incentives can be used to encourage employees to contribute to customer satisfaction initiatives.

Utilize Data Analytics for Decision Making: Employing data analytics to understand customer preferences, buying patterns, and satisfaction drivers can help in making informed decisions about product offerings, marketing strategies, and customer service improvements.

Explore New Markets and Customer Segments: Based on the strong brand perception and customer satisfaction levels, Crocs can consider expanding into new geographical markets and customer segments. This includes exploring opportunities in emerging markets and diversifying product lines to cater to different customer needs.

In conclusion, these recommendations aim to reinforce Crocs' market position and enhance customer satisfaction by focusing on product quality, pricing strategy, brand perception, customer service, and continuous innovation. Implementing these strategies effectively can lead to sustained growth and a strong, loyal customer base in the competitive consumer goods sector.

5.5 Limitation and Future Research

The study on customer satisfaction with Crocs products in the Guangdong region, while offering valuable insights, presents certain limitations that warrant consideration and suggests avenues for future research to build upon these findings.

One of the primary limitations is the geographic scope of the study. Focused solely on the Guangdong region, the study's findings may not be generalizable to other regions or countries. Future research could expand to include diverse geographical areas, providing a broader, more holistic understanding of customer satisfaction across different cultural and economic contexts.

Another limitation lies in the demographic representation of the survey sample. The study may not have captured the full spectrum of Crocs' customer base, particularly in terms of age, income levels, and education backgrounds. Future studies should strive for a more

inclusive demographic sampling to enhance the representativeness and applicability of the findings.

The cross-sectional nature of the study limits its ability to track changes in customer satisfaction over time. Implementing longitudinal research designs could offer insights into the evolution of customer satisfaction and how it is influenced by dynamic market trends, economic conditions, or shifts in consumer preferences.

The study also focuses on specific variables like product quality, price, brand perception, customer service, and innovation. However, other potential factors influencing customer satisfaction might have been overlooked. Future research could explore additional variables, such as cultural influences, personal values, competition, and external economic factors, to provide a more comprehensive analysis of the determinants of customer satisfaction.

Given the subjective nature of customer satisfaction, the reliance on self-reported survey data could lead to response bias. Future studies might benefit from incorporating objective measures, like purchase frequency and customer retention rates, to complement the subjective data and provide a more robust analysis. Additionally, employing mixed-method approaches, including qualitative methods like in-depth interviews or focus groups, could mitigate the limitations of relying solely on quantitative data.

The quantitative focus of the study, while providing structured and generalizable data, may overlook the nuanced understanding that qualitative research can offer. Qualitative approaches could delve deeper into the reasons behind customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction, providing richer, more detailed insights.

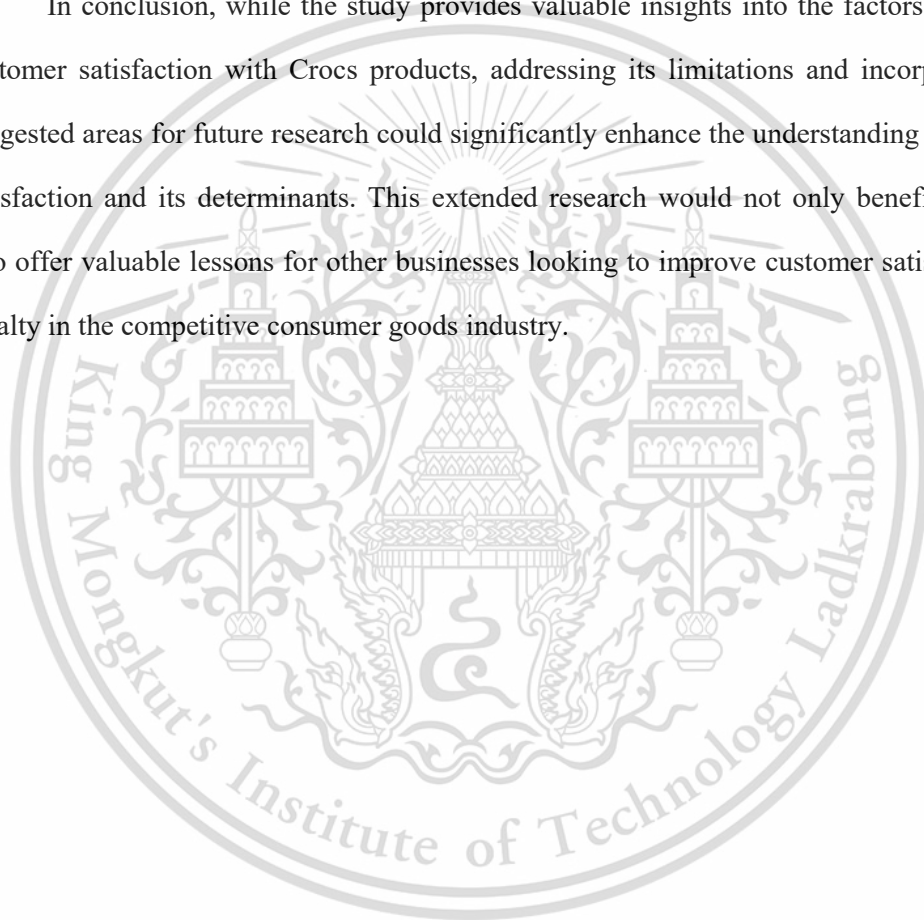
The study's regression model may face issues with multicollinearity among independent variables, potentially affecting the reliability of the findings. Future research should explore alternative modeling techniques or employ advanced statistical methods to address potential multicollinearity, ensuring more accurate and reliable results.

External factors, such as economic conditions, market competition, or technological advancements, were not extensively considered in the study. These factors could have a

significant influence on customer satisfaction. Future studies should incorporate these external elements to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the various factors that influence customer satisfaction.

Furthermore, the findings of this study are specific to Crocs in the Guangdong region. Comparative studies involving other brands or industries could provide a broader perspective on the dynamics of customer satisfaction, offering insights that could be beneficial across the consumer goods sector.

In conclusion, while the study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing customer satisfaction with Crocs products, addressing its limitations and incorporating the suggested areas for future research could significantly enhance the understanding of customer satisfaction and its determinants. This extended research would not only benefit Crocs but also offer valuable lessons for other businesses looking to improve customer satisfaction and loyalty in the competitive consumer goods industry.



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APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Subject: Factors Influencing Customer Satisfaction with Crocs Products in the Guangdong Region China

This study is being conducted as a requirement for a master's thesis and the test designed to measure satisfaction with aspects of the brand that affect customers who have purchased Crocs brands. Participation in this study is voluntary, and your responses will remain confidential. Your personal information will not be disclosed or used for any purpose beyond this research. The collected data will be analyzed collectively and used solely for academic purposes.

Please answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge and experience. Your honest and thoughtful responses will significantly contribute to the quality of this research. Your participation is highly appreciated. Thank you for taking the time to contribute to this study.

Yingzheng Yan

Program: Master of Business Administration in Industrial Business Administration
(International Program) KMITL Business School

Part 1: Demographic Profile

Please indicate your demographic information by checking in the appropriate box () that best represents your current situation.

1. Gender

Male

Female

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2. Age:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 20 years old | <input type="checkbox"/> 21-30 years old |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 31-40 years old | <input type="checkbox"/> 41-50 years old |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 51-60 years old | <input type="checkbox"/> 60 years old or older |

3. Monthly Income

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 5,000 CNY | <input type="checkbox"/> 5,000 CNY - 10,000 CNY |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10,001 CNY - 15,000 CNY | <input type="checkbox"/> 15,001 CNY - 20,000 CNY |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Over 20,000 CNY | |

4. Marital Status

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single | <input type="checkbox"/> Married |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Others | |

5. Education

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> High School or lower | <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational School |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree | <input type="checkbox"/> Master's degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral degree | |

Part 2: Influential Factors and Customer Satisfaction of Crocs Products

Please complete the questionnaire honestly based on your genuine thoughts and opinions. Indicate your level of agreement by marking a check (√) in the corresponding column. Please provide responses for all the questions to ensure completion of the questionnaire. The options provided represent the degree to which you agree with your actual experiences and attitudes, using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating "strongly disagree," 2 indicating "disagree," 3 indicating "neutral," 4 indicating "agree," and 5 indicating "strongly agree."

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Variable	Opinion Level				
	1	2	3	4	5
Customer Satisfaction					
I would recommend Crocs products in Guangdong to friends and family.					
My experience with Crocs products in Guangdong has led to a high level of satisfaction.					
I am satisfied with the sustainability and environmental responsibility of Crocs company.					
I am likely to choose Crocs products in the future.					
Crocs consistently meets my expectations for timely and accurate order fulfillment.					
Product Quality					
The materials used in Crocs products are of high quality.					
Crocs products provide excellent comfort and support for my feet.					
The durability of Crocs products aligns with my expectations, providing long-lasting value.					
Crocs products consistently maintain a high standard of quality across different styles and collections.					
The design features of Crocs products enhance not only aesthetics but also the functionality of the footwear.					
Price					
The pricing of Crocs products is reasonable considering the quality and features offered.					
The pricing of Crocs products is competitive compared to other footwear brands in the market.					

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Variable	Opinion Level				
	1	2	3	4	5
The range of prices for Crocs products is reasonable and accessible.					
I believe that Crocs products provide good value for money.					
Crocs provide the transparent communication about pricing and any associated costs.					
Brand Perception					
The Crocs brand is synonymous with innovative and stylish footwear.					
The branding elements, such as logo and messaging, of Crocs effectively communicate the values and identity of the brand.					
The brand image of Crocs aligns with my personal values and preferences.					
The unique design and colors of Crocs products contribute to a distinctive and recognizable brand image.					
The heritage and history of Crocs contribute positively to my perception of the brand's authenticity and trustworthiness.					
Customer Service					
I feel that the level of customer service provided by Crocs in the Guangdong region meet my expectations.					
The in-store shopping experience for Crocs products, including staff assistance and ambiance.					
Crocs effectively resolves any issues or concerns I may have with their products or services.					
Crocs actively seeks and values customer feedback, making me feel heard and appreciated.					

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Variable	Opinion Level				
	1	2	3	4	5
The return and exchange process for Crocs products in Guangdong is convenient and hassle-free.					
Innovation					
I find Crocs products to be innovative and in line with current fashion trends.					
Crocs consistently introduces new and innovative designs that capture my interest.					
Crocs demonstrates adaptability in product development, reflecting a customer-centric approach to innovation.					
The introduction of limited edition or exclusive collections by Crocs enhances the contribution to its innovative image.					
The innovative use of QR codes and mobile device scanning to access the AR experience demonstrates Crocs' adaptability to modern technologies.					

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