The Effects Of E-Service Quality Dimensions On Online Customer Satisfaction Case Study in Iran

1MirzaHasanHosseini, 2Leila Rahmani-nejad, 3Seyed-HasanHosseini

1Associate professor, Payamnoor University, Faculty of management, Economy & accounting, Tehran, Iran.
2Faculty of accounting and management, School of financial management, University of Sistan and Baluchestan, Zahedan, Iran.

Abstract: Online customer retention has attracted considerable attention in recent years, partly because it serves as a means of gaining competitive advantage. When a customer is satisfied with a particular internet store, he or she is more likely to shop there again. Based on a literature review, followed by an empirical study, this paper outlines the results of a study conducted to identify the critical success factors in online consumers’ satisfaction. The literature review helped conceptualize the variables for the study. The primary objective of the present study is intended to ascertain the factors that affect Online Customer Satisfaction in Iran. In it, information quality, aesthetics, site design, security quality, navigation, Return ability, reliability, personalization, customer support, ease of use have been identified and taken as the antecedents of user satisfaction. A survey was conducted with 160 Iran’s university undergraduates who had online purchase experience. And the data was collected using the questionnaire and also the data has been analyzed using SPSS software. The results of the research show the positive effect of the abovementioned variables on online consumers’ satisfaction.

Key words: e-service quality, critical success factors, website, online customer satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Satisfaction is believed to influence attitude change and purchase intention (Oliver, 1983). A satisfactory purchase experience would appear to be one requirement for the type of continued interest in a product that might lead to repeat purchasing (DeLone and McLean, 2003). Many scholars found that satisfaction is one of critical factors influencing the continued purchase intentions (Devaraj and Kohli, 2002). In e-commerce context, DeLone and McLean identified “User Satisfaction” as an important means of measuring our customers’ opinions of an e-commerce. Corporate websites provide an important interface through which customers and firms interact with each other. This interface has several characteristics that are uncommon to the traditional forms of buyer/seller interaction (e.g., face-to-face or telephone). With little or no human intervention, the capabilities embedded in the website process technology enable a consumer to locate a product or service, assess its utility, and purchase it practically whenever and wherever it is convenient. Indeed, the Internet technology has dramatically impacted the service creation process. Yet, surveys of online customers consistently indicate that a big percentage is not satisfied with the interaction (ICSA 2001, Bednarz 2003). As pointed out by Meuter et al (2000), although extensive academic research has examined the dynamics of interpersonal interactions between service providers and customers, much less research has investigated customer service encounters through technological interfaces. There has been research on website design to improve customer satisfaction. Most studies, however, focus on website navigation, information content, download speed, information presentation (McKinney et al. 2002, Palmer 2002).

Theoretical Background:

Technology advancement is revolutionizing the way business is conducted and reshaping how companies interact with their customers. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the domain of electronic commerce (EC). Companies have realized electronic commerce not only is a way of reducing costs through automation and increased efficiency, but, more importantly, also is a means to expand revenues through enhanced customer service. Online customer retention has attracted considerable attention in recent years, partly because it serves as a means of gaining competitive advantage (Tsai and Huang, 2007). When a customer is satisfied with a particular internet store, he or she is more likely to shop there again (Khalifa and Liu, 2007). Research on online buyer behavior, however, has begun to gain considerable interest among researchers (Donthu and Garcia, 1999). For a seller, the understanding of online purchase behavior is crucial to comprehending and accepting the differences between a traditional store format and an online. Format in which the Web site serves as a store. These differences pertain to the seller and the buyer. From the seller’s perspective, they would include,
From the buyer’s perspective, they would include the underlying motives and desires to shop online and the purchase decision process. Satisfaction is believed to influence attitude change and purchase intention (Oliver, 1980). From the perspective of the buyer, online purchase behavior is the degree to which the buyer accesses, browses, shops, transacts purchases, and repeats the behavior.

Several factors have contributed to the increased use by consumers of electronic means to shop online. These include: 1. Usefulness for the customer (Monsuwé et al., 2004). 2. Consumer demographic and personality traits (Eastlick and Lotz, 1999; Burke, 2002; Dabholkar and Bagozzi, 2002; Swinyard and Smith 2003; Wu, 2003). 3. Easy and wide access to products, services and information, leading to overall convenience (Bhatnagar et al., 2000; McQuitty and Peterrson, 2000; Rohm and Swaminathan, 2004). 4. Ease of use, however, is dictated by what the system can do and what it allows its customers to do, i.e., the capabilities embedded in the e-service technology. Usability studies on online stores have looked at website architecture, design, and various navigation processes to predict how easy it is for users to achieve what they want to do (Lohse and Spiller 1998, Palmer 2002). A recent study by Chen et al. 2004 indicates that poorly designed website processes have an adverse influence on the website’s perceived ease of use. Ennjoyment on the part of the customer (Hirschman, 1983; Childers et al., 2001; Menon and Kahn, 2002). Situational factors (Wollfinberger and Gilly, 2001). Previous online shopping experiences (Weber and Roehl, 1999; Shim et al., 2001).

The increase in online shopping has occurred despite factors that often affect the consumer’s willingness to buy online. These factors include: Computer illiteracy, technological complexity, and lack of understanding of the buying/transaction process via the Internet (Seiders et al., 2000).

1) Lack of physical presence and interactivity (Wee and Ramachandra, 2000; Ruyter et al., 2001; La and Kandampully, 2002).

2) Concerns about risk, security, and privacy (Rohm and Milne 1998; Kargaonkar and Wolin, 1999; Bhatnagar et al., 2000; Liebermann and Stashevsky, 2002; Lim, 2003; Merriman et al., 2002).

3) Factors like trust and confidence, privacy, and security are important elements affecting consumer acceptance of online services because of concerns relating either to money transaction or personal information (Hoffman et al., 1999; Yoon, 2002; Balasubramanian et al. 2003, Koufaris and Hampton-Sosa, 2004, Flavian and Guinaliu, 2006).

Heim and Sinha suggest that website navigation, product information and representation, order processing and fulfillment are major e-service process dimensions. In summary, according to the previous literature, information quality, aesthetics, site design, security, navigation, returnability (delivery, reliability, personalization, customer support, ease of use) are important independent variables and the variable of online customer’s satisfaction has been thought of as the dependent variable. These three factors have been applied in many contexts. Therefore, this study proposes:

H1: Information quality has a positive influence on online user satisfaction.
H2: Aesthetics has a positive influence on online user satisfaction.
H3: Site design has a positive influence on online user satisfaction.
H4: Security has a positive influence on online user satisfaction.
H5: Navigation has a positive influence on online user satisfaction.
H6: Returnability (delivery) has a positive influence on online user satisfaction.
H7: Reliability has a positive influence on online user satisfaction.
H8: Personalization has a positive influence on online user satisfaction.
H9: Customer support has a positive influence on online user satisfaction.
H10: Ease of use support has a positive influence on online user satisfaction.

The Conceptual Model Of The Research:

This model has been taken from the theoretical principles of the research in which the variables of security, information, aesthetics, ease of use, site design, personalization, customer support, navigation, return ability, reliability have been considered as independent variables and the variable of online customersatisfaction has been thought of as the dependent variable.
Fig. 1: Conceptual model of research

Table 1: Website assessment items.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality dimension</th>
<th>ITEM STATEMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Information security is a concern at this site. Security of my personal details is very important to me. I trust this site to respect personal information. I trust this site to protect visitor’s privacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>The information on this site is useless The presentation of information is clear The site content meets my information needs This site’s content is out-of-date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetics</td>
<td>This site is visually appealing. This site looks very amateurish. Pages on the site look quit tacky. This site makes effective use of color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of use</td>
<td>I find this site very difficult to use. It is hard to find information. It is easy to move around on this website. It is easy to do what you want to do on this site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site design</td>
<td>The site design is logical and clear. This site itself is poorly organized. The site does not follow web design conventions. The links between pages are well planned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalization</td>
<td>Ability to customize your use of the site Designed to make future transactions easier Site adaptation to your future needs Degree of personalization that is available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer support</td>
<td>Access to feedback from other consumers. Help available to find what you want. This site provides me with tailored information. I can use this site to get tailored information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navigation</td>
<td>This site is difficult to navigate around The steps to complete a task are clearly defined It is hard to get where you want to go on this site Pages on this site are clearly identifiable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return ability (delivery)</td>
<td>Choice of ways to make returns Acceptance of returns without question Reasonableness of their returns policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reliability
This site performs the service right the first time
Services are provided when they are promised
This site doesn’t always live up to it promise
You never know what is happening on this site

Customer satisfaction
Item this site was satisfying to me
This site was as good as I expected
I feel comfortable surfing this site
This site was worth the time I spent on it

Research Methodology:
Based on previous research, the present study used survey methodology with questionnaire items measured on Likert scales. Conceptual model of Research has been taken from theoretical principles of the research in which the variables of security, information, aesthetics, ease of use, site design, personalization, customer support, navigation, return ability, reliability have been considered as independent variables and the variable of online satisfaction customer has been thought of as the dependent variable. This study is practical based on the purpose of the study. A survey was conducted with 160 Iran’s university undergraduates who had online purchase experience. And the data was collected using the questionnaire and also the data has been analyzed using SPSS software. Validity of the study has been taken based on the forms and criteria of the literature and experts. Reliability of the questionnaire has been calculated through cronbach alpha. The reliability (%87) shows that questionnaire has reliability.

Data Analysis and Results:
In this research, the hypotheses based on the literature review were formulated and finally; by conducting a hypothetical statistical test the hypotheses were confirmed.

Table 2: Statistical analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality dimension</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>sig</th>
<th>Rank of mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>34.85</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>28.01</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetics</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>25.45</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of use</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>31.25</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site design</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>30.05</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalization</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>20.22</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer support</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>17.42</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navigation</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>26.12</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return ability</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>22.55</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>19.31</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the table above, the mean and T of security, information, aesthetics, ease of use, site design, personalization, customer support, navigation, return ability, reliability are:
(4/78, 4/00, 3/67, 4/48, 4/24, 3/33, 3/07, 3/84, 3/47, 3/21) and (34/85, 28/01, 25/45, 31/25, 30/05, 20/22, 17/42, 22/55, 19/31) respectively. Since the calculated value of T with the freedom degree of 159 is significant at the level 0.01 percent (P<0.01) and the mean of security, information, aesthetics, ease of use, site design, personalization, customer support, navigation, return ability, reliability are larger than the T.value, so, The results of the research show the positive effect of the abovementioned variables on online satisfaction customer.

Now we can come to the conclusion based on the conducted research: Security with the website has the most amount of positive effect on online customer satisfaction. The variable of ease of use is of most positive effect after security and following this variable, Site design, Information, aesthetics, return ability, reliability are larger than the T.value; so, The results of the research show that security has a significant role in the amount of customers' satisfaction with the website. Actually, due to lack of personal contact, lack of the possibility to assess products, lack of security in exchanges as well as not considering the private limits, internet is thought of as a perilous environment and convectional risk is known as an important factor in the manner of shopping from the internet. So, website designers are recommended to act in favor of making international contracts for insuring and providing the security of exchanges, insuring compensating the losses in case the customers' account is hacked or there are internet frauds, teaching customers how to protect or change their confidential traits to decrease the chance of abuses in the internet environment. Among other findings of the research we can refer to the high...
amount of customers' satisfaction with the facilities that have an effect on the purpose of use which might have been realized directly or indirectly through its effect on usefulness. In fact, the technology of the information the use of which is easy is thought to be less threatening for people. Overall, realizing the facility has a vital and significant role in predicting the users' way of using in facing technology. A simple and unambiguous purchase transaction process was identified as a major driver, which will necessarily impact the facilitators and the dependents. Customers are often apprehensive and wary of shopping online because of computer illiteracy, technological complexity, or a lack of understanding of the buying/transaction process via the Internet.

A customer should be able to search the Web and transact with ease. Ease of navigation implies simplicity in use during the online shopping process, which can be facilitated by better Internet connectivity and improved website design and appearance. Speed, loading, navigation, and all such aspects of computer technology are important and affect ease of use. According to the obtained results, if the design of websites is developed, they can support and improve commercial names more effectively. Electronic marketers should exchange ideas with the consumers who have reacted positively toward websites so that they can reform the Internet defects and troubles and submit proper solutions.

REFERENCES


