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REVIEW ARTICLE

A Proposed Framework of E-Customer Satisfaction in China: E-Service Quality, Trust, Repurchase Intention

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ABSTRACT

China's decision-making and deployment on accelerating the development of the digital economy in 2023 will promote e-commerce to play an important role in restoring and expanding consumption and promoting the integration of digital and real, and high-quality development will achieve positive results. Online retail sales for the whole year were 15.42 trillion yuan, an increase of 11%. The rivalry in China's e-commerce sector has increased along with the growth of the sector and the notable rise in merchant numbers. This research theoretically explores the characteristics of e-commerce on customer satisfaction, given that it is impacted in this context. The evaluated literature identifies crucial elements and problems to establish a research framework for this article's upcoming empirical studies.

Contribution/Originality: This study contributes to the existing literature that repurchases directly contribute to the revenue generation of e-commerce businesses. It fills gaps in regional knowledge, and helps to understanding of the topic.

1. Introduction

China's Internet is developing very rapidly, as seen by the rise of Internet users over the past few years. According to Zhao (2022), the development of China's Internet industry has grown steadily, the scale of users has continued to expand, and the number of Internet users has reached 1.067 billion. Internet and related service companies above designated size have completed business revenue of 531 billion yuan, and achieved a year-on-year profit increase of 43% (Zhao, 2022). At the same time, the integration and application of the Internet continue to deepen. The industrial Internet market is currently valued at over 1.2 trillion yuan, with over 260,000 service providers and over

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240 Internet platforms with some level of significance (Qi, 2023). For 11 years running, China has developed into the world's biggest e-commerce market, the share of physical products sold online in social retail has expanded to 27.6% (Wang, 2024).

Many researchers have studied examined the concept of e-service quality. Attributes of e-service quality, customer trust, repeat purchase intention and customer satisfaction are significantly related (Al-dweeri et al., 2017). Furthermore, According to Carlso and O'Cass (2010) shown that consumer behavioral intentions, such as intentions to make purchases and return to websites, are positively impacted by the quality of e-services. Lin et al. (2016) illustrates that in Chinese e-commerce, electronic service quality positively affects consumer satisfaction and the inclination to make purchase intention.

IIn the e-commerce environment, trust is seen as a form of confidence that can positively influence the willingness to engage in online transactions (Aslam et al., 2019). Trust is built on the gradual interaction between buyers and sellers. In this context, trust is an important prerequisite for participating in e-commerce, as it allows consumers to subjectively eliminate the negative but possible behavior of online sellers (Joo, 2015). Lăzăroiu et al. (2020) suggests a close relationship between consumer online trust and purchase intention. According to Oliveira et al. (2017), trust refers to the expectation that online providers will act in the best interest of consumers. They found that these trusts affect the repurchase intention of e-commerce.

Customer satisfaction has been found to be crucial to the success and survival of any traditional or online business system (Wu & Tseng, 2014). Many studies have shown that customer satisfaction can have a positive impact on customers' future purchase intentions and customer retention. Therefore, satisfaction has become one of the most important theoretical and practical issues for marketers and researchers (AlKurdi, Alshurideh & Alnaser, 2020). Online stores have realized the importance of customer satisfaction (Vasic, Kilibarda amd Kaurin, 2019), as higher customer satisfaction is considered the best indicator of a company's product or service performance, adaptation or disapproval, and post-purchase behavior (e.g., repurchase, complaints) (Filieri, Chen & LalDey, 2017). These factors can be linked to customer satisfaction.

According to Zhao (2022), complaint cases will still show positive growth in 2023, with a year-on-year increase of 1.19%, which is a decrease compared to 2022. Previously, the number of complaints received from 2019 to 2021 showed negative growth, with a year-on-year decrease of 45.59% in 2020. It will start to turn from negative to positive in 2022 and continue to grow in 2023. According to data from Zhao (2022), in 2022, online shopping complaints accounted for 46.31% of all complaints, the highest proportion; in addition, merchant services accounted for 18.62%, online travel accounted for 5.32%, online payment security accounted for 4.27%, and cross-border online shopping accounted for 3.11 %, and other complaints accounted for 12.31%. It can be seen that customer satisfaction is facing a lot of issues, including customer trust and e-service quality.

2. Literature Review

The overview, theoretical underpinnings, and earlier research on e-commerce customer satisfaction are covered in this part. The theoretical foundation is covered, which is crucial to understanding both the significance of this study and how the proposed structure works collectively.

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2.1. Theoretical Underpinning

The original purpose of The DeLone and McLean Information Systems Success theory (DeLone & McLean, 2003), was to understand the impact of information systems on performance. According to their research, information system success is measured through system quality, information quality, and customer satisfaction. These three factors are affected by system use and individual impact. System usage behavior is affected by user satisfaction and information quality. The updated The DeLone and McLean (2003) Information Systems Success theory provides a more comprehensive and accurate assessment of information systems success. By considering multiple factors such as user satisfaction, information quality and system quality, this model can better explain the impact of information systems on organizational performance. In addition, the decomposed sub-factors make the model more detailed and can help researchers more accurately measure and understand the relationship between different factors.

The DeLone and McLean (2003) Information Systems Success theory has been extensively used in earlier studies to assess and gauge the success of e-commerce (DeLone and McLean, 2003). According to this theory, three crucial e-service attributes information, systems, and services taken into account for information systems to be effective (DeLone & McLean, 2003). These attributes not only affect subsequent use or usage intention, but also affect user satisfaction. Therefore, these three elements are crucial for e-commerce to provide good customer service. The rise of contrastive shopping has given online shoppers a dominant position, enabling them to navigate between target online stores and competing stores. To investigate customer satisfaction with electronic services, it is not only necessary to consider the electronic service quality of the target website, but also the electronic business quality of its competing websites. This study will explore the potential impact of electronic service quality, trust, and repeat purchase intention factors on customer satisfaction.

2.2. Research Gaps of study

This section focuses on two forms of literature gaps: background gaps and theoretical gaps, which have been rigorously investigated and summarized in previous studies. Additionally, previous studies (Pereira, Salgueiro & Rita, 2016; Cater & Cater, 2009; Chakraborty, Srivastava & Marshall, 2007) has not examined the effect of mediating the relationship between e-customer satisfaction and repeat purchase intention. Therefore, this study is expected to answer this phenomenon and generate novelty by studying gab regarding the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the relationship between repeat purchase intention.

2.2.1. Contextual Gap of study

In previous studies, a greater amount of e-commerce research has focused on customer loyalty as the dependent variable (Pereira, Salgueiro & Rita, 2016; Al-Adwan & Al-Horani, 2019; Aslam et al., 2019). However, customer satisfaction significantly influences e-commerce (Gajewska et al., 2019). In this respect, the limitations of previous research need to be addressed. Previous research examined e-commerce consumer satisfaction in Malaysia and Indonesia (Santika, Pramudana & Astitiani, 2020; Ali et al., 2016; Ting et al., 2016). It is recommended that future studies utilize diverse national and international samples for research on customer satisfaction in e-commerce.

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2.2.2. Theoretical Gap

In the field of customer behavior, the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) or the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) has become the basis of several studies as a theoretical basis for understanding consumer behavioral intention relationships (Pavlou, & Fygenson, 2006). Previous research has emphasized that the impact of e-commerce customer loyalty can be explained from multiple perspectives (Taylor, Donovan & Ishida, 2014). Mainly defined by using TPA and TPB. This study will be conducted by using the DeLone and McLean (2003) Information Systems Success theory.

3. Method

This paper reviews existing technology adoption research in the field of e-commerce using a narrative literature review approach. The scope of a narrative literature review is quite broad as it involves collecting, reviewing, and summarizing journal articles and textbooks on a particular topic. These are usually done to gain an overview of the topic and identify gaps in the literature (Jahan et al., 2016).

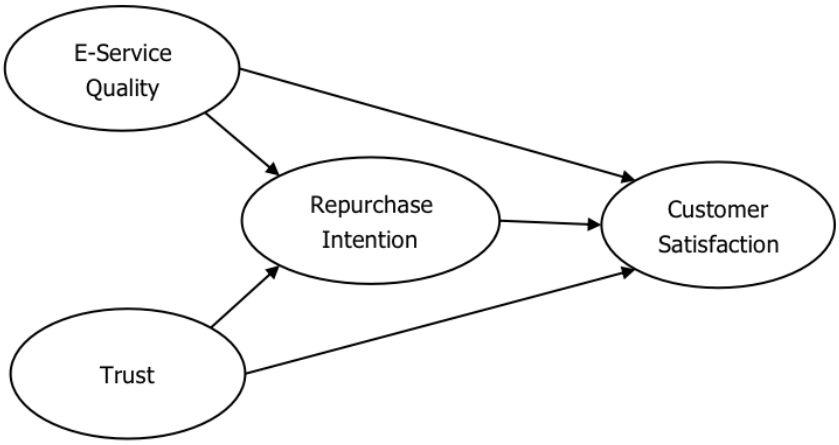
This paper follows the five-step procedure of narrative literature review proposed by Juntunen and Lehenkari (2019): summary and analysis coding, development of micro themes, development of meso themes, generation of narrative syntheses and cross-syntheses analysis and interpretation. In the first step: the researcher searched for relevant articles through the databases of Google Scholar and Research Gate using relevant keywords in a combination of "e-commerce", "China" and "customer satisfaction".

During the search process, the researcher gave priority to relevant articles whose research location was selected in China in the indexed journals. At the same time, the researcher discarded any articles that did not investigate e-commerce customer satisfaction in step 2. In this stage, the researcher accepted articles that used different applications of theories, concepts and methodologies to study customer satisfaction in Chinese e-commerce. The mapping results showed that 53 articles were identified as relevant and could enter the next stage. In the generation of narrative synthesizes stage, the researcher evaluated 58 accepted articles to meet the review question or research question of this paper: What factors may affect customer satisfaction in Chinese e-commerce from multiple perspectives? During the review process, the researcher also categorized and grouped the most controversial findings in the 56 articles, while focusing on these inconsistent results in preparation for the next step. After completing the evaluation process, the researcher made a coherent or comprehensive overview of the important aspects and relationships in the 63 articles. This action was mainly carried out or presented during the writing process. Finally, the researcher will first propose a theoretical framework from the reflection and multidisciplinary discussion in step four:

The proposed research framework serves as the foundation or model for the research endeavors that will support this study. Figure 1 depicts the three variables that determine customer satisfaction. Furthermore, to get insight into the elements that impact customer satisfaction, this study separates three independent variables: e-service quality, trust, and repurchase intention.

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Figure 1: Proposed Research Framework



Sources: Al-dweeri et al. (2017), Carlson and O'Cass (2010), Joudeh and Dandis (2018), Su, Swanson and Chen (2016)

Afterwards, the researchers will outline recommendations for future empirical research to improve the findings of this paper.

4. Finding

This study reviewed 63 articles on Chinese e-commerce customers repurchase intention and found various factors that affect customers' purchase intention. From these review results, a total of 10 factors were selected as potential factors that may affect Chinese e-commerce customer satisfaction: perceived ease-of-use, perceived usefulness, trust, service quality, enjoyment, repurchase intention, website design, words of mouth (WOM), reliability, responsiveness, and fulfillment.

4.1. Factors influencing customer satisfaction

In China, there is a growing interest in e-commerce research. This study looks at the factors that determine consumer satisfaction in terms of e-service quality, trust, and repurchase intention.

4.1.1. E-Service Quality

E-service quality is the delivery of services to consumers via the Internet, this is commonly acknowledged as a requirement for consumer perception. Internet-based services enable customers to execute transactions more efficiently in terms of time and cost. The degree to which online websites enhance the efficacy and efficiency of consumer browsing and consumption is known as e-service quality. It is including delivery, consultation and other service links. According to Kandulapati and Shekhar (2014), the concept of service quality originally emerged in the early 1980s, practitioners realized that product quality alone could not provide an advantage in a corporation. Joudeh and Dandis (2018) expected service quality refers to customers expected satisfaction with the services provided by service enterprises. Perceived service quality is the actual level of customer perception of the services provided by the service company. If the service level perceived by customers is in line with or higher than their expected level, customers will obtain higher satisfaction and thus think that

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the company has higher service quality; otherwise, customers will think that the company's service quality is lower (Su, Swanson & Chen, 2016). To measure service quality, Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) created a gap analysis model called SERVQUAL, which offers many potential applications. The SERVQUAL model is based on five different dimensions, namely tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. The cornerstone of customer satisfaction is impeccable service quality. Pakurár et al. (2019) found that there is a positive relationship between e-service quality and customer satisfaction.

4.1.2. Repurchase Intention

Repurchase intention may be defined as a customer's repurchase appraisal of the same seller's products or services, taking into account the present situation and potential future occurrences (Shang & Bao, 2020). Repurchase intention is to purchase the same product or service again after making a transaction (Sullivan & Kim, 2018). According to Shang and Bao (2020), repurchase intention is measured by the following indicators: (1) transaction interest., that is, customers' desire to always repurchase products that have been used. (2) Reference interest, that is, consumers want to recommend items that have been utilized others can also refer to purchases and other people’s experiences. (3) Preferred interests are consumers’ habits, which they mainly choose to use. Preferences can only be changed if there is a problem with the product they have chosen. (4) Exploration interest is that consumers are always seeking information about the desired products, and this action reinforces the product's beneficial characteristics.

4.1.3. Trust

Customer trust is an individual's willingness to transact with others due to their trust in other parties (Mou, Shin & Cohen, 2015). Furthermore, customer trust refers to a person's belief that others will behave in accordance with one's expectations and the hope that others chosen to trust will not act opportunistically and instead take advantage of the situation (TerHuurne et al., 2017). According to Moin, Devlin, and McKechnie (2015), the indicators to evaluate consumer trust are as follows: (1) Trust belief refers to the degree of trust and confidence a person has in others under certain circumstances. Trust belief means that a person trusts (the consumer) a trustworthy party (the online store seller) and the seller owns property that can benefit the customer. (2) Trusting purpose is deliberate when someone is prepared to rely on another party in specific scenarios; this situation happens alone and has a direct impact on other individuals. The ingredient that forms trust intention is dependence intention, that is, individual dependence intention on e-commerce. Trust in e-commerce is separated into two stages: pre-purchase and post-purchase (Abdullah & Saleh, 2019). Given the emphasis on determining the influence of trust on repurchase intention, we assess trust after the purchase. Post-purchase trust varies from initial trust in that, in the post-purchase stage, consumers have broad and direct experience upon which they may select whether to make subsequent transactions with the same seller (Taylor, Donovan & Ishida, 2014). In this case of repeat purchases, consumers tend to evaluate products or services based on actual performance after consumption. They may reconsider their concepts of trust based on this firsthand experience (Abdullah & Saleh, 2019). In this case, familiarity or repeated interactions are considered the main source of trust and only emerge in the case of repurchase, which may lead to distrust or trust (Mou, Shin & Cohen, 2015).

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4.1.4. Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is the condition in which consumers' needs, desires, and expectations for a product are met (Lee et al., 2016). Getting consumers to continue using a product, getting consumers to develop loyalty, getting consumers to tell others about the product is customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is consumers' reaction and evaluation of service level. According to Ingaldi and Ulewicz (2019), indicators for measuring customer satisfaction include: (1) Product/service quality, that is, the ability of online shopping websites to provide product or service satisfaction. (2) Price refers to satisfaction with prices and discounts provided by online shopping websites. (3) Convenience refers to consumers' satisfaction when conducting e-commerce transactions. Early conceptualizations of satisfaction research typically defined satisfaction as the post-choice evaluative judgment of a specific purchase decision (Huang, 2017). Customer satisfaction is interpreted as a process or outcome (Lee et al., 2016). In the process definition, the negative paradigm is emphasized, where the customer compares performance with expectations and decides to confirm or deny (Uzir et al., 2021). Wu and Tseng (2014) also define satisfaction as "*the feeling of pleasure or disappointment that a person has by comparing a product's perceived performance or results with his or her expectations*." Some researchers emphasize that satisfaction is service quality (Wu & Tseng, 2014; Huang, 2017; Uzir et al., 2021).

5. Conclusion

This article examines the present situation of China's e-commerce market, which has been emphasized in the previous studies. The literature review primarily centers on two key areas. Firstly, the article highlights the electronic customer satisfaction can be influenced by factors such as electronic service quality, trust, and willingness to repeat purchases. As the number of Chinese internet users continues to rise, an increasing number of customers are opting to conduct transactions through e-commerce. Investigating the factors that influence customer satisfaction in e-commerce is of significant importance to the e-commerce market.

In addition to this, this study also suggests a research framework. The literature on consumer satisfaction highlights several categories. that require further research. Furthermore, as extensively discussed in previous studies, e-commerce customer satisfaction needs to be studied from multiple perspectives in order to explain the studied phenomenon with a comprehensive theory. Finally, it is suggested that future research could expand the methods analyzed e-commerce consumer happiness to give deeper and more unique aspects. Therefore, this study proposes an adoption framework based on DeLone and McLean (2003) information system success theory based on a review of the literature and will use quantitative research methods for future empirical research.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors reported no conflicts of interest for this work and declare that there is no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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