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SERVICE QUALITY AND WEBSITE QUALITY IN ONLINE SHOPPING: AN ANALOGY

Prateek Kalia[1], Navdeep Kaur[2] and Tejinderpal Singh[3]

[1]Research Scholar, Department of Research Innovation & Consultancy
Punjab Technical University, Jalandhar.
[2]Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration, Guru Nanak Dev Engineering College,
Ludhiana, Punjab.
[3]Assistant Professor, University Business School,
Panjab University, Chandigarh.

Abstract:-Online shopping has undergone extraordinary growth in the past few years. Everyday companies are adopting newer communication andinformation technologies to maintain and enhance their performances. Organization can only survive in this competitive environment if they are able to provide best service quality to their customers, making service as key factor in the success of any organization. Organizations are using internet as a medium and a website as an interface between buyer and seller to conduct business transactions to tap greater opportunities in global market at extremely low operational costs.In such a scenario websites play pivotal role in positively influencing online purchase intentions, perception of product quality and reducing perceived risk; the quality of websites will play a vital role in attracting and retaining online shoppers. The quality of websites must be of high standards to attract and influence their shopping decisions. In this paper, with an intention to highlight analogy between online service qualityand website quality has be highlighted, various studies focused on Online Service Qualityand Website Quality with reference to online shopping are scrutinized and rigorous literature review has been done.

Keywords : Online Shopping, Online Service Quality, Website Quality

1. INTRODUCTION:-

Internet and World Wide Web (WWW) have become important tools in business, which has a major impact on business world. The amount of personal computers in the world will reach two billions - by 2015 as per the forecast published by the Forrester Research marketing company.The opportunity is immense and today retailers, many of whom once adopted a wait-and-see attitude, can no longer ignore the Internet. Merely having a retail website is not enough and retailers need to reconsider who their customers are and how they behave in this digital century.Electronic Service quality and website quality is not just a buzz word but it has become indispensible ingredient for an online retailer to grow and make profits.

2. Online Service Quality

In this competitive environment, the most central factor for sustainable competitive advantage is to provide the best possible service quality leading to improved customer satisfaction, customer retention, and profitability (Sureshchandar et al., 2002; Buttle, 1996). However, at least two thirds of all e-stores were unable to produce profitability(Swaid & Wigand 2009). The biggest reason for this unprofitability is attributed to an important construct that has gained research attention known as e-service quality.To measure and improve the performance, E-SERVQUAL instrument has been developed. ThisE-SERVQUAL instrument has received wide acceptance across different industries.

2.1 SERVQUAL Instrument

To measure customer satisfaction with various aspects of service quality, ValaireZeithmal and her colleagues developed a survey research instrument called SERVQUAL. The SERVQUAL scale includes five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Within each dimension, several items are measured on a 7-point scale; from strongly agree to strongly disagree, for a total 21 items.

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2.2 From SERVQUAL to e-SERVQUAL

SERVQUAL was developed primarily in the context of face-to-face encounters. In the modern online environment, different service quality dimensions with new measurement items become relevant. To measure electronic service quality on web sites, Parasuraman et al. (2005) created 22 –item scale called E-S-QUAL. Zeithaml et al. (2002)created a 7-dimesion scale in which, the first four dimensions constitute the core e-SERVQUAL scale whereas the latter 3 come into play only when 'online customers havequestions or run into problems'Zeithaml et al. (2002).

Here we will be discussing few of the major studies focusing on online service quality below:

Table 1. Studies Related to Online Service Quality

SrNo	Author(s)	Dimensions	Context
1	Zeithaml et al. (2002)	7 dimensions: Efficiency, reliability, fulfillment, privacy, responsiveness,compensation, and contact.	Online Service Quality
2	Yoo & Donthu (2001)	4 dimensions: Ease of use, aesthetic design, processing speed, and security.	Online Service Quality
3	Yang (2001)	3 dimensions: Website design, security, and information.	Online Service Quality
4	Wolfinbarger & Gilly (2003)	4 dimensions: Website design, reliability, security, and customer service.	Online Service Quality
5	Yang & Jun (2002)	6 dimensions: Website design, security, reliability, responsiveness, accessibility and customization.	Online Service Quality
6	Yang et al. (2003)	11 dimensions: Responsiveness, credibility, ease of use, reliability, convenience, communication, access, competence, courtesy, personalization, collaboration, security and aesthetics.	Online Service Quality
7	Kim & Stoel (2004)	6 dimensions: Web appearance, entertainment, information, transaction capability, responsiveness, and trust.	Online Service Quality
8	Gounaris et al. (2005)	5 dimensions: Website design, information, trust, responsiveness and reputation.	Online Service Quality
9	Lee & Lin (2005)	5 dimensions: Website design, reliability, responsiveness, trust, and personalization.	Online Service Quality
10	(Kim et al. 2006)	9 dimensions: Efficiency, fulfillment, system availability, privacy, responsiveness, compensation, contact, information and graphic style.	Online Service Quality

3. Website Quality

The internet and World Wide Web has seen outrageous growth and the Indexed Web contains at least 2.01 billion pages (http://www.worldwidewebsize.com/) as compared to 130 in mid-1993 (http://royal.pingdom.com).Internet shopping is popular with consumers. Many on-ground companies are adding an Internet component to their business. Be it large business entrreprise or small time entrepreneurs all are staking their presence in the internet. As a result of the tremendous business opportunity, the number of e-stores has increased by leaps and bounds. Companies take advantage of the Internet as a critical channel for selling goods and services and e-commerce sales, especially, online retail sales jumped greatly (Parasuraman et al. 2005), (Elliott & Speck 2005). The exponential increases in online shopping and the rapid growth in the number of retailers

selling online have made the marketplace extremely competitive(Yang 2007).Inspite of number of internet users worldwide growing to 7,017,846,922 (http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm), on-line business is still at its infancy. A high-quality Web site has the potential to attract more consumers and encourage them to purchase goods and revisit the site (Song & Zinkhan 2003). Identifying the pivotal role of website play in online shopping, numbers of studies have been conducted to deciphering and identifying important dimensions leading to quality website. Few of such studies are enlisted below:

Table 2. Studies Related to Website Quality

SrNo	Study	Dimensions	Context
1	Liu & Arnett (2000)	4 dimensions: Information and service quality, system use, playfulness and system design quality	Website Quality
2	Aladwani & Palvia(2002)	4 dimensions: specific content, content quality, appearance and technical adequacy	Website Quality
3	Koufaris (2002)	5 dimensions: Perceived control, shopping enjoyment, concentration, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use	Website Quality
4	Palmer (2002)	5 dimensions: Download delay, navigation/organization, interactivity, responsiveness and information/content	Website Quality
5	Loiacono et al. (2002)	12 dimensions: Information fit to task, Interactivity, trust, response time, ease of understanding, Intutive operations, visual appeal, innovativeness, flow-emotional appeal, consistent image, online completeness and better than alternative channels	Website Quality
6	Barnes & Vidgen (2003)	4 dimensions: Usability, design, information quality and service quality	Website Quality
7	Mich et al. (2003)	7 dimensions: Identity, content, services, location, maintenance, usability and feasibility	Website Quality
8	Tan et al. (2003)	11 dimensions: Reliability, responsiveness, access, flexibility, ease of navigation, efficiency, assurance/trust, security, site aesthetics, customization/ personalization and quality of information	Website Quality
9	Webb & Webb (2004)	9 dimensions: Reliability, assured empathy, tangibility, navigability, relevant representation, accuracy, security, trustworthiness, perceived usability	Website Quality
10	Elliott & Speck (2005)	6 dimensions: Ease of use, product information, entertainment, trust, customer support and currency	Website Quality

4. Analogy between Online Service Quality and Website Quality

Twenty studies have been undertaken i.e. ten each for online service quality and website quality. Eleven analogous dimensions were identified as:Information, Responsiveness, Reliability, Design, Security, Trust, Ease of use, Efficiency,

Access/ accessibility, Personalization and Entertainment. These eleven dimensions along with studies are mentioned in the Table 3.

Table 3. Analogous dimensions between Online Service Quality and Website Quality

SrNo	Dimensions	Author(s) Website Quality	Author(s) Service Quality
1	Information	Liu & Arnett (2000),Palmer (2002), Loiacono et al. (2002), Barnes &Vidgen (2003), Tan et al. (2003), Elliott & Speck (2005)	Yang (2001), Kim and Stoel (2004),Gounaris et al. (2005),Kim et al. (2006)
2	Responsiveness	Palmer (2002), Tan et al. (2003)	Zeithaml et al. (2000), Yang and Jun (2002), Yang et al. (2003), Kim and Stoel (2004), Gounaris et al. (2005), Lee and Lin (2005), Kim et al. (2006)
3	Reliability	Tan et al. (2003), Webb & Webb (2004)	Zeithaml et al. (2000), Wolfinbarger and Gilly (2003), Yang and Jun (2002), Yang et al. (2003), Lee and Lin (2005), Kim et al. (2006)
4	Design	Barnes &Vidgen (2003)	Yoo and Douthu (2001), Yang (2001), Wolfinbarger and Gilly (2002), Yang and Jun (2002), Kim and Stoel (2004), Gounaris et al. (2005), Lee and Lin (2005)
5	Security	Tan et al. (2003), Webb & Webb (2004)	Yoo and Douthu (2001), Yang (2001), Wolfinbarger and Gilly (2003), Yang and Jun (2002), Yang et al. (2003)
6	Trust	Loiacono et al. (2002), Tan et al. (2003), Webb & Webb (2004), Elliott & Speck (2005)	Kim and Stoel (2004), Gounaris et al. (2005), Lee and Lin (2005)
7	Ease of use	Koufaris (2002), Elliott & Speck (2005)	Yoo and Douthu (2001), Yang et al. (2003)
8	Efficiency	Tan et al. (2003)	Kim et al. (2006), Zeithaml et al. (2000)
9	Access/ accessibility	Tan et al. (2003)	Yang and Jun (2002), Yang et al. (2003)
10	Personalization	Tan et al. (2003)	Yang et al. (2003), Lee and Lin (2005)
11	Entertainment	Elliott & Speck (2005)	Kim and Stoel (2004)

5. CONCLUSION

The key to organizational success in online retail business revolves around high quality customer service which enhances company's competitiveness. Web provides a platform through which business can communicate and interact to attract consumers and influence their shopping decisions. Both online service quality and website quality play a pivotal role for enhancing consumers purchase intentions and consumer patronage. In this paper few of the analogous dimensions namely, Information, Responsiveness, Reliability, Design, Security, Trust, Ease of use, Efficiency, Access/ accessibility, Personalization and Entertainment are identified. Managers can benefit from the paper by tweaking the identified dimensions to avail dual benefit of better service quality and interactive website. Researchers can further enhance this work, as only twenty studies were undertaken in current paper.

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Prateek Kalia
Research Scholar, Department of Research Innovation & Consultancy
Punjab Technical University, Jalandhar.

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