



Online Shoppers Inclination towards a Shopping Website: A Study on Virtual Shopping Experience

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ABSTRACT: There lays a sea difference in the very nature of traditional service quality and e-commerce service quality. However, the most prominent and perhaps the most apparent difference between traditional service quality and electronic service quality is the replacement of interpersonal interaction with that of human-machine interaction. The pure peculiarity proposes many arguments concerning the dimensions that might be considered to appraise service quality in the e-commerce context.

Purpose: This paper examined the relationship between e-service quality dimensions and overall customer satisfaction.

Methodology: The descriptive analysis was used to know the gap between perceived and expected service quality by the buyers of a specific website.

Findings: The study established that the service quality dimensions have a positive impact on the satisfaction of buyers' in the virtual world that can lead to future association with the same seller through repetitive purchases.

Originality/value: The study modified the SERVQUAL model and developed the dimensions of the instrument. The inference of this study provides a valuable reference for managers of online stores, as well as the researchers interested in web marketing.

Keywords: customer satisfaction, e-commerce and e-service quality

Abbreviations: e-Commerce - Electronic Commerce and e-Service Quality - Electronic Service Quality.

I. INTRODUCTION

E-retailing is a certified method of convenient shopping that can scrimp and save on ones' time and effort of tracking the merchants, locating items in e-stores, and acquiring the offerings effortlessly [2]. An individual can procure the basic needs at any moment, without actually stepping out of home or plan for a short shopping trip to nearby bricks and mortar store. Instead of stepping into an offline store, web stores with the help of interne can be browsed with no trouble through the internet. The time and surfing benefits of virtual shopping are likely to be apparent in the buying behavior of bargain hunters through their positive perceptions regarding convenience and e-satisfaction. In analogy with their stages of satisfaction that the shopper experiences with a particular business, service satisfaction is reliant on how well they receive it, and it matches their expectations [1].

If buyer perception is higher than the expectations, the service is considered excellent, if found equal, then service is considered good, but if there are discrepancies in meeting the expectations, the service is considered inferior [13]. The substandard services would thwart the customer, which would impact business profitability [18]. Thus, service quality is very

crucial to charm and cohere customers. The expectations of buyers' regarding the service quality thus needs to be gauged persistently by the e-tailers' to elude dissatisfaction in them [27] and to win a spirited edge over the competitors [4]. The rapid growth of internet shopping in recent years has made it compulsory to carefully categorize critical factors persuading the buyer behavior and their attitude toward e-store shopping. Identifying such significant factors influencing online consumer behavior is vital for online sellers to clearly understand critical factors influencing online customers' shopping intentions and take all the necessary actions to ensure effective customer relationship management. If identified and appropriately managed, those critical factors can provide a cutting edge advantage to web sellers' and also increase consumers' satisfaction level and experiences with them. Today, where customers' have many choices, it becomes mandatory for online players to revamp their corporate philosophy customer-oriented to sustain their market position and attract new customers [9]

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Service quality (SQ) perceived by customers is the result of a comparison of customers' expectation (E) of services that the organization should offer versus their

perception of the performance (P) delivered by the service organization. A customer gap occurs when buyers' expectations mismatches their perceptions. Managing the service quality underline on managing this gap. Every firm puts in its earnest efforts to minimize the gap between (P) and (E). Identifying and understanding this gap is very imperative to devise customer orientated strategy [24-25] after proper understanding to close it. Online shopping in the last two decades has seen tremendous growth in India. The consumers, especially youngsters, are preferring online shopping websites more frequently than the brick and mortar store as it is convenient and easy to shop on the go. Even people in their mid 30's and 40's have also shifted their shopping patterns to online shopping mode. Though much research has been undertaken to study the various aspects of online shoppers' behavior, surprisingly, very few research has been conducted to compare and figure out the most surfed website for online shopping i.e., Amazon or Flipkart. Our study tried to bridge that research gap to identify the most preferred site for online buyers and comparing the service quality dimensions on online buyers' satisfaction. Keeping the objective in mind, measures of central tendency and f statistic regression was used to test the given hypothesis:

H0: *There is no significant relationship between E-service quality and satisfaction of online buyers*

H1: *There is a significant relationship between E-service quality and satisfaction of online buyers*

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Ease of use

One of the dimensions of excellent service quality provided by the e-commerce websites is the ease with which their site can be used by the patrons. It is the overall navigation structure that kicks off their perception of ease of use and collaterally persuades their attitude and behavioral intentions [3]. It includes how effortlessly the customer can fetch the information from the website, whether using the different features of the website were comfortable [16, 19], the text/labels/menu items are easy to read and comprehend and that whether can a user become skillful in using the website and the like [22].

In the study, composite scores for the expected as well as perceived "Ease of use" are estimated with the help of regression imputation. The service quality gap for all the selected online ecommerce websites is also estimated through the difference between composite scores the expected as well as perceived "Ease of use". The descriptive analysis of the perceived score of service quality, expected service quality and the gap between them for all the selected online ecommerce websites is studied. The descriptive analysis was used to analyse the central tendency (mean score) of the responses as collected in the study. The results of the descriptive analysis are given in Table 1.

The results indicate that the mean score of the perceived ease of use dimension of the service quality is found to be higher in the case of the companies Amazon and Flipkart. Thus, the two companies report being with a positive service quality gap, as both are

perceived to be more efficient in providing the online shopping platform to their customers. Amazon is seen to be in the lead position in comparison to its competitor.

The quality gap, as found, is not so impressive in the case of e-Bay and Snapdeal. The results indicate that the p-value of the F statistics is found to be less than 0.05 percent level of significance. Thus, with a ninety-five percent confidence level, it can be concluded that there exists a significant difference in the gap of the expected and perceived service quality concerning the ease of use in the case of the selected four companies.

B. Privacy

The online customers are increasingly raising their voice against the data processing followed by virtual businesses, which is viewed as a menace to their security and privacy (Chouhan *et al*, 2015 and Talwar, 2015) [5,20]. The Web shopping lacks physical interaction, making the task of convincing the consumer to be trickier in believing that a particular website is secure. Security and privacy are paramount to reduce the perceived risk and increases the perceived trust of online shoppers. Privacy as a unflinchingly evaluative criterion in online services help the buyers' to decide upon the interaction with a website [17,8,6,11]. In this study, frequent online shoppers responded on different statements of privacy of the website. Regression imputation was used to calculate the composite scores for expected and perceived service quality. The variation between the composite scores helped in estimating the gap in the service quality delivered by the four companies. The descriptive analysis included the analysis of the central tendency (mean score) and dispersion analysis (standard deviation) of the responses collected in the study.

The results of descriptive analysis as given in Table 2 indicate that the mean score of the privacy dimension of the service quality is higher in the case of Amazon and Flipkart. Both confirm a positive service quality gap. A negative gap is although in the case of e-Bay and Snapdeal, indicating people are not very happy with their services. Amazon reports the maximum positive gap, while Snapdeal shows the most negative gap. Such a high and low gap is since the Amazon and Flipkart are perceived to be more secure for online transactions to their customers. The p-value of the F statistics is found to be less than 0.05 percent level of significance. Thus, with a ninety-five percent confidence level, it can be concluded that there exists a significant difference in the gap of the expected and perceived service quality concerning the ease of use in the case of the selected four companies.

C. Website Design

As already discussed, web design; is one of the prominent factors that induces consumers to shop online [7, 21, 25] and rather unswervingly affect their trustworthiness and loyalty towards a specific website. It includes the visual appearance, ease of navigation, opening and closing time of a website et cetra and is all about the overall impression of the website. Five-point Likert scale statements were adapted from different studies to measure the web design of different e-Commerce companies.

Table 1: Gap Analysis “Ease of use” in service quality.

Dimension name	Company name	Perceived service quality	Expected service quality	Gap in service quality w.r.t. “Ease of use”	F statistic (p-value)	Remarks
Ease of use		Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean(SD)	8345 (0000)	Significant difference exists
	Amazon	6.524	5.352	1.17		
	e-Bay	5.252	6.963	-1.71		
	Flipkart	6.544	5.376	1.167		
	Snapdeal	5.244	6.929	-1.68		

Source: Computed from SPSS

Table 2: Gap Analysis “Privacy” in service quality.

Quality dimension	Company name	Perceived service quality	Expected service quality	Gap in service quality w.r.t. “Privacy”	F statistic (p-value)	Remarks
Privacy		Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	9668.45 (0.000)	Significant difference exists
	Amazon	6.98	5.287	1.693		
	e-Bay	5.721	7.091	-1.37		
	Flipkart	7.046	5.414	1.632		
	Snapdeal	5.461	6.8554	-1.394		

Source: Computed from SPSS.

Table 3: Gap Analysis “Website Design” in service quality.

Quality dimension	Company name	Perceived service quality	Expected service quality	Gap in service quality w.r.t. “Website Design”	F statistic (p-value)	Remarks
Website Design		Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	6780.33 (0000)	Significant difference exists
	Amazon	6.5826	5.1172	1.4654		
	e-Bay	5.054	6.6009	-1.5469		
	Flipkart	6.5109	5.0525	1.4584		
	Snapdeal	5.0892	6.5934	-1.51		

Source: Computed from SPSS

Regression imputation was used to calculate the composite scores for Web Design as a service quality dimension expected and perceived. The variation between the composite scores helped in estimating the gap in the service quality provided by the four companies. The descriptive analysis of the perceived score of service quality expected service quality and the gap between them for all the selected online e-commerce websites were studied. The descriptive analysis included the analysis of the central tendency (mean score) of the responses collected in the study. Table 3 shows the results of the descriptive analysis.

The results indicate that the mean score of the web design dimension of the service quality is higher in the Amazon and Flipkart. Both companies perceived to be impressive in the overall design of their website, thus report a positive service quality gap. The remaining players do not have an ideal corporate image in the eyes of buyers and have a negative gap. Anova was applied to test the significant difference in the web design of these e-commerce companies. The findings indicated that sig. value is 000, which is less than 0.05 (95% confidence level) that indicates that there is a significant difference among these companies in terms of web design.

D. Personalisation

As the online market place is getting competitive and increasing number of players are trying to invest in the business model, it is imperative for online firms to

personalize their services. It requires a sincere effort to give peculiar attention, a private thank you notes from online stores, and the availability of a message area for customer questions or comments [23] to captivate and endure them [12]. The companies must work on customizing the web design, sorting of products, delivery convenience, and payment suitability and the like, as per the need of individual customers. For comparing the difference among different companies, composite scores the expected as well as perceived “personalisation” is estimated with the help of regression imputation. The gap between the perceived as well as expected service qualities for all the selected online ecommerce websites is estimated by calculating the difference between composite scores the expected as well as perceived personalisation. The descriptive analysis of the perceived score of service quality, expected service quality and the gap between them for all the selected online ecommerce websites is studied. The result of the analysis is shown in Table 4.

For comparing the difference among different companies, composite scores for the expected as well as perceived “personalization” is estimated with the help of regression imputation. Difference between composite scores for expected as well as perceived personalization reported the service quality gap in the case of all four companies. The findings also indicate that with sig value is 000, which is less than .05 (95% confidence level) indicating that there is a significant difference among these companies in terms of web design.

E. Assurance

Assurance is all about keeping ones' words about what was promised by a vendor to be delivered ? It is a kind of guarantee provided by online companies to consumers. As one of the service quality dimensions, it helps to build consumer trust. Lack of assurance perhaps may prevent the purchaser from purchasing [22]. While comparing the performance of our four companies concerning Assurance, the regression imputation was used to calculate their composite scores. A mismatch between their composite scores on the assurance dimension confirmed there lays a gap between the perception and expectation of buyers regarding Assurance.

The descriptive analysis as used analysed the central tendency (mean score) of the responses collected in the study. The results of the descriptive analysis given in Table 5 indicates that the mean score of the assurance dimension of the service quality is found to be higher in the case of the companies Amazon and Flipkart, while others had a negative gap. It indicates that Amazon and Flipkart are perceived to be more trustworthy as compared to other players.

The results also indicate that the p-value of the F statistics is found to be less than 0.05 percent level of significance. Thus, with a ninety-five percent confidence level, it can be concluded that there exists a significant difference in the gap of the expected and perceived service quality concerning the ease of use in the case of the selected four companies.

F. Responsiveness

One of the dimensions of excellent service quality provided by the e-commerce websites is the responsiveness of e-vendors, which is a key constituent in providing satisfaction and the lack of which becomes a major source of dissatisfaction to the buyers' [14] Since there is no interaction of customers with vendors, customers often have queries related to their purchases; in that case, their queries need to efficient handling. It Responsiveness has a considerable effect on perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness, which in turn influence attitude toward using the portal site, behavioural intention to reuse portal sites, and actual portal site use [10]. The gap between the perceived as well as expected service quality for all the selected online e-commerce websites gets confirmed through the difference between composite scores of responsiveness. The descriptive analysis of the perceived score of service quality expected service quality and the gap between them for all the selected online e-commerce websites are studied. The descriptive analysis includes the analysis of the central tendency (mean score). The results of the descriptive analysis are given in Table 6. The results indicate that the mean score of the responsiveness dimension of the service quality is higher in the case of two companies, namely: Amazon and Flipkart. However, the gap is found to be negative in the case of e-Bay and Snapdeal. Amazon reported the maximum positive gap while Snapdeal with a negative gap, indicating the level of customer satisfaction.

Table 4: Gap Analysis "Personalisation" in service quality.

Quality dimension	Company name	Perceived service quality	Expected service quality	Gap in service quality w.r.t. "Ease of use"	F statistic (p-value)	Remarks
		Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)		
Personalisation	Amazon	7.2178	5.5448	1.67	1083.99 (0000)	Significant difference exists
	e-Bay	5.8999	7.312	-1.42		
	Flipkart	7.3416	5.6558	1.69		
	Snapdeal	5.6904	7.1019	-1.45		

Source: Computed from SPSS

Table 5: Gap Analysis "Assurance" in service quality.

Quality dimension	Comp-any name	Perceived service quality	Expected service quality	Gap in service quality w.r.t. "Ease of use"	F statistic (p-value)	Remarks
		Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)		
Assurance	Amazon	6.4131	5.0658	1.35	8194.880 (0000)	Significant difference exists
	e-Bay	5.2886	6.6692	-1.38		
	Flipkart	6.5524	5.2071	1.35		
	Snapdeal	5.0665	6.4606	-1.4		

Source: Computed from SPSS

Table 6: Gap Analysis "Responsiveness" in service quality.

Quality dimension	Company name	Perceived service quality	Expect-ed service quality	Gap in service quality w.r.t. "Responsiveness"	F statistic (p-value)	Remarks
		Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)		
Responsiveness	Amazon	6.9982	5.5295	1.4687	12272.55 (0000)	Significant difference exists
	e-Bay	5.6437	7.1929	-1.5492		
	Flipkart	7.0236	5.531	1.4926		
	Snapdeal	5.4891	6.9836	-1.4945		

Moreover, Amazon and Flipkart are perceived to be more responsiveness in providing the online shopping platform to their customers. The p-value of the F statistics is found to be less than 0.05 percent level of significance. Thus, with a ninety-five percent confidence level, it can be concluded that there exists a significant difference in the gap of the expected and perceived service quality concerning the ease of use in the case of the selected four companies.

G. Reliability

One of the dimensions of excellent service quality provided by e-commerce websites is the Reliability of such websites for the customers. It is the consistency of the vendor in terms of his service. Consumers become loyal when the company delivers the products with the same Reliability again and again. The composite scores for the expected as well as perceived "Reliability" were estimated via regression imputation. The difference in them indicates existence of e-service quality gap. The results of the descriptive analysis are given in Table 7.

The results indicate that mean score of the reliability dimension of the service quality is found to be higher in case of Amazon and Flipkart. A negative service gap is reported in the case of e-Bay and Snapdeal. The reason for such results being the fact that both Amazon and Flipkart are perceived to be more efficient in providing the online shopping platform to their customers. The results also indicate that the p-value of the F statistics is found to be less than 0.05 percent level of significance. Thus, with a ninety-five percent confidence level, it can be concluded that there exists a significant difference in the gap of the expected and perceived service quality concerning the ease of use in the case of the selected four companies.

H. Information Quality

The last dimension of service quality leading to customer satisfaction is the information quality of e-commerce websites by the customers. It is related to the information provided by the web sellers related to the product, delivery date, and refund policies. The composite scores for expected and perceived "Information Quality" are estimated with the help of regression imputation. The service quality gap for all the selected online e-commerce websites is estimated through the difference between composite scores the expected as well as perceived "Information Quality." The descriptive analysis of the perceived score of service quality expected and the gap between them for all the selected online e-commerce websites are studied. The descriptive analysis includes the analysis of the central tendency (mean score) of the responses collected in the study. Table 8 shows the results of the descriptive analysis.

The results indicate that the mean score of the perceived ease of use dimension of the service quality is found to be higher in the case of the companies Amazon and Flipkart. Thus, the two companies report being with a positive service quality gap, as both are perceived to be more efficient in providing the online shopping platform to their customers. Amazon is seen to be in the lead position in comparison to its competitor. The quality gap, as found, is not so impressive in the case of e-Bay and Snapdeal. The results indicate that the p-value of the F statistics is found to be less than 0.05 percent level of significance. Thus, with a ninety-five percent confidence level, it can be concluded that there exists a significant difference in the gap of the expected and perceived service quality concerning the ease of use in the case of the selected four companies.

Table 7: Gap Analysis "Reliability" in service quality.

Quality dimension	Company name	Perceived service quality	Expected service quality	Gap in service quality w.r.t 'Reliability'	F statistics (p value)	Remarks
Reliability	Amazon	6.9979	5.2982	1.6997	7967.46 (0000)	Significant difference exists
	e-Bay	5.4554	7.0473	5.3045		
	Flipkart	7.0473	5.3337	1.7136		
	Snapdeal	5.3045	6.5752	-.2707		

Table 8: Gap Analysis "Information Quality" in service quality.

Dimension name	Company name	Perceived service quality	Expect-ed service quality	Gap in service quality w.r.t. "Information Quality"	F statistic (p-value)	Remarks
		Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)		
Information quality	Amazon	6.1535	4.4042	1.75	2083.940 (000)	Significant difference exists
	e-Bay	5.0567	5.7208	-0.67		
	Flipkart	6.1539	4.4599	1.694		
	Snapdeal	4.7408	5.603	-0.862		

Source: Computed from SPSS

IV. CONCLUSION

Contentment is a key to withhold clients and plays a very significant role in profit-generating for e-commerce corporations. The entities victorious at enticing its clientele can quickly stop them from switching over to other companies in the virtual market. The online retailers must stand by the expectations of the

customers and enhance their level of satisfaction. The e-tailers' must continuously assess their online customer service to devise strategies to deliver superior service quality effectively and efficiently. In today's e-commerce scenario where there is stiff competition with domestic and international players entering the market, effective and efficient service quality is vital to attract and retain the customer. The above 8 dimensions are

sure to be taken into consideration and worked upon to minimize the gaps to survive. The service quality that exceeds meets or falls below expectations, serves to be as a common ground for continuation or improvement of the service quality level [15]. In this study, we established that customers from various e-shopping websites experienced a difference between expectation and perception of the service received. The selected four companies report a significant difference in the gap between the expected and perceived service quality for all eight dimensions. Both Amazon and Flipkart have a definite positive gap in meeting customer expectations and are alleged to be more proficient in their offerings in the online shopping platform to their customers. Amazon is the world's largest e-commerce marketplace, which operates in India with a domain name Amazon.in. It is the most populous site on both desktop and mobile and is known for providing precise and dependable services to the consumers. Its' corporate philosophy emphasizes on customer relationship management (Amazon, 2019) through the clear guidelines and protocols as issued by it to its various sellers to ensure that only quality product is delivered. Amazon presents a better user experience through its Prime Membership, which has acquired 100 million subscribers worldwide and is also 35% of its' overall purchases. A secured payment gateway is used by the company to consent to and process customer transactions, better known as 'Amazon Pay.' Many business people, customers, and governments of various countries like India, the United States, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Japan, and the United Kingdom et cetera. trust this gateway. Amazon website observes satisfactory transparent operations, keeping its clients updated about the progress of their delivery, accepts the replacement of a product in 30 days and cases of damage, at no additional cost. It also provides its users a convenience to shop through a single Amazon login. As compared to Flipkart, it is proactive in tracking visitors' traffic and also very prompt in sending mailers and pop up ads through the analytics as soon as a visitor gets tracked. It is also very much involved in the engagement of their visitors and not to forget; they were the first in the e-commerce platform to start a loyalty program for their customers named 'Amazon Prime Membership.'

Flipkart vies mainly with Amazon and Snapdeal in India. It is a strong contender to Amazon and rules over the online selling of apparel. Its' such overriding position got boosted even more with its strategic initiative of acquiring Jabong.com, which is a fashion and lifestyle e-commerce portal in the country, through its subsidiary Myntra. It confronts Amazon, especially in electronics and mobile phone sales. However, it is also struggling with issues gravely crashing its corporate image and clientele. It is censured off and on for its poor service, with dejected shoppers complaining of fake products delivered through its channel partner surfaced on various online platforms. Many victims in the past have raised their voice against their dreadful shopping experience through Flipkart and described their repulsion on receiving stones, bricks, soap bars or wrong products, and even trash. (Source: Business Today, February 02, 2018) [29].

It is also striving hard to tackle with the recent lottery scams defaming its name and endangering the safety and confidentiality of buyers. The prankster calls the online buyers of high-value products and wins their confidence by initially confirming the address, order ID, name and mobile number and casually discussing their shopping experience. Later, they would be lured to win a lucky draw gift with a nominal registration charge of Rs.1,500. It indicates the access of scammer in breaking into the so-called high end modernized security information system of Flipkart and fetching customer details to prey on them (source: The Times of India, June 09, 2019) [30]. As compared to Amazon, the delivery cycle of Flipkart is somewhat slow. Online Shopping festivals like the Great Indian Festival was one of its unique kind of initiative as a first mover in the industry which provided customers the products at dead drop prices as compared to any other platform. Looking at this Flipkart also started Big Billion Days, but again the issue of slow delivery was being reported from the various parts of the country (Source: Debashis Sarkar, The Indian Express, October 06, 2014) [28]. These failures in satisfying customers are a severe blow to the corporate image of Flipkart, compelling the consumers' to think once before being associated. Thus, in a nutshell, in terms of conversion of data traffic, brand engagement, digital media initiatives, delivery systems, and customer service, Amazon provides a better platform as compared to Flipkart.

V. FUTURE SCOPE

The results of the paper uncover the service quality gaps of major e- retailers in India. The next link in the paper could be to benchmark these Indian E-commerce websites with the world's best E-commerce websites to keep them aggressive enough in the global competitive industry. The Indian e-commerce market is one of the fastest-growing markets with ever-increasing investments from various venture capitalists and private equity houses. The growing internet/mobile penetration has also unlocked many doors for e-commerce giants like Paytm Mall, Tata Cliq, Alibaba.com and many more with similar business model to enter into this market and to take Indian consumer at its best with fancy and world-class services cape, customer-centered policies, an interactive approach to solving the customer problems and reliable and time tested services.

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