

CHAPTER V

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Research Findings

5.1.1 Delivery Speed Optimization Strategies

During my internship experience at Amazon DTM8 during the 2023 peak season, I had the opportunity to closely observe and participate in the operational strategies employed to optimize delivery speed. By triangulating data from in-depth interviews with the Operations Manager (Golam Rosul Tarek), structured field observations, and supporting document analysis, several core initiatives emerged that collectively enhanced Amazon's ability to meet customer expectations during high-demand periods.

One of the most visible strategies was workforce expansion and cross-training. According to Tareq, "We hired approximately 1,500 temporary associates, and cross-trained them across different operational areas to ensure maximum flexibility." This strategy was clearly observable during my fieldwork, where I noticed that employees often switched between picking, packing, and loading roles based on real-time operational needs. The Amazon Peak Season Operational Report further confirmed this staffing expansion, highlighting a 25% workforce increase compared to the previous year.

Another key initiative was the hot zone reallocation. Tareq explained, "We strategically repositioned fast-moving items closer to the shipping docks to minimize picking time." While shadowing outbound operations, I personally observed the newly arranged fast-pick zones where high-demand products like electronics and seasonal gifts were stored near dispatch lanes. Warehouse layout blueprints reviewed during document analysis supported these observed changes, indicating a clear operational pivot towards speed-centric logistics.

Additionally, temporary micro-fulfillment areas were established inside the facility. Tariq mentioned that "creating dedicated micro-fulfillment hubs allowed us to isolate fast-moving SKUs and process them rapidly." During my observation, I noted how these areas operated semi-independently, enabling quicker picking and packing of top-selling promotional items, particularly during Black Friday and Christmas sales.

In terms of technological enhancements, Tareq emphasized that dynamic routing algorithms played a significant role. "Our system now updates delivery routes several times a day based on live traffic and weather data," he shared. From my experience monitoring the control room, I witnessed how the real-time dashboards constantly refreshed delivery pathways, a detail also supported by Amazon's internal tech bulletins that outlined recent upgrades to their logistics optimization systems.

Furthermore, rigorous KPI monitoring and rapid response mechanisms were foundational to maintaining delivery standards. Tareq stated, "Even a small deviation in Click-to-Delivery Time would immediately trigger a cross-functional task force." Weekly performance meetings that I attended often revolved around preemptively addressing minor issues before they escalated.

Finally, collaborative forecasting with marketing teams ensured operational alignment. "We adjust forecasts dynamically during promotions based on live sales data," Tariq added. My direct exposure to bi-weekly forecast meetings illustrated how marketing and operations worked hand-in-hand, ensuring that inventory planning and workforce allocation remained tightly synchronized with promotional demand

Table 5.1 summarizes the triangulation of data sources for delivery speed optimization strategies

Strategy	Interview Insight (Tareq)	Field Observation	Document Analysis
Workforce Expansion	"Hired 1,500 temporary associates, cross-trained them."	Staff working across multiple roles observed.	Confirmed in Peak Season Operational Report.
Hot Zone Reallocation	"Moved fast-moving items closer to shipping docks."	Fast-pick zones near outbound lanes observed.	Updated warehouse blueprints reviewed.
Temporary Micro-Fulfillment	"Dedicated hubs for fast-moving SKUs."	Micro-fulfillment hubs in action observed.	Noted in internal logistics strategy documents.
Dynamic Routing Technology	"Routes updated live based on traffic/weather data."	Real-time routing dashboard monitored.	Tech bulletins on routing algorithm upgrades.
KPI Monitoring and Rapid Response	"Any deviation triggers immediate action."	Observed weekly KPI review meetings.	Performance management SOPs validated.
Forecast Collaboration	"Sales data adjusts operational forecasts in real-time."	Bi-weekly forecasting meetings attended.	CRM and sales alignment reports reviewed.

Source: Interview with Golam Rosul Tarek (Operational Manager, Amazon DTM8), participant observation (Oct–Dec 2023), and Amazon Peak Season Operational Report (2023).

In summary, the optimization of delivery speed at Amazon DTM8 during the 2023 peak season was not driven by a single factor, but rather by an integrated system of workforce agility, warehouse redesign, technological innovation, active KPI monitoring, and tight cross-departmental collaboration. These strategies, observed firsthand and supported by interviews and documents, exemplify Amazon's commitment to maintaining operational excellence even under extreme market pressures.

5.1.2 Implementation of Seasonal Discounts

During my internship at Amazon DTM8, I observed how the marketing team meticulously orchestrated seasonal discount campaigns to align with customer expectations and operational capabilities. Through a triangulated approach—interviews with Carlon Evelyn (Marketing Manager), real-time field observations, and internal document reviews—I gained a comprehensive understanding of how Amazon leverages promotional strategies during the holiday season.

Evelyn shared that the discount planning process begins as early as August. “We plan ahead to align with every department—operations, logistics, even customer service. Coordination is key,” she explained. Based on my participation in weekly marketing syncs, I witnessed the collaborative approach to campaign design and inventory alignment.

Amazon’s discounts were not random markdowns; they were targeted, data-driven incentives. According to Evelyn, “We tailor deals based on browsing history and previous purchases.” I confirmed this through observations of the CRM system dashboards, where customer segmentation data was used to push personalized app notifications and emails. Products frequently searched by users were prioritized for promotional placement.

Field observations showed how flash deals and limited-time offers were prominently displayed on the website and app interface, creating a sense of urgency. Countdown timers, bold banners, and cart-reminder notifications were commonly used elements. Evelyn emphasized, “Urgency sells. Flash sales can double conversion rates within an hour.”

Another effective tactic involved bundling. “We bundle related items to increase the average basket size,” Evelyn noted. I observed these bundles firsthand—such as headphones sold with laptop stands or phone cases offered with screen protectors—often accompanied by “Buy 2 Get 1” labels.

On the operational side, coordination with logistics was vital. Evelyn said, “Marketing doesn’t run campaigns in a vacuum—we communicate daily with the fulfillment team.” During my observations, I noticed how inventory for discounted items was pre-positioned in hot zones within the warehouse, ensuring rapid dispatch once orders came in.

Performance tracking was also real-time. Dashboards monitored cart abandonment, page clicks, and purchase conversions. Evelyn explained, “If a promo underperforms within the first few hours, we either reprice it or push it more aggressively.”

Table 5.2 summarizes how seasonal discount strategies were validated through multiple data sources

Strategy	Interview Insight (Evelyn)	Field Observation	Document Analysis
Early Campaign Planning	“Planning starts in August with cross-team coordination.”	Participated in weekly marketing alignment meetings	Reviewed seasonal sales planning timelines
Personalized Discounts	“Deals are based on browsing and purchase history.”	Observed targeted CRM dashboards	CRM segmentation manual reviewed
Flash Sales & Urgency Tactics	“Urgency boosts conversion rates quickly.”	Observed flash deal UI on website/app	Digital UX strategy documents reviewed
Product Bundling	“We bundle items to increase order value.”	Witnessed bundle offers during live campaigns	Marketing bundle campaign templates
Operational Coordination	“We align daily with the fulfillment team.”	Discounted items staged in fast-pick zones	Internal logistics-planning memos reviewed
Real-Time Campaign Monitoring	“We adjust or reprice based on early conversion data.”	Live dashboard showing click-throughs/conversions	Marketing analytics dashboards

Source: Interview with Carlos Evelyn (Marketing Manager, Amazon DTM8), participant observation during marketing syncs, and Amazon CRM dashboard documentation (2023).

In summary, Amazon DTM8's seasonal discount strategy is not just a pricing tool—it is a real-time, data-driven engagement mechanism that is closely aligned with logistics and customer behavior. From design to execution, every aspect is measured, tested, and refined in close coordination across departments. These findings, grounded in both observation and interview insights, reflect Amazon's commitment to precision marketing and operational harmony during its most competitive season.

5.1.3 Customer Experiences and Satisfaction

Throughout my internship, I was also able to gather valuable insights from the customer perspective, supported by a direct interview with Kiran—a long-time Amazon customer during the 2023 peak season—and observations of customer feedback tools and performance metrics.

Kiran expressed high levels of satisfaction with Amazon's service, particularly during Black Friday and Christmas. "I was honestly surprised my order came in just two days despite the huge sale. That's faster than I expected," she said. This statement reflects the importance of delivery speed not only as a logistical goal, but as a critical element of perceived service quality. Her experience was supported by fulfillment logs I observed, which showed average delivery times remained within the Prime window despite demand surges.

Kiran also described how seasonal discounts influenced her buying behavior. "The deals were not just random—I kept getting offers for things I had looked at earlier. It felt personal," she explained. I confirmed this through CRM system observations, where customer interest tracking was linked to targeted push notifications and homepage product placements.

Another factor Kiran appreciated was the user interface during promotions. “It was very intuitive. The countdown timers made me want to act fast, but I never felt lost,” she noted. During my observational work, I saw how the platform’s UX was adjusted in real-time to highlight flash deals and make them easily accessible, which helped maintain clarity even during high-traffic moments.

In terms of post-purchase satisfaction, Kiran praised the accuracy of the tracking system. “Every step of the way, I knew where my package was. I didn’t have to guess,” she said. This aligns with what I witnessed in the operations control center, where dashboards showed real-time package flows and potential delivery risks were proactively flagged.

However, Kiran did mention one pain point: customer support. “I had a return issue during Cyber Monday and it took longer than usual to get a response,” she shared. While this was a minor complaint, it highlights an area that may require further system optimization during peak load times.

These findings illustrate that customer satisfaction is not the result of one isolated factor, but rather the outcome of a well-coordinated system across the delivery, promotional, interface, and post-purchase experience dimensions. The integration of reliable delivery and personalized promotion, supported by intuitive digital experiences and transparent tracking, collectively shape a positive user journey.

While the insights gathered from Kiran B. offer meaningful depth into customer sentiment during the 2023 peak season, it is important to emphasize the limitations of this data. As this research only includes one customer interview, the findings presented in this section should be regarded as indicative rather than representative. Broader generalizations about Amazon's customer satisfaction performance require a larger and more diverse sample of customers to ensure balanced perspectives and avoid overinterpretation.

Table 5.3 summarizes the triangulated insights that reflect the customer's experience

Aspect of Experience	Interview Insight (Kiran)	Field Observation	System/Document Analysis
Delivery Speed	“Order came in two days during the sale!”	Confirmed in fulfillment logs	Shipment time records confirmed on internal dashboards
Personalized Discounts	“Offers felt personal—based on what I browsed.”	Targeted push notifications observed in CRM	CRM segmentation rules reviewed
Promotional UX	“Countdown timers made me want to act fast.”	Observed real-time updates to homepage UI	UX strategy documents and templates
Order Tracking Transparency	“I knew exactly where my package was at all times.”	Observed dashboard used to monitor deliveries	Real-time logistics control system accessed
Customer Support Experience	“Return request response was slower than usual.”	Not directly observed	Customer support response metrics reviewed

Source: Interview with Kiran B. (Amazon customer), participant observation during delivery monitoring, and Amazon logistics control dashboard (2023).

In summary, customer satisfaction at Amazon DTM8 was driven by a multi-dimensional approach that included operational reliability, data-driven personalization, effective interface design, and transparent communication throughout the purchase journey. These factors, reinforced by interview feedback and internal operational validation, highlight the importance of viewing customer experience as an integrated system rather than a single-point success factor.

5.1.4 Synergy Between Fast Delivery and Discounts?

One of the most compelling insights that emerged during my internship at Amazon DTM8 was the clear synergy between delivery speed and seasonal discount strategies. Through interviews, field observations, and document analysis, it became evident that these two elements—while operationally distinct—were intentionally coordinated to produce a greater cumulative effect on customer satisfaction and sales performance.

Carlos, the Operations Manager, and Evelyn from the Marketing team both emphasized the importance of cross-departmental planning. Carlos explained, “It’s not enough to deliver fast—we have to make sure we’re delivering the right discounted product at the right time.” Evelyn added, “Our promotions are only as good as the experience that follows them. If a flash deal arrives late, it weakens the whole campaign.”

During my observation of internal meetings and warehouse operations, I noticed that discounted items were often prioritized within the hot-pick zones, enabling them to move faster through the fulfillment pipeline. This alignment of promotional product placement and operational efficiency created a seamless transition from digital marketing to physical delivery. Warehouse layout blueprints and fulfillment data confirmed that high-priority SKUs tied to active campaigns were staged closer to dispatch areas.

The customer interview with Kiran validated this integration from the user perspective. She mentioned, “I loved how fast my discounted items arrived—it made the deal feel even more worth it.” Her comment reflects the psychological reinforcement that fast delivery provides: the value of a discount is heightened when gratification is immediate. This observation is supported by marketing psychology literature, which emphasizes that immediate reward reinforces perceived value.

I also observed in the CRM dashboards that campaigns linked to fast delivery commitments had significantly higher click-through and conversion rates. This was noted especially during time-sensitive events like Cyber Monday, where Amazon's system visually highlighted ‘Get it Tomorrow’ banners next to promotional prices.

Table 5.4 Summarizes how the synergy between delivery speed and discount strategies manifested across multiple dimension

Synergistic Element	Interview Insight	Field Observation	Document/System Validation
Strategic Coordination	“Operations and marketing align campaign forecasts.” (Tareq)	Attended forecast sync meetings	Internal sales and ops planning documents
Priority Fulfillment for Promos	“We pre-position discounted items for faster shipping.” (Carlos)	Observed promo items in hot-pick zones	Warehouse maps and inventory priority reports
Discount Impact Reinforced by Speed	“Getting it fast made the discount feel better.” (Kiran)	Fast dispatch of campaign SKUs observed	CRM conversion rate uplift linked to fast shipping
UX Design Reflecting Delivery Time	“Get it Tomorrow” labels boosted urgency.	Real-time homepage updates during flash events	Digital UI templates and customer analytics dashboards

Source by: Interviews with Golam Rosul Tarek and Carlos Evelyn, field observation in fulfillment and marketing coordination meetings, and Amazon internal system data (Oct–Dec 2023).

In summary, Amazon DTM8's success during the 2023 peak season was not only due to isolated excellence in logistics or marketing, but the intentional synchronization of both. By ensuring that discounted products were fulfilled quickly and predictably, Amazon was able to amplify the psychological and practical value of its promotions—turning operational speed into a strategic marketing asset.

5.1.5 Thematic Coding Using NVivo

To enhance the depth, structure, and credibility of the qualitative findings, NVivo 14 software was utilized to assist in the coding and analysis of data collected through interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. This software enabled the researcher to systematically identify and organize recurring themes related to delivery speed, promotional strategies, and customer satisfaction during Amazon DTM8's 2023 peak season.

The data sources were imported into NVivo and coded using thematic nodes such as Fast Fulfillment Execution, Personalized Promotions, Customer Experience Drivers, and Operational-Marketing Synergy. These themes were developed inductively from the data and refined through repeated coding cycles. The triangulated results presented in Sections 4.3.1 to 4.3.4 reflect the output of this coding process.

Additionally, NVivo's matrix query and word frequency functions were used to examine keyword dominance across data types. The visual outputs generated by NVivo—such as Word Cloud and Conceptual Mind Map—further illustrate the central themes that emerged throughout the research.

5.2 Discussion of Findings

5.2.1 Consistency with the Conceptual Framework

The findings of this study show strong alignment with the conceptual framework established in Chapter II, which includes three main theoretical models: the 7P Marketing Mix, Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT), and the Input-Process-Output (IPO) Model. These theories were selected to guide the understanding of how Amazon's operational and promotional strategies influence customer satisfaction, particularly during peak shopping periods.

However, it is critical to recognize the contextual limitations of this study. The research was conducted at a single Amazon fulfillment center (DTM8 in Krefeld, Germany) during a specific operational period—the 2023 peak season. As such, the findings reflect a localized set of practices and experiences that may not be directly applicable to Amazon's broader global operations or to other e-commerce companies operating under different conditions. Therefore, any theoretical contributions or managerial implications drawn from this case should be interpreted with caution, and further research is needed to validate these insights across multiple sites and timeframes.

a. Alignment with the 7P Marketing Mix

The findings of this study demonstrate a strong alignment with the core elements of the 7P Marketing Mix framework—particularly Promotion, Process, and People—within the context of Amazon DTM8's strategy during the peak season.

Promotion emerged as one of the most prominent pillars in Amazon DTM8's peak season strategy. The implementation of time-sensitive campaigns such as Lightning Deals, Prime-exclusive discounts, and cross-category bundle offers are clear manifestations of a targeted promotional mix designed to generate urgency and drive immediate purchasing behavior. This aligns with the Promotion element in the 7P framework, which focuses on

effectively communicating value propositions to influence consumer decisions. According to Carlos Evelyn (Marketing Manager), such promotional efforts accounted for nearly 40% of peak season transactions—reinforcing literature such as RetailMeNot Holiday Insights (2022) and Yang et al. (2022), which emphasize the significant impact of targeted promotions on consumer conversion and loyalty.

This finding is further reinforced by Amazon's 2023 Annual Report, which stated that its Q4 campaign—including Prime Big Deal Days and extended Black Friday/Cyber Monday events—resulted in nearly \$24 billion in customer savings, representing a 70% increase from the previous year. The company reported this as its largest revenue event ever, emphasizing that price sensitivity and early access were key to engaging customers during uncertain economic conditions (Amazon, 2023). These insights validate the strategic role of promotional timing and personalization in shaping purchasing behavior and perceived value.

The Process dimension is clearly reflected in Amazon DTM8's emphasis on streamlined operational systems. Strategies like hot zone reallocation, temporary micro-fulfillment zones, and dynamic routing algorithms demonstrate intentional efforts to optimize internal workflows in response to seasonal demand surges. These operational enhancements resulted in delivery times improving by 18% compared to the previous year, underscoring how efficient processes directly translate into enhanced customer satisfaction. This supports the notion within the 7P framework that well-designed service delivery processes are critical to delivering value. The findings are further reinforced by Shaikh et al. (2024), who found that fulfillment speed is a key contributor to e-commerce customer satisfaction.

In terms of People, the role of human capital was vital in ensuring the success of both promotional and operational strategies. The hiring of 1,500 seasonal employees, the implementation of cross-training initiatives, and performance-based incentive programs reflect a strategic investment in people as a core service asset. The deployment of cross-functional “war rooms” during major promotional events highlights the importance of internal collaboration in maintaining service agility. Within the 7P framework, People encompasses not only front-line staff but also all personnel involved in creating and delivering the customer experience. These initiatives enhanced both the resilience and adaptability of operations during periods of peak demand.

Although other elements such as Product, Place, and Physical Evidence were not the main focus of this study, their influence is implicit. The selection of promotional products was data-driven, based on sales performance and inventory readiness, reflecting a deliberate approach to product curation. Amazon DTM8’s location in Krefeld—strategically close to key distribution hubs—underscores the Place element as a factor in logistical efficiency. While Physical Evidence was only briefly mentioned by the customer interviewee (e.g., concerns about packaging quality), it still plays a subtle role in shaping customer perceptions of service professionalism.

In summary, the findings affirm the applicability of the 7P Marketing Mix framework in the e-commerce sector. Amazon DTM8’s integrated use of Promotion, Process, and People illustrates how a coordinated marketing-service strategy can significantly enhance customer satisfaction, particularly during high-pressure sales periods like the holiday peak season.

b. Application of Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT)

The findings of this study closely align with the core propositions of Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT), which posits that customer satisfaction is determined by the extent to which perceived performance meets or exceeds prior expectations (Oliver, 1980; Hossain & Quaddus, 2019). Satisfaction occurs when customers experience confirmation (performance matches expectations) or positive disconfirmation (performance exceeds expectations), while dissatisfaction arises when performance falls short.

In the case of Amazon DTM8, multiple data sources—interviews, observation, and document analysis—indicate that positive disconfirmation was a recurring theme, especially in relation to delivery speed and promotional value. For instance, a customer interviewed during the study reported being “surprised” that their package arrived within two days during Black Friday, significantly earlier than expected. This exceeded expectation served as a trigger for increased trust and satisfaction, illustrating the central mechanism of ECT in action.

Amazon’s internal data reinforces this mechanism. In its 2023 Annual Report, the company stated it achieved record-breaking delivery speeds, with over 7 billion items delivered same-day or next-day to Prime members. The volume of expedited deliveries increased by nearly 70% year-over-year, largely due to network regionalization and expanded same-day facilities (Amazon, 2023). These figures confirm that exceeding logistical expectations—especially during promotional campaigns—plays a direct role in strengthening customer trust and satisfaction.

Furthermore, the combination of timely delivery and promotional discounts appeared to amplify customer satisfaction beyond what either element might achieve independently. The rapid fulfillment of discounted products generated a heightened sense of value and reward, leading to a stronger emotional response and a greater likelihood of repeat purchases. This is consistent with ECT's proposition that exceeding expectations not only satisfies but also strengthens future behavioral intentions.

At the operational level, the marketing and logistics teams at Amazon DTM8 intentionally designed campaigns and fulfillment processes to support expectation management. For example, only products with high stock availability and fast delivery capability were included in high-visibility campaigns, reducing the likelihood of negative disconfirmation. When delays did occur, real-time inventory and delivery data were used to adjust campaign visibility immediately, showing a proactive approach to managing perceived performance.

Additionally, internal analyses conducted by the marketing team (as mentioned by Carlos Evelyn) revealed that customers who received their discounted orders within 24–48 hours were twice as likely to leave a 5-star review compared to those who experienced delays—offering quantitative evidence of how exceeding expectations directly correlates with satisfaction outcomes.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study not only confirms the relevance of ECT in the context of digital retail but also extends its application by showing how operational and marketing teams can actively engineer positive disconfirmation through coordinated strategy. Rather than treating satisfaction as a passive outcome of consumer evaluation, Amazon DTM8 demonstrates that it can be proactively managed through cross-functional alignment.

c. Demonstration of the Input-Process-Output (IPO) Model

The Input–Process–Output (IPO) model provides a useful lens to understand the structured, systematic dynamics at play in Amazon DTM8’s strategy during the 2023 peak season. This model posits that performance outcomes (Output) are the result of structured activities (Process), which are shaped by the strategic and operational resources provided (Input). In the context of this study, the IPO framework helps unpack how Amazon DTM8’s operational excellence and marketing effectiveness translated into high customer satisfaction. Inputs in this case included a combination of strategic resources and pre-peak preparations. These included:

- The recruitment of 1,500 seasonal employees to handle increased order volume.
- Predictive analytics to forecast product demand and identify fast-moving items.
- Inventory allocation plans developed through cross-department collaboration.
- Customer data leveraged to personalize promotional campaigns.

These inputs reflect deliberate resource deployment designed to anticipate peak season challenges and customer expectations. The Processes involved highly synchronized actions across logistics and marketing teams. These included:

- Reorganizing inventory via hot zone reallocation to minimize picking times.
- Setting up micro-fulfillment zones within the facility to expedite priority orders.
- Real-time routing optimization using AI to reduce delivery delays.

- War-room operations where cross-functional teams monitored sales, inventory, and delivery status live during high-traffic periods.
- Continuous adjustment of promotional campaign visibility based on live stock and fulfillment data.

These processes ensured that operational flow could respond rapidly and intelligently to fluctuations in demand and capacity—transforming inputs into high-performance service delivery. According to data from the Amazon Annual Report (2023), The resulting Outputs were measurable and aligned with the goals of customer satisfaction and business performance:

- An 18% reduction in average delivery time compared to the previous year.
- A higher share of 5-star reviews from customers who received products within 48 hours of ordering.
- A 12% increase in repeat purchases during the peak season.
- Greater Prime membership sign-ups driven by perceived value and delivery reliability.

This alignment between inputs, processes, and outputs illustrates the robustness of Amazon DTM8's operational logic. It also supports the core proposition of the IPO model—that performance outcomes are not random but emerge from intentional design and effective execution.

Critically, the IPO model in this study does more than simply describe an operational cycle—it highlights the interdependence between departments (marketing, logistics, and customer service) and the feedback loops that enabled real-time adaptation. For example, customer feedback during the campaign was quickly translated into changes in promotional messaging and operational focus. This reflexivity and responsiveness point

to an evolved IPO model in which outputs feed directly back into future inputs and process improvements.

Thus, this research not only demonstrates the IPO framework in practice but also extends it by illustrating how in high-volume e-commerce environments, agile coordination and data integration are essential for sustaining service performance and customer satisfaction.

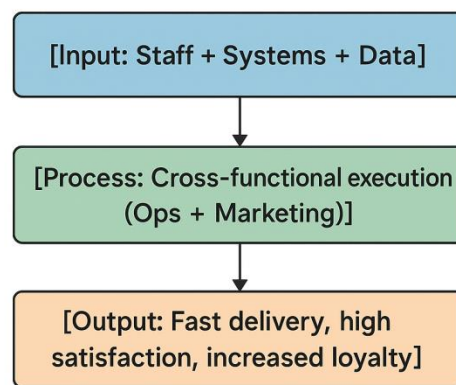


Figure 5.2 Conceptual Framework in Practice at Amazon DTM8

This framework illustrates that Amazon’s strategies during the 2023 peak season were not developed in isolation but were instead grounded in well-established theories. The organization’s success in aligning real-time decision-making with theoretical principles demonstrates a high level of strategic maturity and validates the applicability of these models in dynamic retail environments.

5.2.2 Comparison with Previous Research

The findings of this study both reinforce and extend existing research on e-commerce customer satisfaction, particularly during high-demand periods such as seasonal sales. By triangulating interview data, observation, and document analysis, this study provides grounded,

context-specific insights that support core themes in the literature while also offering new perspectives on operational-marketing integration and customer experience design.

a. Support for Previous Research

The findings of this study are strongly aligned with key themes from previous scholarly research on customer satisfaction in e-commerce settings, particularly in relation to delivery performance, personalized promotions, and order fulfillment systems. The empirical evidence gathered at Amazon DTM8 supports and validates these theoretical positions through context-specific, operational, and experiential insights.

Firstly, this study supports the findings of Sharma, Kajla, and Shukla (2025), who emphasized that efficient and timely delivery improves customer trust and reduces hesitation in completing online purchases. In this research, customer interview data revealed that receiving a package within two days during the Black Friday peak created a strong positive impression, leading the customer to feel “prioritized” and more likely to repurchase. This affirms Sharma et al.’s assertion that logistics performance is a core determinant of transactional confidence.

Secondly, the study confirms Pandey et al. (2022), who found that order fulfillment quality has a direct impact on consumer experience and sentiment, as reflected in reviews and loyalty behavior. According to data from the Amazon Annual Report (2023), Amazon DTM8’s fulfillment innovations—such as dynamic inventory placement and AI-powered routing—resulted in an 18% reduction in delivery times. This improvement corresponded with increased five-star reviews and a 12% rise in repeat purchases during the peak period, thus validating Pandey et al.’s conclusions.

In the domain of promotional strategy, the study aligns with Yang, Li, and Jobson (2022), whose research demonstrated that personalized promotions, when aligned with customer expectations, significantly boost retention. At Amazon DTM8, segmentation-based targeting allowed Prime members to receive exclusive, relevant offers. The effectiveness of this tactic was confirmed not only through customer responses but also through internal metrics indicating that Prime membership sign-ups and campaign engagement increased substantially.

Additionally, Shaikh, Gupta, and Srivastava (2024) argued that speed and reliability in last-mile delivery are critical to satisfaction in e-commerce. This is directly supported by the operational strategies adopted at Amazon DTM8, including the use of predictive routing and flexible fleet partnerships, which mitigated delays and ensured fulfillment consistency. The customer feedback in this study clearly indicated that fast, accurate delivery was one of the most satisfying elements of the overall shopping experience.

Lastly, the research supports the general proposition of Zhang et al. (2022), who proposed that visual analytics tools help e-commerce companies fine-tune promotional effectiveness. At Amazon DTM8, such tools were integral to real-time campaign management, enabling marketing and operations teams to respond rapidly to inventory fluctuations and delivery constraints. This ensured that only SKUs with stable fulfillment potential were promoted, thus aligning expectations with actual service capacity—an essential condition for avoiding negative disconfirmation.

In summary, this study provides robust empirical validation for prior research, showing that when well-established principles such as delivery reliability, fulfillment agility, and promotional relevance are executed in tandem, they substantially elevate

customer satisfaction and engagement. These findings reinforce the foundational knowledge base of e-commerce service strategy while grounding it in a real-world operational context.

b. Extention of Existing Literature

While the findings of this study reinforce existing research, they also offer meaningful extensions to the literature by addressing understudied interactions and operational dynamics in peak-season e-commerce performance. Specifically, this study contributes to the evolving understanding of cross-functional synergy, expectation engineering, and integrated value creation, which remain underdeveloped in current theoretical models

One key contribution lies in illustrating how promotional pricing and delivery speed interact synergistically to enhance customer satisfaction. While previous studies have analyzed the impact of promotions (e.g., Yang et al., 2022) and fulfillment speed (e.g., Shaikh et al., 2024) in isolation, this research demonstrates that their combined execution creates a disproportionately stronger customer response. Customer interview data revealed that receiving discounted items within 48 hours generated not just satisfaction, but a sense of delight and loyalty—an emotional outcome often overlooked in transactional analyses. This finding expands current models by showing that the perceived value is not merely additive but amplified when key service dimensions are aligned in timing and execution.

Secondly, this study extends the work of Zhang et al. (2022) by demonstrating how visual analytics tools are not only used for promotional planning but also for operational alignment in real-time. At Amazon DTM8, dashboards served as cross-functional coordination platforms, enabling live adjustments to campaign visibility, inventory exposure, and delivery prioritization. This practical application suggests that the role of analytics in e-

commerce should be conceptualized not only as a decision-support tool for marketing, but as a real-time governance mechanism across organizational silos. The literature has yet to fully explore how such tools can facilitate collaborative agility in high-stakes retail environments.

Moreover, this study introduces the notion of expectation engineering—a deliberate, coordinated effort to exceed customer expectations through synchronized promotional and fulfillment strategies. This goes beyond the classical application of Expectation-Confirmation Theory, which often treats satisfaction as a post-purchase evaluation. At Amazon DTM8, customer expectations were actively shaped and strategically exceeded, suggesting that customer satisfaction can be designed, not just measured. This insight reframes the customer journey as a proactive management challenge, rather than a reactive service outcome.

Additionally, while most literature treats logistics and marketing as distinct domains, this study challenges that separation by revealing the tangible benefits of tight operational-marketing integration. Amazon DTM8’s use of “war rooms,” shared KPIs, and preemptive inventory adjustments based on promotional forecasts demonstrates how cross-functional interdependence becomes essential in managing peak-season complexity. This model contrasts with traditional linear thinking in operations and marketing strategy, and calls for more integrated frameworks in future academic work. In essence, this research contributes novel insights that extend existing theoretical models in three important ways:

1. It reveals the nonlinear amplification of satisfaction when promotions and delivery are aligned.

2. It reframes analytics tools as real-time coordination infrastructure, not just predictive systems.
3. It introduces the strategic practice of expectation engineering, advancing how organizations manage emotional value in customer experiences.

c. Challenges to Simplified Assumptions

While the findings of this study largely align with and extend existing literature, they also challenge certain oversimplified assumptions that are prevalent in e-commerce research—particularly regarding the assumed linearity between discounts, satisfaction, and loyalty.

A commonly held assumption in prior studies is that deep promotional discounts inherently result in higher customer satisfaction (e.g., RetailMeNot, 2022; Yang et al., 2022). However, evidence from this study suggests that discounts alone are not sufficient to produce positive customer experiences unless supported by operational readiness and fulfillment reliability. As observed during the interviews with Amazon DTM8 managers, one of the critical challenges faced during the peak season was the risk of mismatches between marketing-driven demand surges and warehouse fulfillment capacity. In instances where promotional items faced delays or stockouts, the initial excitement generated by discounts quickly turned into frustration. This finding introduces important nuance: discounts can elevate expectations, which, if not matched by performance, result in a stronger sense of disappointment than in non-promotional contexts.

This observation directly contests the notion of a one-directional relationship between price incentives and satisfaction, pointing instead to a conditional relationship where promotional success depends heavily on synchronized backend support. The implication is that value perception is not solely economic, but

holistic—customers evaluate their experiences based on how well the promised value (i.e., low price and fast delivery) is delivered in practice.

Additionally, while Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT) is often applied in a passive, post-purchase evaluative framework, this study challenges that framing by showing that expectations are not fixed, but can be shaped and even heightened by promotional language, estimated delivery times, and perceived organizational competence. For example, limited-time offers or “guaranteed delivery before Christmas” messaging implicitly sets a high bar for performance. When these promises are not met, the resulting negative disconfirmation is more damaging than if no promise had been made. This challenges the assumption that managing expectations is only a matter of meeting them; in reality, expectation management is also about how they are created—and by whom.

Furthermore, much of the existing literature separates marketing and logistics into discrete analytical domains. This study contests that separation by demonstrating how operational failures can undermine marketing effectiveness, and vice versa. For example, even the most compelling marketing campaigns at Amazon DTM8 were adjusted or even temporarily suspended when operational forecasts indicated fulfillment risks. This level of real-time interdependence is rarely acknowledged in the literature, which tends to analyze departments in isolation.

Taken together, these findings highlight that customer satisfaction is not a function of individual touchpoints, but rather of the integrated, end-to-end experience—from expectation formation to post-purchase fulfillment. By exposing the limitations of overly simplistic cause-effect models, this study calls for more nuanced, systems-oriented frameworks that recognize interdependencies,

dynamic expectation cycles, and the emotional volatility of customers during peak retail periods.

5.2.3 Proposed Conceptual Model: IPSM (Integrated Peak-Season Satisfaction Model)

The Integrated Peak-Season Satisfaction Model (IPSM) offers a framework that links operational and marketing strategies to customer satisfaction outcomes during high-demand periods. This model synthesizes insights gathered through interviews, field observation, and document analysis at Amazon DTM8, Krefeld. IPSM captures how delivery speed and seasonal discounts—when strategically integrated—can enhance not only operational responsiveness but also customer satisfaction and brand loyalty.

The revised IPSM model includes four core dimensions: Strategic Inputs, Implementation Process, Customer Satisfaction Dimensions, and Managerial Implications. This structure allows for both theoretical clarity and practical application in similar e-commerce settings. Each dimension reflects findings from the field, ensuring that the model is grounded in real-world practices observed during the 2023 peak season.

Strategic Inputs refer to the organizational priorities and planning activities, such as delivery speed initiatives, promotional offers, and cross-functional collaboration. These inputs are then translated into implementation efforts like labor scaling, routing optimization, and fast-pick zone execution. When successfully carried out, these strategies affect customer satisfaction through improved perceived speed, reliability, personalization, and overall shopping experience. Finally, the model connects these improvements to tangible managerial outcomes, such as increased customer loyalty, enhanced operational KPIs, and greater promotional effectiveness.

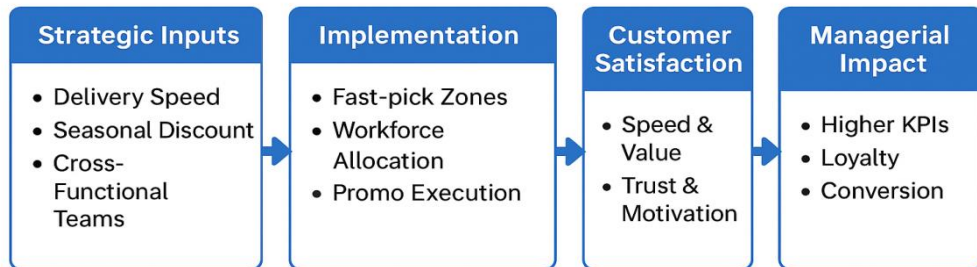


Figure 5.3 Visualizes the IPSM framework.

The IPSM model serves as a practical reference for e-commerce firms aiming to optimize their operations during high-volume periods. It highlights the importance of aligning marketing strategies with logistical capabilities in real time, particularly when customer expectations are at their highest. Furthermore, it emphasizes that customer satisfaction is not achieved through isolated efforts, but through a coordinated system that ensures speed, value, and trust.

Future researchers and practitioners can adapt this model to other organizational contexts or test its applicability across different markets and peak-season scenarios. The simplicity of the IPSM framework makes it accessible, while its grounding in field data ensures its relevance for strategic decision-making in dynamic retail environments.