

The E-Servqual Effect on Mobile Stickiness Intention of E-Commerce Marketplace †

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Abstract: Digital devices and the internet have created a new lifestyle among Malaysian consumers, especially after COVID-19. Online transactions have become common. Shopping on e-commerce marketplaces has become inseparable from the life of Malaysian consumers. The most popular e-commerce marketplace applications used here are Shopee and Lazada. The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of e-service quality on stickiness intention in Malaysia. This study obtained 251 responses and uses the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to test all four hypotheses. The results showed that three relationships (reliability, website design, and customer service and support) were found to have significant effects on mobile stickiness intention while the second hypothesis (privacy and security) was found to have an insignificant negative effect on mobile stickiness intention. The findings of this study provide insight into consumer behaviour, e-commerce, marketing, and technology. This study contributes to the growing literature on E-Servqual and stickiness intention.

Keywords: E-Servqual; e-commerce; online marketing



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1. Introduction

In the past two years, online digital platforms have become the busiest they have ever been in terms of both sellers and buyers. The usage of the internet and online selling have greatly accelerated and created massive shifts in consumer buying behaviour [1–3]. Sellers have embraced and utilised these platforms in an effort to remain relevant and to re-penetrate the market as well as increase effectiveness and efficiency [3–5]. Meanwhile, buyers have chosen to conduct transactions via these platforms with the intention to minimise movements and physical contacts [1,3,6]. The pattern of online buying and selling is expected to not return to how things were experienced before COVID-19 [7,8]. Although many operations have resumed normally, due to the high increase in COVID-19 cases reported in early 2022 [9], the majority of Malaysians still prefer to purchase their non-complex items via digital platforms.

Generally, there are many e-commerce platforms where buyers can conduct transactions such as sellers' own websites, mobile applications, social media platforms, or even e-commerce marketplace [5]. In Malaysia, e-commerce marketplaces (e.g., Shopee, Lazada, and Happy Fresh) are booming and receiving many visitors, especially during their special promotion days. Moreover, the e-commerce marketplaces are now available on mobile applications, thus, giving consumers more benefits and privileges such as sufficient information, convenience, and a great number of choices [2,10,11]. With the choices and options available on these platforms, consumers could purchase many items under one roof with minimum disruptions [5]. This has created a positive impact where an increase in sales between 10% and 15% on the e-commerce platforms in Malaysia has been recorded [2]. Other than these benefits, the quality of online services has also become a major factor

contributing to consumers' decisions to purchase from or revisit the platforms. Good and consistent E-Service Quality (E-Servqual) provided by the e-commerce marketplace is able to increase the trust and satisfaction level among the customers [11,12]. This will enhance the possibility of platform stickiness intention [4,12].

Stickiness is important specifically for e-commerce platforms as it has become one of the success determinants. According to previous studies, no solid factors have been identified on how to make visitors stick with a platform [4,12]. Nevertheless, findings from [4] showed that good practice in E-Servqual (especially during this COVID-19 period) managed to increase the stickiness intention among visitors and users. E-Servqual is considered fundamental and must be taken seriously. Close monitoring and improvement from time to time are required to ensure the services provided will always be high quality and satisfying. This will encourage the return of visitors and repurchase activities [11,12]. As mentioned earlier, a high number of buyers are purchasing from this digital marketplace; we do know that stickiness intention will affect sustainability, and E-Servqual is said to influence the stickiness intention. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the effect of E-Servqual on the e-commerce marketplace.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Stickiness Intention

As stated earlier, stickiness intention is important in determining the future of a business, and this is not a new area of study as it has been widely discussed for years. It is defined as the repetitive visits to and use of a certain e-commerce platform. It is also about the willingness to spend an extensive period of time browsing and scrolling the platform [4]. Reference [13] viewed stickiness as the ability of a platform to attract and develop visitors' behaviour to revisit and retain them. Stickiness will only take place if the users and visitors are comfortable, satisfied, and trust the platforms they visited [12].

Wu, Liu, & Cui (2021) summarised the factors discussed in previous studies that influence stickiness intention. The factors are website content/information, situation, infrastructure, usefulness, system quality, product options, trust, satisfaction, belongingness, and positive attitudes [12]. Studies conducted by [4,13] showed that E-Servqual (or service quality) do affect and influence stickiness intention (or user stickiness).

2.2. E-Service Quality (E-Servqual)

E-Servqual dimensions are not a new area to discuss and study. However, due to the drastic changes and accelerating digital business resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, quality of service should be at the centre of the discussion again. This is because more sellers have redeveloped and enhanced their online marketing strategies as digital marketing has changed tremendously [14,15]. As one of the tactics to be competitive on the digital platform, the services provided by digital sellers must be of the very best quality [16]. It is believed that E-Servqual is potent in influencing online users' behaviour including sticking to and remaining with digital platforms [4,17].

Over the decades, the dimensions of E-Servqual have changed and been reconceptualised to fit with the situation and surroundings that are still based on the first service quality measurements [16,18]. According to [19], providing stable service quality to customers is a complex activity. One model used for one platform or industry may not be suitable for another [18] as the aim of providing E-Servqual is to satisfy platform users [20,21]. In this study, researchers adapted the E-Servqual dimensions from a study conducted by [21] comprising reliability, privacy and security, website design, and customer service and support. Many past studies have conducted E-Servqual research using purchase intention, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. However, very few have undertaken research with stickiness intention as the dependent variable. Hence, the hypotheses of this study are as follows:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). *Reliability has a positive significant relationship with stickiness intention.*

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *Privacy and security have a positive significant relationship with stickiness intention.*

Hypothesis 3 (H3). *Website design has a positive significant relationship with stickiness intention.*

Hypothesis 4 (H4). *Customer service and support have a positive significant relationship with stickiness intention.*

3. Methodology

In this study, a quantitative technique was employed for data collection, with the researcher distributing questionnaires specially prepared with research-related questions to the target respondents. Initially, a series of questions pertaining to the study variables were created to elicit responses from the target respondents. The objective is to determine which factors of online retail service quality impact consumer stickiness intention. The questionnaire set is divided into three sections, which are Section A, Section B and Section C. Section A, the first part of the questionnaire, consists of questions regarding the demographic background of the respondents.

There were three questions under Section B, where researchers asked about respondents' online purchasing behaviour. Meanwhile, the last section comprised five subsections focusing on four independent variables of the study, which are reliability, privacy and security, website design, customer service and support that influence the dependent variable—stickiness intention. The results were utilised to analyse the most important factors influencing consumer stickiness intention. In this research, the independent variables and dependent variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 as follows: 1 represents Strongly Disagree, 2 represents Disagree, 3 represents Neutral, 4 represents Agree, and 5 represents Strongly Agree.

The researcher utilised a non-probability sampling technique for this study. The G*Power 3 calculator was used in this investigation to estimate the sample size from the general population. The choice of convenience sampling and the selection of respondents were based on the researcher's ease of accessibility. Data were gathered from online shoppers after the survey link was sent through messages to Shopee and Lazada account users. The total number of replies obtained was 251 sets.

The data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential methods. Methods of analysis such as reliability analysis, Pearson's correlation coefficient, and multiple regression analysis were employed in this research. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25.0 software was used to evaluate and analyse the data that were collected from the questionnaire. The statistical analysis was used to determine the relationships between E-Servqual dimensions and customer stickiness intention.

4. Findings

4.1. Characteristics of Respondents

In this study, a total of 251 responses were obtained. The respondents are individuals who had shopped online using E-commerce marketplaces, specifically Shopee and Lazada. Of the total number of responses, 80.5% are female and only 49 respondents are male. As for the age group, the majority of the respondents are 18–25 years old (60.6%), followed by 17.5% who are above 45 years old. A total of 13.5% are those between 35 and 45 years old. Lastly, only 8.4% are people aged between 26 and 35 years old. From the obtained data, most of the respondents hold a bachelor's degree (61.4%). Out of 251 responses, 41.8% are employed in various sectors and industries, while the remaining individuals are students or recently graduated. As the majority of the respondents are students and unemployed, hence 66.6% of the total respondents earn less than RM2500.00 monthly. Due to that, only 24.8% out of the 251 respondents have conducted online purchases more than 15 times in the past 2 years. A total of 47% of the respondents prefer to pay their purchases using online banking transfers rather than other options available.

4.2. Data Analysis

A reliability test was conducted to determine the items' Cronbach alpha figures and range. There are five variables altogether (reliability, privacy and security, website design, and customer support and service) used and tested in this study. The Cronbach alpha ranges are between 0.808 and 0.912. This indicates the items and variables are all reliable and can be further analysed.

Data then were tested under the Pearson correlation analysis. This test was conducted to identify the direction and strength of the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The final analysis conducted was the multiple regression analysis. The purpose of this analysis is to prove the hypotheses and to determine which E-Servqual determinants impacted the stickiness intention the most, by calculating the coefficient of determination (R^2). The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Result.

| Variables | Cronbach Alpha | Path Coefficient | T-Value | Sig. |
|------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------|-------|
| Stickiness Intention | 0.906 | - | - | - |
| Reliability | 0.808 | 0.631 | 4.928 | 0.000 |
| Privacy and Security | 0.882 | -0.492 | -0.072 | 0.943 |
| Website Design | 0.885 | 0.679 | 6.008 | 0.000 |
| Customer Service and Support | 0.912 | 0.559 | 2.116 | 0.000 |
| | R Square | | | 0.538 |
| | Adjusted R Square | | | 0.530 |
| | N | | | 251 |

Dependent Variable: Stickiness Intention.

5. Conclusions

The results in Table 1 showed three hypotheses (reliability, website design, and customer support and service) were found to have positive significant relationships with stickiness intention. However, the second hypothesis, which was on privacy and security in relation to stickiness intention was found to be insignificant and had a negative direction.

In digital practices, especially involving transactions between customers and merchants, privacy and security should be the very most important element to pay attention to. Platforms that are incompetent in protecting customer data definitely will receive fewer visitors and users resulting from customers' reluctance to trust the platforms. Therefore, merchants and platforms these days invest a great deal in digital security to ensure every customer will be protected as they deserve. E-Commerce marketplaces such as Shopee provided a clear privacy policy (last modified on 29 October 2021) [22]. In the privacy policy, Shopee mentioned:

“We implement a variety of security measures and strive to ensure the security of your personal data on our systems. User personal data is contained behind secured networks and is only accessible by a limited number of employees who have special access rights to such systems. However, there can inevitably be no guarantee of absolute security”

Although Shopee does not guarantee absolute security, we can still conclude from the finding that users and customers are comfortable and trust the platform. With such confidence, the customers shall continue to visit and repurchase from the platform without ignoring other service quality factors, especially how the platform is designed.

From the table above, website design is found to be the most influential factor in customer stickiness intention. With that, all major e-commerce marketplaces are suggested to continuously monitor their layouts by keeping them neat and clean. A neat and well-structured layout will definitely deliver a positive emotion to the visitors and soon will encourage them to revisit the page.

Referring to the results, E-Servqual variables used in this research are viewed to be important in leading customers to stick to a platform. Continuing to maintain a good quality of services can definitely bring visitors to return to Shopee. However, it is highly recommended for future researchers to include emotions as mediators or geography as a moderator. Findings with such variables will make the results more interesting and enhance the body of knowledge as a whole.

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