



**AN ANALYSIS OF THE FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMER  
LOYALTY IN THE EXPRESS DELIVERY INDUSTRY - A CASE  
STUDY OF SF EXPRESS IN XINXIANG, HENAN PROVINCE,  
CHINA**

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**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS  
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2024**



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This Independent Study Has Been Approved as a Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Business Administration

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**Title:** An Analysis of the Factors Influencing Customer Loyalty in the Express Delivery Industry - A Case Study of SF Express in Xinxiang, Henan Province, China

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the factors influencing customer loyalty to SF Express, a leading delivery service in China. This study has two objectives: 1) To explore the key factors influencing customer loyalty to SF Express in Xinxiang, Henan province, China; 2) To provide recommendations to improve customer loyalty to SF Express in Xinxiang, Henan province, China.

A quantitative methodology was employed, collecting 394 questionnaires, resulting in 390 valid responses used for analysis. In this study, the population consisted of customers who had used the services of SF Express, a leading delivery service in China. In terms of sampling, a random sampling approach was utilized in this study. This method involved selecting participants randomly from the customer database of SF Express, which helped ensure that every individual in the population had an equal chance of being chosen.

The results of the study: 1) SF Express's corporate image, service quality and service price have an influence on customer loyalty; 2) Positive corporate image can enhance customers' brand identity and thereby enhance loyalty. At the same time, high-

quality services meet customer needs and directly affect their loyalty. In addition, a reasonable service pricing strategy can help maintain customer loyalty, especially in a highly competitive market environment. In conclusion, SF Express's performance in these three aspects significantly affect customer loyalty and provide an important basis for its future development strategy. These findings provide valuable insights for SF Express and suggest practical strategies to enhance customer loyalty in the competitive delivery industry.

**Keywords:** corporate image, service quality, service prices, customer loyalty



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Yang Zhipeng

## DECLARATION

I, Yang ZhiPeng, hereby declare that this Independent Study entitled “An Analysis of the Factors Influencing Customer Loyalty in the Express Delivery Industry - A Case Study of SF Express in Xinxiang, Henan Province, China” is an original work and has never been submitted to any academic institution for a degree.

.....  
(Yang Zhipeng)

Oct 24, 2024



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# Chapter 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background of the Study

In the context of "Internet Plus," e-commerce transactions in China are rapidly increasing. Express delivery services began to develop in China in the 1980s, but the integration of modern information technology into express logistics has only happened recently (Frehe et al., 2017). Although the market for express logistics in China is still emerging, it is growing quickly (Li et al., 2019). According to the National Bureau of Statistics, China's online retail sales reached 13,088.4 trillion yuan in 2021, with 10,804.2 billion yuan coming from physical goods and 812 million online shopping users by June 2021. Online shopping consumption in Sichuan has been rising each year. Data from JD.com shows that SF Express ranks fifth in purchasing power in China (Zaid et al., 2021). As the number of internet users grows, e-commerce companies continue to update their transaction records. In 2020, the business volume of large express delivery companies reached 83.358 billion packages, an increase of 31.2% from the previous year, with total revenue hitting 879.54 billion yuan, up 17.3% year on year (Xinhua, 2022).

With the fast growth of the internet, China's online shopping market is expanding, and the surge in order volume presents both opportunities and challenges for delivery companies. To survive in this competitive environment, customer loyalty is crucial (Arora et al., 2021). How customers receive quality logistics services from express delivery companies is essential in their choice of service provider (Al-Sharari, 2022). Courier companies are the main point of contact for customers in e-commerce transactions. Customer loyalty with logistics services directly influences their evaluation of online shopping and affects future purchasing decisions (Sarder, 2021).

Despite the increasing number of internet users and online shoppers, the scale of e-commerce keeps growing. In 2019, the national volume of express deliveries exceeded 60 billion packages, and the total revenue surpassed 750 billion yuan (Zenezini et al., 2018). Express logistics companies handle about 170 million packages daily, and this number can reach 540 million during peak periods, showing explosive growth in the logistics distribution industry.

With the rapid development of the express delivery industry, customer loyalty has become a crucial factor for business success. SF Express, as a leading company in the industry, plays a key role in shaping customer recognition and trust through its corporate

image. Research shows that a positive corporate image can significantly enhance customer loyalty, making it essential to understand how SF Express's corporate image affects customer loyalty (Tsai et al., 2021). In addition, service quality is another critical factor influencing customer loyalty and loyalty. SF Express is known for its efficient services, but it is important to analyze the specific impact of service quality on customer loyalty to identify areas for improvement. Finally, the reasonableness of service pricing is an important consideration for customers when choosing delivery services. As market competition intensifies, it is necessary to evaluate how SF Express's pricing strategy affects customer loyalty in order to develop more effective marketing strategies. As a key player in this market, SF Express has gained significant attention for its logistics services. Understanding customer loyalty is essential for companies like SF Express to thrive in this competitive environment. Therefore, this research focuses on customers in Xinxiang, Henan province, China, who have used SF Express services within the last year. In a rapidly evolving express delivery industry, understanding customer loyalty is crucial for companies like SF Express to maintain their competitive edge. By examining the interactions between corporate image, service quality, and pricing, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the factors that drive customer loyalty for SF Express in Xinxiang, and can provide valuable insights and recommendations for enhancing customer loyalty.

## **1.2 Questions of the Study**

To achieve the aim of the study, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What are the key factors influencing customer loyalty to SF Express?
2. What recommendations can be made for SF Express to improve its customer loyalty?

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The main objectives of this research are:

- 1.To explore the key factors that influence customer loyalty to SF Express in Xinxiang, Henan province, China.
- 2.To provide recommendations to improve customer loyalty to SF Express in Xinxiang, Henan province, China.

## **1.4 Scope of the Study**

This study uses the theory of customer loyalty to analyze how these factors influence customer loyalty to SF Express in Xinxiang, Henan province, China. A thorough literature review was conducted, examining relevant studies on customer loyalty, service quality, and pricing strategies. This review helped to analyze key variables that affect customer loyalty, particularly in the context of SF Express.

The study employed a quantitative research methodology. By analyzing these variables, the study aims to understand how they interact and affect overall customer loyalty. The scope of this research is limited to customers in Xinxiang, Henan province, China who have used SF Express services within the last year. An online survey was conducted using a Chinese questionnaire platform called Wenjuanxing. A total of 394 questionnaires were collected, and after filtering for quality, 390 valid responses remained for analysis. By focusing on these areas, the research aims to provide valuable insights into how corporate image, service quality, and pricing affect customer loyalty in the express delivery sector.

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of factors influencing customer loyalty specifically for SF Express customers in Xinxiang, Henan province, China. It combines theoretical insights with practical implications, benefiting both researchers and practitioners in the logistics industry. By focusing on customer experiences and expectations, the research helps develop effective strategies for enhancing customer loyalty. Therefore, this research is significant for several reasons. Firstly, it aims to analyze key factors that contribute to customer loyalty in the express delivery sector, providing valuable insights for logistics companies. Secondly, it contributes to academic literature by filling gaps related to customer behavior in the context of rapidly evolving e-commerce. Finally, the findings can help SF Express in Xinxiang, Henan province, China improve its services and better meet customer needs, ultimately enhancing its market position.

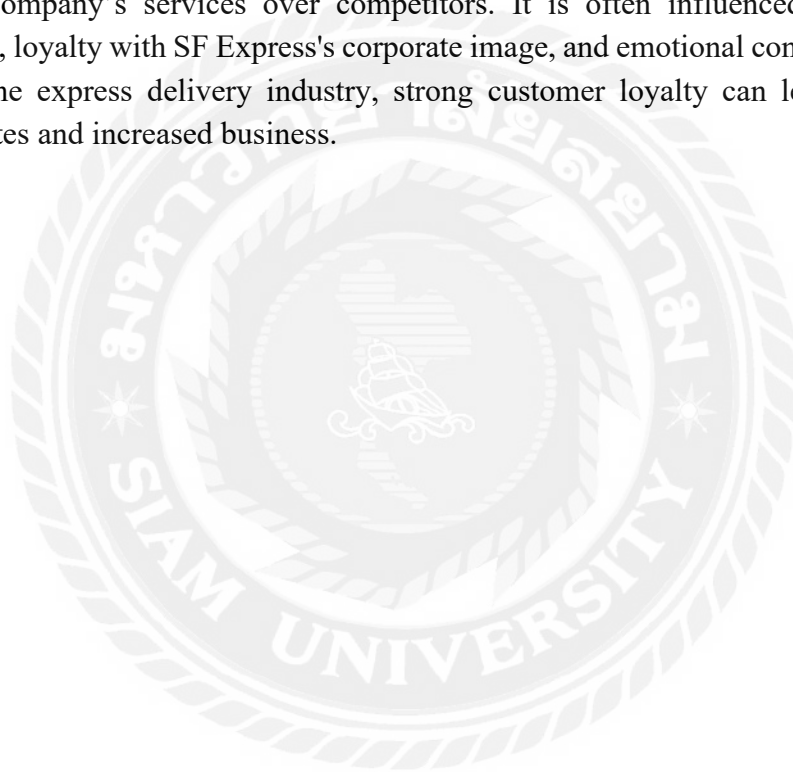
## **1.6 Definition of Key Terms**

Corporate image refers to the perception and impression that customers have about a company. It includes the company's reputation, values, and how it is portrayed in the media. A strong corporate image can create trust and loyalty among customers.

Service quality is the assessment of how well a service meets customer expectations. It includes aspects such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. High service quality leads to greater customer loyalty and can enhance loyalty.

Service prices refer to the costs charged by SF Express for its various delivery services. These prices can vary based on several factors, including the type of service (e.g., standard, express, same-day), the weight and dimensions of the package, and the distance between the pickup and delivery locations. Service prices are a crucial aspect of customer decision-making, as they influence perceived value and affordability.

Customer loyalty refers to a customer's commitment to repeatedly choose a particular company's services over competitors. It is often influenced by positive experiences, loyalty with SF Express's corporate image, and emotional connection to the brand. In the express delivery industry, strong customer loyalty can lead to higher retention rates and increased business.



## Chapter 2 Literature Review

In this chapter, this study explores key concepts and theories that are essential for understanding the dynamics of customer loyalty in the express delivery industry, particularly focusing on SF Express. The literature review is structured into several sections, each addressing critical components that contribute to customer loyalty.

### 2.1 Corporate Image

Corporate image refers to the perception and impression that the public, customers, and stakeholders have about a company, encompassing how it is viewed based on its branding, communications, and overall reputation (Chen et al., 2016). Key elements of corporate image include its reputation, which reflects how well the company is regarded in its industry and among consumers; its values, which represent the principles and ethics the company stands for, such as sustainability, integrity, and customer service; its visual identity, including the logo, design, and overall aesthetics that represent the brand; its communication, which involves how the company interacts with its audience through marketing, public relations, and customer service; and its performance, which pertains to the quality of products and services offered, including reliability and customer loyalty. A positive corporate image can lead to increased customer loyalty, better employee morale, and a stronger competitive advantage in the market. One significant study by Punel and Stathopoulos (2017) investigated the acceptability of corporate image, emphasizing the role of context and experience effects. Their research highlights that shippers from the general public have varying levels of agreement on the viability of corporate image options, which are influenced by their prior experiences and the specific context of the delivery. This indicates that consumer acceptance of corporate image is not uniform and suggests that targeted strategies may be necessary to enhance its appeal.

Seghezzi et al. (2021) examined the economic effects of a "Pony Express" model that leverages corporate image for express and super-express deliveries. This study highlights the potential economic benefits of utilizing corporate image in a rapidly changing market. Alnaggar et al. (2021) presented a thorough review of corporate image platforms and related academic studies. They investigate how various businesses utilize these models to provide fast, same-day shipping. This review serves as an important reference for understanding the current state of corporate image logistics and its effects on efficiency and customer loyalty. Fatehi and Wagner (2022) focused on the details of

corporate image in last-mile deliveries, particularly concerning major retailers like Walmart. They create an optimization model to evaluate the effectiveness of corporate image in increasing delivery speed and reducing costs. Their results suggest that strong optimization strategies can greatly enhance the performance of corporate image systems, making them more competitive in the e-commerce industry. Kafle et al. (2017) discussed the design and modeling of a corporate image system for urban parcel relay and delivery. They argue that rethinking urban logistics is becoming increasingly urgent due to the rapid expansion of e-commerce. Their research examines how different factors, such as penalty rates, affect the performance of corporate image shipping systems. By providing insights into system design, their work contributes to the ongoing conversation about improving urban delivery logistics through innovative methods.

## 2.2 Service Quality

Service quality refers to the overall standard of service that a company provides to its customers, encompassing factors such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Raza et al., 2020). It is important because it directly affects customer loyalty and loyalty. In the context of express delivery, high service quality means that packages are delivered on time, in good condition, and with effective communication throughout the process. When customers receive reliable and efficient service, they are more likely to trust the company and choose it again in the future (Sharma & Lijuan, 2015). Therefore, maintaining a high level of service quality is essential for companies like Express to build a positive reputation, attract new customers, and retain existing ones. Ultimately, good Express's service quality leads to increased customer loyalty, which contributes to long-term business success. The study of SF Express's service quality, perceived value, and trust in home delivery service personnel has gained significant attention in recent years, particularly in developing countries. Uzir et al. (2021) investigated how these factors contribute to customer loyalty in home delivery services. Their findings indicate that Express's service quality plays a crucial role in shaping customer perceptions and loyalty, highlighting the need for service providers to focus on improving their service standards to retain customers.

Cheng et al. (2021) constructed a Express's service quality scale specifically for the online food delivery sector. This research emphasizes the relationship between SF Express's service quality and customer loyalty, suggesting that a well-defined SF Express's service quality scale can help businesses assess their performance and identify areas for improvement. The study demonstrates that high SF Express's service quality is essential for fostering positive customer experiences, which in turn enhances loyalty.



Suhartanto et al. (2019) further explored the loyalty dynamics within online food delivery services by examining the roles of e-SF Express's service quality and food quality. Their research indicates that customer loyalty serves as a mediating factor between SF Express's service quality and customer loyalty. This implies that enhancing both e-service and food quality can lead to greater customer loyalty, which ultimately fosters loyalty. The findings suggest that businesses should not only focus on delivering high-quality food but also ensure that their online platforms provide excellent service. Murfield et al. (2017) investigated logistics SF Express's service quality in the context of omni-channel retailing. Their study reveals that consumers perceive SF Express's service quality as a bundle of attributes that collectively influence their loyalty. The authors argue that omni-channel consumers have unique expectations and experiences, necessitating tailored service strategies that address these specific needs. This perspective is critical for logistics providers, as it underscores the importance of understanding customer behavior in a multi-channel environment. Lastly, Jie et al. (2015) analyzed customer loyalty concerning product delivery service providers from the perspective of Chinese e-retailers. Their research emphasizes that SF Express's service quality significantly influences customer loyalty, particularly in the era of the Internet of Things (IoT). As e-retailers strive to enhance their logistics capabilities, understanding the factors that contribute to customer loyalty becomes essential for developing effective delivery strategies.

### **2.3 Service Prices**

Service prices are structured to accommodate a variety of customer needs while remaining competitive in the logistics market (Pani et al., 2020). Service prices are important because it can significantly influence customer loyalty. When customers feel valued and supported, they are more likely to trust the company and choose its services again in the future. The connection between express service prices and customer loyalty has been widely examined in recent years, particularly in the e-commerce sector. Lixian and Yuanhui (2017) looked into how the quality of express services impacts customer loyalty with brands. Their study shows that high SF Express's service prices positively affects customer experience is in this relationship. The results suggest that companies must improve their service performance to meet changing customer expectations, which can help build stronger brand loyalty.

In the realm of delivery services, Zenezini et al. (2018) discussed the implementation of collection-and-delivery points from the viewpoint of courier and

express service operators. They explain that factors like flexible pricing, faster delivery times, and better SF Express's service prices lead to higher overall customer loyalty. This research indicates that a well-organized delivery process can reduce costs while increasing revenue, which enhances the performance of business-to-consumer (B2C) delivery services. Kraugusteeliana and Violin (2024) focused on performance assessment in the e-commerce industry by using decision support systems. Their analysis identifies important aspects of SF Express's service prices, such as delivery speed and customer SF Express's service prices, which significantly affect customer loyalty. By evaluating these elements, e-commerce businesses can better align their delivery strategies with what customers need, ultimately giving them a competitive advantage. Yu et al. (2015) explored how Chinese e-retailers choose their product delivery service providers. Their findings show that selecting effective delivery services is essential for improving customer loyalty. This emphasizes the need for retailers to evaluate different delivery options and their SF Express's service prices levels to ensure they select providers that meet their quality standards. Pipatchokchaiyo and Meenakorn (2022) conducted further research on SF Express's service prices in the parcel delivery sector, specifically in Bangkok. Their study highlights how important SF Express's service prices is in shaping customer loyalty within the private parcel delivery market. This research adds to our understanding of how specific service features can influence overall customer perceptions and experiences.

In a broader context, Kim et al. (2017) investigated the impact of express delivery on customer loyalty in cross-border e-commerce. Their research suggests a positive link between using express delivery services and higher repurchase rates, indicating that efficient delivery options can boost customer loyalty and retention in competitive markets. Waluyo et al. (2021) assessed how customers use and feel about various delivery services in Indonesia. Their study stresses the importance of understanding customer preferences and the factors that drive loyalty, which can help delivery service providers tailor their services to better meet market demands.

Overall, high-quality service delivery, effective SF Express's service prices, and careful selection of service providers are crucial factors that influence customer perceptions and loyalty. Understanding these aspects will be essential for companies looking to improve their service offerings and stay competitive in the logistics and delivery industry.

## **2.4 Customer Loyalty Theory**

Customer loyalty refers to a customer's commitment to repeatedly choose a particular company's services over those of its competitors. This loyalty is often built through positive experiences, high loyalty with SF Express's corporate image, and a strong emotional connection to the brand. Customer loyalty is significant because it leads to repeat business, which is more cost-effective than acquiring new customers. In the express delivery industry, loyal customers are more likely to recommend the service to others and provide valuable feedback for improvement. The relationship between various factors such as corporate image, location, price, and SF Express's corporate image and their impact on customer loyalty in delivery services has gained considerable attention in recent studies. Handoyo (2021) explored how these elements influence customer loyalty specifically for J&T Express delivery services. The study reveals that a strong corporate image, convenient location, competitive pricing, and high SF Express's corporate image are essential for achieving customer loyalty. This loyalty, in turn, fosters customer loyalty, suggesting that businesses need to focus on these key areas to retain customers and encourage repeat purchases.

In the air freight express industry, Tsai et al. (2021) investigated what drives customer loyalty. Their research indicates that different marketing approaches can affect customer behavior after a transaction. They find that aspects like SF Express's corporate image and corporate image have both direct and indirect influences on customer loyalty. This highlights the importance of maintaining a positive image and high-quality service to enhance customer loyalty in freight transportation. Subaebasni and Risnawaty (2019) discussed how brand image, quality, and price impact customer loyalty and loyalty for PT Strait Liner Express in Jakarta. Their findings suggest that customers are influenced by the overall perception of the brand, the quality of services provided, and pricing strategies. As these factors play significant roles in customer loyalty, they also contribute to building long-term loyalty among customers. Zaid et al. (2021) examined the effects of service recovery, customer loyalty, and corporate image on customer loyalty. Their study shows that service recovery can significantly enhance customer loyalty, which then positively impacts customer loyalty. This research emphasizes the need for delivery service providers to implement effective service recovery strategies to strengthen customer relationships and improve overall loyalty. Wahyono and Nurjanah (2020) focused on experiential marketing, SF Express's corporate image, and customer loyalty in the delivery services sector. They argue that delivering high-quality service creates positive experiences for customers, which ultimately leads to increased loyalty. This suggests that businesses should prioritize enhancing customer experiences as a means to build loyalty. Zhong et al. (2022) investigated the adoption of express delivery services in the UK and how it relates to customer loyalty. They conclude that to achieve higher

loyalty, companies must put more effort into understanding customer needs and preferences. By aligning their services with customer expectations, businesses can increase customer loyalty and loyalty. Kim et al. (2017) studied the effects of express delivery on customer loyalty in the context of cross-border e-commerce. Their findings indicate that the use of express delivery services positively correlates with customer loyalty, measured through repurchase rates. This underscores the importance of efficient delivery options in retaining customers in a competitive market. Nurlaela and Sumarwan (2019) explored the determinants of online customer loyalty and how they influence loyalty. They find that various stages of the delivery process significantly affect customer perceptions and experiences. This study emphasizes the importance of ensuring a smooth delivery process to enhance customer loyalty. Finally, Huma et al. (2020) investigated the role of logistics SF Express's corporate image in customer loyalty within the logistics industry. Their research highlights that high SF Express's corporate image leads to greater customer loyalty, suggesting that logistics providers must focus on improving their service offerings to meet customer expectations.

In the field of express logistics, research on the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty shows that service quality is considered the primary factor affecting customer loyalty. As early as 1980, Oliver emphasized the importance of service quality in customer loyalty, stating that it is a key driving factor for both transaction-oriented loyalty and cumulative loyalty. This viewpoint laid the foundation for subsequent studies, prompting researchers to explore various dimensions of service quality and their specific impacts on customer loyalty.

In recent years, Qi Yuan (2022) conducted a systematic study based on the theory of customer loyalty and express services, finding that service quality has a significant impact on customer loyalty. He pointed out that perceived quality is the main factor influencing customer loyalty, meaning that customers' subjective evaluations of the service they receive directly relate to their loyalty. However, through in-depth theoretical analysis and practical investigation, his study also discovered that corporate image, service quality, and service pricing collectively have a significant impact on customer loyalty.

Customer loyalty theory explores the factors that influence a customer's commitment to a particular brand or company, leading to repeat purchases and advocacy. This indicates that, in addition to service quality itself, the establishment of a positive corporate image and the reasonableness of service pricing are also important factors influencing customer loyalty. A strong corporate image can enhance customer trust, while reasonable service pricing can meet customer expectations and increase their loyalty. Therefore, in the express logistics industry, companies need to consider the

relationship among these three factors comprehensively. They should take effective measures to improve service quality while focusing on building corporate image and optimizing pricing strategies to achieve higher customer loyalty and loyalty. This study seeks to offer valuable insights into the factors influencing customer loyalty for SF Express in Xinxiang by exploring how corporate image, service quality, and pricing interact with one another.

## **2.5 Overview of SF Express in Xinxiang, Henan Province**

SF Express is one of the largest express delivery companies in China, recognized for its efficient and reliable logistics services. SF Express (Group) Co., Ltd. is a Chinese multinational delivery services and logistics company based in Shenzhen, Guangdong. It is the largest courier in China, and provides domestic and international express delivery. SF Express has a fleet of 69 cargo aircraft, including 37 Boeing 757, 17 Boeing 737, 13 Boeing 767 and two Boeing 747 all-cargo freighters, which are owned by its subsidiary SF Airlines. Established in 1993, SF Express has rapidly grown, expanding its reach across the country. In recent years, the company has made significant strides in cities like Xinxiang, located in Henan province, China. This overview will explore SF Express's history, operations, corporate image, service quality, pricing strategies, customer loyalty, and the challenges and opportunities it faces in Xinxiang.

### **1. History of SF Express**

SF Express was founded in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, by Wang Wei. Initially focused on the delivery of documents, the company quickly expanded its service offerings to include parcels and freight. Over the years, SF Express has developed a comprehensive logistics network, integrating technology and innovation into its operations. The company became publicly listed in 2016, further enhancing its capabilities and resources.

In Xinxiang, SF Express established its presence to cater to the growing demand for express delivery services. The city, known for its industrial base and commerce, has provided a strategic location for SF Express to support local businesses and meet the needs of consumers.

### **2. SF Express Operations in Xinxiang**

SF Express operates several facilities in Xinxiang, including sorting centers and service points. These locations are strategically placed to ensure efficient delivery routes and quick access to customers. The company offers a range of services, including same-day delivery, next-day delivery, and logistics solutions tailored to businesses.

The operations in Xinxiang also benefit from advanced technology. SF Express utilizes a sophisticated tracking system that allows customers to monitor their shipments in real time. This transparency enhances customer trust and loyalty, as they can see the status of their deliveries at any time.

### 3. Corporate Image of SF Express

The corporate image of SF Express is built on its commitment to quality and reliability. In Xinxiang, many customers view SF Express as a trustworthy partner for their delivery needs. The company's reputation is bolstered by its timely services and professional staff.

Moreover, SF Express actively engages in community initiatives, which helps to improve its image further. By participating in local events and supporting charitable causes, the company demonstrates its commitment to the community, which resonates positively with customers.

### 4. Service Quality

Service quality is a crucial factor for any logistics company, and SF Express places great emphasis on maintaining high standards. In Xinxiang, customer feedback indicates a strong level of loyalty with the services provided. The company ensures that its employees are well-trained, which contributes to the overall quality of service.

One of the key aspects of service quality is the promptness of deliveries. SF Express is known for its speed, often delivering packages ahead of schedule. This reliability fosters customer loyalty and encourages repeat business.

Additionally, the company has implemented measures to handle customer complaints effectively. A dedicated customer service team is available to address issues, ensuring that customers feel valued and heard.

### 5. Pricing Strategy

Pricing plays a vital role in the competitive landscape of the express delivery market. SF Express adopts a pricing strategy that balances affordability with quality service. In Xinxiang, the pricing is competitive compared to other local and national courier services.

The company offers various pricing tiers based on service speed and package weight, allowing customers to choose options that best suit their needs and budgets. This flexibility in pricing is appealing to a diverse customer base, from individual consumers to large businesses.

#### 6. Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty is essential for the long-term success of SF Express in Xinxiang. The company has implemented several strategies to foster loyalty among its customers. These include loyalty programs that reward frequent users with discounts and special offers.

Furthermore, the high service quality and positive corporate image contribute significantly to customer retention. Many customers in Xinxiang express a preference for SF Express over competitors due to their consistent experiences and the value they receive.

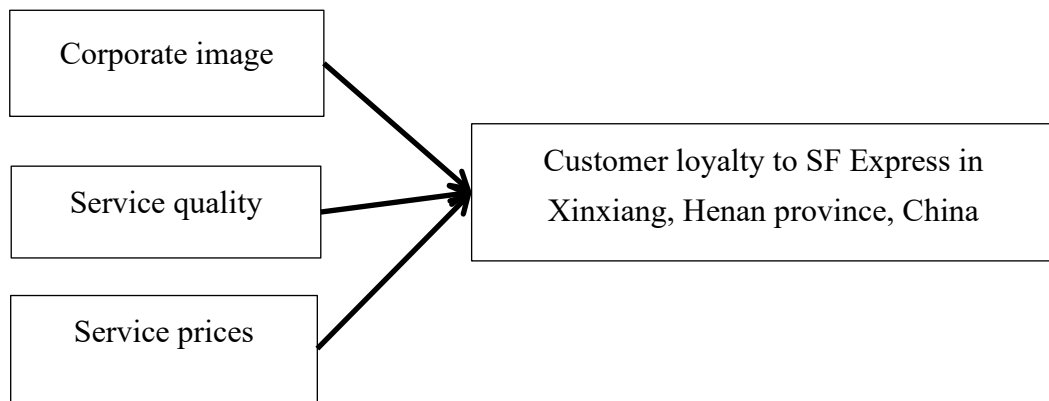
#### 7. Challenges and Opportunities

Despite its success, SF Express faces challenges in the Xinxiang market. Increased competition from other delivery services and the rise of e-commerce require the company to continuously adapt its strategies. Additionally, seasonal fluctuations in demand can impact operational efficiency.

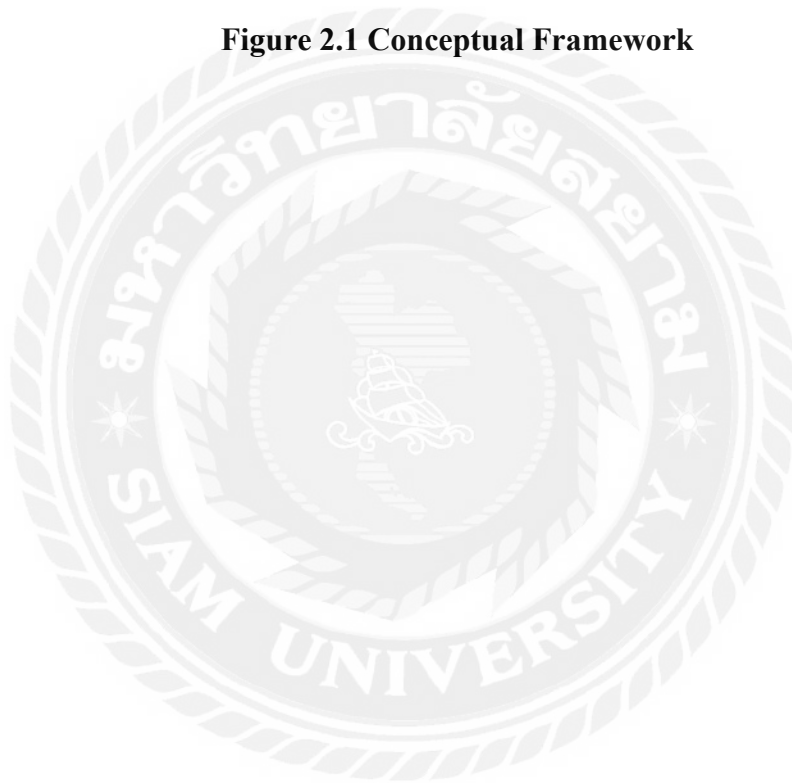
However, there are also numerous opportunities for growth. The ongoing expansion of e-commerce in China presents a chance for SF Express to enhance its services and reach new customers. By investing in technology and logistics, the company can further improve its delivery capabilities.

## 2.6 Conceptual Framework

Therefore, this study establishes a research framework for a clearer study, shown in Figure 2.1



**Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework**





## **Chapter 3 Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Design**

The empirical aspect of this research aims to verify how the variables of SF Express's corporate image, service quality, and service prices significantly affect customer loyalty to the SF Express in Xinxiang, Henan province, China. To achieve this goal, the study employed a quantitative analysis method, which is known for its ability to provide measurable data that can be statistically evaluated. A questionnaires survey was conducted with the customers of SF Express.

In this research, a structured survey questionnaire was designed to collect data from customers in Xinxiang, Henan province, China who had used SF Express services. The questionnaire consists of carefully crafted questions that assess the key variables influencing customer loyalty.

### **3.2 Population and Sample**

In this study, the population consisted of customers who had used the services of SF Express, a leading logistics company in China. These customers were located across various regions in China, and the data collection took place over a specific period when the company was actively engaging with its customer base. A total of 390 questionnaires were collected, so the final analysis sample size was 390 valid questionnaires.

In terms of the sampling method, a random sampling approach was utilized in this study. This method involved selecting participants randomly from the customer database of SF Express, which helped ensure that every individual in the population had an equal chance of being chosen. This randomness contributed to the representativeness of the sample, allowing the findings of the study to be generalized to a wider audience of SF Express customers. By employing this sampling technique, the researchers aimed to obtain reliable data that accurately reflects customer loyalty to SF Express services.

### **3.3 Hypothesis**

The hypotheses based on the variables of SF Express's corporate image, service quality, and service prices in SF Express:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Corporate image has a positively impact on customer loyalty to SF Express in Xinxiang, Henan province, China.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Service quality has a significant positive impact on customer loyalty to SF Express in Xinxiang, Henan province, China.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Service prices have a significant positive impact on customer loyalty to SF Express in Xinxiang, Henan province, China.

### **3.4 Research Instrument**

This questionnaire used in this study survey is divided into two sections, each containing three questions. The first section focuses on demographic information, including age, gender, and frequency of use. The second section involves four key variables: 1) examining SF Express's corporate image, which includes trustworthiness, brand image, and corporate social responsibility; 2) evaluating service quality, which covers packaging quality, customer service attitude, and overall satisfaction; 3) exploring the service prices of SF Express, including price fairness, value for money, and willingness to pay higher prices; and 4) assessing customer loyalty, which focuses on the willingness to continue using SF Express, the likelihood of recommending it to others, and overall loyalty.

Overall, the questionnaire aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of consumers' perceptions and experiences with SF Express. This approach allows the researchers to select participants from a diverse customer base, thereby enhancing the generalizability of the findings.

**Table 3.1 Questionnaire Scale Design**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Statement</b>	<b>No.</b>
<b>Demographics</b>	Age: Under 18 / 18-24 / 25-34 / 35-44 / 45-54 / 55+	Q1
	Gender: Male / Female	Q2
	Frequency of Use: Daily / Weekly / Monthly / Rarely	Q3
<b>Corporate image</b>	I believe SF Express is a trustworthy delivery company.	Q4
	The brand image of SF Express is leading in the industry.	Q7
	I am satisfied with SF Express's sense of corporate social responsibility.	Q8
<b>Service quality</b>	The packaging quality of SF Express is excellent, ensuring the safety of items.	Q9
	The customer service attitude of SF Express is friendly and professional.	Q10
	I am very satisfied when using SF Express's delivery services.	Q11
<b>Service prices</b>	The prices of SF Express's delivery services are reasonable.	Q12
	I believe SF Express offers high value for money.	Q13
	I am willing to pay a higher price for the excellent services of SF Express.	Q14
<b>Customer loyalty</b>	I will continue to choose SF Express as my delivery service provider.	Q15
	I would recommend SF Express to others.	Q16
	My overall loyalty to SF Express is high.	Q17

### **3.5 Data Collection**

Data collection was carried out through an online survey distributed via the Chinese questionnaire platform: wenjuanxing.com. The survey link was shared through various channels, allowing a wide range of customers to participate. To collect data from this population, a total of 394 questionnaires were initially gathered. These questionnaires were distributed online through a popular survey platform known as Questionnaire Star, which is widely used in China for conducting surveys. The online distribution allowed for reaching a diverse audience quickly and efficiently. In total, 394 questionnaires were collected, which indicates a strong interest in the study among SF Express customers.

However, during the data collection process, it was noted that four of the responses were excluded due to their insufficient completion time, which compromised the quality of the data. As a result, the final analysis was conducted on 390 valid questionnaires, ensuring that the data used for analysis met the necessary quality standards.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

The collected data were analyzed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics provided an overview of the demographic characteristics of the respondents, while inferential statistics, including correlation analysis and regression analysis, were used to test the relationships between the variables. This analysis aimed to identify significant effects of SF Express's corporate image, service quality, and service prices on customer loyalty to SF Express.

### **3.7 Reliability and Validity Analysis of the Scale**

#### **3.7.1 Reliability Analysis**

To ensure the reliability of the survey instrument, a reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha. This analysis measures the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. A Cronbach's alpha value above 0.70 is typically considered acceptable, indicating that the items within each section are reliably measuring the intended constructs.

**Table 3.2 Reliability Analysis of the Scale**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
<b>Corporate image</b>	Q1	0.862
	Q2	
	Q3	
<b>Service quality</b>	Q4	0.878
	Q7	
	Q8	
	Q9	
<b>Service prices</b>	Q10	0.863
	Q11	
	Q12	
	Q13	
	Q14	
<b>Customer Loyalty</b>	Q15	0.837
	Q16	
	Q17	

### **3.7.2 Validity Analysis**

The validity of the questionnaire was assessed through content validity and construct validity. Content validity was evaluated by consulting experts in the field, who reviewed the questionnaire to ensure it accurately measures the relevant constructs. Construct validity was examined through factor analysis, which helps determine whether the items in the questionnaire group together in a way that reflects the underlying theoretical constructs.

**Table 3.3 Validity Analysis of the Scale**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Factor Loadings</b>	<b>Content Validity</b>
<b>Corporate image</b>	Q1	0.78	Valid
	Q2	0.81	
	Q3	0.76	
<b>Service quality</b>	Q4	0.82	Valid
	Q7	0.79	
	Q8	0.77	
	Q9	0.85	
<b>Service prices</b>	Q10	0.8	Valid
	Q11	0.78	
	Q12	0.75	
<b>Customer Loyalty</b>	Q13	0.82	Valid
	Q14	0.77	
	Q15	0.75	
	Q16	0.79	
	Q17	0.78	

## Chapter 4 Findings

### 4.1 Findings

#### 4.1.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Table 4.1 present the demographic characteristics of participants for a sample size of 390 customers.

**Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Demographics**

	Category	Frequency	Percentage(%)
<b>Age</b>	Under 18	20	5.1
	18-24	120	30.8
	25-34	150	38.5
	35-44	60	15.4
	45-54	30	7.7
	55+	10	2.6
<b>Gender</b>	Male	200	51.3
	Female	190	48.7
<b>Frequency of Use</b>	Daily	100	25.6
	Weekly	150	38.5
	Monthly	90	23.1
	Rarely	50	12.8

The demographic analysis reveals several key insights about the participants. The largest age group among participants is 25-34 years old, comprising 38.5% of the total, followed by the 18-24 age group at 30.8%. In terms of gender distribution, the responses are relatively balanced, with 51.3% identifying as male and 48.7% as female. Regarding the frequency of use, most participants utilize SF Express on a weekly basis, accounting for 38.5%, while 25.6% are daily users. This descriptive statistical analysis provides a comprehensive overview of the participants' demographic characteristics, which are essential for understanding their perceptions and loyalty towards SF Express.

### 4.1.2 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is a statistical method used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between two or more variables. In this study, correlation analysis was conducted to explore the relationships between SF Express's corporate image, SF Express's service quality, SF Express's service prices, and customer loyalty to SF Express.

**Table 4.2 Correlation Analysis of Variables**

	Customer loyalty	SF Express's corporate image	SF Express's service quality	SF Express's service prices
Customer loyalty	1			
SF Express's corporate image	0.721**	1		
SF Express's service quality	0.706**	0.703**	1	
SF Express's service prices	0.717**	0.717**	0.704**	1

Note. \*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*  $p < 0.01$

The analysis reveals several key findings. First, a positive correlation is observed between SF Express's corporate image and customer loyalty, suggesting that as SF Express's corporate image improves, customer loyalty tends to increase as well. This finding supports the idea that delivering high-quality services is essential for retaining customers.

Additionally, the correlation analysis indicates a significant relationship between service quality and customer loyalty. This suggests that innovative delivery methods, which may enhance customer experience, can lead to increased loyalty among customers.

Furthermore, the results show a strong positive correlation between SF Express's service prices and customer loyalty, indicating that effective service prices play a crucial role in fostering loyalty. Customers who receive prompt and helpful assistance are more likely to remain loyal to the brand.



## 4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study relate closely to existing research on customer loyalty in the logistics and e-commerce sectors. The demographic analysis in Table 4.1 highlights key characteristics of the participants, revealing that the largest age group is 25-34 years, comprising 38.5% of the sample. This indicates a strong engagement among younger adults with SF Express, suggesting that marketing strategies should be tailored to resonate with this demographic. A balanced gender distribution, with 51.3% male and 48.7% female respondents, reflects the brand's broad appeal. This demographic diversity underscores the need for SF Express to address a variety of preferences and expectations in its service offerings. The frequency of usage further emphasizes the importance of SF Express in customers' lives, as 38.5% of participants reported using the service weekly, and 25.6% use it daily. Such high engagement levels suggest that SF Express has effectively established itself as a reliable option for delivery services, integrating seamlessly into customers' routines.

The correlation analysis presented in Table 4.2 offers valuable insights into the interplay between SF Express's corporate image, service quality, service prices, and customer loyalty. A strong positive correlation (0.721\*\*) between corporate image and customer loyalty suggests that an enhanced corporate identity contributes significantly to customer commitment. This finding highlights the necessity for SF Express to actively manage and promote its public image to cultivate loyalty among its users. Furthermore, the substantial correlation between service quality and customer loyalty (0.706\*\*) points to the critical role of maintaining high service standards in fostering customer retention. This relationship implies that innovations in delivery methods and a consistent quality of service are essential for enriching customer experiences and strengthening loyalty. Additionally, the analysis indicates a strong positive correlation (0.717\*\*) between service prices and customer loyalty. This suggests that competitive pricing strategies, when aligned with quality service, can substantially boost customer loyalty. Customers who believe they are receiving good value for their money are more likely to remain loyal to SF Express.

Previous studies have identified various factors that influence customer loyalty, such as SF Express's corporate image, brand reputation, and customer engagement. By comparing these established factors with the results obtained from SF Express customers, this research validates or challenges earlier conclusions. Additionally, it provides context for the evolving nature of customer expectations in a rapidly changing e-commerce environment, thereby contributing to the broader academic discourse on customer behavior in logistics.

## **Chapter 5 Conclusion and Recommendation**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

This study aimed to explore the factors that influence customer loyalty to SF Express in Xinxiang, Henan Province, China, focusing on SF Express's corporate image, service quality, and service prices. This study focused on examining how SF Express's corporate image, service quality, and service prices influence customer loyalty. The literature review indicates that a strong corporate image can significantly enhance customers' brand affiliation, leading to increased loyalty. Additionally, high-quality services that effectively address customer needs play a crucial role in fostering loyalty, as satisfied customers are more likely to remain committed to the brand. Furthermore, implementing a reasonable pricing strategy is essential for sustaining customer loyalty, especially in a competitive market where price sensitivity is prevalent.

Therefore, SF Express's performance in these three areas: 1) corporate image, 2) service quality, and 3) service prices, has a profound positive impact on customer loyalty. When customers perceive the brand as trustworthy, experience exceptional service, and find pricing to be fair and transparent, their loyalty strengthens. This positive relationship not only encourages repeat business but also fosters word-of-mouth referrals, which are invaluable in the delivery industry. Thus, the findings of this study offer meaningful insights for SF Express, suggesting actionable strategies to enhance customer loyalty and secure a competitive edge in the market. These findings provide valuable guidance for the company to develop effective strategies that meet customer needs and expectations in a competitive market.

### **5.2 Recommendation**

To improve customer loyalty, SF Express should prioritize enhance service quality and reduce SF Express's service prices. This paper shows that positive service quality significantly impacts customer loyalty, while effective SF Express's service prices also play a crucial role in shaping customers' perceptions. Therefore, implementing strategies that focus on both areas is essential.

First, SF Express should improve its online presence by encouraging satisfied customers to leave positive reviews. When customers share their experiences, especially on social media and review platforms, it creates a sense of trust among potential customers. By actively managing its online reputation and responding to both positive

and negative feedback, SF Express demonstrates that it values customer opinions. This approach not only enhances service quality but also encourages existing customers to remain loyal. Satisfied customers who see their feedback acknowledged are more likely to continue using the service.

Additionally, SF Express should invest in training its staff to provide excellent service prices. This training should include skills such as effective communication, problem-solving, and empathy. When employees understand how to address customer needs promptly and politely, it leads to a better overall experience. Customers who feel valued are more likely to become loyal. Furthermore, training should include information about the company's logistics processes, so staff can provide accurate information to customers. This knowledge ensures that customers receive reliable updates, which enhances their trust in the service.

Moreover, SF Express should create a customer feedback loop by regularly surveying its customers to understand their needs and preferences. When customers feel that their opinions matter, it builds a stronger connection with the brand. The company can use this feedback to make improvements in service delivery and customer interaction. For instance, if customers express concerns about delivery times, SF Express can adjust its logistics strategies to address these issues. By being responsive to customer feedback, the company not only improves its service but also fosters loyalty.

Finally, SF Express should leverage loyalty programs to reward returning customers. By offering discounts or benefits to loyal customers, the company can encourage repeat business. Such programs create a sense of belonging and appreciation among customers, making them more likely to remain loyal. When customers feel rewarded for their loyalty, they are more inclined to share their positive experiences publicly, further enhancing service quality.

In conclusion, by focusing on enhancing service quality and service prices, SF Express can significantly improve customer loyalty. Positive service quality builds trust and attracts new customers, while effective SF Express's service prices ensure that existing customers remain satisfied. Through initiatives such as encouraging customer feedback, investing in staff training, utilizing technology, and implementing loyalty programs, SF Express can create a strong foundation for lasting customer relationships. Ultimately, these efforts will lead to greater customer loyalty, which is essential for the company's success in the competitive express delivery market.

### **5.3 Further Study**

Further study on customer loyalty in the express delivery industry should focus on several important areas. First, researchers can explore the impact of specific factors, such as delivery speed and reliability, on customer loyalty. Understanding how these factors influence customer perceptions can help companies like SF Express tailor their services to meet customer needs more effectively. For example, if studies show that delivery speed significantly affects loyalty, SF Express can prioritize faster delivery options to enhance customer loyalty. And further research could include comparisons between different express delivery companies. By studying how competitors manage SF Express's service prices and service quality, researchers can identify best practices that can be implemented in the industry. These comparisons can reveal which strategies are most effective in building customer loyalty and may help SF Express improve its own approaches.

Another important area for future research is the level aspect of customer loyalty, it would be beneficial to conduct longitudinal studies that track customer loyalty over time. By following a group of customers and their interactions with SF Express, researchers can gain insights into how loyalty develops and changes based on experiences. This type of study can provide a clearer picture of the long-term effects of SF Express's corporate image and service quality on customer loyalty.

These areas of exploration can provide a deeper understanding of customer loyalty, enabling companies like SF Express to develop more effective strategies that meet the evolving needs of their customers.

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# Appendix

## Survey Questionnaire to Assess Factors Affecting Customer Loyalty in SF Express

Dear,

Thank you for participating in this survey. The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information about your experiences with SF Express. Your feedback is valuable and will help improve SF Express's corporate image. Please answer the following questions honestly.

### Section 1: Demographics

1. Age:

Under 18

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55 and above

2. Gender:

Male

Female

Other

3. Frequency of Use:

Daily

Weekly

Monthly

Rarely

### Section 2: SF Express's corporate image

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding SF Express services:

4. I believe SF Express is a trustworthy delivery company.

Strongly Disagree  
Disagree  
Neutral  
Agree  
Strongly Agree

5.The brand image of SF Express is leading in the industry.

Strongly Disagree  
Disagree  
Neutral  
Agree  
Strongly Agree

6.I am satisfied with SF Express's sense of corporate social responsibility.

Strongly Disagree  
Disagree  
Neutral  
Agree  
Strongly Agree

### **Section 3: service quality**

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

7.The packaging quality of SF Express is excellent, ensuring the safety of items.

Strongly Disagree  
Disagree  
Neutral  
Agree  
Strongly Agree

8.The customer service attitude of SF Express is friendly and professional.

Strongly Disagree  
Disagree  
Neutral  
Agree

Strongly Agree

9.I am very satisfied when using SF Express's delivery services.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

#### **Section 4: SF Express's service prices**

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

10.The prices of SF Express's delivery services are reasonable.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

11.I believe SF Express offers high value for money.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

12.I am willing to pay a higher price for the excellent services of SF Express.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

#### **Section 5: Customer Loyalty**

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

13.I will continue to choose SF Express as my delivery service provider.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

14.I would recommend SF Express to others.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

15.My overall loyalty to SF Express is high.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

Thank you for your time and input. Your responses will help improve the services provided by SF Express.