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FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION OF ONLINE SHOPPING IN OMAN – YOUTH PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Purpose: The objective of the study was to analyze the impact of online customer satisfaction through the product quality, application safety, delivery guarantee, and the offers through online shopping.

Design/methodology/approach: For this research, the purposive sampling method was used to collect 120 samples through a questionnaire—from those who are performing online shopping in Oman especially the youth. SPSS was used to analyze the collected data. Chi-square analysis, ANOVA and Kolmogorov-Smirnov ranking analyses were carried out to conclude.

Findings: The results of the empirical study reveal that the perceptions of the youth confirming the product quality & service guarantee influenced comfort and satisfaction to the online customers. The study also revealed that the service tangibility concerning the guaranteed package and delivery process along with the lowest price motivated them to go for online shopping repeatedly.

Research Implications: The study illustrates through Quality Safety Assurance (QSA) model, the factors viz. Product Quality, Application Safety, Delivery Guarantee, and Offers should be focused to improve the online customer satisfaction, and the best-buy offers are the factors which need more attention to increase the Omani clientele.

Social implications: The study throws light on the factors and their important role towards improving customer satisfaction during online shopping and the ways and means to augment the same.

Originality/Value: Only a very few have examined the factors influencing the customers' satisfaction of online shopping in Oman, and it is a first-hand study of its kind, and the results will be useful to the online marketers.

Keywords: Online shopping, Customer Satisfaction, Product Quality, Application Safety, Delivery Guarantee, Offers.

INTRODUCTION

Worldwide, the number of people buying online has been increasing as they feel it is easy to do online shopping compared to traditional shopping. Online shopping is a form of e-commerce in which a consumer can purchase goods or services directly from the seller through the Internet. Consumer's intention to buy depends on the appearance of the website, quality information and video clipping narration of the products, rather than physical experience (Kolesar and Galbraith, 2000). Online shopping is similar to shopping using a paper catalog wherein customers cannot touch, smell or feel the items. In online shopping, customers can explore the company's products and services viewing these pictures and images – the details of the product specifications, features, and pricing mentioned therein and make their purchases in real time.

With the growing speed of the World Wide Web, online shopping is becoming popular among the Omani youth. The younger generation entirely depends on the internet as they are accustomed to using the internet for everything. El Khatib and Khan (2017) confirmed that the younger generation is more interested in browsing anything and everything online. Though the Omani market is small, easy access to the internet making the youth feel online shopping is easier and comfortable, and hence they consider online shopping is useful to purchase the products. Online shopping has brought more customer turnout as it has been considered as the easy way of doing shopping being at home at a relatively lower price compared to traditional shopping. In online shopping, the customers need not run up and down to buy a specific product from a specific store, and the shopping becomes easier. It is similar to that of a shop where you can buy multiple brands/products under one roof. The technology is helping the consumers to react fast. There are many online shopping websites familiar amongst the Omani youth viz. Amazon, Namshi, JollyChic, Ebay, Roumaan, Aliexpress, etc. All these sites focus, mainly towards increasing the customer satisfaction and thereby towards customer retention. These brands are focusing the majority of Omani youth because they were importing the goods directly or the inclined to buy the imported goods. So the online marketers, not only trying to bring lots of Omani customers into their manifold but also trying to serve and enrich the Omani youth community with the online experience. Though the five dimensions for the perceived service quality plays a predominant role in customer satisfaction, the factors enriching the customer satisfaction on the mindset of the Omani youth need to be analyzed and aligned to that of the reliability of the product information, service assurance, the service tangibility through guarantee, customer alliance, the responsiveness

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through customer queries, and empathy towards customer grievances. There is no doubt that the online shoppers are paying attention to these factors but the customers still have the following questions:

- 1. How far is the information advertised through these online websites reliable?
- 2. How well are the systems and the safety measures of the transactions held?
- 3. What is the assurance that their personal information will not be susceptible to hacking? and
- 4. What is the guarantee of the intact delivery of the product ordered?

These questions were backed up by the events of the past viz.

- i. A customer ordered a product which was totally different from what he received as a door delivery
- ii. Due to hacking, some of the customers lost their entire money in their bank accounts after online shopping
- iii. Few of the customers, who ordered goods online received empty boxes containing just papers.

Thus, the bitter experiences of the bygone days had made the youth customers feel traditional shopping is safer compared to other modes of shopping, especially online shopping.

Though the trend appeals to change in Oman and the younger generation is coming forward to order products through online websites, the fear remains, and the causes of such issues remain unsolved. Thus there is a need for the study to find out the essential elements and the perceived expectation of the online customers viz. Omani youth. The study will help to identify and generalize the factors to improve the customers' satisfaction through fulfilling the expectations of the customers of all ages, especially in Oman.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Molla and Heeks (2007) indicated that the online retailing benefits the organizations through the improved value chain, increase in profitability and efficiency of the services. Khan, Hatami, Sasidharan, and Al-Roshdi (2017) claimed that the easy means to influence customers are through online retailing. Zatalini and Pamungkas (2016) pointed out that the factors leading to customer loyalty and the successful implementation of online retailing are the privacy of customer information and security, and the speed of service. According to Suh and Han (2003), security is the biggest issue, the online shopping customers worried about and so higher the system security; higher will be the customer satisfaction. Vehovar (2003) showed that the security concerns act as barriers against online retailing and directly affects customer satisfaction. Pavlou (2003) confirmed trust and security as the main beliefs customers look for when they go online shopping. Matic and Vojvodic (2014) showed that the insecurity of internet usage affects the online purchase decision. Javadi Dolatabadi, Nourbakhsh, Poursaeedi and Asadollahi (2012) stated that the financial risk and the non-delivery risk affects online customer behavior and thus the online retailers should make the websites safer and ensure prompt delivery. Niranjanamurthy, Kavyashree, Jagannath, and Chahar (2013) claimed that the factors driving enterprises to use online retailing are improved service quality and reduce costs. Oxley and Yeung (2001) confirmed that online shopping is widely preferred because it provides easy access to a large amount of information at reduced costs. AlGhamdi, Nguyen, Nguyen, and Drew (2012) claimed that the factors encouraging companies to engage in online retailing are the Government action in the form of reliable and secure online payment option, e-commerce support, strong ICT infrastructure, and educational e-commerce awareness programs in the country. Wirtz and Lihotzky (2003) stated that building customer trust and convenience are necessary for online businesses. Constantinides (2004) proved that the factors influencing the online buying decision-making could be controllable. Azadavar, Shahbazi, and Teimouri (2011) emphasized that factors such as trust, customer service, the price of products and security, encourage people to buy online products. Amongst all the other factors the most important one is transaction security. Eid (2011) claimed that the trust and the customer satisfaction could be enhanced during online shopping only if the customer is assured of the product quality and quality information. Khan, Al-Balushi, Algaithi, and Al-shihi (2017) claimed that the information reliability is the factor which highly induces customer satisfaction. Tsiotsou (2006) claimed that the perceived product quality had a direct impact on the overall satisfaction of purchase intentions. Park and Kim (2001) claimed that the quality of the product, quality of packing and security perceptions impact customer satisfaction and the related information reduces transaction costs and risk, Lin, Wu, and Chang (2010) identified the most important factors affecting online consumers' satisfaction are delivery quality, product quality, service quality, system quality and a considerable level of perceived price. Al Karim (2013) stated that the information available with diversified products, reasonable prices, easy ordering system, and delivery without damage are the catalysts for online customer satisfaction. Zamri (2014) confirmed that the three factors – product quality, brand diversity, and shopping experience influence online shopping customer satisfaction. Jiradilok, Malisuwan, Madan, and Sivaraks (2014) claimed that the shopping experience plays an important role in attracting customers as the experienced customers have sufficient knowledge of the price, the reliability of the website and the payment security. Wu and Tseng (2014) stated that the experiential marketing could easily enforce the customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. El Khatib and Khan (2017) claimed that the younger generation prefers online browsing mainly because of information reliability. The pleasure features of online purchasing are

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more important than the privacy and security features when consumers intent to purchase (<u>Belanger, Hiller and Smith</u>, 2002). <u>Alam and Yasin</u> (2010) stated that the product quality, offers, product variety, and delivery performances are the four key factors influencing online shopping consumers' satisfaction. After thoroughly going through the above literature review, the questionnaire was prepared in line with the variables identified and the data was collected from the respondents.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out using a questionnaire which was divided into two parts – part one containing the demographic data and part two containing the variables obtained through the above review of literature viz. product quality, application safety, delivery guarantee, and the offers. Our samples were obtained from the selected villages of Oman viz. Ibri, Saham, and Sohar.

On the whole, 130 samples were collected from the youth. The purposive sampling method was used to collect the samples, i.e., out of 130 total samples collected, 120 samples – those performing online shopping were only considered for our study and the related analysis. SPSS was used to analyze the collected data. Chi-square analysis was carried out, and Kolmogorov-Smirnov ranking analysis was conducted among the group variables to rank the factors amongst each group, and the group variables were tested with regression analysis to arrive at a multi-linear equation to derive the relationship amongst them to conclude.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Table.1 Demographic details of the respondents

Characteristics		Frequency	%
Performed Online shopping	Yes	120	92.3
	No	10	7.7
Gender	Male	44	36.7
	Female	76	63.3
Age	< 20 years	23	19.2
	20 - < 30 years	78	65.0
	30 - < 40 years	13	10.8
	< 40 years	6	5.0
Working Status	Working	34	28.3
-	Not working/studying	86	71.7
Online shopping through the websites	Amazon	40	33.3
	Aliexpress	26	21.7
	Jollychic	28	23.3
	eBay	17	14.2
	Namshi	6	5.0
	Roumaan	3	2.5
How frequent was your online shopping	Frequently / once a month	44	36.7
	Once in six months	48	40.0
	Once a year	26	21.7
	Never	2	1.7
Most important factor in online shopping	Convenience	68	56.7
	Attractive Website design	52	43.3

Source: Questionnaire

Table 2. Product Quality

#	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	K-S value	Chi Square	p value
1	The quality of the product was ensured while purchased online	4 3.3%	6 5.0%	19 15.8%	48 40%	43 35.8%	2.667	119.700	.000
2	Through online shopping, we get reliable information about the product and the brand	2 1.7%	8 6.7%	27 22.5%	47 39.2%	36 30.0%	2.594		

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3	During online shopping, we get more diversified products with price and quality	6 5.0%	13 10.8%	24 20.0%	28 23.3%	49 40.0%	2.561	
4	Information obtained through online shopping is consistent with the quality of the product	5 4.2%	19 15.8%	43 35.8%	36 30.0%	17 14.2%	2.228	
5	Product quality & service guarantee during online influences comfort and satisfaction	5 4.2%	10 8.3%	19 15.8%	28 23.3%	58 48.3%	2.689	

Null hypothesis: There is no relationship between the product quality and the choices of the respondents.

From the table above, it is observed that the p-value is less than 0.05, i.e., the Null hypothesis gets rejected. Therefore, it is confirmed that there is a significant relationship between product quality and the choices of the respondents. Comparing the K-S values obtained from Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, 'Product quality & service guarantee during online influences comfort and satisfaction' rank first followed by 'The quality of the product was ensured while purchased online' followed by 'Through online shopping, we get reliable information about the product and the brand.'

Table 3. Application Safety

#	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	K-S value	Chi Square	p value
1	I feel secured providing personal information during online purchases	12 10.0%	28 23.3%	27 22.5%	36 30.0%	17 14.2%	1.994		
2	Online shopping has adequate security features – payment etc.	5 4.2%	23 19.2%	36 30.0%	35 29.2%	21 17.5%	2.050		
3	I trust online shopping websites as they do online trade responsibly	11 9.2%	31 25.8%	30 25.0%	34 28.3%	14 11.7%	1.978	82.000	.000
4	Return of goods and retrieving payment process is guaranteed in online shopping	21 17.5%	22 18.3%	28 23.3%	38 31.7%	11 9.2%	2.011		
5	Payment process can be relied upon during online shopping	11 9.2%	32 26.7%	32 26.7%	34 28.3%	11 9.2%	1.983		

Null hypothesis: There is no relationship between the application safety and the choices of the respondents.

From the table above, it is observed that the p-value is less than 0.05, i.e., the Null hypothesis gets rejected. Therefore, it is confirmed that there is a significant relationship between the application safety and the choices of the respondents. Comparing the K-S values obtained from Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, 'Online shopping has adequate security features – payment, etc.' ranks first followed by 'Return of goods and retrieving payment process is guaranteed in online shopping' followed by 'I feel secured providing personal information during online purchases.'

Table 4. Delivery Guarantee

#	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	K-S value	Chi Square	p value
1	Online shopping delivery & package were flexible & responsible	9 7.5%	7 5.8%	27 22.5%	41 34.2%	36 30.0%	2.489	82.200	.000

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2	I am satisfied with the package and delivery process as it is tangible	6 5.0%	12 10.0%	32 26.7%	51 42.5%	19 15.8%	2.361	
3	I prefer online shopping as I received the product without any damage	6 5.0%	18 15.0%	31 25.8%	34 28.3%	31 25.8%	2.367	
4	I got my product delivered in time as per the service assurance	8 6.7%	21 17.5%	29 24.2%	42 35.0%	20 16.7%	2.250	
5	The delivery process does not compromise with the price and the quality	13 10.8%	19 15.8%	44 36.7%	27 22.5%	17 14.2%	2.089	

Null hypothesis: There is no relationship between the delivery guarantee and the choices of the respondents.

From the table above, it is observed that the p-value is less than 0.05, i.e., the Null hypothesis gets rejected. Therefore, it is confirmed that there is a significant relationship between the delivery guarantee and the choices of the respondents. Comparing the K-S values obtained from Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, 'Online shopping delivery & package were flexible, and responsible' ranks first followed by 'I prefer online shopping as I received the product without any damage' followed by 'I am satisfied with the package and delivery process as it is tangible.'

Table 5. The Offers

#	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	K-S value	Chi Square	p value
1	Discount coupons are offered during online purchases encourages me to purchase more	9 14.0%	14 11.7%	19 15.8%	29 242%	49 40.8%	2.528		
2	Various offers available in online shopping are genuine and reliable	9 7.5%	15 12.5%	24 20.0%	47 39.2%	25 20.8%	2.356		
3	Online shopping offers outweigh the offers available in the traditional shopping	6 7.5%	9 12.5%	24 20.0%	43 39.2%	38 20.8%	2.544	33.600	.004
4	Service Guarantee is assured during online shopping	3 2.5%	15 12.5%	22 18.3%	32 26.7%	48 40.0%	2.594		
5	In online shopping, I got the lowest price without compromising quality	4 3.3%	10 8.3%	21 17.5%	35 29.2%	50 41.7%	2.650		

Null hypothesis: There is no relationship between the offers and the choices of the respondents.

From the table above, it is observed that the p-value is less than 0.05. i.e., the Null hypothesis gets rejected. Therefore, it is confirmed that there is a significant relationship between the offers and the choices of the respondents. Comparing the K-S values obtained from Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, 'In online shopping, I got the lowest price without compromising quality' ranks first followed by 'Service Guarantee is assured during online shopping' followed by 'online shopping offers outweigh the offers available in traditional shopping.'

Table 6. Customer Satisfaction through Online Shopping

#	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	K-S value	Chi Square	p value
1	I am happy and prefer to redo online shopping	3 2.5%	21 17.5%	24 20.0%	41 34.2%	31 25.8%	2.422	55.500	.000

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2	Shopping through online is easier and faster	4 3.3%	11 9.2%	31 25.8%	50 41.7%	24 20.0%	2.439	
3	I am satisfied with the online shopping security system	8 6.7%	25 20.8%	41 34.2%	34 28.3%	12 10.0%	2.094	
4	Online shoppers took care of the timely delivery of the product, assured package quality		14 11.7%	36 30.0%	42 35.0%	20 16.7%	2.289	
5	I feel comfortable in ordering products through online	7 5.8%	24 20.0%	31 25.8%	38 31.7%	20 16.7%	2.222	

Null hypothesis: There is no relationship between the Customer Satisfaction and the choices of the respondents.

From the above table, it is observed that the p-value is less than 0.05. i.e., the Null hypothesis gets rejected. Therefore, it is confirmed that there is a significant relationship between the customer satisfaction and the choices of the respondents. Comparing the K-S values obtained from Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, 'Shopping through online is easier and faster' ranks first followed by 'I am happy and prefer to redo online shopping' followed by 'Online shoppers took care of the timely delivery of the product, assured package quality.'

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Table. 7 (a), (b), (c) & (d)

Variables Entered/Removed

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Product Quality, Application Safety, Delivery Guarantee and Offers, Customer satisfaction		Enter

^a Dependent Variable: customer satisfaction

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R	Std. Error of
			Square	the Estimate
1	.698a	487	.469	3.07566

^a Predictors: (Constant), Product Quality, Application Safety, Delivery Guarantee and Offers, Customer satisfaction.

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression Residual Total	931.336 1087.864 2119.200	4 115 119	257.834 9.460	27.256	.000p

^a Dependent Variable: customer satisfaction

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^b all requested variables entered

^b Predictors: (Constant), Product Quality, Application Safety, Delivery Guarantee, and Offers, Customer satisfaction.



Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Unstandardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	В	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-2.670	1.974		-1.352	.179
Product Quality	.236	.102	.187	2.319	.022
Application Safety	.236	.089	.280	3.710	.000
Delivery Guarantee	.318	.104	.257	3.069	.003
Offers	.248	.092	.214	2.712	.008

^a Dependent Variable: Customer satisfaction

From the above table, it can be seen that the p-value is < 0.05.

Thus, the obtained regression line is as follows:

$$CS = -2.670 + .236Q + .239 AS + .318 DG + .248 O$$

Where: CS is the Customer Satisfaction, Q is Product Quality, AS is Application Safety, DG is Delivery Guarantee, and O is Offers.

There is an association between the selection of Customer satisfaction & Product Quality, Application Safety, Delivery Guarantee, and Offers. i.e., Product Quality, Application Safety, Delivery Guarantee, and Offers affects customer satisfaction and makes an impact on online shopping customer satisfaction.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is observed from the findings that

- Amazon website was preferred for most of the respondents to perform online shopping followed by Jollychic.
- The product quality & the service guarantee influenced comfort and satisfaction to the online customers.
- They got reliable information about the product and the brand.
- They experienced the application of safety in the form of secured payment gateways, etc.
- The application was user-friendly, and the procedure for returning goods was simple and retrieving payment was easier as well.
- They felt secured providing personal information during online shopping.
- Received the product intact and without any damage and were satisfied with the service tangibility concerning guaranteed package and delivery process.
- Timely delivery of the product ordered and package quality was assured.
- The respondents felt that they got the lowest price without compromising quality along with assured Service Guarantee.
- Online shopping offers outweighed the offers available in traditional shopping.
- Online Shopping was considered easier and faster.
- Preferred to go for online shopping again.

On the whole, the perceptions of the youth confirm that the Product Quality, Application Safety, Delivery Guarantee, and the Offers directly impact online customer satisfaction. Thus, it is recommended that the online shoppers of Oman should take utmost care of the following:

- Without compromising the Product quality, variety of products should be made available online.
- As the customers repeatedly visit the online sites, the application should be made highly reliable.
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM) should be smooth No time delay in attending to customers on any inquiry relating to the ordering of goods, delivery, feedback, etc.
- Delivery Quality must be ensured package and time of delivery.
- Application safety should be ensured whether it is a payment gateway or personal information details, the application should also be highly user-friendly, and utmost secrecy needs to be maintained.

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• The most expected by the Omani youth during online marketing is that they are looking for best-buy offers. So the offers should be updated on a regular basis.

The above-discussed features can be illustrated using a conceptual model named as Quality Safety Assurance Model (QSA Model) which is as follows:



Fig.1 Quality Safety Assurance Model (QSA Model)

As per the Model, it is evident that the four factors viz. Product Quality, Application Safety, Delivery Guarantee, and Offers, impact directly on the different dimensions of the perceived Service Quality of Customer Satisfaction. In other words, Customer satisfaction can be improved through the information reliability, the responsiveness by the shoppers through prompt response to the customer queries and redressing the customer grievances, Service tangibility in the form of assured sales services, guaranteed product delivery, assured service guarantee and the best offers. Thus the QSA model illustrates the factors, the online shoppers should focus on to improve the customer satisfaction and Best-buy offers the factor which needs more attention to increase the Omani clientele.

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