A Comparison of Customers Responses to E-Service Quality Statements: Customer Encountered vs. Not Encountered Problems[1]

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Abstract

In recent years, quick growing of online shopping all around the world and differentiation of online shopping from traditional shopping at many points (such as service quality perceptions, sources of problems encountered) have been accompanied new issues. Since the rules of traditional shopping are not completely valid related to these issues, new researches have been required in terms of online shopping. In this study performed, according to whether e-costumers encountered problems in the course of online shopping, it was aimed to compare the responses given to statements of E-S-Qual (E-service quality) scale and determine the differences emerged. Observing difference between the customers encountered and not encountered problems in only 4 statements out of 22. It shows that these 4 statements ("This site is well organized", "This site does not crash", "It delivers orders when promised", "It has in stock the items the company claims to have")are important factors about encountering problem during online shopping and eliminating the deficiencies in these areas of online stores influential on not encountering problems.

Keywords: Online shopping, Online Shopping Problems, E-Service quality

1. Introduction

Online shopping which entered into our lives in recent years generally revolutionized in the habits of shopping. The customers gain the possibility to use their time, energy and other resources as they wish with the environment provided to them through online shopping. Disappearance of time and place restrictions of traditional marketing in online shopping, it contributes online shopping to become widespread every passing day by making it more attractive. Online shopping also made progress in Turkey as it is all around the world. In Table 1, order rates of goods or services through Internet are seen as a result of household cognitive technologies usage research published by Turkish Statistical Institute every year. From the data obtained, it is seen that shopping through Internet has double growth rate in 4 years by increasing rapidly. Hence, according to this data, one of every 5 Internet users made shopping through Internet in 2012.

Table 1: Percentage of individuals (16 to 74 age group) who purchased goods or services over the Internet for private purposes (%)

Years	Turkey (%)
2009	11.80%
2010	15.00%
2011	18.60%
2012	21.80%

Source: Turkish Statistical Institute, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Usage Survey on Households and Individuals, 2012, 2011,2010, 2009 No: 10880, 8572, 148, 147

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As a result of the credit card research of Kart Monitor in 2012 which was made by Interbank Card Center (ICC), 5 TL transaction out of 100 TL has been made through Internet in 2008, and this amount has increased up to 9 TL in 2012. It is foreseen that this rate will increase up to 18 % in 2023. Moreover, the number of payment conducted with card through Internet in 2023 is foreseen as 600 million and it is estimated that total amount will reach up to 356 billion TL(ICC Kart Monitor, 2012).

Rapidly growing online shopping also accompanied with new issues. As an example of these issues, we may count some elements of e-service quality as credit card security, privacy, on-time delivery, ease of navigation(Holloway, Beatty, 2003).It is foreseen that malfunction emerged any element of e-service quality will cause the customer encounter a problem and negative effect in their attitudes towards web sites, their satisfactions and their intention related to purchase again.

When analyzing the research conducted, it was seen that there are numerous studies about online shopping however very few of them are related to the problems encountered in online shopping.Therefore, the problem of research has been determined as there is no knowledge how the e-service quality perceptions of the customers encountered problems differentiate from the perceptions of the customers who did not encounter problems during online shopping and by determining this, it is aimed to determine the most frequent problems originated e-service quality during online shopping.

2. Literature Review

2.1 E-Service Quality

E-service quality, as defined by Santos (2003), is the overall customer perceptions, judgments and evaluations of the quality of service obtained from a virtual marketplace. According to Parasuramanet al. (2005), e-service quality is defined as "the extent to which aWeb site facilitates efficient and effective shopping, purchasing, and delivery". E-servicequality covers all stages of interactions of the customers with a wide range of aspects from facilitator effectiveness of web site to shopping, purchasing and distribution(Parasuraman,2005).In order to determine the extent of e-service quality, a lot of studies have been conducted in the literature and scales have been developed (Loiacono et al. 2000; Barnes, Vidgen, 2001; Yoo, Donthu, 2001; Wolfinbarger, Gilly,2003;Parasuraman et al.2005).E-S-Qual scale developed by Parasuramanet al. (2005) became prominent by covering both pre- and post- service web site service aspects. The E-S-Qual scale has 22 statements and 4 dimensions. These dimensions are defined by Parasuraman et al. (2005) as follows;

- Efficiency; The ease and speed of accessing and using the site
- Fulfillment: The extent to which the site's promises about order delivery and item availability are fulfilled.
- System Availability: The correct technical functioning of the site.
- Privacy: The degree to which the site is safe and protects customer information.

Table 2 shows the E-S-Qual scale statements.

Table 2: Parasuramanet al. (2005) E-S-Qual scale statements

1	This site makes it easy to find what I need.	**12**	Pages at this site do not freeze after I enter my order information.
2	It makes it easy to get anywhere on the site.	**13**	It delivers orders when promised.
3	It enables me to complete a transaction quickly.	**14**	This site makes items available for delivery within a suitable time frame.
4	Information at this site is well organized.	**15**	It quickly delivers what I order.
5	It loads its pages fast.	**16**	It sends out the items ordered.
6	This site is simple to use.	**17**	It has in stock the items the company claims to have.
7	This site enables me to get on to it quickly.	**18**	It is truthful about its offerings.
8	This site is well organized.	**19**	It makes accurate promises about delivery of products.
9	This site is always available for business.	**20**	It protects information about my Web-shopping behavior.
10	This site launches and runs right away.	**21**	It does not share my personal information with other sites.
11	This site does not crash.	**22**	This site protects information about my credit card.

There is also a sub-scale of this scale developed by Parasuramanet al. (2005). This sub-scale has 3 dimensions. These dimensions are responsiveness, compensation and contact. This sub scale is related to the ability of the web sites about working out the problem and it can be applied only to the customers encountered a problem.

2.2 Service Errors and Problems Encountered in Online Shopping

Problems encountered in online shopping are generally originated from service failures. Service failures showed up in cases the expectations of the customer related to service were not satisfied (Wu, 2006). Figure 1 presents a framework related to the emergence of online service failures. As it is seen in the figure, a service distribution system fails if it could not completely provide the services promised. In this case, to prevent the failure to repeat and the problems encountered again by the customers, the point of failure should be determined and service distribution system should be repaired and modified (Ahmad, 2002).

Service failures in online shopping differentiate from the service failures in traditional environment because the customer in the traditional shopping contacts with the seller directly. In case a system failure, the seller can rapidly compensate the failure. However in online shopping, the seller is in a mediating environment which he cannot determine the service failures. Therefore, an opportunity should be provided for customers to forward their concerns quickly and in an accurate manner(Ahmad,2002).

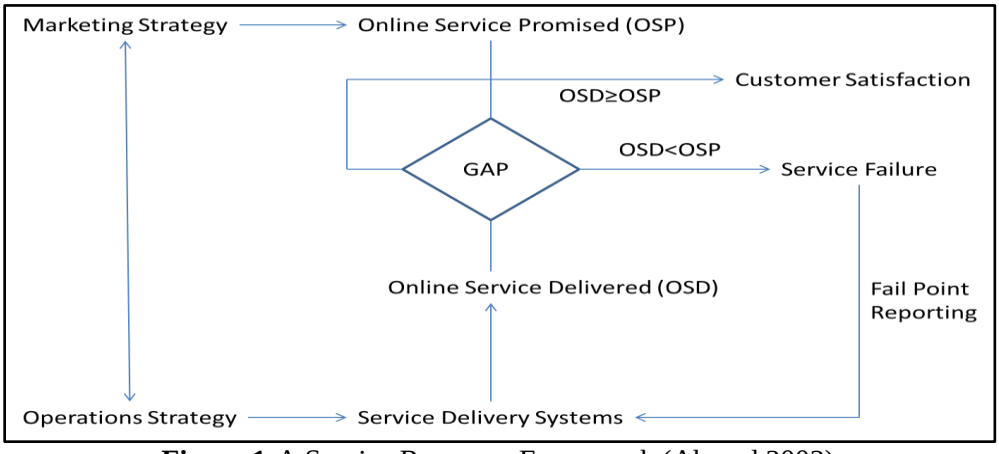

Figure 1:A Service Recovery Framework (Ahmad,2002)

When analyzing the results of household cognitive Technologies usage research published by Turkish Statistical Institute every year related to the cases which includes problem encountering in online shopping for last four years, it was realized that most frequent problem encountered during online shopping are "Wrong or damaged goods/services delivered" and "Speed of delivery longer than indicated" (www.tuik.gov.tr).This situation shows that this process has a critical importance in terms of online shopping since both of these problems occurred within the period from receiving the order to delivery to the customer.

Table 3: Individuals (16-74 age group) who encountered problems when buying or ordering goods or services over the the Internet in the last 4 years and type of problems (%)

	2009	2010	2011	2012
Percentage of individuals who faced with problems when buying or ordering goods or services over the Internet	**5.6**	**5.7**	**7.4**	**9.4**
Type of Problems;				
Technical failure of website during ordering or payment	**25.2**	***20.4***	9.4	**16.7**
Difficulties in finding information concerning guarantees and other legal rights	10.6	7.6	3.7	3.5
Speed of delivery longer than indicated	**30**	***40.2***	***31***	***39.9***
Final costs higher than indicated (e.g. Higher delivery costs, unexpected transaction fee)	0	1.6	5.8	5.2
Wrong or damaged goods/services delivered	***52.3***	16.4	***42.7***	***47.7***
Problems with fraud encountered (e.g. no goods/services received at all, misuse of credit card details etc.)	5.1	11.2	15.4	5.5
Complaints and redress were difficult or no satisfactory response after complaint	9.3	2.6	4.2	4.6
Other	4.4	7.4	7.3	3.1

Source: Turkish Statistical Institute, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Usage Survey on Households and Individuals, 2012, 2011,2010, 2009 No: 10880, 8572, 148, 147

3. Purpose and Importance of the Research

In this study performed, according to whether e-costumers encountered problems in the course of online shopping, it was aimed to compare the responses given to statements of E-S-Qual scale and determine the differences emerged. By this way, it will light the way about whether the problems encountered during online shopping affects the service quality perceptions of the customers related to web site, if so, through which way it affects and the results of the problems encountered in the web sites of online store managers.

4. Methodology

4.1 Profile of the respondents

Students registered in Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences of Anadolu University for the fall season in the academic year 2012-2013 constitute the universe of this research. A sample has been taken from the universe since the number of student found in the universe is high. By taking necessary permissions from the instructor of the class, a questionnaire has been conducted in the class determined by convenience sampling in the first 10 minutes before the class. 315 students have participated to the research by filling the questionnaire forms however these forms have been excluded from the consideration since it was seen that 35 forms were filled inaccurately or deficiently and 280 students constituted the sample of the research. Information related to personal characteristics of research participants are given in Table 4.

Table 4: Profile of the respondents

Gender	**N**	**%**	**Department**	**N**	**%**	**Problem Encountered Status**	**N**	**%**
Male	136	48,6	Business	195	69,7	Not Encountered Problems	148	52,9
Female	144	51,4	Economics	76	27,2	Encountered Problems	132	47,1
Total	280	100	Public Finance	5	1,8	**Total**	280	100
			Labour Economics	4	1,4			
			Total	280	100			

As it is seen in Table 4, 48,6% of the participants are male, 51,4% of the them are female. When reviewing the distribution of subjects according to their department, Department of Business is in the first rank with the rate of 60% and then Department of Economics is in the second rank with the rate of 20%. High contingent of Department of Business and Economics compared to the other departments has affected the participation rate of these departments to the research. 52,9% of the questionnaire participants indicated that they have not encountered problem in the online shopping web site, 47,1% indicated that they have encountered problems.

4.2 Collecting Data and Scales

In the implementation phase of the research, in order to collect necessary data, questionnaire method has been applied among the primary data collection methods. The questionnaire consists of two parts. E-S-Qualscale has been constituted by benefiting E-S-Qual scale of Parasuraman et al. (2005).There were 4 dimensions in the scale as efficiency, system availability, fulfillment and privacy. Articles in the scale are measured through 5 point Likert scale. Both edges of each scale, there are categories as 1 “strongly disagree”, 5 “strongly agree”. The scales have been translated in accordance with expert opinion, a pilot scheme has been implemented to determine whether there is any statement which cannot be understood as a result of translation and it was included into the questionnaire.

In the second part of the questionnaire, descriptive statements which ensure to have information related to demographic characteristics of responders took part. These statements are questions aimed to determined gender and department of the respondents.

4.3 Research design

In this research, responses given to the e-service quality statements by the customers encountered and not encountered problems in the shopping made through online environment have been analyzed and compared. With this aspect, this study is a research prepared as relational screening model and relation between variables has been determined through comparison.

5 Findings and Discussions

Mann Whitney-U test was used to compare the points of responses given to e-service quality scale measured by 5 points Likert scale by research participants who made online shopping before and encountered problems and the ones not encountered problems. According to the results of Mann Whitney-U test, the statements which have significant difference between two groups are given in Table 5.

Table 5:Mann Whitney-U test results

	Groups	N	Mean Rank	Sum Of Ranks	U	P
This site is well organized	Respondents Not Encountered Problem	148	148.91	22038	8524	**0.044***
	Encountered Problem	132	131.08	17302		
This site does not crash	Respondents Not Encountered Problem	148	149.35	22104.5	8457.5	**0.040***
	Encountered Problem	132	135.26	17854.5		
It delivers orders when promised	Respondents Not Encountered Problem	148	149.53	22130.5	8431.5	**0.038***
	Encountered Problem	132	130.38	17209.5		
It has in stock the items the company claims to have	Respondents Not Encountered Problem	148	151.02	22351.5	8210.5	**0.015***
	Encountered Problem	132	128.7	16988.5		

*p<.05

According to this, it was realized that there is a significant difference between the responses of the participants encountered and not encountered a problem during online shopping given to the statements as "This site is well organized", U=8524, p<.05, "This site does not crash.", U=8457.5, p<.05, "It delivers orders when promised.", U=8431.5 p<.05, "It has in stock the items the company claims to have" U=8210.5,p<.05. When taking their mean ranks into the consideration, the customers encountered problems gave lower points compared to the customers not encountered a problem. This finding indicates that encountering problem during online shopping has negative effect on these four statements.

6. Conclusions

When comparing the customers encountered problems before and the ones not encountered any problem based on the statements individually, it was realized that the customers encountered problems give lower points to the statements as "This site is well organized", "This site does not crash.", "It delivers orders when promised.", "It has in stock the items the company claims to have". This result shows parallelism with the most frequently encountered problem types of household cognitive technology usage of Turkish Statistical Institute (TSI) between the years 2009 – 2012(shown in Table 3).

The results show that in both studies delays in sending order, sending of wrong products and incorrect web site layout are the factors that cause most problems in online shopping.Problems as issues about privacy and security, page loading speed are not highly effective in encountering problems. In conclusion, web sites (e-stores) should go to the bottom of the problem in order not to lose their current customers encountered problems and should determine on which stage does most frequently encountered problems emerge and focus on elimination of these problems.

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