

## ANALYZING THE ANTECEDENTS OF E-REPURCHASING: A MODEL FRAMEWORK WITH MEDIATING ROLE OF SATISFACTION

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### Abstract

To date, the overwhelming amount of online purchasing and its salient role on promoting e-retailing industry is not hidden from the view of marketing practitioners in the world. E-vendors have tremendously endeavoured to incorporate the best marketing strategies, which not only can enhance the selling amount of their products, but also to attract their clients to purchase them again. However, this may not be viable unless the satisfaction of consumers could be met. Indeed, focusing on the e-client's satisfaction is considered as great significance as an e-vendor should employ in his merchandising tactics; as neglecting consumer's needs and satisfaction prevents an e-vendor to achieve its goals for a fruitful profit in the early future, and that repurchasing provide added-values for the e-vendors and presumably loyalty for the e-clients. Thus, the study intends to present a simplified, but comprehensive testable model framework elucidating the correlations between key factors triggering consumer satisfaction in the online repurchasing context.

**Keywords:** *e-vendor quality; e-service quality; e-customer service quality; post-purchase experience; satisfaction, product quality.*

**JEL Codes:** *O16, P22.*

### Introduction

In the last decades, the world has witnessed a huge amount of growth, either quantitatively or qualitatively, in the e-stores start-up sector, and it would be estimated that the number of such e-shops is boosting rapidly than ever (Tandon et al., 2018; Choi et al., 2019; Jeddy et al., 2022). Indeed, such an e-commerce growth helps to the welfare of local economy of a state in being developed and flourished via monetary circulation, and decreases inflation in a society as well (Li & Yuan, 2018; Al-Hattami, 2021; Melović et al., 2021).

By the emergence of the Internet, numerous nascent entrepreneurs have established their own e-retail outlets, and hence competed with their peers for a share of virtual market. Thus, the severe competition for maintaining customers so as to repurchase and become loyal to them is very high indeed in the e-commerce industry (Mofokong, 2021; Al-Adwan et al., 2020). Selling products online through social media has a considerable advantage and benefits for both e-retailers and e-clients. For the e-retailers, for instance, they

do not have to stay at their counters for a long time waiting for a customer to buy them or not; rather, by designing a business website they offer their products online for the whole day ready for sale. For consumers, too, they do not have to wander around the malls whether to find their suitable priced item or not, but by a quick search, comparison and click away they can find and purchase their items, which save their time and money efficiently.

However, it is essential for the e-vendors to apply marketing strategies that trigger their prior customers to purchase them as frequently as possible since repeated purchasing furnishes e-vendors with a huge profitable revenue. Thus, in order to remain steady in such a tantalizing virtual market, and attract the e-clients to purchase them again, e-vendors indubitably have to primarily satisfy their e-clients; otherwise, they simply lose their past, current and future potential customers as well as share of market by just failure to meet their customers' expectations.

Retaining and attracting customer's satisfaction play an important role in the context of repurchasing (Rita et al., 2019; Vijay et al., 2019; Khan et al., 2019). In other words, satisfaction helps the clients to trust, which may ultimately forward loyalty to the e-vendor by the client's past relevant e-shopping experience, or evokes repurchase intentions instead (Fang et al., 2014; Wu, 2013; Nguyen et al., 2021). In the e-literature, the research on the notion of repurchasing as well as e-shopping satisfaction has been of great importance (Al-Hattami, 2021; Choi et al., 2019; Mofokong, 2021; Rita et al., 2019), but the number of research on this area is few and scattered, and there is no unified model to clarify general antecedents of repurchasing at the post-purchase experience level.

Removing such a gap, the paper then intends to contribute and foster insights on client's e-repurchasing by organizing a simplified as well as comprehensive testable model framework Satisfaction vs. Repurchasing (SR conceptual model) signifying the relevant key factors and determinants enabling customer's satisfaction to repurchase from the e-vendors. This proceeds by reviewing the extant literature on the mediating role of e-satisfaction followed by justifications and hypotheses made for presenting the conceptual model.

### **Literature Review**

In the e-literature, there are some research conducted by scholars who have examined the relationship between satisfaction and repurchasing based on their own scope of study. For instance, Wu et al., (2013) surveyed consumer e-shopping satisfaction and its relationship to complaint intentions. They found the mediating role of satisfaction with complaint intentions and revealed that distributive as well as interactional justice influence customer's satisfaction. In a similar vein, Cao et al., (2018) found the high significance of satisfaction in post-online purchase experience in terms of logistics such as delivery, return as well as tracking in an empirical study conducted in Taiwan and China. In another attempt, Al-Jahwari et al., (2018) analyzed the impact of online customer

satisfaction through the influencing factors in Oman, namely product quality, application safety, delivery guarantee, and promotional offers during online shopping. They posited that all those factors were significant to e-clients satisfaction and repurchasing accordingly. Tzeng et al., (2021) also detected in their study that a decent after sale-service can enhance e-clients' satisfaction. Nguyen et al., (2021) also declared the most significant impacts between satisfaction and repurchase intention in Vietnam.

Customer's (e)satisfaction, by definition, refers to a customer's general evaluation of the overall purchase experience for a particular product or service (Fared et al., 2021). Satisfaction differs from client's expectation, which defines consumer's belief about what he/she should or will obtain after a specific online transaction, and incurs a level prior to satisfaction (Mofokeng, 2019). Such a good/bad evaluation may be felt before, during or after-sales services by the e-client. By before, it conveys the impacts or evaluation that a consumer perceives by viewing a particular e-store's website. For instance, if an e-vendor's web quality does not appear professional or interesting enough at first glance, the consumer may not trust and hence reject to buy an item or re-visit the website. A consumer may also feel bored during online shopping intentions by browsing excessive searching for his desired product and not find it at last; albeit such an item was already available inside the warehouse of the e-store, but could not be found merely owing to the technical problems or hard browsing procedure existed in the web domain. And finally, a consumer may feel an awful experience, after-sales service, in case of refunding, delivery, product deficits, warranty, guarantee, compensations and so forth.

In the realm of e-shopping, three major concepts are always the subject of heated debate, namely e-trust, e-satisfaction and e-loyalty. The first step in the online purchasing is trust. Without initial trust no transaction and purchase would be made (Jeddy et al., 2022). After trusting happens then it comes to the matter of satisfaction, which pertains to the post-purchase experience, and has the greatest importance in that whether a consumer will

repurchase from the e-retailer or not. Third, (e)loyalty is the last step, which is the ideal goal and outcome of frequent relationship/contacts between the consumer and e-retailer. (E)Loyalty refers to a deeply held commitment to repurchase or patronize a product/service constantly in the future, or customer's favourite attitude towards an e-business resulting in repeated buying behaviour (Vijay et al., 2019). Albeit satisfaction is deemed as a strong predictor of loyalty and has influence on it; nevertheless, satisfaction may not necessarily lead to loyalty. Indeed, loyalty is a complicated psychological and affective concept that is the outcome of long-term purchase of a consumer, who is emotionally stuck to a special brand rather than a specific e-store and/or web itself (Mofokeng, 2021). Thus, a consumer may be satisfied by his past online purchase experience from an e-vendor and repurchase him without being loyal to him afterwards. As repurchasing occurs after initial trust and first-time e-shopping experience established, and that loyalty may happen as the future desired instance of long-term interaction between the e-buyer and e-seller, hence the predictors of trust and loyalty are excluded from the study's proposed model, and satisfaction is considered as the pivotal mediating role of repurchasing, for the study focuses only on the area of post-online purchasing experience.

### Model Framework

To build the conceptual model, the peripheral factors led to satisfaction and repurchasing are scrutinized under four broad categories, namely e-service quality, e-vendor quality, e-customer service quality and product quality factors. In the e-literature, there is no universal consensus about the overall definition, and/or fixed determined attributes of the e-service quality/characteristics since each scholar has measured the dimension based on his own scope of study and it is indeed a multi-dimensional factor (Rita et al. 2019; Mashaqi et al., 2020). However, e-service quality refers to the extent to which a company is competent to meet the needs of its customers by using the Internet facilities (Mashaqi et al., 2020). Prior

investigations revealed that e-service quality has a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction as well as repurchase intentions, word-of-mouth and site revisiting (Rita et al. 2019; Mashaqi et al., 2020). E-service quality factor includes overall web quality features such as web graphical design richness, information adequacy, web/application privacy and security systems, ease of use (navigation and ordering), usefulness, web-reliability, tangibility and web performance (no web crashing) (Rita et al. 2019; Mashaqi et al., 2020; Shafiee & Bazargan, 2018; Khan et al., 2020; Al-Jahwari et al., 2018; Tandon et al., 2018; Merugu & Mohan, 2020). The studies have shown that decent web quality affects positively customer's satisfaction and repurchasing, and poor web quality incurs e-client's negative emotional feelings instead, and ultimately leads to customer loss (Fang et al., 2014; Tzeng et al., 2021; Tandon et al., 2018; Mashaqi et al., 2020; Tan & Vu, 2019). Thus, in view of the above, the following assumptions are made:

*H<sub>1a</sub>: Web ease of ordering has positive impact on customer's e-satisfaction.*

*H<sub>1b</sub>: Web ease of ordering has positive impact on customer's e-repurchasing.*

*H<sub>1c</sub>: Web/application privacy & security systems has positive impact on customer's e-satisfaction.*

*H<sub>1d</sub>: Web/application privacy & security systems has positive impact on customer's e-repurchasing.*

E-vendor quality is another characteristic related to the e-retailer/e-store itself. Offline presence with available contacts, store reputation, store size, number of purchases made by consumers, rating review, third parties' assurance-making (seals, warrants, use of customers' testimonials) are the common attributes of e-vendor quality (Li & Zhang, 2002; Nofrialdi, 2021; Bramall et al., 2005). The significant relevance of store reputation as well as store size with trust and purchase intention was found in many empirical studies (Qalati et al., 2021; Chen & Barnes, 2007; Koufaris & Sosa, 2004). The number of purchases and rating reviews made by consumers is highly influencing in consumer buying-decision.

Number of purchases shows how many items of a particular product have been already sold-out. This feature is available in the most eminent e-business websites such as Amazon. It also implies how far credible and successful an e-store has been in his services that could attract consumers to purchase him such quantities of items. Rating review, on the other hand, refers to the user's rating a past purchased product experience, and can be the indicator of the reputation or credibility of an e-retailer or product as well (Hamdan & Yuliantini, 2021). In case of having no prior acquaintance with the size or reputation of an e-store, new consumers should refer to see the rating reviews or number of purchases made by other consumers. Rating review is somehow very much akin to word-of-mouth and/or customer's testimonials in terms of the e-store performance. The importance of rating review has been also identified in several investigations in that rating review may enhance/weaken customers' trust and consequently repurchasing intentions (Nofrialdi, 2021; Hamdan & Yuliantini, 2021). Based on the above assumptions, the following hypothesis made:

*H<sub>2a</sub>: The number of purchases by consumers have positive influence on customer's e-repurchasing*

*H<sub>2b</sub>: Rating review has positive influence on customer's e-repurchasing.*

E-customer service quality sometimes known as e-recovery and/or CRM (Customer Relationship Management) pertains to "an e-store's response and reaction to a service failure to ease/compensate dissatisfaction and eventually retain customers" (Mashaqi et al., 2020). Amongst the attributes of e-customer service quality, responsiveness, timeliness of orders or services/waiting time, ease of return and refunds, delivery/shipping conditions (speed, tracking and marginal costs), customer communication channels, empathy, accessibility of salesmen, promotional offers, and compensation could be mentioned (Li & Zhang, 2002; Lim et al., 2020; Miandari et al., 2021; Yin & Xu, 2021; Merugu & Mohan, 2020). In the e-commerce literature, responsiveness and delivery promptness have shown a high influence on customer's satisfaction and repurchasing (Choi et al., 2019;

Wahab & Khong, 2019; Shafiee & Bazargan, 2018; Rita et al., 2019). Delivery promptness is the extent to which an e-store is as swift as possible to forward the product to the client address. By the same token, responsiveness specifies the extent to which customer feedback is taken into consideration and the time retailers take to respond to customers' demands (Lim et al., 2020). Thus, upon the above premises the following hypotheses made:

*H<sub>3a</sub>: E-store delivery promptness has positive impact on e-satisfaction.*

*H<sub>3b</sub>: E-store delivery promptness has positive impact on e-repurchasing.*

*H<sub>3c</sub>: E-store responsiveness has positive impact on e-satisfaction.*

*H<sub>3d</sub>: E-store responsiveness has positive impact on e-repurchasing.*

Product characteristics or quality is the outcome of the deal between e-retailer and e-consumer after monetary transaction achieved. Product quality, by definition, is a combination of features and characteristics of a salable product that meet basic requirements, and can be controlled by a manufacturer to meet the customers' expectations (Tzeng et al., 2021). Product quality entails miscellaneous attributes such as variety of goods, product quality, product performance, product information, product availability, pricing by retailer and brand. In the e-literature, there are numerous studies about product quality, and it is indeed the core element and ultimate goal in consumer satisfaction and repurchasing intention (Al-Jahwari et al., 2018; Yin & Xu, 2021; Tzeng et al., 2021; Li & Zhang, 2002). Product information relates to the valence and intensity of accurate information about the product that an e-store provides to consumers for sale on its website (Nguyen et al., 2021; Mofokeng, 2021). The research on this area revealed that low product information quality has negative impact on client satisfaction and repurchasing. In a similar fashion, pricing by the e-retailer on the products has a very high significance in consumer satisfaction and repurchase decision-making (Garbarino & Maxwell, 2010; Tandon & Kiran, 2018). E-store product pricing should be eventually lower than physical (traditional) stores, otherwise the consumer will not feel a monetary advantage over the online shopping

process. Economically, consumers are very high alert and sensitive to higher pricing, or dynamic Internet prices as price discrimination provokes consumers' distrust in e-shopping, which then lead to dissatisfaction and non-repurchasing (Garbarino & Lee, 2003). As such, Kim et al., (2012) in an empirical study found that perceived price had a strong influence on repurchasing. Thus, in view of the above assertions the following hypotheses made:

*H<sub>4a</sub>: Product information quality has positive impact on e-satisfaction.*

*H<sub>4b</sub>: Product information quality has positive impact on e-repurchasing*

*H<sub>4c</sub>: Decent product pricing by e-retailer has positive impact on e-satisfaction.*

*H<sub>4d</sub>: Decent product pricing by e-retailer has positive impact on e-repurchasing.*

In a nutshell, the SR (Satisfaction vs. Repurchasing) conceptual model is depicted as the figure (1) below:

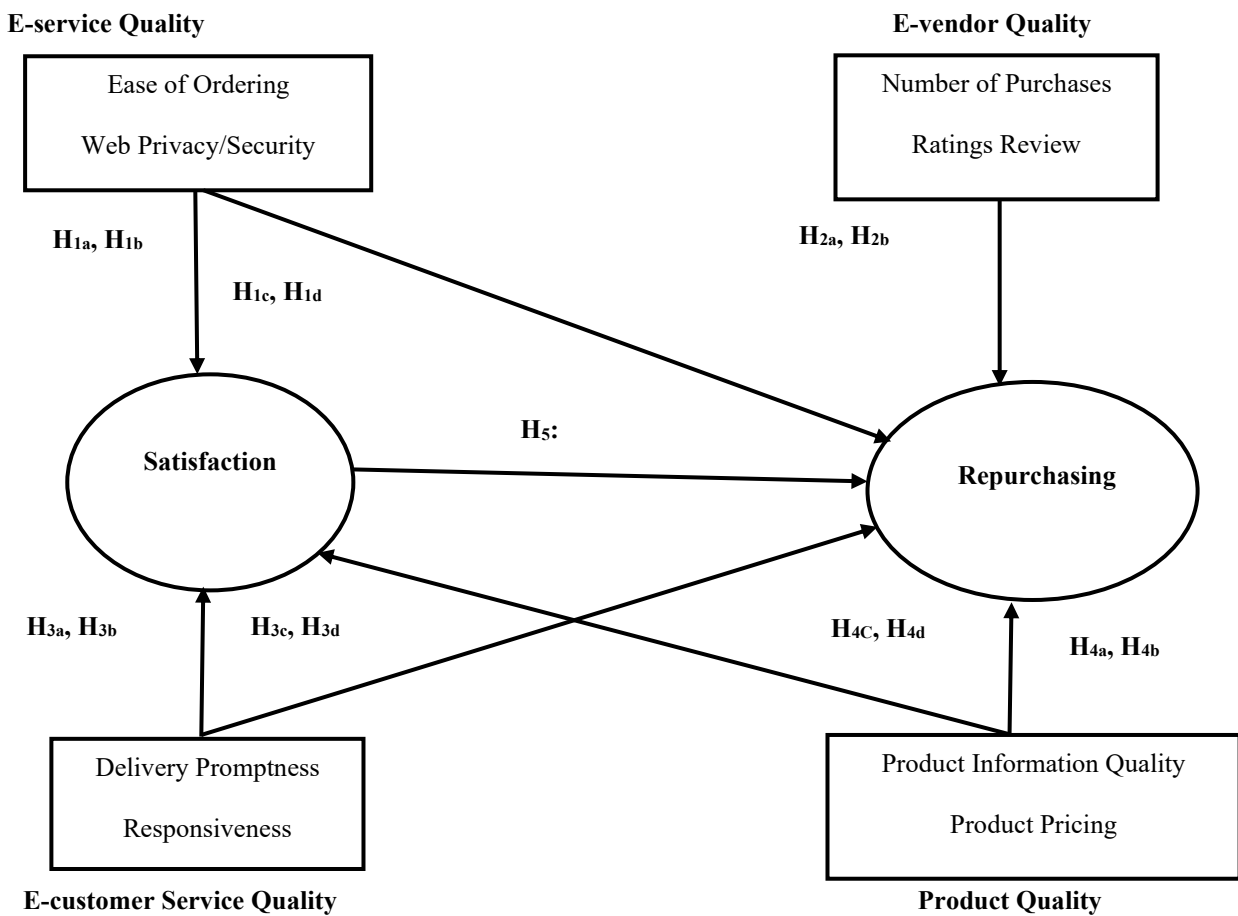


Figure 1. SR Conceptual Model

Satisfaction versus repurchasing is the last key for opening repurchasing door and has the highest influence in repeated purchasing. More satisfaction in the past online shopping experience or being satisfied by viewing e-store's website, triggers client's willingness to purchase from the same e-vendor again. The relevance and correlation of satisfaction with repurchasing has been highlighted in much research (Nguyen et al.,

2021; Lim et al., 2020; Cao et al., 2018). Thus, the following hypothesis is ascertained:

*H<sub>5</sub>: E-satisfaction has positive impact on e-repurchasing.*

**Conclusions**

As in the marketing literature there could not be seen a unified and organized conceptual model for the measurement of consumers repurchasing intentions, this paper

attempted to contribute to further understanding of the Internet re-purchasing context. Since there wasn't an overall organized testable model for repurchasing purpose, this paper addressed this gap by analyzing and collecting pertinent factors as well as attributes with the mediating role of satisfaction enabling repurchasing at the user-end. It is suggested for the future research avenue to develop this model to the loyalty phase in that how satisfaction and repeated purchasing behaviour could be ultimately leading to loyalty by considering the psychological, affective and emotional aspects it involves and the SR model as well. For practitioners, too, it is suggested to upgrade their marketing strategies in accordance with

the factors and attributes elucidated in this paper to obtain a better repurchasing output in the future. As it is apparent in the model, e-service quality, e-vendor quality, e-customer service quality and product quality are the factors that have impact on consumer's satisfaction and e-repurchasing. Amongst these factors, ease of ordering process, web privacy/security, number of purchases views and rating reviews by the e-consumers, delivery promptness and responsiveness as well as ample product information quality, product pricing by e-vendors are the mostly cited attributes that all in all have high influence in e-consumers re-purchasing behaviour.

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