



# A consumer typology based on e-service quality and e-satisfaction



Grégory Bressolles <sup>a,\*</sup>, François Durrieu <sup>a,1</sup>, Sylvain Senecal <sup>b,2</sup>

<sup>a</sup> KEDGE Business School—Bordeaux, 680 Cours de la Libération, 33405 Talence Cedex, France

<sup>b</sup> HEC Montréal, 3000 Chemin de la Côte-Sainte-Catherine, Montréal, QC, Canada H3T 2A7

## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received 15 November 2013

Received in revised form

18 July 2014

Accepted 19 July 2014

Available online 26 August 2014

### Keywords:

e-Service quality

e-Satisfaction

e-Commerce

Predictive typology

Regression mixture model

## ABSTRACT

The increasingly systematic use of the Internet in consumers' decision-making processes, coupled with the development of e-commerce, has led researchers and practitioners to examine issues concerning service quality and satisfaction in an online context. This paper proposes a post-hoc predictive typology of e-satisfaction based on four dimensions of e-service quality. A sample of 1144 French consumers recruited on websites from three different industries (online travel, cultural goods (books, CDs, DVDs, etc.), and electronics goods) was used to generate the proposed typology. Using a mixture modeling regression, five groups of consumers who differed in terms of e-satisfaction and e-service quality were identified: the 'involved', the 'browsers', the 'fun seekers', the 'careful' and the 'surfers'. All the four e-service quality dimensions investigated were found to influence e-satisfaction. Theoretical and managerial implications are discussed.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction

The Internet has become increasingly accessible and is now used by a wider spectrum of consumers. However, as in traditional settings, online consumers differ in their preferences (Burke, 1997). To address this heterogeneity, managers rely on market segmentation. Prior research has proposed online consumer typologies (Ganesh et al., 2010; for a review) to help managers segment the online consumer market into homogeneous segments. These typologies can also help managers understand the consumer market and eventually target segments with specific offers.

Prior online consumer typologies have focused on general segmentation bases such as web usage, Internet lifestyle and shopping motivations (Breneman et al., 2005; Ganesh et al., 2010; Gehrt et al., 2012; Swinyard and Smith, 2003). Although useful for better understanding the overall online consumer market, these segmentation bases may not be very relevant in segmenting a retail website customer base. Website-specific segmentation bases are more pertinent for this endeavor. For instance, a segmentation based on specific website quality (e.g., website aesthetics) would be more useful for a website manager

than a segmentation based on consumers' general online shopping motivations (e.g., Internet convenience).

This article is the first, to our knowledge, to propose a post-hoc predictive online consumer typology based on website-specific segmentation bases. Using a regression mixture model (Wedel and DeSarbo, 2002), e-service quality dimensions are used as a predictor of e-satisfaction. Although the relationship between e-satisfaction and e-service characteristics has been supported in past research (e.g., Massad et al., 2006), overall satisfaction can be different from one user to another depending on the importance given to the different characteristics of e-service quality. Overall e-satisfaction is a relevant basis for segmentation because it is an important determinant of ongoing performance (Gummerus et al., 2004; Harris and Goode, 2004). E-service quality dimensions are also relevant bases for segmentation because they are more detailed and actionable for managers.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Consumer typologies

Consumer classifications are implicitly or explicitly used by managers to cope with the heterogeneity of buyers (Myers and Nicosia, 1968). By segmenting their market, managers can implement marketing programs that are better attuned to customer needs.

Market segmentation can be defined as "a state of demand heterogeneity such that the total market demand can be disaggregated into segments with distinct demand functions" (Dickson

\* Corresponding author. Tel.: +335 56 84 22 28.

E-mail addresses: [gregory.bressolles@kedgebs.com](mailto:gregory.bressolles@kedgebs.com) (G. Bressolles), [francois.durrieu@kedgebs.com](mailto:francois.durrieu@kedgebs.com) (F. Durrieu), [sylvain.senecal@hec.ca](mailto:sylvain.senecal@hec.ca) (S. Senecal).

<sup>1</sup> Tel.: +335 56 84 22 54.

<sup>2</sup> Tel.: +1 514 340 6980.

and Ginter, 1987, p. 5). Marketing segmentation research focuses on segmentation bases and methods. A segmentation basis refers to a “set of variables or characteristics used to assign customers to homogeneous groups” (Wedel and Kamakura, 2000). Segmentation bases can be observable (e.g., store patronage) or unobservable (e.g., satisfaction) and general (e.g., demographics) or product-specific (e.g., product preferences). Wedel and Kamakura (2000) suggest that segmentation methods can be categorized as *a priori* (type and number of segments determined in advance) or *post-hoc* (type and number of segments determined on the basis of data analyses) and as predictive (interdependence among bases) or descriptive (no interdependence among bases).

## 2.2. Online consumer typologies

Initially, research focused on differences between online and offline consumers. These studies used segmentation bases such as demographics, shopping motivations, innovativeness, risk aversion, and privacy concerns to illustrate differences between online and offline shoppers and buyers (e.g., Mathwick et al., 2001; Sheehan, 2002). There have also been studies focusing on differences between online consumers that led to proposing online consumer typologies (e.g., Christodoulides et al., 2013; Barnes et al., 2007; Bhatnagar and Ghose, 2004; Ganesh et al., 2010; Gehrt et al., 2012; Moe, 2003). For instance, Gehrt et al. (2012) used the e-service quality dimensions identified by Wolfinbarger and Gilly (2003) to describe customer segments based on their online shopping orientations. Most consumer online typology research has used cluster analysis to segment the market (e.g., Gehrt et al., 2012; Hill et al., 2013). One noticeable exception is the typology proposed by Bhatnagar and Ghose (2004), which used latent class analysis. Furthermore, prior online consumer typologies have used general segmentation bases such as online shopping attitudes, motivations (Barnes et al., 2007; Ganesh et al., 2010; Kau et al., 2003; Hill et al., 2013), online shopping patterns (Kau et al., 2003; Rohm and Swaminathan, 2004), e-store attribute importance or performance (Bhatnagar and Ghose, 2004; Ganesh et al., 2010), psychographics (Barnes et al., 2007), and shopping orientations (Gehrt et al., 2012). Hence, the online consumer typologies proposed thus far have followed a post-hoc descriptive approach, and most of them have used general segmentation bases. Because general segmentation bases are independent of products, services, or circumstances and because product-specific segmentation bases are related to the customer and the product, and/or the circumstances, the latter should be more useful to website managers (e.g., website quality attributes). By using product-specific segmentation bases such as e-service quality dimensions (Bhatnagar and Ghose, 2004; Ganesh et al., 2010) and e-satisfaction to segment the online market, managers should be in a better position to target promising consumer segments for their websites.

## 2.3. Regression mixture model

Prior research based on regression mixture models has created classifications that allow for heterogeneity in terms of price, frequency of purchasing, and brand choice (Bucklin et al., 1998; Böckenholt, 1993; Heilman et al., 2000; Wedel et al., 1993) and define the profile of each market segment. In a service context, this method was used to measure traditional service quality with SERVQUAL (Wedel and DeSarbo, 1994); results show the heterogeneity of customers' service quality evaluations. Wedel and DeSarbo (1995) explain customer satisfaction, using a mixture regression model, with 5 determinants (expectations, performance, disconfirmation, attribution and inequity). DeSarbo et al. (2001) explain customer value using a mixture regression model in an

offline context. They used a mixture regression model to uncover unobserved heterogeneity and explain customer value using service quality dimensions. Concerning online shopping, mixture regressions models have been used to identify how consumers choose assortments of brands (Papatla and Bhatnagar, 2002), how visitors browse in relation to their past visits (Park and Fader, 2004), how visitors search for information (Johnson et al., 2004). Finally, Bhatnagar and Ghose (2004) successfully used a latent class analysis approach to segment online consumers.

## 2.4. e-Service quality

Recent developments have led researchers and practitioners to re-evaluate certain traditional concepts, such as service quality and satisfaction, in the context of information technology. Online consumers actively participate in service delivery, supplying their own effort and time, and consumers also contribute by assuming part of the responsibility for service delivery. This aspect of online purchasing can affect perceptions of service quality and satisfaction (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2000). Whereas traditional service quality is defined as a “consumer's judgment about an entity's overall excellence or superiority” (Parasuraman et al., 1988, p. 15), e-service quality represents “the extent to which a website facilitates efficient and effective shopping, purchasing and delivery” (Parasuraman et al., 2005, p. 217).

The relevant literature on e-service quality indicates that a website is not simply a utilitarian tool for finding information, making choices, and ordering a product or service. Studies in this area have progressively taken into account other dimensions linked to the pleasure associated with the site visit and the interaction between the user and the website.

Based on a review of the literature in marketing and information systems (Barnes and Vidgen, 2001; Bauer et al., 2006; Bressolles, 2006; Collier and Bienstock, 2006; Cristobal et al., 2007; Loiacono et al., 2007; Parasuraman et al., 2005; Wolfinbarger and Gilly, 2003; Yoo and Donthu, 2001), we identified five main dimensions of e-service quality based on a content analysis of the items and dimensions of the main published scales. These dimensions are also identified by Ladhari (2010) as common dimensions used in evaluating e-service quality, regardless of the service type:

- (1) *Quality and quantity of information*: These elements are frequently cited as significant reasons for online buying (e.g., Barnes and Vidgen, 2001) and have not been directly examined in evaluations of traditional service quality. The absence of contact with the service provider during online buying increases the need for clarity and precision of information. This dimension measures the Internet user's perceptions of the quality and quantity of commercial or technical information on the services or goods provided by businesses.
- (2) *Ease-of-use*: Online transactions can appear complex and thereby intimidate some consumers. The ease-of-use of the website is thus an important factor in e-service quality (Barnes and Vidgen, 2001; Yoo and Donthu, 2001). Ease-of-use generally refers to usability in the Internet context (Swaminathan et al., 1999). For a website, usability represents the ability of a customer to find information or enact a transaction with the least amount of effort (Collier and Bienstock, 2006).
- (3) *Aesthetics*: It refers to the richness of the representation of the website's environment, linked to its formal characteristics (Steuer, 1992) such as graphics, colors, images, animated sequences, etc. These elements contribute to the look, feel, and atmosphere of the website (Yoo and Donthu, 2001).
- (4) *Reliability and respect of commitments*: As in the traditional context, these are related to the ability of online sellers to keep their promises, to fulfill the terms of the exchange, and to

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1028951>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1028951>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)