



How E-Commerce Politeness Shapes Positive and Negative Experiences in Cross-Border Furniture Purchases on Temu: A Critical Incident Technique Approach

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ABSTRACT: With the rapid expansion of cross-border e-commerce driven by economic globalization, understanding how service strategies influence consumer experience has become increasingly important. Existing research has largely focused on marketing, technology, and logistics, while overlooking the role of e-commerce politeness in shaping service perceptions. Furniture, as a category prone to damage and requiring installation guidance, provides a highly interaction-dependent context for examining service encounters. This study investigates consumers who purchased furniture on the Temu platform and employs the Critical Incident Technique to explore their expectations and evaluations in uncertain online transactions. The findings show that product quality and perceived value for money are the main drivers of satisfaction, whereas packaging protection and fulfillment of service promises are the primary sources of dissatisfaction. Notably, packaging protection and product quality appear in both positive and negative incidents, underscoring their central role in consumers' perceptions of e-commerce politeness. The study identifies key factors shaping cross-border furniture consumption experiences and clarifies their mechanisms of influence. It further offers targeted recommendations for e-commerce platforms, merchants, logistics providers, and consumers to enhance service experiences through improved adherence to e-commerce politeness.

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E-Commerce Politeness, Critical Incident Technique, Cross-border E-commerce, Customer Satisfaction, Temu, Furniture Category

1. INTRODUCTION

With the continuous advancement of economic globalization, the global logistics system has become increasingly sophisticated. Against this backdrop, consumer demand for cross-border shopping continues to rise, driving the rapid development of cross-border e-commerce. The intelligentization of the supply chain and the widespread adoption of overseas warehouses have accelerated the reform of the industry ecosystem. Moreover, the diversification of marketing channels and the scenario-based connection with consumers enable cross-border e-commerce enterprises to achieve sustainable development. As a result, the delivery speed of bulk commodities such as furniture has significantly improved. For consumers, shopping on cross-border e-commerce platforms now involves shorter waiting times and reduced shipping costs. However, furniture products in cross-border shopping often face unique challenges such as lack of experiential interaction and high perceived risk. When logistics efficiency, product innovation, and price differences are relatively minimal, the quality of service provided in consumer interactions becomes the key factor for merchants to shape brand differentiation and build consumer stickiness. High-quality service can increase repurchase rates, generate word-of-mouth promotion, effectively alleviate negative emotions caused by poor shopping experiences, and efficiently handle after-sales issues.

However, existing scholars have primarily focused their research on areas such as marketing, technology, and logistics, while the impact of service strategies centered on *E-commerce Politeness* on consumers' service experience during the shopping process has not yet been thoroughly explored. This research lag is also reflected in business practice. For example, customer service responses may be delayed or overly templated, frequent pop-up advertisements may disrupt user experience, and after-sales measures may be handled in a rigid manner.

The emergence of these phenomena is largely due to the lack of E-commerce Politeness in human-machine interactions. Consequently, the absence of E-commerce Politeness may be an important factor triggering consumer dissatisfaction and negative reviews. Moreover, because furniture products are characterized by large size, strict packaging requirements, and high costs of returns and exchanges, service strategies centered on E-commerce Politeness have even less tolerance for error.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Cross-border E-commerce

With the continuous advancement of economic globalization, the cross-border e-commerce industry has shown a vigorous growth trend. In particular, in China, the scale of cross-border e-commerce has been expanding, and the factors influencing its development have become increasingly diverse (Liu et al., 2022). Meanwhile, overseas markets have witnessed a sustained increase in demand for online shopping, further enlarging the transaction market of cross-border e-commerce. Therefore, this study selects consumer feedback on furniture purchases from the cross-border e-commerce platform Temu as the basis for data analysis. Since cross-border e-commerce often faces challenges such as cross-cultural communication and policy differences, enterprises and merchants must propose strategies such as cross-cultural management and localized operations to ensure sustainable development (Li, 2025). Moreover, consumers are highly sensitive to perceived risks in aspects such as products, suppliers, and technology during e-commerce shopping (Lim, 2003). Among these, suppliers and products are the most critical factors influencing consumer satisfaction. Suppliers determine the shipping distance and delivery time of online purchases, while products determine the level of packaging and the difficulty of long-distance transportation. Thus, logistics services directly affect the development of cross-border e-commerce (Yuan, 2023), which in turn influences consumers' perceived risk and satisfaction. Existing studies indicate that products with shorter delivery times are more likely to win consumer favor and increase repurchase intentions (Kim et al., 2017). Given that furniture belongs to a category with high perceived risk and involvement, these phenomena are further amplified, making consumers more prone to anxiety and negative evaluations. At this point, merchants need to proactively provide service strategies centered on E-commerce Politeness to compensate for deficiencies in consumer service experience (Chen & Huang, 2025).

However, most existing scholars have concentrated their research on marketing, technology, and logistics (Lin, 2025; Jiang, 2025; Xu, 2024). In complex cross-border transaction scenarios, how service strategies centered on E-commerce Politeness influence consumer service experience remains insufficiently explored.

2.2 E-commerce Politeness

In daily life, politeness generally refers to interactions between people, often used to facilitate friendly communication or to reflect personal qualities. In the context of e-commerce, politeness refers to consumers' experiential perceptions during human-machine interactions. When consumers use platform software, the provision of high-quality E-commerce Politeness services can enhance their experience, increase their frequency of platform usage, and contribute to the construction of a harmonious online community environment (Whitworth & Liu, 2008). Since the standards of E-commerce Politeness are culturally relative, cross-cultural communication becomes an unavoidable issue in cross-border e-commerce. Therefore, in order to provide high-quality services, service providers must select appropriate E-commerce Politeness strategies based on the cultural background of the counterpart and the specific communication scenario (Yaghubyan, 2019; Noorani, 2024). However, in cross-cultural communication, both service providers and recipients are prone to foreign language anxiety, which can lead to communication barriers (Aichhorn & Puck, 2017) and reduce communication efficiency. Existing research points out that cognitive responses such as comprehension difficulties and information-processing burdens, as well as emotional responses such as anxiety and frustration, play mediating roles in communication. The ultimate goal, however, is to build trust and thereby improve communication efficiency (Tenzer et al., 2014). In cross-border transactions, consumers are highly sensitive to perceived risks, especially in bulk commodity categories such as furniture. Research has shown that perceived risk negatively affects consumer satisfaction, while electronic trust positively

influences satisfaction (Oktariani et al., 2022). Satisfaction, in turn, is one of the key measures of service quality. Thus, high-quality service can enhance consumer satisfaction and purchase intention (Zhang et al., 2014). Providing high-quality services centered on E-commerce Politeness can therefore improve consumers' service experience.

With the rise and widespread adoption of AI technology, many merchants have begun to use AI as customer service. AI customer service, due to its personalized service, has a significant positive effect on consumer satisfaction. Hence, the application of AI technology can effectively improve consumers' service experience (Le et al., 2024). However, for complex, emotional, and cross-cultural after-sales issues, the pre-set E-commerce Politeness strategies of AI customer service often fail to adapt to consumers' diverse needs and emotions. Under current technological conditions, AI customer service can only serve as a communication intermediary. At this point, the flexibility and reliability of human customer service in applying E-commerce Politeness to problem-solving become evident.

Therefore, this study conceptualizes E-commerce Politeness into three dimensions—language, behavior, and institution—with the aim of capturing its specific manifestations in real consumer incidents through this multidimensional framework. Although existing research has recognized the value and cultural relativity of E-commerce Politeness (Yaghubyan, 2019; Noorani, 2024) and has begun to focus on its application in new forms such as AI customer service (Le et al., 2024), current studies remain insufficient. In particular, within complex cross-border consumption scenarios, the mechanisms through which E-commerce Politeness influences consumer service experience still lack empirical evidence.

2.3 Customer Satisfaction

In the complex context of cross-border transactions, customer satisfaction serves as an important indicator for measuring the service quality of platforms and merchants. In categories such as furniture, which involve high perceived risk and significant demand for installation services, customer satisfaction is strongly influenced by the level of service quality. Existing research shows that consumers' trust in e-commerce service quality has been increasing, and service quality has been classified into different levels and standards (Gajewska et al., 2020; Gefen, 2000). During shopping, consumers often choose platforms, merchants, or products with higher “familiarity” to reduce perceived risk (Pavlou, 2003). The reduction of perceived risk, in turn, increases consumers' switching costs, thereby enhancing customer loyalty (Yen, 2015), which ultimately improves customer satisfaction (Likhitha, 2022). Moreover, service quality plays a mediating role between consumer experience and customer satisfaction, with strong relationships among the three (Mamakou et al., 2024). Therefore, providing high-quality service can improve customer satisfaction and, in turn, enhance consumers' overall service experience.

From the above discussion, it can be seen that consumer loyalty forms the foundation of customer satisfaction, while consumer trust and perceived risk act as mediating factors. However, existing studies have rarely treated customer satisfaction as a concrete manifestation of E-commerce Politeness.

In light of this, the present study places E-commerce Politeness at the center of cross-border furniture consumption experiences and regards it as a key independent variable influencing customer satisfaction. By applying the Critical Incident Technique (CIT), this research investigates how service strategies centered on E-commerce Politeness can improve customer satisfaction in multiple dimensions, thereby optimizing consumers' service experience. This research design aims to fill existing gaps and provide a new theoretical perspective for analyzing consumer service experience in cross-border consumption.

To clearly present the e-commerce politeness-oriented ecological relationships, the interaction mechanisms among various core elements are illustrated in Figure 1.

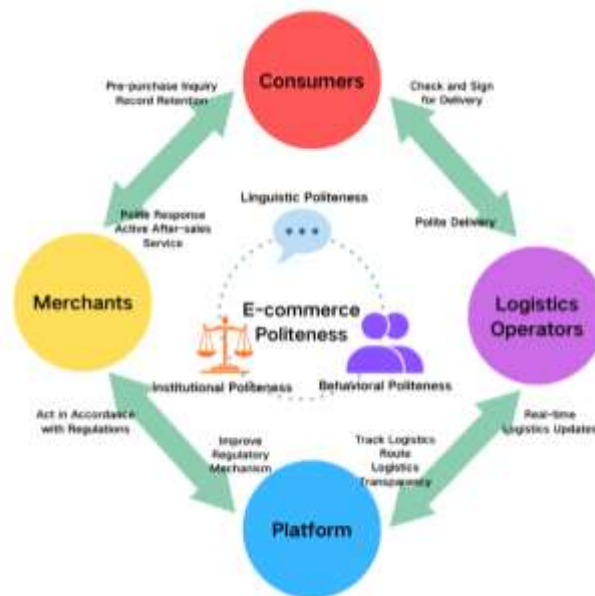


Figure 1. Ecological Relationship Diagram between E-commerce Politeness and Cross-border Furniture Service Experience

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Critical Incident Technique

The Critical Incident Technique (CIT), as a qualitative research method, explains its practical utility by collecting and analyzing critical incidents or processes that have significant impacts on individual behaviors and emotions (Flanagan, 1954).

Over the past seventy years, CIT has been widely applied across multiple fields of research, such as nursing (Schluter et al., 2008), information behavior (Yeoman et al., 2003), veterinary medicine (Hofmeister et al., 2018), education (Douglas et al., 2009), and business management (Brunton & Jeffrey, 2010). Thus, CIT has become a mature and well-established research tool.

The core data of this study is derived from online reviews on cross-border e-commerce platforms, which contain numerous consumer descriptions of their “most satisfactory” or “least satisfactory” experiences. These descriptions directly reflect the key factors influencing their service experience. Since customer satisfaction is a complex and multidimensional subjective construct (Griffiths et al., 2007), a single variable is insufficient to capture its variations in the cross-border shopping process. Therefore, this study adopts CIT to purposefully filter and analyze these critical incidents from a vast number of reviews, in order to explore the impact of E-commerce Politeness on consumers’ service experience.

3.2 Research Design

This study aims to explore how E-commerce Politeness influences consumers’ service experience in the process of purchasing furniture through cross-border e-commerce platforms. Since consumers typically purchase furniture on cross-border e-commerce platforms more than once, this study adopts the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) as a qualitative research method to uncover consumers’ service experiences of E-commerce Politeness in cross-border furniture shopping. From the consumer perspective, and taking the cross-border furniture category as an example, the study collects critical incidents of consumers’ “most satisfactory” and “least satisfactory” experiences related to E-commerce Politeness during the purchasing process (Flanagan, 1954). These incidents form the data foundation for analyzing how E-commerce Politeness affects service experience in cross-border e-commerce furniture transactions. To facilitate data collection, this study relies on online channels, specifically the cross-border e-commerce platform Temu. In the initial stage of data collection, screening was conducted to ensure the accuracy and practicality of the research data. Consumers who had purchased cross-border furniture within the past six months on average were selected as data collection subjects. Their most satisfactory and least satisfactory reviews during the purchase and usage process were gathered. Additionally, the study investigates the measures consumers believe should be improved in unsatisfactory incidents, as well as their willingness to continue using the platform. The collected review data were analyzed and organized to provide authentic and reliable support for examining the impact of E-commerce Politeness on consumer service experience in cross-border furniture transactions.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Data Collection

The data for this study are derived from consumer feedback on furniture purchases from the cross-border e-commerce platform Temu. All data consist of publicly available and accessible consumer reviews on the platform. To ensure compliance with ethical standards, all collected data were anonymized, with any information that could potentially identify individual consumers removed. For sample selection, this study adopted a purposeful sampling strategy to ensure that the data possessed both market representativeness and content depth.

The specific screening criteria and procedures were as follows: Furniture as the research object: Furniture was chosen because such products are prone to wear and tear, involve strong size perception, and require installation guidance. These characteristics maximize consumer–merchant interaction, thereby providing a suitable context for observing E-commerce Politeness phenomena. Moreover, furniture has a large consumer base and a high volume of reviews, making its feedback representative of mainstream market choices and general consumer opinions, thus ensuring market-level representativeness of the sample. Time frame of review collection: Reviews were collected between January 2024 and June 2025. This continuous period of one and a half years allowed for a comprehensive capture of consumer feedback in the furniture category on Temu, ensuring both timeliness and dynamic relevance of the data. Targeted selection of reviews: From the screened products, 10 to 15 reviews were selected, balancing satisfactory reviews (5-star) and unsatisfactory reviews (1-star). Priority was given to reviews with detailed content, specific usage scenarios, or descriptive details, to ensure depth and richness of data quality. Through this process, the study ultimately constructed a qualitative analysis dataset consisting of 239 consumer reviews. Due to its focused source, continuous time span, sales-based representativeness, and high information density, this dataset is well-suited for exploratory thematic analysis and provides solid empirical evidence for understanding consumer experiences in this market.

4.2 Classification Principles

From the 240 reviews collected in this study, one invalid review that deviated from the central theme was excluded, resulting in a total of 119 satisfactory critical incidents and 120 unsatisfactory critical incidents. After an initial review of these critical incidents, the researchers categorized them as follows: Satisfactory critical incidents: logistics speed, packaging protection, functional diversity, cost-effectiveness, product quality. Unsatisfactory critical incidents: after-sales service, packaging protection, consistency with promises, logistics service, product quality. Since some attributes overlapped between satisfactory and unsatisfactory critical incidents, identical naming was applied to those categories. In this study, E-commerce Politeness is defined as a multidimensional process in cross-border e-commerce transactions, whereby platforms, merchants, and logistics service providers deliver high-quality services through language, behavior, and institutional dimensions to optimize consumer service experience. Specifically: Language Politeness: after-sales service, consistency with promises. Behavioral Politeness: packaging protection, product quality, functional diversity. Institutional Politeness: logistics speed, logistics service, after-sales service. Tables 1 and 2 clearly present the classification names and detailed explanations of both satisfactory and unsatisfactory critical incidents.

Table 1. Classification and Description of Satisfactory Critical Incidents

Classification Label	Detailed Description
Logistics Speed	Refers to the total time consumed across all logistics stages, from order placement to final delivery and receipt of the product.
Packaging Protection	Refers to the degree of protective measures in product packaging, such as the use of foam or air cushions, aimed at reducing product damage.
Functional Diversity	Refers to the characteristic of an item being able to serve multiple purposes or functions across different scenarios.
Cost-effectiveness	Refers to the overall value of obtaining a product that meets diverse needs and offers high utility at a relatively low price.
Product Quality	Refers to the reliability and adaptability of a product in terms of performance, durability, and safety, consistently meeting consumer usage requirements.

Table 2. Classification and Description of Unsatisfactory Critical Incidents

Classification Label	Detailed Description
After-sales Service	Refers to the support provided by the seller after the consumer receives the product, such as returns, exchanges, or repairs, when the product does not meet expectations or problems arise.
Packaging Protection	Refers to the degree of protective measures in product packaging, such as the use of foam or air cushions, aimed at reducing product damage.
Consistency with Commitments	Refers to situations where the seller fails to deliver products according to the agreed specifications or attributes in the order, or delivers incorrect items, resulting in inconsistency between actual fulfillment and prior commitments.
Logistics Service	Refers to cases where logistics providers fail to deliver within the agreed timeframe, deliver earlier than scheduled, or deliver to the wrong address, leading to inconsistency between logistics performance and commitments.
Product Quality	Refers to the reliability and adaptability of a product in terms of performance, durability, and safety, and its ability to consistently meet consumer usage needs.

Table 3 provides detailed background information on the three classifiers. These classifiers possess extensive experience in the cross-border e-commerce industry and have been long-term active participants on cross-border e-commerce platforms, paying particular attention to the manifestations of E-commerce Politeness in cross-border furniture transactions. Therefore, this study specifically invited these three classifiers to conduct classification validation of consumer service experience evaluations in cross-border furniture transactions, identifying satisfactory and unsatisfactory critical incidents to ensure that these incidents remain closely aligned with the research theme.

Table 3. Background Information of Classifiers

Classifier	Position	Work Experience
Classifier 1	Senior Practitioner in Cross-border E-commerce	Has specialized in the cross-border furniture sector for many years, with extensive industry experience; proficient in team and data management, supply chain and logistics management, as well as customer and after-sales management.
Classifier 2	Cross-border E-commerce Expert	Familiar with platform operation rules; has engaged in cross-border e-commerce platform development and design for 11 years, continuously exploring consumer preferences and changes in international policy trends.
Classifier 3	University Lecturer in E-commerce	Has served as an e-commerce instructor for many years, possessing rich theoretical knowledge and practical experience in the field.

4.3 Validity and Reliability Analysis

4.3.1 Reliability Analysis

Reliability refers to the stability and consistency of measurement results, meaning the degree to which repeated measurements of the same variable using the same method yield consistent outcomes. In the reliability analysis of the Critical Incident Technique (CIT), evaluation is typically conducted from two perspectives: “individual classification consistency” and “inter-classifier consistency.” The former assesses the consistency of a single classifier when categorizing the same incident at different times, while the latter focuses on the degree of agreement among different classifiers when categorizing the same incident. When the reliability coefficient exceeds 0.8, the CIT research results are considered to have an acceptable level of reliability (Flanagan, 1954). In this

study, once all three classifiers agreed on the categorization of satisfactory and unsatisfactory critical incidents, the first round of classification was conducted. After reaching consensus on the criteria for determining “satisfactory critical incidents” and “unsatisfactory critical incidents,” the classifiers completed the initial categorization. Two weeks later, the same three classifiers were asked to conduct the classification again. The data from both rounds were collected, integrated, and subsequently compared to analyze the classification results. In terms of individual classification consistency, the three classifiers in this study achieved consistency levels above 0.8 across all eight categories. This meets the requirements established by scholars and demonstrates strong classification consistency and reliability in this research. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Number of Individual Classification Consistencies among Classifiers

Item	Classifier 1	Classifier2	Classifier3	Classifier1	Classifier2	Classifier3
	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Number of Matches	98	107	108	117	116	111
Total Cases	119	119	119	120	120	120
Consistency	0.82	0.90	0.91	0.98	0.97	0.93

In terms of inter-classifier consistency, this study applied the theoretical framework proposed by Flanagan (1954) to verify the degree of consistency among the three classifiers in categorizing critical incidents. The analysis results are presented in Table 5 and Table 6.

Table 5. Number of Inter-classifier Consistencies – Satisfactory Incidents

Inter-consistency Count	Classifier 1	Classifier 2	Classifier 3
Classifier 1	98	—	—
Classifier 2	83	107	—
Classifier 3	83	96	108

Table 6. Number of Inter-classifier Consistencies – Unsatisfactory Incidents

Inter-consistency Count	Classifier 1	Classifier 2	Classifier 3
Classifier 1	117	—	—
Classifier 2	106	116	—
Classifier 3	101	101	111

Based on the data in Table 5 and Table 6, this study employed the reliability analysis method proposed by Holsti (1969) to verify the degree of inter-classifier consistency among the three classifiers. The formulas are presented in Equation (1) and Equation (2).

Equation (1):

$$A = \frac{\frac{2M_{12}}{n_1 + n_2} + \frac{2M_{23}}{n_2 + n_3} + \frac{2M_{13}}{n_1 + n_3}}{N}$$

Equation (2):

$$R = \frac{(N \times A)}{1 + [(N - 1) \times A]}$$

Variable Definitions for Equations (1) and (2):

- **R = Reliability**

Refers to the reliability coefficient of classification consistency.

- **N = Number of Classifiers**
Indicates the total number of classifiers participating in the categorization.
- **A = Average Interjudge Agreement**
Represents the average degree of consistency among classifiers.
- **M = Number of Identical Classifications between Classifiers**
For example, M_{13} denotes the number of identical classifications between Classifier 1 and Classifier 3.
- **n = Number of Samples Judged by Each Classifier**
For example, n_2 refers to the number of samples classified by Classifier 2.

Based on the above formula, the calculations yielded Table 7: Classification Reliability.

Table 7. Classification Reliability Table

BBT Classification	Average Interjudge Agreement (A)	Reliability (R)
Satisfactory	0.74	0.90
Unsatisfactory	0.86	0.95

The results in Table 7 indicate that the classifiers' average interjudge agreement exceeded 0.7, with satisfactory classification at 0.74 and unsatisfactory classification at 0.86. The classification outcomes were stable, and the Reliability (R) values likewise exceeded 0.8, meeting the requirements established by scholars. This demonstrates that the classifications possess substantial reliability and are acceptable (Latham & Saari, 1984; Smith & Houston, 1985). Validated through reliability testing, these results provide a solid and trustworthy foundation for subsequent research, ensuring credible data and classification support.

4.3.2 Validity Analysis

Validity refers to the extent to which a measurement tool accurately measures the intended construct. To ensure the validity of this study, the analysis was conducted from three perspectives: Expert Validity, Content Validity, and Face Validity.

- Expert Validity refers to the degree of recognition by professionals regarding the professionalism of the measurement tool (Andersson & Nilsson, 1964).
- Content Validity refers to whether the selected measurement tool adequately covers all important aspects of the research concept (Haynes et al., 1995).
- Face Validity refers to the extent to which the measurement tool appears acceptable and understandable to ordinary observers (Nevo, 1985).

Accordingly, in terms of Expert Validity, professionals were invited to review and confirm the classifications and labels derived from critical incidents, ensuring that they did not deviate from the theme of E-commerce Politeness. In terms of Content Validity, the study ensured that all key stages of the cross-border furniture shopping service process were included. In terms of Face Validity, the study ensured that the characteristics of these critical incidents were easily understood and accepted by ordinary consumers. In summary, this study demonstrates strong Expert Validity, Content Validity, and Face Validity, thereby enhancing the rigor of subsequent research.

4.4 Classification Results

After categorizing the collected critical incidents according to the established classification names and calculating their frequencies, the study aimed to gain deeper insights into how each category influences the service experience in cross-border furniture transactions. To illustrate this, two incidents were selected as examples from both the satisfactory and unsatisfactory critical incidents. These examples are presented in Table 8 and Table 9. Furthermore, data analyses of each classification category are provided in Table 10 and Table 11.

Table 8. Examples of Satisfactory Critical Incidents

Incident Category	Example 1	Example 2
Logistics Speed	I was impressed by the fast delivery. I placed the order on the 18th and received it on the 20th, which was unexpectedly quick. The size was perfect for my apartment, and the package was safely left at my doorstep. I am very satisfied.	The shipping was so fast! I placed the order on Sunday and received it today. The mirror is sturdy and heavy, looks amazing, and completely matches the description. Great value for money. Highly recommended, 5 stars!
Packaging Protection	I fell in love with my mirror! Delivery was on time, the quality was excellent, and the company brought it without any damage. The packaging was intact, everything was perfect, the metal had no scratches, and the size was just right. I love my mirror!	I have already purchased four of these mirrors. They all arrived within a few days, fully assembled, and very well packaged! None of the four mirrors had a single scratch! I bought three in black, which are very beautiful, and I also included a photo of the gold frame so you can see how it looks. It is a very beautiful soft gold frame.
Functional Diversity	I really like this mirror! I was worried it might not be tall enough, but the actual size is perfect. The stand is of good quality, though I placed it against the wall to save space.	Carmen reporting. The mirror is of good quality, cost-effective, shipped quickly, and well packaged. It supports both desktop placement and wall mounting, with installation tools included. Very satisfied, will purchase again.
Cost Performance	The quality is amazing, and the cost performance is excellent. The pre-assembled design is very convenient—ready to use right out of the box. Very satisfied, highly recommended! PS: If you want the same size as shown in the advertisement, choose the largest size directly.	The mirror is beautiful. I didn't expect much at such a low price, but the actual product is elegant, high quality, and requires no assembly. It is much cheaper than the same model on Amazon, with extremely high cost performance. Highly recommended.
Product Quality	I absolutely love this mirror! It perfectly matches the room style, the height is impressive, and even my 1.8-meter-tall mother can see herself fully. The quality is excellent and instantly enhances the sense of space. Highly recommended to anyone looking for a tall, stylish mirror—trust me, it's worth it!	I bought a full-length mirror from Temu, and it was great value for money! The packaging was intact, the quality was good, and the price was affordable. The mirror surface is clear without distortion, perfect for checking outfits. It is lightweight yet stable. The simple design perfectly matches the bedroom style. Highly recommended for this high cost-performance full-length mirror!

Table 9. Examples of Unsatisfactory Critical Incidents

Incident Category	Example 1	Example 2
After-sales Service	I found this purchase unbelievable. I had not even completed my order, but since you already had my number from a previous purchase, the order was processed. I received nothing from shipping or my free gift. I spent more than two hours trying to contact someone, but there was no way. I tried the virtual assistant, but it did not help me move forward.	I was very dissatisfied with the broken glass I received. I messaged the seller but got no reply. I only wanted a replacement. In the end, I had to request a refund, but now I must return it. Glass shards are everywhere, and they fall out whenever I move the pieces! This is ridiculous. It does not even deserve one star, but I had to give one just to post this review!
Packaging Protection	The product arrived damaged. Everything was broken, and even glass shards fell out of the box. I saw it immediately upon opening.	The product arrived already broken, with very poor packaging.
Consistency with Promises	The picture size was seriously misleading! I thought it would be as large as shown in the display image, but it turned out to be only half that size. A complete waste of money and time.	Not as described! I received a distorted square mirror instead of a curved one. Very disappointing, and it cannot be used as a Valentine's Day gift. A waste of my money! Contact me to resolve this—I want the product that was originally promised!
Logistics Service	The status showed that the order was delivered on November 16, but I have not received it to this day. I contacted FedEx customer service to ask about the status, and they said they would contact the shipper and inform me. Two days later, I received a call saying my order had been delivered to the wrong address and that they would provide more information. After that, I received no further calls, and it has been more than 20 days. Now when I call FedEx customer service, they ask me to contact the shipper, but they say they do not have the shipper's contact information. When I requested a refund, they said it could not be processed without the shipper's confirmation.	When delivering to my apartment building, they did not require a signature, and the package was stolen! Now the company is being very uncooperative in handling this issue and refuses to give me a refund. This is my hard-earned money! I will never buy from them again!
Product Quality	Do not buy. Terrible. The reflection in the mirror is completely distorted.	This mirror is very crooked and looks awful. I do not like it at all. I regret buying it.

Table 10. Data Analysis of Satisfactory Critical Incidents

Rank	Satisfactory Incident Category	Classifier 1 Count	Classifier 2 Count	Classifier 3 Count	Average Count	Average Ratio
1	Product Quality	48	52	47	49.00	41%
2	Cost Performance	24	38	43	35.00	29%
3	Logistics Speed	28	15	15	19.33	16%
4	Packaging Protection	13	11	10	11.33	9.50%
5	Functional Diversity	6	3	4	4.33	3.60%

Table 11. Data Analysis of Unsatisfactory Critical Incidents

Rank	Unsatisfactory Incident Category	Classifier 1 Count	Classifier 2 Count	Classifier 3 Count	Average Count	Average Ratio
1	Packaging Protection	53	46	52	50.33	42%
2	Consistency with Promises	42	41	42	41.67	35%
3	Logistics Service	16	17	18	17.00	14%
4	After-sales Service	4	9	5	6.00	5%
5	Product Quality	5	7	3	5.00	4%

The data show that among the satisfactory critical incidents, Product Quality and Cost-effectiveness ranked as the top two categories. This indicates that in the context of online transactions filled with uncertainty, consumers seek to purchase products of normal or higher quality at fair prices. From the perspective of Behavioral Politeness within the framework of E-commerce Politeness, providing quality products is not only a respect for consumer rights but also a manifestation of honest transactions. Therefore, for merchants, focusing on product quality control and offering competitively priced products are effective approaches to sustaining positive consumer evaluations and fostering long-term consumer loyalty.

Among the unsatisfactory critical incidents, Packaging Protection and Consistency with Promises ranked as the top two categories, indicating that consumers were particularly dissatisfied with the packaging protection and the consistency of services provided by merchants. Specifically, negative feedback often stemmed from products being damaged during transportation due to inadequate packaging, or from significant discrepancies between the actual product received and the merchant's descriptions or displayed images. It is noteworthy that some categories share identical naming across both satisfactory and unsatisfactory critical incidents. This demonstrates that consumers place high importance on Packaging Protection and Product Quality, reflecting their demand for greater product value. Among satisfactory incidents, Product Quality ranked first, while in unsatisfactory incidents it ranked last. This suggests that when product quality meets expectations, it serves as the foundation for satisfaction. However, once problems arise, consumers become more frustrated with subsequent impolite behaviors such as "packaging damage" or "after-sales shirking." This highlights the crucial role of E-commerce Politeness in service recovery. Therefore, to a large extent, if merchants can effectively address these issues, they can significantly enhance consumers' service experience in cross-border furniture transactions. In summary, Product Quality and Cost-effectiveness were identified as the primary causes of satisfactory incidents, while Packaging

Protection and Consistency with Promises were the main causes of unsatisfactory incidents. If merchants can maintain both product quality and cost-effectiveness while ensuring adequate packaging and reducing discrepancies in consistency with promises, they can significantly enhance consumers' service experience during the shopping process.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study employed the Critical Incident Technique (CIT), using E-commerce Politeness as the analytical lens, to explore the impact of e-commerce politeness on consumer service experience in the context of cross-border furniture transactions. The research findings reveal that eight dimensions—Logistics Speed, Packaging Protection, Functional Diversity, Cost-effectiveness, Product Quality, Logistics Service, Consistency with Promises, and After-sales Service—have significant influence on consumers' service experience.

The findings of this study are as follows: First, it proposes and applies E-commerce Politeness as a multidimensional construct composed of Language Politeness, Behavioral Politeness, and Institutional Politeness. Among these, Consistency with Promises and After-sales Service reflect deficiencies in Language Politeness; Packaging Protection and Product Quality reveal shortcomings in Behavioral Politeness; while Logistics Speed and Logistics Service demonstrate the safeguards of Institutional Politeness. Second, the study found that Packaging Protection and Product Quality appeared in both satisfactory and unsatisfactory incidents, indicating that these two factors are critical in shaping consumers' service experience. Notably, consumers expressed a relatively high level of dissatisfaction with Packaging Protection. This suggests that merchants often fail to provide adequate packaging. Therefore, the use of protective materials such as foam or air cushions can improve packaging quality and ensure that products arrive to consumers in good condition. This is not only the most basic respect for consumers' property rights but also helps prevent negative evaluations that may arise from inadequate packaging being perceived as Behavioral Impoliteness.

In conclusion, this study, through the application of the Critical Incident Technique (CIT), revealed the multidimensional manifestations and pathways of E-commerce Politeness in cross-border e-commerce. This finding not only supplements existing research by addressing the gap in "soft" service strategies but also provides a new perspective for understanding consumers' service experiences in cross-border e-commerce.

5.2 Recommendations

The process of cross-border e-commerce transactions is relatively well-developed and continues to improve. This is especially true for bulk commodities such as furniture, where platforms establish specific rules in accordance with the unique characteristics of these products. However, few studies have analyzed such transactions from the perspective of E-commerce Politeness. Therefore, this study conducted an analysis of cross-border furniture transactions through the lens of E-commerce Politeness, collecting data from the Temu platform and applying the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) to explore in depth how e-commerce politeness influences consumers' service experience during transactions. Based on the findings, recommendations are provided for four key stakeholders: cross-border e-commerce platforms, merchants, logistics providers, and consumers.

5.2.1 Recommendations for Cross-border E-commerce Platforms

In this study, the recommendations made for cross-border e-commerce platforms are mainly as follows:

- **Service Aspect:** When consumers encounter difficulties in seeking assistance from merchants or when filing complaints, platform customer service should respond with a polite, proactive, and patient attitude. They should not evade problems or treat consumers perfunctorily.
- The platform should regularly provide E-commerce Politeness training for customer service staff in cross-cultural scenarios and compile a Platform Customer Service Politeness Manual to offer standardized dialogue examples for different situations. In addition, a consumer rating and evaluation system based on response and resolution rates should be established. This would encourage customer service staff to consistently maintain positivity and patience, respond politely to consumers, address their concerns in a timely manner, and make improvements based on consumer feedback.
- **Regulation Aspect:** The platform should improve the logistics monitoring system and promote transparency of logistics information, ensuring that product delivery status is updated promptly. Reward and penalty mechanisms should be applied to relevant personnel. Logistics providers should be required to apologize politely and explain solutions when errors occur during

delivery, thereby reducing incidents of lost items, missed deliveries, incorrect shipments, or rough handling. This would enhance consumers' service experience during the purchasing process. At the same time, stricter regulation of merchants should be enforced to ensure that they provide high-quality services. Merchants who exhibit impolite behavior should be penalized to safeguard consumers' legitimate rights and optimize their overall service experience.

5.2.2 Recommendations for Cross-border E-commerce Merchants

In this study on cross-border e-commerce furniture transactions, one aspect of e-commerce politeness is defined as the merchant's service attitude toward consumers. Research data show that consumers experienced both polite and impolite situations regarding the protective degree of product packaging and product quality. Dissatisfaction was particularly prominent in areas such as after-sales service, consistency with commitments, and logistics services, where consumers' reasonable demands were not adequately met. For large-scale commodities like those in the furniture category, these issues are especially pronounced.

- Due to differences in cross-cultural communication and frequent policy changes, cross-border merchants must not only flexibly adjust their sales strategies according to target markets but also provide training for customer service staff on E-commerce Politeness procedures related to Consistency with Promises. A double-check mechanism should be established prior to shipment to ensure that the products consumers receive are consistent with the images and orders, thereby eliminating discrepancies in consistency with promises.
- Merchants should reinforce the politeness principle that “adequate packaging is a respect for consumers' property rights.” Staff engaged in product packaging and shipping should undergo strict training, with reward and penalty mechanisms in place. Merchants should enforce a mandatory requirement that only properly packaged products can be shipped.
- It is recommended that merchants implement seamless integration between AI and human customer service. When AI customer service detects keywords such as “error” or “complaint,” or when the same inquiry is repeated more than three times, a prominent option for “transfer to human customer service” should automatically appear. This would help alleviate consumers' negative emotions, reduce negative evaluations, and ensure that consumers' reasonable demands are met. In turn, this would improve the overall service experience and increase consumers' willingness to repurchase.

5.2.3 Recommendations for Logistics Providers

Research data show that many consumers have encountered problems such as not receiving products, delivery errors, damaged packaging, or rude attitudes from delivery personnel. These situations are regarded by consumers as “impolite” service experiences. Therefore, relevant logistics operators should establish the concept of “Polite Logistics” and transform the “Polite Logistics” philosophy into concrete practices at three levels:

- Operational Level: The principle of “handle with care” should be formalized as a mandatory standard. Delivery personnel should be required to place packages properly and provide photographic feedback confirming the intact condition of the parcel after delivery.
- Communication Level: A simple standardized process should be implemented, including proactively identifying oneself, reminding customers to check the outer packaging, and offering a polite closing remark. Using standardized language demonstrates professionalism and reinforces E-commerce Politeness.
- Management Level: At the company level, frontline employees should be granted limited decision-making authority, allowing them to offer small-value coupons as an apology in cases of minor packaging damage. This enables quick and proactive resolution of consumers' negative emotions. Moreover, when responding to consumer inquiries or reasonable requests, employees should adopt a positive and polite attitude, avoiding perfunctory replies. Such practices foster constructive communication between both parties and facilitate smoother operations.

5.2.4 Recommendations for Consumers

- When selecting products, consumers should prioritize merchants who provide clear, multi-angle product images, detailed material descriptions, and transparent after-sales policies.
- Before making a purchase, consumers are advised to proactively inquire about product information from merchants and confirm accuracy before placing an order. In cases of language barriers, translation tools may be used, and communication records should be retained. These records can serve as evidence to safeguard consumer rights if discrepancies in Consistency with Promises occur.
- Consumers should closely monitor the logistics tracking of their products, promptly contact customer service if anomalies arise,

and inspect the packaging carefully before signing for delivery to ensure it is intact and undamaged. Where possible, it is recommended to record the unboxing process on video, thereby maximizing protection of their legitimate rights and interests.

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