



Impact of E-service Quality on Brand Attachment and Willingness to Spend More

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Received 10th June 2018 and Revised 15th September 2018

Abstract: E-service quality is important in current business practices. This concept is yet to be explored in context of influencing other important variables. This paper aims to conceptualize e-service quality relationship with brand attachment and willingness to spend more. Understanding the relationship between these constructs is important for service providers in order to enhance superior online customer service experience. Suggested linkages amongst variables further need empirical support. Theoretical implications and future research directions are also proposed.

Keywords: E-service quality, Brand attachment, Willingness to pay more.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of service quality is pivotal and is important for both offline and online settings. Online and offline settings present different and unique purchase experiences. Hence the concept of service quality in online context also differs (Wolfenbarger and Gilly, 2003). E-channels are replacing the traditional channels of distributions. Therefore, firms started to invest in , and the growth remained in double digit since last decade (Blut *et al.*, , 2015). However, e-service quality to deliver better services remain a challenge in online service.

A number of articles can be found in literature those who discussed the relationship between e-service quality and satisfaction. However, previous literature has ignored the to study the relationship between e-service quality, willingness to spend more and brand attachment (Blut *et al.*, , 2015). Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to conceptualize the relationship between e-service quality willingness to spend more and brand management. It is not necessary on practical grounds that a satisfied service user will definitely purchase the service again. Hence to consider e-service quality relationship and willingness to spend more is very important.

This study effort to develop a conceptual framework of e-service attachment and willingness to spend more as shown in (Fig 1). to better understand the issue either e-service quality supports in relationship building with users.

2. THEORY DEVELOPMENT AND CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Debate on total service quality originated from Grönroos (1984), and was noted that technical quality,

corporate image, and functional quality formulate service quality. Further, (Grönroos 1984) found that image is formulated by technical and functional aspects, thereof image describe the total perceived service quality.

Later the exploratory study of (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985) resulted into gap model of service quality. In this model communication, access, courtesy, competence, reliability, credibility, tangibility, understand ability, security and responsiveness were determinants of expectations to perceive service quality. In response to this, (Grönroos 1988) came with determinants like attitudes and behaviour, skills and professionalism, flexibility, accessibility, trustworthiness, credibility and reputation to mark perceived service quality. To solve the puzzle on how service quality is perceived, the efforts remained continue, until (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988) came with SERVQUAL having 22 items of five dimensions. These dimensions were tangibility, reliability, assurance, responsiveness and empathy.

Later internet emerged as an important tool and SERVQUAL found inadequate in online settings (Wolfenbarger and Gilly, 2003). In online context it was named as e-service quality. "Extent to which a website facilitates efficient and effective shopping, purchasing, and delivery" is termed as e-service quality (Parasuraman *et al.*, , 2005). Once it comes to e-service quality, literature has debated two competing models. These are (Parasuraman *et al.*, , 2005) model having six dimensions namely privacy, efficiency, system availability fulfilment, contrast and responsiveness; and (Wolfenbarger and Gilly 2003) model. This model has four dimensions. These are website design, user service, security and fulfilment. A recent meta-analysis (Blut *et al.*, 2015) made efforts to compare these

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models. In comparison the four-dimension model was found to have a better model fit. Accordingly, this study compromises on four-dimension model of e-service quality as the linkages between these dimension and total e-service quality are well established.

The relationship between e-service quality and brand attachment need to be explored (Blut *et al.*, 2015). Brand attachment is emotional connection of the user to a brand (Chiou *et al.*, 2013). Brand is considered as a distinct personality and users tend to develop same relations as with people even a brand is different in attributes and properties (Thach and Olsen, 2006). Online service providers frame service users mind to learn e-services to avoid hassle and save time. To mark the first impression of e-service quality an online transaction need to be time saving and hassle free. Thus such a service might be helpful for brand attachment (Thach and Olsen, 2006). This can create an impression in the mind of a use to weigh a brand in a forging relationship as a companion (Dennis *et al.*, 2016). Hence, it can be argued that e-service quality has ability to boost the propensity to enhance emotional attachment towards such a service providing brand. Thus, following proposition is made:

P1. There will be a positive relationship between total e-service quality and brand attachment.

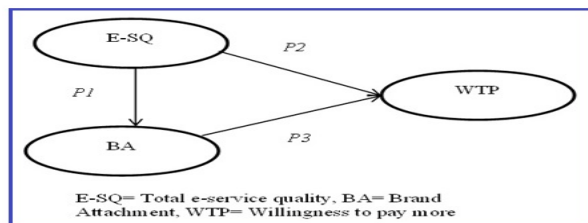


Fig. 1 .Theoretical Framework of study

Profitability is the main consideration of every commercial firm. Therefore, recent relationship marketing tools are used to strengthen service firm and user relationship. Hence, it is merits to consider whether e-service quality can enhance willingness to spend more (Blut *et al.*, 2015). The willingness to spend more is mostly used in maximum reservation of spending on service of a firm (Fathi *et al.*, 2016). Marketing has borrowed this term from agricultural regulatory (Mai, 2014). Willingness to spend may change due to quality of service, brand names as well as the user experience with that brand (Chou *et al.*, 2016). In addition to this brand relation theory emphasis that brand attachment can influence behaviour (Shi *et al.*, 2011). Hence, following two propositions are suggested:

P2. E-service quality will have a positive relationship with willingness to spend more.

P3. Brand attachment will have positive relationship with willingness to spend more.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This study contributes in literature by proposing the linkages between e-service quality, brand attachment and willingness to spend more. Such propositions can theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it contributes by proposing new theoretical linkages amongst variables. The conceptual model of this paper (**Fig. 1**). E-service quality perception enhancement demands budgeted. Therefore, before incorporating it as a policy it may need some empirical evidences to support the linkages. Therefore, future research may extend this study and verify these linkages on empirical standards. Overall this study is an effort to suggest practitioners the outcomes of e-service quality and to boost future research in this particular area.

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