

An Investigation of E-shopping Quality Determinants among Students at a Higher Learning Institution

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate e-shopping quality determinants among students at a higher learning institution in Malaysia. Data was collected from 200 students and analyzed using multiple regressions. Results revealed that privacy/security emerge as the most important determinant of e-shopping quality among students followed by web site design. E-shopping quality does not determine by customer service and atmospheric/experiential factor. The e-retailers may improve or upgrade their e-shopping websites by understand which of the web site attributes influence consumers' beliefs about online shopping. This study provides important implications for e-tailers whose web site developers must keep in mind that customers are not only web users with trust/safety and information needs, but also shoppers with service and experiential needs.

Keyword(s): E-shopping Quality, Web site Design, Privacy, Security, Atmospheric, Experiential

their first transaction online. The findings should be useful in the development of guidelines for online stores to obtain higher customer satisfaction, greater customer loyalty, and sales. Hence, this study aims to investigate e-shopping quality determinants among students at a higher learning institution in Malaysia.

Literature Review

E-shopping Quality

E-shopping quality refers to overall consumer perceptions of the excellence and effectiveness of an e-tailer's product and or service offering through its virtual store. Both the quality of web site features or interface performance and the quality of features going beyond web site interface influence a consumer's perception of Internet shopping (Ahn, 2003; Wolfinbarger & Gilly, 2003). From the consumers' perspective, online shopping refers to a number of experiences including information search, web site browsing or navigation, ordering, payment, customer service interactions, delivery, post-purchase problem resolution, and satisfaction with one's purchases (Ha & Stoel, 2008). High quality e-shopping sites may result in the perception that one's e-shopping experience is fun and enjoyable where they do not have to drive, walk, search for merchandise, wait in lines, or carry large items.

Privacy/Security

Privacy refers to the degree to which the online shopping web site is safe and protects the customers' information. Consumers will hesitate to shop online if they do not feel assured that their credit card information is secure and protected from potential hackers (Collier & Bienstock, 2006). Prior research in the online shopping context indicates that consumers' perceptions of privacy have a significant and positive effect on their trust in the online vendor (Bart, Shankar, Sultan, & Urban, 2005; Liu, Marchewka, Lu, & Yu, 2005; Román, 2007). Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: E-shopping quality has been influenced positively by perceived privacy or security.

Web Site Design

Web design is a process of conceptualizing, planning, and building a collection of electronic files that determine the layout, colours, text styles, structure, graphics, images, and use of interactive features that deliver pages to your site visitors. Professional Web design helps to make business appear credible online (<http://www.networksolutions.com/education/what-is-a-web-site-design>). A website is an address which can be server and location on the World Wide Web that contains web pages and can be accessed by anyone on the internet. (http://www.rocketface.com/designing_a_website.html). The quality of web site

Methodology

Two hundred questionnaires were completed by students 200 students at a higher learning institution in Malaysia with 80% response rate following simple random sampling technique; a technique that each element in the population has a known and equal probability of selection. Respondents answered by agreeing or disagreeing with the statement using a Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. Questionnaire items, as stated in Appendix 1, were adapted from Ha & Stoel (2008). A seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 – strongly disagree, to 7 – strongly agree was used for the questions to indicate a degree of agreement or disagreement with each of a series of statements related to the stimulus objects. The data were analyzed using multiple regression analysis via the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program version 17.0 for windows, with the aim of studying the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

Data Analysis

Profile of Respondents

The descriptive statistics of the sample are listed in Table 1. Of the 200 participants, 27.5% are males, 72.5% are females, and 85% are between 20-40 years old. Most of them are young people. More than 50% of the respondents have a bachelor's degree or higher education level. Among the 200 respondents, 88.5% of them are staff with the University.

Table 2 depicts respondent's e-shopping experiences. 63.5% express that they have e-shopping experience. More than 60% of them prefer to purchase apparel fashion via the Internet and only 8.5 % attracted for jewellery. 13% is the frequent buyer. Further investigation of the descriptive finding reveals that enjoyment led the factor that made e-shopping is more acceptable among the consumers, followed by quality element. They are encouraged to purchase online because of two main reasons: (1) secure and trust, and (2) convenience. 77% has spent more than RM 101 for e-shopping transaction and chosen e-banking as form of making payment.

Reliability

The research instrument was tested for reliability using Cronbach's coefficient alpha estimate. The degree of consistency of a measure is referred to as its reliability or internal consistency. A value of 0.70 or greater is deemed to be indicative of good scale reliability (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2010). The Cronbach's alpha for the five factors range from 0.811 to 0.973, suggesting that the constructs measures are deemed reliable (Table 3).

The final hypothesis, Hypothesis 4 proposed that e-shopping quality has been influence positively by atmospheric/experiential. Atmospheric/experiential exhibited insignificant relationship with e-shopping quality ($\beta = 0.150$, $t\text{-value} = 1.477$). Its $p\text{-value}$ is > 0.05 , posited that Hypothesis 4 is also not supported. Whether experiential purchases, as opposed to materialistic purchases, are likely to increase well-being but these increases are likely to be due to increased satisfaction of psychological needs and/or decreased social comparison not the e-shopping quality. Participants indicated that experiential purchases represented money better spent, brought more happiness to them, and brought more happiness to others (Howell & Hill, 2009).

Conclusion and Recommendations

In a nutshell, results revealed that privacy/security has a significant relationship with the e-shopping quality and emerge as the most important determinant of e-shopping quality among students followed by web site design. Nonetheless, e-shopping quality does not determine by customer service and atmospheric/experiential factor. As indicated by the study, the majority of the consumers today are very concerns about the web site design while shopping on the Internet; thus customers need to adapt by learning the changes made to the website. If the quality of online shopping can be assured, people will certainly shop online. The e-shopping quality need to be addressed by all parties including the government, vendors, and organizations. This research can provide knowledge to know which website attribute influence consumer's belief about online shopping. Furthermore, the current findings will help developers design web sites by providing insights on how comprehensive their web site in terms of business activities to make the web site successful. This study surveys students at a higher learning institution in Malaysia that impedes the generalization of findings to older online consumers. Additionally, taking the number of factors in the research model into consideration, this study does not have adequate sample size to generalize the findings. It is recommended that further research should be conducted on a larger population since this study was conducted based on the findings taken only from 200 respondents.

References

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Table 3 Reliability Test

Variable	No of item	Cronbach's Alpha
Web Site Design	4	0.973
Customer Service	6	0.842
Privacy / Security	9	0.902
Atmospheric / Experiential	5	0.811

Table 4 Correlations Analysis between Variables

	1	2	3	4
(1) Web Site Design	1			
(2) Customer Service	0.709(**)	1		
(3) Privacy /Security	0.695(**)	0.711(**)	1	
(4) Atmospheric /Experiential	0.653(**)	0.646(**)	0.685(**)	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 5 Influence of the Independent Variables on Dependent Variable

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Web Site Design	0.201	0.078	0.279*	2.577	0.011
Customer Service	0.054	0.084	0.071	0.647	0.519
Privacy/Security	0.273	0.073	0.415*	3.722	0.000
Atmospheric/ Experiential	0.105	0.071	0.150	1.477	0.141
Multiple R			0.294		
R ²			0.86		
Adjusted R ²			0.67		
F			4.597		
Sig. F			0.001		

Note: * denotes a significant value as $p < 0.05$

Hotel Booking

Hotels in Athens do not follow a common pricing or service policy. They are regulated to have a ceiling (top) price but everything depends upon the demand and supply per given period of time. Due to serious complaints by our conference participants in the past we decided to collaborate with an agent and establish what we call a conference hotel.

The price we set in the registration form (one year prior to the conference dates) is the ceiling price with a small discount. Our Institute encourages participants to make their own hotel booking but if they decide to book with us we would like to guarantee the quality of service, the proximity to the venue (or free transportation to the venue) and other benefits that might we get depending upon the number of participants in each conference. The official site of the Greek Hotel Association with hotel lists can be found at <http://www.grhotels.gr/EN/Pages/default.aspx>

We never bargain over price. It is quite possible that the same hotel during our conference undersells their rooms but our arrangement with the agent guarantees the number of rooms we need in different hotels. We do not know the HOTEL YOU ARE GOING TO STAY till one week prior to the conference. Of course, since you pay through the Institute we give total and per item receipts to each participant. As an Institute we do NOT sponsor any hotel. However, it is our recommendation that you book close to Syntagma Square (the central square of Athens) with at least a FOUR star hotel.

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