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Are private shopping sites really satisfied customers?

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Abstract

Last decade, there is tremendous increase in online shopping sector in Turkey. Private shopping is the most popular type that users have to be sign up to the system and can buy goods at high discounts with in 2 to 6 days. With this limited time and lots of campaign traffic, private shopping sites have to understand and improve their customer's satisfaction level. The extant literature and extensive focus group research in Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Malhotra's (2000) study suggested that customers' assessment of a Web site's quality includes not only experiences during their interactions with the site but also post interaction service aspects. In this point of view this paper focuses on measuring electronic service quality and service recovery issues by means of E-S-QUAL and E-RecS-QUAL scales based on Parasuraman et al's (2005) framework. The current research aims to understand the e-service quality and e-recovery of private shopping sites from the consumer perspective, by identifying the main factors that are able to predict the e-satisfaction of consumers. 300 questionnaires are distributed to private shopping sites users.

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1. Introduction

Last decade, there is tremendous increase in online shopping sector in Turkey. As this percentage continues to rise, so does the need to understand why and how users choose e-commerce instead of traditional shopping. This also leads to the increase in research to get a better understanding of how to facilitate future of e-commerce. It can be said that one of the most important feature of e-commerce is e-service and e-service quality. Although there are many ways to define e-commerce, in this research, we are going to use the definition by Grandon and Pearson (2004): the process of buying and selling products or services using electronic data transmission via the Internet and the www.

According to the definition, e-commerce provides many benefits to both sellers and buyers, and due to these advantages of the online business model over the traditional, the expectations around e-commerce are increasing. There is, however, a problem that exists, in that although some firms have successfully achieved tangible improvements in e-service quality by integrating e-commerce

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into their activities (Brynjolfsson & Kahin, 2000), not all firms have been successful around e-service quality. It is necessary to determine the right conditions and facilitating or inhibiting factors during the transition from existing traditional system to online service (Teo, Wei, & Benbasat, 2003). Consequently, continuous research has been conducted to investigate why some firms have been successful more than others. First, some studies emphasize the influence of e-service quality factors such as reliability, confidentiality, customer service quality, responsiveness, online system quality, accuracy, security / privacy, and customer service competence. Teo and Ranganathan (2004) examined several environmental factors that facilitate e-commerce adoption by identifying the major differences between e-commerce firms and traditional offline firms. For instance, prominent examples of success in e-commerce often describe firms offering products that are standardized and/or deliverable electronically (Poon and Joseph, 2001). Finally, further research focuses on issues such as website features, ease of navigation, system availability, suggestions for relevant links, etc. They insist that user acceptance of e-commerce depends highly on customer satisfaction, which is affected by the nature of web-based applications and that of offline marketing activities (Ahn, Ryu, & Han, 2004).

As the e-commerce industry has already reached a certain level of maturity, recent research has shifted its focus from macro issues to micro issues. Particularly, as more products / services are traded via the online channel, it is worth investigating the product/service characteristics that facilitate e-commerce adoption. Most research has been confined to only tangible products. However, with the advancement of information technology (IT), plenty of services in the physical marketplace are now shifting to the online marketplace.

In this research, we introduce a theoretically constructed and empirically verified model for identifying the relevant factors that may affect e-service quality. This model, depending on the e-service quality features, can be used to predict to what extent e-service quality affects the level of customer loyalty. Though a great deal of offline functions can be technically replaced by online functions, there is still limitations as to the specific type of service offerings because customers are reluctant to use them through online channel, which explains why some offline trading has been the more preferred business medium (Cho & Park, 2002). Therefore, this paper focuses on the customer's satisfaction while using e-commerce when purchasing services, which is a necessity condition for success of online service providers. In our research model, our dependent variable has been identified as e-loyalty, our independent variables identified as e-service quality and e-recovery.

The next section presents the literature review, which is then followed by a section wherein the research model and hypotheses are discussed. This is then followed with a discussion, where a conclusion is reached. The final section offers implications for researchers and practitioners and provides future directions for research.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses

2.1. Electronic Service Quality

Both concepts of e-service and e-service quality have become increasing important issues in research. E-service is different from traditional service, which is based on interactive information flow between customers and service providers. E-service quality has been regarded as having the potential not only to deliver strategic benefits, but also to enhance operational efficiency and profitability. E-service is becoming even more critical for companies to retain and attract customers. What brings online customers back to company's websites is a sense of satisfaction that comes from a high level of service offered by companies. Oliveria et al. (2002) suggest that companies can achieve competitive capabilities by offering good e-services to customers. Service quality has a strong impact on customer satisfaction; improving e-service quality to satisfy and retain customers is becoming a challenging issue (Li & Suomi, 2009).

H₁: E-service quality has a positive effect on e-satisfaction

2.2. Electronic Service Recovery

Service recovery refers to those actions taken by an organization in response to a service failure (Grönroos, 1990) in order to change customers' dissatisfaction to satisfaction (Bell, 1994) and ultimately to retain those customers (Miller et al., 2000). Management should support service recovery in the organization, since poor or ineffective service recovery implies that the customer is let down for a second time. This could result in customers spreading negative word-of-mouth communication, defecting from the organization for a competitor (Lewis & McCann, 2004), or rating organizations lower than they would have immediately after experiencing the failure (Maxham, 2001). Service failures and the subsequent service recovery efforts of an organization can have a profound effect on customers' satisfaction with an organization as well as on the quality of the relationship with the organization, despite other efforts by the organization to build long-term relationships with its customers. Considering the problem statement, objectives and literature review, service recovery has an impact on customer loyalty.

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