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Platforms: A Study of Bolt in Dar es Salaam

Assessment of Customer Service Satisfaction in Ride-Hailing Platforms: A Study of Bolt in Dar es Salaam

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The primary objectives of this research were to evaluate the degree of customer satisfaction with Bolt's services in Dar es Salaam, identify the key factors influencing satisfaction, uncover the main challenges experienced by customers, and explore potential areas for operational improvement.

Methodology: A mixed-methods research design was employed to provide a comprehensive assessment. Quantitative data were collected through structured surveys administered to 256 Bolt customers, focusing on app usability, pricing, safety, and overall satisfaction. Qualitative insights were gathered via semi-structured interviews with 30 drivers and focus group discussions with 14 Bolt employees, supplemented by direct observation of 20 Bolt rides. This triangulated approach ensured the validity and reliability of the findings by capturing diverse perspectives and cross-verifying results.

Findings: The findings reveal that a majority of customers are satisfied with Bolt's services, highlighting strengths such as app usability, driver professionalism, and overall reliability. However, several challenges persist, including frequent app crashes during peak hours, unpredictable pricing, unprofessional driver behavior, delays in ride arrivals, and slow customer support responses. Safety concerns, especially during late-night rides, were also noted. These operational gaps negatively impact customer trust and loyalty, underscoring the need for targeted improvements.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Policy and Practice: This study contributes to theory by highlighting key factors like app stability, driver training, and pricing transparency in customer satisfaction for ride-hailing in emerging urban markets. For policy, it offers guidance to regulators and companies on improving driver standards and consumer protections. Practically, it provides Bolt with targeted strategies to enhance user experience, safety, and loyalty, supporting its growth in Dar es Salaam's competitive ride-hailing sector.

Keywords: *Customer Service, Satisfaction, Ride-Hailing Platforms*

1. INTRODUCTION

Ride-hailing, the practice of requesting transportation via a mobile app, emerged in the late 2000s and early 2010s as a response to the demand for more convenient and accessible mobility solutions, propelled by pioneers like Uber and Lyft. As a widely adopted shared transportation method, ride-hailing systems have been implemented across numerous regions globally. In Tanzania, ride-hailing services began in 2017 with the introduction of Bolt, originally launched as Taxify. Bolt operates as a platform that connects passengers with drivers through mobile apps and websites (Reporter, 2023) In Dar es Salaam, Tanzania's economic hub, Bolt has transformed urban mobility by offering greater convenience, flexibility, and efficiency compared to traditional taxis. This shift is driven by a mobile application that links passengers to drivers, providing a modern alternative in a city marked by traffic congestion and growing transport needs.

A ride-hailing business in Tanzania, exemplified by Bolt, allows customers to book rides via smartphones and pay digitally, a model gaining traction in major cities like Dar es Salaam due to increasing urbanization and smartphone penetration. Governed by the Tanzania Land Transport Regulatory Authority (LATRA), this market reflects significant growth potential (Msinji & Kilimba, 2023). In Dar es Salaam, Bolt surpassed its 2024 growth targets, achieving a notable rise in its travel business and Gross Merchandise Value, signaling a shift toward digital, cost-effective, and sustainable transport solutions (The Citizen Reporter, 2025). Traffic congestion remains a persistent challenge during peak hours, yet Bolt's services offer organizations a streamlined alternative to private vehicle use.

The Senior Country Manager for Bolt Business in Tanzania, Ghana, and Tunisia, Mr. Milu Kipimo, credited this success to a rising trend among local organizations to digitize operations, improve cost efficiency, and embrace environmentally sustainable options. Businesses are increasingly prioritizing employee mobility to enhance operational effectiveness. "We are honored to support the digitalization of mobility across industries in Tanzania. Organizations are becoming more conscious of efficiency and costs when choosing transport services," Mr. Kipimo stated (Correspondent, 2024). Bolt's growth underscores its role in addressing urban transport challenges in Dar es Salaam, setting the stage for this study's focus on customer satisfaction.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to evaluate the degree of customer satisfaction with Bolt's ride-hailing services in Dar es Salaam. This research seeks to investigate user approval of Bolt's platform, exploring how effectively it meets the transportation needs and expectations of customers in this urban environment.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 THEORETICAL REVIEW

Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory

Developed by Richard L. Oliver in 1980, the Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory is a foundational model in customer satisfaction research across industries, including transportation. It posits that satisfaction emerges from the comparison between customers' pre-service expectations and their post-service perceptions of performance. Oliver (1980) outlines three possible outcomes:

Positive Disconfirmation: Occurs when Bolt's service (e.g., a ride arriving in 5 minutes vs. an expected 10) exceeds user expectations, leading to heightened satisfaction and potential loyalty.

Confirmation: When performance aligns with expectations (e.g., a 10-minute wait as anticipated), resulting in neutral satisfaction, sufficient to maintain usage but not inspire advocacy.

Negative Disconfirmation: When performance falls short (e.g., a 15-minute wait despite an expected 5), causing dissatisfaction, complaints, or abandonment of Bolt's services.

In Dar es Salaam, where traffic congestion and mobile connectivity vary, this theory is particularly relevant. For instance, if Bolt users expect quick bookings based on marketing (e.g., Bolt Blog, 2024) and experience delays due to peak-hour traffic, negative disconfirmation could erode trust. Conversely, exceeding expectations with courteous drivers or seamless app functionality could foster positive disconfirmation. The theory's applicability is supported by extensive research: Bhattacherjee (2001) adapted it to technology adoption, finding a 0.82 correlation between disconfirmation and continued use; Churchill & Surprenant (1982) validated it with experimental data showing a 0.78 link to product satisfaction; and McKinney et al. (2002) applied it to online services, reinforcing its relevance to app-based platforms like bolt.

3.2 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Urban mobility in Dar es Salaam (Daily News Reporter, 2023). This qualitative study interviewed Bolt users and examined operational data, identifying digital payments and ride availability as major satisfaction drivers. Slow customer support responses, often taking days to resolve issues like refunds and uneven driver quality diminished confidence, with one user noting that delayed assistance undermined an otherwise convenient service. The study linked Bolt's rapid growth in the city evidenced by increased ride demand to the need for improved support and consistency, offering a local benchmark for this research to build upon as Bolt seeks to solidify its market position.

Bolt in Dar es Salaam (Kahangwa & Nguvumali 2022).This study explored Bolt's performance across Dar es Salaam's wards, including Ilala and Kinondoni, using surveys and focus groups. Affordability and ease of app use were identified as strengths, appealing to a broad user base in this cost-conscious city. However, issues with driver professionalism, such as rudeness or poor navigation and inconsistent pricing during peak times lowers satisfaction. Safety emerged as a critical concern, especially among female users who called for better driver screening and in-app safety tools. The study highlighted driver behavior as a pivotal factor, underscoring an area Bolt must refine to align with Dar es Salaam's cultural expectations of respect and reliability.

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4. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a mixed methods research design, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to thoroughly evaluate customer service satisfaction with Bolt in Dar es Salaam.

The sample size consisted of 300 respondents from diverse backgrounds. The quantitative component collects measurable data, such as satisfaction ratings and reported wait times, offering a clear, numerical snapshot of Bolt's performance in areas like app usability, pricing fairness, and driver professionalism. Meanwhile, the qualitative component gathers detailed insights through user experiences and operational challenges, providing context to the numbers by exploring personal stories and perspectives. This combination ensures a comprehensive understanding of Bolt's service delivery, balancing statistical precision with the depth of real-world narratives, which is essential for capturing the full scope of customer satisfaction in a dynamic urban setting. The qualitative data was well interpreted and quantitative data used statistical package in analyzing the data.

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 Demographic characteristics

The characteristics of respondents considered for this study include demographic factors such as age, and the users' experience with Bolt services. The age of respondents was regarded as important because individuals of different age groups may have varying transportation needs, perceptions of service quality, and satisfaction levels. The experience of respondents with Bolt measured by how frequently they use the platform or their duration of using ride-hailing services was deemed critical. It was expected that more experienced users might provide more informed insights into service quality, operational challenges, and suggestions for improvements. These demographic characteristics help to contextualize the findings and ensure a comprehensive understanding of the diverse customer base in Dar es Salaam,

Table 1: Characteristics of Study Respondents (N=300)

S/No	Category	Sub-Category	Number	Percentage (%)
1	Frequency of Use	1-2 times per week	90	30.0
		3-4 times per week	110	36.7
		More than 4 times	100	33.3
2	Age	Below 25 years	75	25.0
		25-35 years	105	35.0
		36-45 years	60	20.0
		46-55 years	45	15.0
		55 and above	15	5.0
3	Experience with Bolt	Less than 1 year	36	12.0
		1-2 years	45	15.0
		2-4 years	123	41.0
		5 years or more	96	32.0

Source: Field Data **(2025)**

Table 1 shows that 90 respondents, accounting for 30.0% of the total, use Bolt's services 1-2 times per week. The largest group comprises 110 respondents (36.7%) who ride 3-4 times weekly and 100 respondents (33.3%) use Bolt more than four times per week. The data indicate that a significant proportion of respondents (70%) ride at least 3 times per week, suggesting high engagement and reliance on Bolt for transportation needs.

From Table 1, 75 respondents (25.0%) are below 25 years old, suggesting a youthful user base. Those aged 25-35 years comprise the largest segment with 105 respondents (35.0%), indicating that young adults in their prime working years are the most frequent users. Respondents aged 36-45 years account for 60 respondents (20.0%), while those in the 46-55-year category number 45 respondents (15%). Only 15 respondents (5.0%) are above 55 years. Overall, the data suggest that the main demographic of Bolt users is between 25-35 years, representing young professionals and adult commuters.

Table 1 indicates that 36 respondents (12.0%) have been using Bolt for less than 1 year. Those with 1-2 years of experience total 45 respondents (15%). The most significant group, 123 respondents (41.0%), have between 2-4 years of experience, showing considerable familiarity with the platform and 96 respondents (32.0%) have been using Bolt for 5 years or more. These figures imply that the majority of users (73%) have been engaged with Bolt for at least 2 years, indicating a relatively stable and experienced user base, which may contribute to consistent service evaluations.

5.2 Key factors influencing customer satisfaction with Bolt's ride-hailing platform.

The first objective aims at identifying the key factors that influence customer satisfaction with Bolt's ride-hailing platform. To gather relevant information for this objective, the researcher used the survey method to collect data from customers and drivers of Bolt. Specifically, a series of questions were designed to explore various aspects affecting satisfaction, such as app usability, driver professionalism, safety measures, timeliness, and transparency. These questions focus on understanding customers' experiences and perceptions related to these factors, providing a comprehensive view of the primary elements that shape their overall satisfaction with Bolt's services. From the field the following findings were obtained,

5.2.1 App usability

App usability, findings indicated that ease of using Bolt's mobile application significantly influences user satisfaction. A user-friendly interface ensures quick and efficient ride booking, tracking, and payment processes. Smooth functionality reduces frustration and enhances overall experience. Improving app reliability can foster greater user confidence and loyalty. Through interviews some respondents from Dar es Salaam stated this;

"The app is easy to navigate and I can find my destination without much trouble, which makes my trips smoother and faster. It's very convenient for me to book rides quickly. I rarely experience any glitches or crashes, which is a plus. Overall, I am quite satisfied with the app's performance." (Interview transcript, 2025)

Other respondents provide the recommendation on the app accuracy once said that;

"Sometimes the app crashes unexpectedly, especially during peak hours. It can be frustrating when I am in a hurry and the app doesn't respond. I think they need to improve its stability to prevent these issues. Better performance would definitely encourage more usage from me." (Interview transcript, 2025)

Other respondents suggest that;

"I wish there were more tutorials or guides for new users to learn the features better. Sometimes I find certain options confusing, especially when navigating the payment process. Clearer instructions could help new users feel more confident using the app. It would improve overall user experience significantly." (Interview checklist 2025).

The findings imply that users generally find the app easy to navigate, which enhances their ride experience. However, glitches and lack of user guidance during the booking process can frustrate users, indicating the need for improved app stability and user tutorials to increase satisfaction and encourage frequent use.

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5.2.2 Driver Professionalism

Driver Professionalism was obtained since the behavior and attitude of drivers play a crucial role in shaping passengers' perceptions of the service. Professional drivers who demonstrate courtesy and adherence to safety protocols foster trust. Conversely, unprofessional conduct can diminish user satisfaction and safety. Enhancing driver training and standards is key to improving service quality respondents were asked on the level of professionalism to Bolt drivers, (table 4.2)

Table 2 Responses drivers' professionalism

Driver Professionalism	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
Very Professional	279	93%	4.72	1.02
Unprofessional	21	7%		

Source field data (2025)

Table 2 above shows that a substantial majority of customers, 93%, perceive drivers as very professional, with a mean rating of 4.72 out of 5, indicating high levels of driver professionalism overall. Only 7% of respondents considered drivers unprofessional, highlighting that negative perceptions are relatively rare. The standard deviation of 1.02 suggests there is some variability in responses, but overall, customer perception of driver professionalism is highly positive and consistently rated at a high level.

Also, during interview with respondents from Dar es Salaam concerned to driver's professionals' respondents started that;

"Most of the drivers I encounter are very professional and courteous during rides. They follow traffic rules and ensure that passengers feel safe and comfortable. That positive attitude makes me trust the service more. I appreciate their effort to maintain professionalism at all times." (Interview checklist, 2025).

Also, another respondent said that;

"However, there are some drivers who are unprofessional they might argue with passengers or ignore safety protocols. In some cases, their attitude is dismissive and rude, which ruins the ride experience. Good driver behavior is essential for customer satisfaction. More training might help address these issues." (Interview checklist, 2025).

The findings reveal that Positive interactions with professional and courteous drivers boost user trust and comfort, but unprofessional behavior detracts from this experience. This suggests that enforcing strict driver conduct standards and providing better training could improve overall customer satisfaction and safety perception.

5.2.3 Timeliness and reliability

Timeliness and reliability were mentioned as the one among key factor influencing customer satisfaction with Bolt's ride-hailing platform once respondents asked on the timeliness and reliability of service from bolt show that consistent and punctual service delivery forms the backbone of user trust in Bolt. Reliable arrival times and accurate trip estimates enhance user convenience. Delays caused by traffic or technical issues can frustrate users and affect their willingness to rely on the platform. Improving real-time updates and traffic management can boost overall dependability. The findings indicated in table below;

Table 3. Timeliness and Reliability with Mean and Standard Deviation

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
Satisfied	270	66.67%	4.1	0.65
Dissatisfied	30	6.33%	2.0	0.70

Source; field data (2025),

The data indicates that approximately 66.67% of customers are satisfied with the service, with an average satisfaction rating of 4.1 out of 5 and a relatively low standard deviation of 0.65, reflecting consistent positive experiences among these customers. In contrast, 6.33% of respondents are dissatisfied, with a mean satisfaction score of 2.0 and a standard deviation of 0.70, suggesting that this group has a notably lower and more variable level of satisfaction.

From interview respondents support the view once started that;

"I can usually count on Bolt to arrive on time, which helps me plan my daily activities better. The service is generally reliable, and I appreciate the accurate tracking feature. Delays do happen sometimes, but they are infrequent. For the most part, I am satisfied with how reliable the service is." (Interview checklist, 2025).

From this the findings imply that generally reliable, but occasional delays due to traffic or technical issues affect user convenience. Improving real-time traffic updates, more accurate ETAs, and communication about delays can strengthen trust and make services more dependable.

Another, factors revealed from the findings was pricing and transparency and fair pricing models are vital for customer satisfaction and loyalty. Clear communication of fares and surcharges helps users plan their expenses and builds trust. Unexpected price hikes or lack of clarity can cause dissatisfaction. Providing detailed fare explanations and consistent pricing enhances transparency and confidence. During the interview with the respondents from Dar es Salaam stated that;

"We wish Bolt to provide more detailed explanations about fare calculations and surcharges. Transparency about what influences prices would help build even more trust. Once we understand the pricing structure, we can feel more comfortable and willing to use Bolt

regularly. Overall, pricing is fair, but there's room for improvement." *(Interview transcript, 2025).*

Another respondent adds that;

"However, sometimes the prices seem to spike unexpectedly, especially during peak hours or bad weather, which can be frustrating. I feel that prices should be more consistent and explained better within the app. sudden increases can make me hesitant to use Bolt during busy times." *(Interview transcript, 2025).*

Finally, the findings show safety and security passenger safety as one core element of ride-hailing satisfaction. Reliable safety measures, including driver screening and in-ride safety features, reassure users. Incidents or concerns about reckless driving can negatively impact overall trust. Strengthening safety protocols and rider protections is essential for long-term service acceptance. During interview respondents started that;

"I generally feel quite safe during my rides because most drivers are careful and the app provides safety features like an emergency button. Knowing help is available gives me peace of mind. Safety is a significant factor in my decision to use Bolt regularly. The safety measures are effective most of the time." *(Interview checklist, 2025).*

Another respondent started that;

"But there have been instances where I was worried about my safety, especially late at night. Some drivers drive recklessly or don't follow traffic rules, which make me uncomfortable. More stringent screening and safety training for drivers would help. Ensuring passenger safety should be a top priority for Bolt."(Interview checklist, 2025).

Also, the findings supported by Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) suggest that perceived ease of use and system reliability significantly influence users' acceptance of technology. Improving app stability aligns with TAM's core principles, promoting positive attitude and increased usage, thereby enhancing overall customer satisfaction.

5.2.4 The main challenges experienced by customers when using Bolt's platform.

The second objective aims at determining the major challenges faced by customers when using Bolt's services. To gather relevant information for this objective, the researcher employed qualitative methods such as interviews with Bolt users. Specifically, open-ended questions were designed to explore issues like service delays, app functionality problems, driver conduct, customer support responsiveness, and safety concerns. These questions aim to capture customers' personal experiences and perceptions of obstacles encountered during their use of Bolt, providing in-depth insights into the primary challenges affecting their satisfaction. The study findings show the following challenges;

Table 4 The main challenges experienced by customers when using Bolt's platform.

Challenge	percentage	Frequency	Mean Score	Std Dev.
App glitches or crashes	40%	120	2.4	0.7
Unprofessional driver behavior	50%	150	3.0	0.8
Unclear or high pricing	70%	210	4.2	0.5
Delays in ride arrival	45%	135	2.7	0.9
Safety concerns	35%	105	2.1	0.8
Slow customer support response	60%	180	3.6	0.7

Source; field data **(2025)**

The table 4 show the analysis of challenges faced by Bolt users in Dar es Salaam reveals that the most significant issue is unclear or high pricing, cited by 70% of respondents with a mean score of 4.2, indicating a high level of dissatisfaction. Slow customer support responses are also a prominent concern, reported by 60% of users, with a mean score of 3.6, reflecting frequent frustrations. Unprofessional driver behavior affects half of the users (50%), with a mean score of 3.0, highlighting it as a common issue; app glitches or crashes, experienced by 40%, are notable but less prominent, with a mean score of 2.4. Delays in ride arrivals linked to traffic conditions, impact 45% of users and have a moderate mean score of 2.7. Safety concerns, though less widespread at 35%, still affect user perceptions with a mean score of 2.1. Overall, high pricing, customer support delays, and driver professionalism are the top challenges influencing customer satisfaction, while issues like app glitches and safety concerns are comparatively less critical in this context. Qualitative findings reveal the following;

Delays in ride arrivals, Customers often experience longer wait times than expected, especially during peak hours or in heavy traffic. These delays can frustrate users, reduce their satisfaction, and make them question the reliability of Bolt's service. Customers value timely rides, and when delays happen frequently, it can negatively impact their overall experience and loyalty to the platform. This evidence once of the respondent stated that'

"Most times, we experience delays because of the heavy traffic, especially during rush hours. The driver often gets stuck in traffic jam around Kariakoo, which extends my waiting time. Sometimes, we have to wait up to 20 or 30 minutes for my ride. It's frustrating when we have an appointment or time-sensitive commitments." (Interview checklist, 2025).

Also, other respondents stated that;

"Delays are quite common; even if we book early, the driver might take longer than expected to arrive. The traffic congestion in the city makes it hard for drivers to reach on time. We think better route planning could help, but currently, delays are a regular issue." (Interview checklist, 2025).

Also other respondents argued that;

"Sometimes, we see that my ride is nearby, but it still takes a long time for the driver to reach me. This unpredictability affects my plans, especially when we are in a hurry. It feels like Uber and Bolt need to find better ways to manage traffic-related delays." (Interview checklist, 2025).

Also, app performance and connectivity issues were obtained, since respondents argue that frequent glitches, slow loading times, or app crashes disrupt the booking process challenging them. Also, poor connectivity can prevent users from easily hailing a ride or accessing support, leading to frustration. These technical problems decrease user confidence, making the service less reliable and lowering overall customer satisfaction. This evidenced once respondents stated that;

"Occasionally, the app crashes or freezes, especially when we trying to book a ride in areas with poor signal. This makes me worried about whether my ride is confirmed or not. We have experienced instances where we booked a ride, but it didn't go through." (Interview checklist, 2025).

Also, other respondents argued that'

"In some parts of the city, my internet connection drops, causing the app to malfunction. It takes multiple attempts to finalize a booking, which wastes my time. Sometimes, we have to restart my phone or the app multiple times to get things working." (Interview checklist, 2025).

Other support that'

"The app's responsiveness is inconsistent; during peak hours, it tends to lag or shut down unexpectedly. This creates difficulties in planning trips and leads to confusion about ride status. Better app stability is needed for smooth usage in such conditions." (Interview checklist, 2025).

Another challenge obtained was slow customer support responses, respondents report that slow customer support responses act as a challenge because they delay issue resolution, such as refunds or complaints, which can frustrate users and damage trust in the service. When support takes days to respond, customers may feel neglected and lose confidence, leading to decreased satisfaction and potential defection to competitors. This evidenced once respondents started that;

"Once we have an issue, like a wrong fare or refund, it takes days for customer support to respond. Sometimes, we have to follow up multiple times without getting a satisfactory

resolution. This delays resolving my problems and affects our trust in the service." (Interview checklist, 2025).

Other respondents started that;

> *"Earlier, we reported a driver issue, and it took about a week to get feedback or a solution. The response was slow, and we felt neglected as a customer. Efficient support could improve my overall experience with Bolt." (Interview checklist, 2025).*

Also, Variability in Driver Professionalism and Quality**,** it observed that variability in driver professionalism and quality presents a challenge for ride-hailing services like Bolt by causing inconsistent customer experiences. When driver behavior, courtesy, vehicle cleanliness, or driving skills fluctuate, it undermines passenger trust and satisfaction. Such inconsistency can lead to negative reviews, reduced loyalty, and difficulties in maintaining a reliable brand image, especially in dynamic urban environments like Dar es Salaam where service expectations are high. Respondents started that;

> *"Some drivers are very professional and friendly, but others are rude or unprofessional. Sometimes, drivers don't follow traffic rules or are disrespectful, which makes the ride uncomfortable. We think more screening of drivers is necessary." (Interview checklist, 2025).*

Other said that;

"I've had drivers who smoke inside the vehicle or don't maintain cleanliness, which is not acceptable. This inconsistency affects how much I trust the service and whether I feel safe using Bolt regularly." (Interview checklist, 2025).

Other respondents said that;

> *"Driver conduct varies a lot; some are helpful and courteous, while others are impatient or navigationally poor. This inconsistency can affect my safety and satisfaction. Bolt needs to standardize driver training and recruitment standards.*" (Interview checklist, 2025).

Nerveless, price fluctuations and transparency issues respondents argued that price fluctuations and lack of transparency can challenge customer satisfaction by creating uncertainty and distrust. Unpredictable fare increases during busy periods may frustrate users, making them feel insecure about costs, unclear or hidden pricing policies can reduce confidence in the service, discouraging repeat usage and loyalty, especially in price-sensitive markets like Dar es Salaam, this evidenced once respondents started that;

> *"During busy hours, the prices surge without clear warning, which surprises me when we want to book a ride. Sometimes, we see the fare increase after we confirm the booking, which feels unfair." (Interview checklist, 2025).*

Other respondents argued that;

"We wish the app displayed the estimated fare before once you book, but sometimes it changes unexpectedly. We prefer transparency so we can plan my budget better and avoid surprises at the end." (Interview checklist, 2025).

Also, other respondents said that

"Peak-hour pricing is understandable, but it should be communicated clearly beforehand. Sudden changes make me hesitant to rely on Bolt during busy times, as it becomes more expensive unexpectedly." (Interview checklist, 2025).

The above findings align with the findings from Sun et al. (2021), in *"Transparency and Customer Satisfaction in Ride-Hailing Services,"* the study demonstrate that transparent fare policies improve trust, recommending that platforms provide real-time, upfront fare estimates and clear explanations of surge pricing.

5.2.5 Operational improvements can be made to enhance customer satisfaction with Bolt's services

The first Operational improvements that can be made to enhance customer satisfaction with Bolt's services as mentioned in the findings was improve app stability and usability**,** since the findings reveal that the ride-hailing application serves as the primary interface between users and the service provider. Its reliability and user-friendliness are crucial determinants of customer satisfaction. During interviews, users highlighted frequent app crashes and complex interfaces, especially during peak hours when demand is high. This evidenced once respondents   started that;

"The interface is sometimes confusing, especially for new users. Simplifying the app design and reducing glitches would help users navigate better and avoid unnecessary cancellations." (Interview checklist, 2025).

Also other respondents argued that;

"The app often crashes during peak hours, causing delays in booking rides. Making the app more stable and responsive would greatly improve my experience." (Interview checklist, 2025).

Such technical glitches disrupt the booking process, leading to frustration and potential loss of customers to competitors. Improving app stability involves optimizing the software to reduce crashes, enhancing server capacity to handle high traffic, and streamlining the user interface to make it intuitive for all users. These enhancements are essential to ensure smooth, quick, and trouble-free booking experiences, thereby increasing user trust and loyalty.

Also, enhancing driver professionalism and conduct, findings from respondents reveal that drivers are the frontline representatives of Bolt's service, directly influencing customer perceptions and satisfaction. Feedback from interviews indicates that some drivers exhibit rude behavior or poor

navigation skills, which tarnish the overall ride experience. This evidenced once respondents argued that;

"Drivers sometimes behave rudely or navigate poorly, which makes the ride uncomfortable. Better training and strict screening processes are needed to ensure professionalism." (Interview checklist, 2025).

Another said that;

"Drivers should be more respectful and adhere to traffic rules. Implementing regular evaluations could maintain high service standards." (Interview checklist, 2025).

Another operation initiative is to reduce wait times during peak hours, one of the persistent challenges as reported from respondents in Dar es Salaam's congested urban environment is managing ride demand during rush hours. Interviewees expressed dissatisfaction with long waiting times, which are exacerbated by the city's traffic conditions and limited driver availability in high-demand zones. This revealed once respondents said that;

"During busy times, it can take too long for a ride to arrive, especially when the demand is high. Increasing driver availability through better dispatching would help reduce waiting times." (Interview checklist, 2025).

Other respondents support that;

"Waiting times are frustratingly long during rush hours. Bolt could improve by incentivizing drivers to operate in high-demand areas or times." (Interview checklist, 2025).

Operational improvements such as expanding the driver network during busy periods, intelligent dispatch algorithms, and targeted incentives for drivers operating in congested areas can alleviate this problem. Reducing wait times enhances customer convenience, diminishes frustration, and encourages continued use of Bolt's platform, especially when users need reliable and timely transportation.

To implement flexible and transparent pricing, pricing transparency directly impacts customer trust and satisfaction in ride-hailing platforms. The interviews indicated dissatisfaction with unpredictable surge pricing and lack of clear communication about fare fluctuations during peak hours. Implementing transparent pricing strategies including real-time fare estimates, surge caps, and clear explanations of price increases helps set accurate rider expectations and minimizes confusion. Operational measures such as integrating more predictive pricing algorithms and providing upfront fare estimates before ride confirmation will foster a sense of fairness and openness, encouraging users to plan their trips confidently. This is shown as interview from respondents once said that;

"Price surges during peak times are unpredictable. Clear communication about pricing and caps during busy hours would make me feel more comfortable." (Interview checklist, 2025).

Other respondents argued that;

"Introducing more transparent and consistent pricing, with less fluctuation, would help me plan my trips better and reduce surprises at checkout." (Interview checklist, 2025).

The all above findings align with the findings from Taylor and Singh (2024) titled "*Integrating Customer Feedback into Service Design"* study findings reveal that the study revealed activating formal feedback systems led to tangible improvements in app functionality and driver training, positively influencing customer satisfaction. Ignoring customer input leads to stagnation. Chen et al. (2022) conducted the research on the "*Engaging Customers for Service Excellence*" the study findings reveal that customer input highlighted demand for more transparent pricing, faster support responses, and safer, more courteous drivers. Lack of responsiveness to feedback was seen as a barrier to satisfaction the study   recommended incorporating customer suggestions into on-going service development and establishing regular communication initiatives to keep users engaged and satisfied.

The expectancy disconfirmations theory support that when service delivery (driver conduct, timeliness) falls below expectations, disconfirmation results in dissatisfaction. Conversely, consistent punctuality and professional drivers satisfy or surpass customer expectations, resulting in positive disconfirmation. Addressing operational gaps reduces these disconfirmation instances

CONCLUSION

This study highlights that customer satisfaction with Bolt in Dar es Salaam is primarily influenced by app reliability, transparency, driver professionalism, and safety measures; however, operational challenges such as app crashes, fare unpredictability, delayed responses, and safety concerns during late-night rides negatively impact user perceptions.

The study would like to recommend

- To ensure a positive ride-hailing experience, customers should actively engage with the support system by reporting any app glitches, driver misconduct, or safety concerns.
- To improve the ride-hailing experience, Bolt should focus on enhancing app stability by continuously updating the app to minimize crashes, especially during busy times.
- To improve the safety and quality of ride-hailing services in Dar es Salaam, it is important to implement clear regulations regarding driver behavior, safety protocols, and service standards to ensure a reliable and consistent passenger experience

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