A Study on the Dimensions and Influence of Dynamic Determinants to attain Customer E-Satisfaction in Online Retailing

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Abstract

The internet shopping for various customers is being accepted as an alternative shopping mode rather than visiting the physical stores. The Internet as a global medium is quickly gaining focus and attractiveness as the most revolutionary marketing tool. The global nature of communication and shopping has as well redefined, seeing that it is the perfect mode for online shopping stores. The penetration of Information Technology in India has enabled organizations to approach larger customer base. This research study focuses on exploring the major factors that lead to customer satisfaction in online retailing in India. It also leads to understanding the theories of relationship between various factors of online buying in Indian market by capturing the perspectives of customers with respect to their satisfaction. If the online retailer knows the factors influencing the customer satisfaction levels, and the association between these factors and the type of online buyers, then they can adopt their own marketing strategies to convert potential customers into active customers. The result of this study assists the online retailers in targeting customers and adopting affective online marketing strategies to improve their satisfied customer base. The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of various factors on customer satisfaction in online shopping. This study of customer satisfaction is based on the customer online buying intentions with the customer playing the three distinct roles of user, payer and buyer.

Keywords: Online Retailing, Customer E-Satisfaction, Online Customer.

Introduction

Customer is the important factor for the success of any business. So, measurement of customer satisfaction is becoming essential for the long term sustainability of any organization. Customer satisfaction helps organizations to plan the marketing activities aiming at the growth the business. More the competition, higher is the necessity to keep the customers satisfied. The biggest benefit of electronic retailing compared to other retail formats is the vast number of alternatives that become available to e-customers. In this competitive atmosphere, it becomes essential to understand the factors which might affect customer satisfaction in the Indian online retail sector. The world of online shopping is a highly competitive field wherein online retailers constantly strive to create an impressive image in the minds of the customers. Measuring customer satisfaction is very important for online retailers as it results in achieving loyal customer

and also attracts new potential customers. Website design plays very important role in attracting e-customers in etailing environment. Service quality is another important factor that shows direct impact on customer e-satisfaction. Service quality can be understood as providing the required service to customer in order to meet and exceed customer expectations on the online retail store, which will help the online retailer in increasing the customer e-satisfaction level. Information quality is an important factor for online retailers to build trust in e-customers. Ouality of information helps the e-customer to take appropriate purchase decision in online retail store. Information quality reduces the time taken to search the required information of a product by e-customer in online retail website, this shows direct influence on customer e-satisfaction on the online retail store. Customer e-satisfaction is very important for online retailers, as the satisfied customer may get back to the online retail website for repeat purchase in future. Attractive and easy to use website design may improve traffic to online retail website, as ease of use is one of the influencing factors for e-customer to consider any particular website for shopping needs. Recent and advanced method of capturing customer feedback and customer satisfaction is by utilizing social media platforms. Online retailer can participate in social media platforms and capture customer feedback and reach out to them to make them satisfied, as social media platform provides two way communications.

Conceptual Framework:

The importance of measuring customer e-satisfaction is one of the key to plan customer retention. Customer e-satisfaction levels need to be analyzed and the application of the knowledge of customer e-satisfaction is essential to establishing a long-term relationship with customer. Generally a well satisfied customer stays longer. Online Retailers may not be able to provide better services to their customers unless customer expectations are known. Customer expectations can be recognized through the knowledge of e-satisfaction levels. This necessitates the measurement of customer e-satisfaction level which in turn postulates determination of the factors influencing it.

From the above preamble, the following questions emerge:

- a. What are the various factors influencing the customer for purchasing in online?
- b. How does quality of 'customer service' influence customer's e-satisfaction?
- c. How does 'assurance to customer' influence customer's e-satisfaction?
- d. How does 'availability to customer' influence customer's e-satisfaction?
- e. How does 'attention to customer' influence customer's e-satisfaction?

Literature Review:

Ahn et al., (2004) opined that both online features and offline features are important for online vendors as customers look at both online and offline features while evaluating the quality variables.

Bakos (2001) opined that online customers have the advantage of lower prices and more choice available in online shopping environment. With the advancement of technology online merchants can easily understand the customer preferences and provide good service.

Bijalwan and Sirswal (2013) opined that customers prefer to save time in shopping. Online retail stores provide this facility of time saving as the customer can purchase desired goods online. Online retail stores are providing goods at less expensive prices to the customers. Customer retention is the major challenge for the web retailer. [03]Burt and Sparks (2003) opined that the facility of self-service in online retailing environment allows the customer to select as per their choice, freedom on substitute product decision and free to replace goods instantly while choosing. This gives ease of selection to customer and increase in sales to online retailers. Online customers have the advantage of viewing the products from multiple suppliers in online retailing environment.

Chinwuba and Egene (2013) opined that delivering what is of value to the customer is important for organizations to generate repeat business. Measuring intangible expectations of customer is very difficult. Quality of service is very important for any business success. Greater customer service can deliver the amazing experience to the customer.

Collier and Bienstock (2006) opined that it is very important that online vendors have to give significance to the delivery of purchased goods, such as how the ordered goods are received by the customer. The quality of transaction's result directly affects customer satisfaction levels. They way online retailers handle the service recovery shows direct impact on customer satisfaction. Customer staying on the eTail website depends on the kind of interaction facility or the functionality provided by the online retailer in their web site.

Dharmawirya and Smith (2012) opined that understanding the target market is very important for the online vendors to get success in the competitive market. Age and experience of the customer are also important factors that online vendor s should consider while understanding the target market. It is suggested that online vendors should create easy to use online store in order to gain repeat purchase from customers. Good brand image in the market is very important for online vendors.

Doherty and Chadwick (2010) suggested that online retailers have to build their marketing strategies by giving importance to social media marketing concepts. In order to provide highest levels of service to the customers, the retailers have to consider the strategies of integrating their online and offline channels more effectively. They also opined that the retailers who are technically expert and good at internet concepts will dominate the market as they gain better understanding of their customers.

Fiona et al., (2007) suggested that online retailers have to give importance to their web site and ensure that all the resources and capabilities to be aligned and integrated to achieve the desired benefits. It is very important for online vendors to be attentive and respond to any new online initiatives in the competitive market.

Colla and Lapoule (2012) opined that price is very important for retail customers. The website of online merchant should provide various functions, including good navigation features and automatic search engine to satisfy the online customer.

Ghosh (2014) opined that effective and quick after sales service improves the customer satisfaction level in the online buyers in Indian environment. It is suggested that incorporating the local language in the online retail web sites attracts more rural customers in India.

Hung et al., (2014) opined that customers feel happy if the service quality of the online retailer is good. Leading retailers allow their customers to return the goods purchased online to any of their physical stores if they wish to return, this is possible as their online system integrates customer information across sales channels. Customer feels comfortable with this facility. [12]Jiang and Rosenbloom (2005) suggested that Customers have more positive price perception about online retailers who are more trustworthy in fulfillment. Customer service should be the high priority for online retailers. It is very important for online retailers to maintain worthy online information and interactive communication to encourage customers to revisit the online store. Customer testimonials also play an important role in attracting customers to online retail store. Maintaining error free and accurate billing system gives confidence to customers on online retailer. Both online and offline after sales support is very important for online retailing environment.

Jiradilok et al., (2014) have studied the customer satisfaction on online purchasing and observed that the value assurance and empathy are the most influential factors of customer being satisfied with online shopping. This is applicable for both new online buyers and the buyers with some prior online shopping experience. They also suggested online vendors to ensure that the customer receives the goods as promised.

Jun et al., (2003) observed that service quality is the important factor in enhancing the customer satisfaction in online retailing environment. They have suggested online retailers to implement information systems that integrate their online and offline operations to advance delivery performance. Personalized services to customers are also important in making online customer satisfied.

Kim et al., (2009) opined that it is important for online retailers to make the web site pleasurable to amplify the customer attitude towards the website and purchasing intention. Customer's emotion is positively associated with attitude towards the web site and purchasing intention. The way products are displayed on the retailer website also influences customer's evaluation of products.

Kim and Lim (2001) suggested that providing useful and accurate information in the website is very important. Entertainment factor to be united with excellent information in order to satisfy online customers.

Koivumaki (2001) opined that there is a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and possibility of repeat purchase. In addition to the repeat purchase, customer satisfaction helps the online vendors in retaining the existing customers.

Lee and Lin (2005) observed that online vendor can achieve e-customer satisfaction by ensuring the delivery of products as promised, providing accurate information and focus on security of online transactions.

Lee and Joshi (2007) suggested that online stores should provide the information relating to all the elements of sales transaction starting from product search to delivery to the customer in addition to the product details. It is observed that informed customer is expected to be satisfied customer.

Lin et al., (2011) opined that customers consider the product and delivery as very important factors of satisfaction in online retailing environment. They suggested online retailers to maintain quality of delivery by adhering to the agreed timeline and safe packing of the products. [21]Mandal and Bhattacharya (2013) have studied the concept of customer satisfaction and mentioned that it is important to understand the customer expectations on the product before the actual purchase and the reactions of the customer after the purchase and actual use of the purchased product.

Nayyar and Gupta (2011) suggested that easy navigation feature on the online retail website, multiple payment options and innovative customer reach programs are winning factors for online retailers in achieving more business. Attractive discounts on products may amplify the client base for online retailers.

Neupane (2014) studied the relationship between customer satisfaction and business performance by collecting data from 230 respondents and found that customer satisfaction has positive relationship with business performance.

Park and Kim (2003) in their study on identifying key factors affecting customer purchasing behavior in an online shopping context opined that product information quality that is provided by the online retailer in the website is an important factor that shows impact on customer's loyalty to the web store. User interface quality is also an important factor in online retailer website.

Qinghe et al., (2014) opined that online shopping is becoming famous with the increase in the use of web environment or the internet. It is suggested that categorization of products in online retail store makes it easy for the online buyer to choose the desired product quickly.

Shergill and Chen (2005) suggested that the website ambience, and how it functions, plays an important role in achieving online customer satisfaction. Efficiency and usability of the etailer's website can make the online buying process easy and gain customer confidence in the web site. It is suggested that online retailers can achieve more success by choosing well-known or branded products to market online. Order tracking facility and return process are also important for web retailer to make customer satisfied. [27]

Shorter et al., (2008) opined that customers prefer online shopping as it saves lot of time. Online shopping provides the facility of delivering the purchased goods at the customer door step.

Zhenxiang and Lijie (2011) opined that online customers are sensitive about price. Generally the online vendors adopt certain promotional activities such as discounts on price and reduction of shipping cost to achieve more customers. As a fact of customer motivation or customer incentive to purchase online one should understand the difference of total cost of offline purchase and online purchase including delivery charges.

Research Methodology:

Objectives Of The Study:

- a. To explore the importance of customer e-satisfaction in Online Retailing.
- b. To understand relationship of service quality, assurance to customer, attention to customer and availability to customer with customer e-satisfaction in online retailing context.

Sampling Design:

This research paper is confined to study the importance of customer e-Satisfaction in online retailing context with special focus to attention to customer, availability to customer, assurance to customer and service to customer. The population under consideration in this study is grouped based on their occupation, income, age and their gender. Individuals with prior online shopping experience were selected as respondents to this study. Data is collected from a sample of 252 respondents in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, who are online buyers.

Methods Of Data Collection:

Source of Data:

Data is collected through both primary and secondary sources of data. The present research work is a descriptive study, which includes surveys and finding of various aspects related to customer e-satisfaction. The research instrument used for collecting the data is a well structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was administrated in such a way that it cautiously records the satisfaction levels. The customers were asked to provide their expectations on a five point scale (Strongly Agree [1], Somewhat Agree [2], Neutral [3], Somewhat Disagree [4], Strongly Disagree [5]) regarding attributes of online retailing. Questions in the questionnaire were framed in such a manner that the respondent gives their opinion mostly for questions on this five point scale. The first part of the questionnaire was aimed at collecting the demographic details of the respondents. And the second part included the items to measure various dimensions of customer satisfaction. Secondary data is collected through various books, business magazines, journals, newspapers, web sites and research studies.

Research Tools:

Data Analysis:

In order to assess the satisfaction level regression analysis was performed on the variables under study namely service to customer, assurance to customer, availability to customer and attention to customer. The factors were identified by means of response based on Likert scale for understanding customer's satisfaction, were analyzed and grouped through factor analysis method using SPSS package. In analyzing various factors influencing customer satisfaction, the first step used was to find out the adequacy of the sample through KMO and Bartlett's test.

Hypothesis:

H1: Service to customer has positive influence on customer overall satisfaction in online retailing.

H2: Assurance to customer has positive influence on customer overall satisfaction in online retailing.

H3: Attention to customer has positive influence on customer overall satisfaction in online retailing.

H4: Availability to customer has positive influence on customer overall satisfaction in online retailing. **Data Analysis:**

Reliability test

Renability test							
Item-Total Statistics							
	Scale	Scale					
	Mean if	Variance if	Corrected	Cronbach's			
	Item	Item	Item-Total	Alpha if Item			
	Deleted	Deleted	Correlation	Deleted			
Online product reviews	32.35	137.312	.685	.910			
Updating customer on the	32.36	144.374	.453	.915			
product availability							
Collection of Customer	32.31	141.066	.543	.913			
feedback							
Customer questions answered	32.23	143.716	.436	.915			
well							
After sale service	32.14	137.175	.645	.910			
Secure payment option	32.17	137.196	.646	.910			
Expected date of stock arrival	32.08	137.010	.558	.913			
Order Confirmation email	32.17	138.092	.663	.910			
Privacy Policy clearly stated	32.23	138.080	.655	.910			
Return policy clearly stated	32.26	139.820	.583	.912			
Cash on Delivery facility	32.17	137.531	.632	.911			
Online customer support	32.33	142.980	.484	.914			
chatting facility							
Service Recovery	32.25	143.852	.459	.915			
Free shipment facility	32.04	132.695	.729	.908			
Suggesting alternative products	32.45	147.930	.295	.918			
Display of recently purchased	32.27	137.299	.621	.911			
list of items							
Display of wish list	32.21	138.462	.634	.911			
Display of recently visited list	32.22	138.006	.600	.912			
Display of items most visited by	32.35	144.293	.408	.916			
other buyers							
Focus back the cursor at the	32.27	140.120	.570	.912			
selected item among the full list							

A reliability test was conducted using SPSS 19.0 version for measuring overall consistency of 20 variables. For all the variables, Chronback's alpha value was more than 0.7 which signifies adequacy of variables for the analysis but from the column corrected item for total correlation, one variable "Expected data of stock arrival is too low i.e., less than 0.35. Factor analysis was conducted excluding the variable "Expected data of stock arrival".

Factor analysis:

Factor analysis for reducing the dimensions was conducted on remaining 19 variables. Four components (Dimensions) were extracted and these four components were explained 61.153% of total variance of the variables. These components were explained from rotated component matrix. The four components were:

Table: 1 Factor Analysis

Component	mponent Name of Variables of component		Chronback's			
_	component	-	alpha			
		Updating customer on the product availability				
1	Service to	Expected date of stock arrival	0.912			
1	customer	After sale service				
		Free shipment facility	7			
		Display of wish list				
		Secure payment option				
	A ====================================	Order Confirmation email				
2	Assurance to	Privacy Policy clearly stated	0.911			
	customer	Return policy clearly stated				
		Cash on Delivery facility				
		Collection of Customer feedback	0.912			
		Display of recently purchased list of				
		items				
3	Attention to	Display of items most visited by other				
3	customer	buyers	0.912			
		Display of recently visited list				
		Focus back the cursor at the selected	1			
		item among the full list				
		Customer questions answered well				
		Service Recovery	0.913			
4	Availability to	Online product reviews				
4	customer	Suggesting alternative products				
		Online customer support chatting				
		facility				

Table: 2 KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test					
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin N	.890				
Adequacy.					
Bartlett's Test of	2333.600				
Sphericity	Df				
	Sig.	.000			

KMO and Bartlett's test option was selected to test the sample adequacy, Kaiser-Meyer sample adequacy value was 0.890 which greater than 0.6 and significance value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05. Both parameters were

satisfied and it can be claimed that adequate sample has been used for knowing customer satisfaction on online trading.

Regression analysis:

Table: 3 Model Summary

			Adjusted R	Std. Error of			
Model	R	R Square	Square	the Estimate			
1	.752 ^a	.566	.559	.741			
a. Predictors: (Constant)							

Source: Primary data

Coefficient of determination adjusted R square value was 0.559 in which predictor variables are explained the

relationship with dependent variable. It can be claimed that 56% of relation was explained overall.

Table: 4 ANOVA^b

		Sum of				
Model		Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	176.721	4	44.180	80.507	.000a
1	Residual	135.548	247	.549		
	Total	312.270	251			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Service to Customer; Assurance to customer; Attention to Customer and Available to customer

b. Dependent Variable: In general satisfaction

Source: Primary data

From the ANOVA table, significance value was 0.000 which is less than 0.05 which results that impact of predictor

variable on dependent variable are not same and has different percentage levels of effects on dependent variable.

Table: 5 Coefficients

Coefficients ^a								
Unstandardized Sta				Standardized			95.0% C	onfidence
		Coefficients Co		Coefficients			Interval for B	
			Std.				Lower	Upper
	Model	В	Error	Beta	T	Sig.	Bound	Bound
	(Constant)	1.706	.047		36.565	.000	1.614	1.798
	Service to	.444	.047	.398	9.495	.000	.352	.536
	Customer							
1	Assurance to	.258	.047	.231	5.512	.000	.166	.350
	Customer							
	Attention to	.594	.047	.532	12.694	.000	.501	.686
	Customer							
	Available to	.297	.047	.266	6.353	.000	.205	.389
	Customer							
a. Dependent Variable: In general satisfaction								
	Service to Customer: RF1				Attention to Customer: RF3			
	Assurance to Customer: RF2				Available to Customer: RF4			

Source: Primary data

Multiple regression equation:

Y = 1.706 + 0.398 RF1 + 0.231 RF2 + 0.532 RF3 + 0.266 RF4

All predictor variables were having less than 0.05 levels of significance, hence null hypothesis was rejected that the predictors and dependent variable were having dependency relationships. Among the predictor variables, highest effect on dependent variable was Attention to customer with regression coefficient of 0.532 and followed by Service to Customer with 0.398.

Conclusion:

Findings:

All the four dimensions (service to customer, assurance to customer, attention to customer and availability to customer) are having significance level less than 0.05 hence null hypotheses between overall 'customer e-satisfaction' as dependent variable to these four dimensions is rejected. Therefore there is a relation and affect due to these four dimensions (service to customer, assurance to customer, attention to customer and availability to customer) on overall 'customer e-satisfaction' in online retailing.

Summary:

Online retailing has provided a new milestone and inexpensive delivery channel for retailers to reach out to their customers. There would be an exponential growth in the online retailing business in the current scenario. Though much is yet to be achieved, remember online retailing is a new to various groups of people. With broadband internet access still accessible to entire population, this industry may see an explosive growth. Most growth drivers are favor-demographics, economy, changing lifestyle, exposure to new ideas. It is just a question of creating a sustainable eco system for e-Retailing, which definitely drives the growth of e-Retailing. The key growth drivers of digital business under the realms of online retailing are convenience and accuracy, feedback management, efficiency, queue management, accessibility, and customization. Digital modus operandi aims at fulfilling these requisites for giving better shopping experience to the More and more people are accessing the e-customers. internet through mobile so a mobile version of the site as well as promos should be initiated by the online retailers. Considering that customers may not be very computer savvy, the steps involved in the purchase process should be clearly explained in the form of a demo video on the website.

Limitations And Scope For Future Research:

Further research can be initiated with social media marketing concepts incorporated in online retail marketing strategies. Researchers can consider web experience and customer feedback acceptance by online retailers for betterment of their services in gaining customer satisfaction. Web advertising effectiveness, learning management system effectiveness, user frustration points while buying goods and brand awareness of online retail customers are potential topics for further research work.

Suggestions:

Customer satisfaction is a complex, dynamic, multidimensional process, and all marketing decisions are based on assumptions about customer satisfaction. Understanding consumer e-satisfaction and what they value in an online environment is crucial to online retailer's for meeting customer's expectations. Easy to use navigational features incorporated with fast delivery options and running innovative customer reach programs could act as encouraging factor for online retailers. Frequently personalized information and exclusively customized website could influence buying behavior of customers in online retail environment. With the technology advancement, it is better to incorporate social media marketing concepts in online retailing marketing strategies. Online retailers should give priority to deploy customer web experience management team to enhance continuously the customer satisfaction while buying goods in online retail store.

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