

ANTECEDENCES AND CONSEQUENCES OF E-SERVICE QUALITY ACROSS INDUSTRY SECTORS

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Abstract: A few studies are available on the different sectors basis on the determinants of success in online retailing. This study tries to identify which e-Service dimensions serve as determinants of e-Service quality (Zeithaml et al., 2002). Therefore we focused on analyzing impacts on overall e-Service performance of various e-Service quality dimensions in internet retailing. We analyzed the impact of e-Service quality dimensions of online retailers along several sectors. We found that while many dimensions of online service performance were similar in their impact across all sectors, several dimensions in particular exhibited sector-by-sector performance differences.

1 INTRODUCTION

What companies on the Internet require is to deliver high value to the customer, build customer loyalty, encourage repeat purchases and maintain long term relationships with the customers (Gurau 2003; Parasuraman and Zinkham 2002), since recent research indicates that 'positively predisposed on-line customers' demand much more (Van Riel et al. 2003). To do so, as Zeithaml et al., (2002, p362) argue, companies need to shift the focus of e-business from e-commerce to e-Service. Such shift implies understanding what customers' value in an on-line encounter, how they perceive the experience and how they evaluate its quality (Lauren et al, 2006).

Understanding, measuring and managing

e-Service quality on the web has thus become an issue for ensuring customer satisfaction, loyalty and firms' profitability and service, both for industry and the public sector (Buckley 2003). Thus, we examine each of several industry sectors separately to distinguish the web site dimensions that are associated with creating overall satisfaction in the online consumer. Here we concisely review literatures that have empirically examined antecedents and consequences dimensions of e-Service quality in electronic services. Table 1 is a list of the variables that have been examined in these literatures, both in multi-industry sector e-retailing literatures, and in single industry studies related to general e-Service, online banking/ financial services, travel services, book retailing, and health care services.

2 ANTECEDENCES

A few previous literatures have studied the issue of online e-Service quality from a multi-industry perspective, or have collected data across several industry sectors. According to review of 19 literatures, we discovered overall web site quality is the most frequent antecedent across general e-Service/ e-retail industry (Kim et al., 2002; Palmer, 2002), online banking/ financial services industry (Chen and Hitt, 2002; Montoya-Weiss et al., 2003; Jayawardhena, 2004), travel industry (Harris and Goode, 2004), books industry (Gefen, 2002) and health industry (Van Riel et al., 2001). The second frequent antecedent is trustworthiness or assurance across four industries of online banking services industry (Balasubramanian et al., 2003; Jayawardhena, 2004), travel industry (Harris and Goode, 2004), books industry (Gefen, 2002; Lee, G. G. & Lin H. F., 2005; Lin, H. F., 2007) and health industry (Viitanen et al., 2003).

We examined general e-Service industry, online banking services industry, travel industry and books industry, and found that security of environmental risk is a antecedence variable of general e-Service/ e-retail industry (Kim et al., 2002; Zhang, X. & Prybutok, V. R., 2005), online banking industry (Balasubramanian et al., 2003; Montoya-Weiss et al., 2003), books industry (Gefen, 2002) and in health industry (Viitanen et al., 2003). In addition to that, we also found content or information is the predictor of e-Service quality across industries of e-retail industry (Kim et al., 2002; Palmer, 2002; Janda, S., Trocchia, P. J. and Gwinner, K. P., 2002; Liao, C., Palvia, P. and Lin H. N., 2006), online banking industry (Montoya-Weiss et al., 2003) and books industry (Lin, H. F., 2007). Furthermore, personalization, customization or interactivity were predictor across e-retail industry (Palmer, 2002), online banking industry (Chen and Hitt, 2002; Jayawardhena, 2004), travel industry (Van Riel et al., 2003) and books industry (Lin, H. F., 2007). But technical quality or technical adequacy viewed as antecedent only in e-retail industry (Choi et al., 2004; Kim et al., 2002; Liao, C., Palvia, P. and Lin H. N., 2006) and health industry (Viitanen et al., 2003).

We found accessibility or e-Service convenience used as independent variable in studies of e-retail industry (Zhang, X. & Prybutok, V. R., 2005), online banking industry (Jayawardhena, 2004) and travel industry (Van Riel et al., 2003). Fulfillment or reliability is the antecedent across travel industry (Van Riel et al., 2003) and books industry (Gefen,

2002; Lee, G. G. & Lin H. F., 2005), functional quality is the antecedent across e-retail industry (Choi et al., 2004; Kim et al., 2002) and health industry (Van Riel et al., 2001), and security or privacy is the antecedent across e-retail industry (Kim et al., 2002; Janda, S., Trocchia, P. J. and Gwinner, K. P., 2002) and books industry (Lin, H. F., 2007).

For banking and travel industry, aesthetic appeal is the driver of e-Service quality (Montoya-Weiss et al., 2003; Van Riel et al., 2003), and comparative prices is also the driver across e-retail industry (Choi et al., 2004) and banking industry (Balasubramanian et al., 2003). Download speed became the antecedences across e-retail industry (Palmer, 2002) and travel industry (Van Riel et al., 2003). Usefulness is significant driver in books industry (Koufaris, 2002), health industry (Viitanen et al., 2003). And on time delivery became the significant driver in books industry (Gefen, 2002) and health industry (Viitanen et al., 2003). Online banking industry and travel industry studies used navigation as antecedent (Montoya-Weiss et al., 2003; Van Riel et al., 2003). Product quality viewed as predictor in e-retail industry (Choi et al., 2004) and travel industry (Clemons et al., 2002), responsiveness used as predictor in books industry (Lee, G. G. & Lin H. F., 2005; Lin, H. F., 2007). However, web site design is significant association with dependent variables only in books industry (Lee, G. G. & Lin H. F., 2005; Lin, H. F., 2007).

3 CONSEQUENCES

We found satisfaction is the most major consequent variables in the previous studies across general e-Service/ e-retail industry (Kim et al., 2002; Palmer, 2002; Janda, S., Trocchia, P. J. and Gwinner, K. P., 2002; Zhang, X. & Prybutok, V. R., 2005), online banking/ financial services industry (Balasubramanian et al., 2003; Montoya-Weiss et al., 2003); travel industry (Van Riel et al., 2003; Harris and Goode, 2004), books industry (Lee, G. G. & Lin H. F., 2005; Lin, H. F., 2007) and health industry (Van Riel et al., 2001; Viitanen et al., 2003). And the second major consequences is customer loyalty across four industries including general e-Service/ e-retail industry (Kim et al., 2002; Palmer, 2002), travel industry (Van Riel et al., 2003; Harris and Goode, 2004), books industry (Gefen, 2002; Koufaris, 2002) and health industry (Van Riel et al., 2001; Viitanen et al., 2003). Next consequent variable is quality or e-Service quality studied in

three industries including online banking/ financial services industry (Jayawardhena, 2004), travel industry (Van Riel et al., 2003) and books industry (Lee, G. G. & Lin H. F., 2005). Moreover, value variable is studied across different industries general e-Service/ e-retail industry (Choi et al., 2004), travel industry (Harris and Goode, 2004) and health industry (Van Riel et al., 2001).

In addition, we examined online banking and books industry, and found customer switching is the antecedent separately studied in Chen and Hitt (2002) and Gefen (2002). And Clemons et al. (2002) surveyed travel industry, price dispersion as antecedent. Otherwise, Janda, S., Trocchia, P. J. and Gwinner, K. P., (2002) examined general e-Service/ e-retail industry and used likelihood of future purchase, likelihood of complaining and word-of-mouth as dependent variables, but Liao, C., Palvia, P. and Lin H. N. (2006) used trust as dependent variables at the same industry. We may make up the situation of outcome variables were identified, the summary shows in Table IV.

4 METHOD

The a-priori theory underlying our analysis of the relationship between individual e-Service quality dimensions and overall e-Service performance is that customers in each e-retailing sector will possess certain preferences about aspects of an online shopping system, and e-Service designers will strive to understand those sector-specific factors and will design their online service system to attempt to satisfy customers in their sector. Across all online retailing sectors, a large body of e-Service quality dimensions will exist, subsets of which will be relevant for managing individual sectors.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Firms today need to understand better how different industry sectors and contexts lead to different relationships between tactical activities such as e-Service quality management and their overall performance outcomes (Bolton et al., 2004). With the phenomenal growth of e-Services, research must aim to better understand the dimensions, antecedences, and consequences of quality and customer satisfaction in the online domain across various industry sectors (Lauren et al, 2006). Therefore we focused on analyzing impacts on

overall e-Service performance of various e-Service quality dimensions in internet retailing. We analyzed the impact of e-Service quality dimensions of online retailers along several sectors. We found that while many dimensions of online service performance were similar in their impact across all sectors, several dimensions in particular exhibited sector-by-sector performance differences.

This study makes several contributions to the literature on e-Service performance specifically due to our sector-by-sector analysis. In prior studies, researchers have taken a scattered approach to identifying e-Service quality dimensions for their studies. They have also focused on the issue from a single industry perspective. This research approach has led the literature to a state of many quality dimensions having been identified, but little evidence that can be triangulated across sectors or across studies. In closing, we hope our paper will prove insightful to academics and managers interested in managing e-Service operations. We believe there is much interesting research left to be done on such topics, and hope our paper serves to motivate others to explore the emerging issues in this interesting industry arena.

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