

Antecedents and Effects of Customer Delight For E-Commerce Website

Rajesh Poonia¹, Jyoti Godara²

¹Assistant Professor - Lovely Professional University, Mittal School of Business, Punjab, India

²Assistant Professor - Lovely Professional University, School of Computer Science and Engineering, Punjab, India

Abstract

The rapid rise of e-commerce has enabled intense competition in this segment. The first interaction point of the customer with the e-commerce player is the firm's website. Therefore, the firm needs to have a user friendly and attractive website. This research identifies various quality factors of a website which are perceived by the customers. The customer is also evolving along with time. The augmented product features provided to the customer earlier has now become core features. Similarly, the customer is also not looking only being satisfied but is interested being delighted by the e-commerce players. The research examines the role of surprise in delighting the customer.

Keywords

Customer delight, e-commerce, satisfaction, surprise, purchase intentions

Introduction

In the age of cut-throat competition in business, firms are striving very hard to grab the market share (top-line growth) and profits (bottom lines) for sustainability. Sustainable competitive advantage is a challenge when technology can be easily adapted. Building long term relationship by offering a value proposition consistently is the key. Mere meeting the needs of the customers is not sufficient but customers need to be delighted to keep them happy. A delighted/satisfied customer spread good word of mouth about the firm, influence others to purchase the products and go for repurchases [25]. It helps in building high customer lifetime value [31]. [29] propose the usage of Information technology for customer delight.

Technological advancements and user interests in information technology along with wide reach of internet has lead to the immense growth of e-commerce industry in India. One of the factor for the success of online shopping is customer's attitude towards it [22]. Customer's decision making is influenced by his attitude [17]. [24] identified that price, convenience, wider selection,

homepage, customer service, utilitarian, , fun and hedonic benefits helps in building student's attitudes towards e-commerce website. A website needs to be innovative to attract and delight visitors. A firm needs to understand the factors which evoke satisfaction and delight and how to positively impact the user behavior through a website as the only source of contact for an e-commerce player is the website and a lot of investment is involved in its development and promotion [27].

In order to find the relevant precursors and implications of delight on e-commerce website, this research tests three WebQual factors and two stimulus factors that are identified by TAM and [28] in order to register consumer assessments of websites (entertainment, response time, and usefulness). The study also assesses how delight and surprise affects customer purchase intention online on an e-commerce website.

Satisfaction and Delight

Surprise leads to joy [23]. Surprise is a state of emotion which can be both positive and negative [20]. Pleasant surprise enhances satisfaction while negative surprise lowers it [36]. An aroused state of emotion – joy and happiness along with surprise leads to customer delight [25]. Customer involvement is required for aroused emotion [18]. Delivering what a customer expecting results in customer satisfaction but exceeding the expectations leads to customer delight [7]. [9] observed that surprise is a robust determinant of delight. Customer satisfaction is experienced when expectation is met. Delight is experienced when customer expectations are exceeded [25].

[2] Examine the precursors and significances of customer satisfaction and observed that perceived quality determines satisfaction which has an impact on the pre-purchase expectations. Expectations do not directly affect satisfaction. Poor quality which fails to meet customer expectations has higher impact on satisfaction and repurchases intention over good quality which exceeds expectations. Ease in quality evaluation leads to disconfirmation.

[5] found that higher customer satisfaction leads to higher retention which leads to long term service provider-customer relationship that ultimately results in higher customer lifetime value. Organizations need to proactively identify the defects by measuring the current level of customer satisfaction. Heterogeneity in utility of services and prior cumulative satisfaction determines the stay duration of the customer with the organization. Higher prior experience boosts customer confidence in the service provider and thus the customer put less weight on evaluating the service quality. Customers are sensitive to the cost/losses arising from a relationship/interaction and are insensitive to gains/benefits.

[29] observed that firms need to focus on customer needs instead of expectations as expectations are dynamic in nature and does not have stable frame of reference. Handling self esteem makes a

customer feel important and gives more control in hands leads to customer delight. Firms need to make emotional attachment with the customer.

[12] examined that employees plays a crucial role in delighting the customer. Core product is the stronger predictor of delight. Differential preferential treatment can lead to customer embarrassment. Surprise has a negative impact on individuals and likes predictability [20]. Asians do not feel good with unexpected surprises. They take that as bad luck. Westerns take unexpected surprise positively and take that as a way of promotion. Both Asians and westerns take expected surprise positively.

[32] found that free access to facilities like up-gradation of room, gym, swimming pool, free gifts pleasantly surprises the customer which further leads to customer delight in hotel industry.

[13] examined that a culture should be developed in the organization where employees are able to identify the needs of customers and presenting it when it is not expected by them – instead of giving unexpected surprise.

[33] identified two kinds of delight – reenacted and transitory. In reenacted delight a customer expects same additional services in next visit in hotel. These are below 20 years of age and 50-60 years of age and works in public sector. In transitory delight customer expects different additional services. These are in the age group of 20-50 yrs and works in private sector.

These findings illustrate that satisfaction and delight are two different constructs and therefore the findings of one cannot be applied on other. Thus, additional research is required to find the factors responsible for customer delight for an e-commerce website.

Hypothesis Study

Attractive quality attributes attract the customer and the presence of which leads to customer satisfaction but the absence of which does not lead to customer dissatisfaction. As the degree of one-dimensional attributes increases, customer satisfaction also increases [7]. Pre communication leads to more satisfaction than surprise. Respondents evaluate more positively when a surprise is given [18]. Customer satisfaction leads to retention [5] and repurchase behavior [35]. The Positive attitude towards a website leads to user satisfaction and further to loyalty and repeat purchase. Satisfaction leads to repurchase intentions [2]. Higher customer involvement leads to higher purchase intentions [5].

[26] observed that satisfaction is the antecedent for loyalty but it becomes less important when loyalty begins to set through other antecedents like social bonding, fortitude (personal determinism), product superiority and their synergistic effects.

[3] Examines the nature and strength of the link between the customer satisfaction and economic returns in terms of market share and profitability. Quality has a positive impact on the customer satisfaction and ultimately on profitability. Increase in market share may lead to lower customer satisfaction. A rational customer expectation of the quality positively affects customer satisfaction. Thus,

Hypothesis 1: Customer satisfaction has a positive effect on the purchase intention for the product advertised on an e-commerce website.

A customer responds back to the organization with the same way and intensity, according to the equity theory. A delighted customer rewards the company by increased loyalty, repurchase and commitment. A firm fulfilling the one-dimensional attributes for affectively may lead to customer delight [4]. Thus,

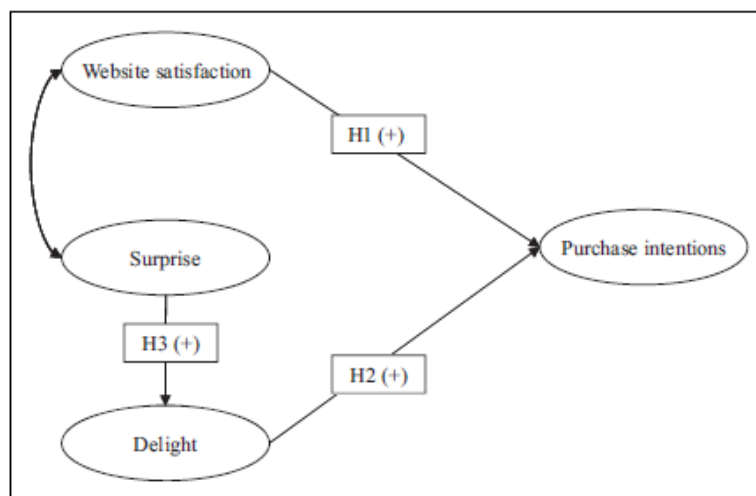


Figure 1. Study 1: Conceptual model.

Hypothesis 2: Customer delight has a positive effect on the purchase intention for the product advertised on an e-commerce website.

An aroused state of emotion – joy and happiness along with surprise leads to customer delight [25]. Customer involvement is required for aroused emotion [18]. Delivering what a customer expecting results in customer satisfaction but exceeding the expectations leads to customer delight [7]. Surprise is a strong determinant of delight [9]. Thus,

Hypothesis 3: The pleasant surprise a customer enjoys on an e-commerce website leads to customer delight.

A delighted customer goes for repurchase and recommends the product/service to others [8]. Firms need to focus on the psychological and physical attributes and give memorable experience for delighting the customer [7]. Customer requires economic and physical safety, fair and justified treatment and maintenance of self esteem. Raising the bar every time to delight the customer unless they forget the previous experience is a challenge [21]. Thus,

Hypothesis 4: The purchase intention on an e-commerce website is more influenced by delight than mere satisfaction.

Perceived usefulness is more prominent than ease-of use in user acceptance of information technology [11]. [1] Concluded that perceived usefulness and ease of use determines usage of the technology i.e frequency of use and duration of use. [30] identified the third element – effectiveness, affecting the user acceptance of information technology along with usefulness and ease in operation. [15] identified the factors like number of graphics, homepage length, amount of text, links and use of animation which influence the perceptions towards the complexity of homepage. Customers respond more positively to moderate level of homepage complexity.

In countries with weak rule of law, Privacy/security protection has a high impact on perceived value whereas countries in which citizens have high national identity give more importance to the fit between culture and the website. People living in individualistic countries give higher weight to customization, Privacy/security protection than people from collectivistic countries. Thus characteristic of a country impacts the perceived value derived from visiting a website [34]

The perceived risk for information sharing websites is lower than transaction processing websites. Also, good reputation of a website helps in negating the risk [10]. Thus,

Hypothesis 5: Surprise is positively influenced by the perception of usefulness of an e-commerce website.

Hypothesis 6: Delight is positively influenced by the perception of usefulness of an e-commerce website.

The rapid rise in the usage of internet enabled customer to retrieve information quickly and easily. High internet speed influences user's attitude and therefore even low response time is unacceptable to them.

Response time is not having significant impact on delight but has minimal effect on surprise [9]. [19] examined that the response of consumer toward banner ads in websites, types of websites have a huge impact on the banner ads which is emotions and cognitive, putting an accurate banner in an exact place attracts a huge number of responses.

[37] explore the privacy concern related to the site and site design intricacy which the user find to operate the site and the value which they perceive from the site. It discovered the effect of contextual marketing and customer-orientation strategy on site satisfaction is moderate when it comes about the site design intricacy but lesser when it comes consumer privacy. Thus,

Hypothesis 7: Surprise is positively influenced by the perception of response time of an e-commerce website.

Hypothesis 8: Delight is positively influenced by the perception of response time of an e-commerce website.

Entertainment has more effect on delight than surprise [9]. The visual appeal shapes the users attitude towards a website [14]. Aesthetics determines the navigation on a website [6] which ultimately leads to customer delight [16]. [25] found that a website perceived to be innovative with advanced features helps in exceeding customer expectations which further leads to customer delight. Thus,

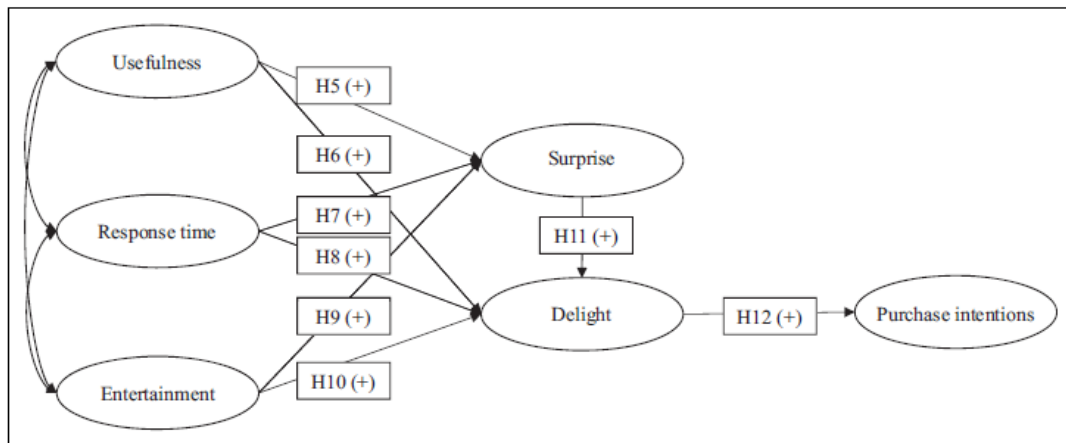


Figure 2. Conceptual Model.

Hypothesis 9: Surprise is positively influenced by the perception of entertainment on an e-commerce website.

Hypothesis 10: Delight is positively influenced by the perception of entertainment on an e-commerce website.

Surprise is a state of emotion which can be both positive and negative [20]. Surprise leads to joy. Customer’s expectations can be controlled by giving the explanation/reasons for any offerings/surprise which would further enhance customer delight [23]. Pleasant surprise enhances satisfaction while negative surprise lowers it [36]. Thus,

Hypothesis 11: The pleasant surprise on an e-commerce website leads to customer delight.

[39] considers few variables to reflect success of e-commerce entrepreneurial like the accomplishment angle and locus of control of business and founders highlighting ease in operation of e-service quality and reliability. Satisfaction may be induced by avoiding problems; delight requires more [18]. This research explores the difference in the feelings aroused due to satisfaction and delight and its capability to stimulate buying intentions of the customer on an e-commerce website. Thus,

Hypothesis 12: Customer delight has a positive effect on the purchase intention for the product advertised on an e-commerce website.

Empirical Studies

Overview

In order to test the hypothesis, two empirical studies were conducted. Study 1 show that customer delight and satisfaction are two different constructs and has different affects on purchase intentions. It also illustrate that surprise is the requirement for delight. Study 2 demonstrates the influence of different aspects of website quality on surprise and delight and the way it has impact on customer's purchase intention. (Hypothesis 5-12).

Data Collection

An online questionnaire survey approach is used for both the studies to collect the data. 106 entries were shortlisted for survey 1 with 64 men and 42 women while 132 entries were shortlisted for study 2 with 73 men and 59 women. Short listing is done after omitting the incomplete and incorrect entries.

Measures

Existing and validated scales are used for both the studies and five point Likert scale is used for delight and surprise: 5 = always and 1= never; for all other constructs 5 = strongly agree and 1= strongly disagree. A scale from Baker and Churchill (1977) is used to provide the assessment of purchase intentions. To measure the consumer's satisfaction with the website, a two point scale of Oliver and Bearden (1983) is also adopted.

Table 1. Study 1: Descriptive Statistics, Composite Reliabilities, Squared Correlations, and AVEs.

Variable	M	SD	CR	1	2	3	4
1. Delight	3.53	.93	.82	.61			
2. Website satisfaction	4.26	.71	.72	.38	.56		
3. Surprise	3.38	1.00	.81	.46	.11	.68	
4. Purchase intentions	3.48	1.02	.86	.15	.19	.05	.68

Note. AVE = average variance extracted; CR = composite reliability; SD = standard deviation.

Values on the main diagonal are AVEs; values below are squared correlations.

A reduced form of the WebQual dimensions is used in study 2 [28]. Seven dimension out of 12 were not suitable for this study. The 5 remaining dimensions which are used for analysis in this study are informational fit to task, innovativeness, visual appeal, tailored communications and response time. Because of the low factor loading, one item was excluded from the scale.

Study 1&2

Measurement Model Evaluation

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and the robust maximum likelihood procedure are used for the assessment of the model. The following fit indexes are used to evaluate the model along with and. The proposed measurement model shows

Fit Indexes	Ideal Value	Study 1	Study 2
Comparative fit index (CFI)	>.95	0.965	0.98
Adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI)	>.90	0.916	0.949
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	<.08	0.071	0.042
Chi-square (w2)		78.94	82.8
Degrees of freedom (df)		105	131
Goodness of fit index (GFI)		0.954	0.962
Factor loading	>.5		
Composite reliability (CR)	>.7		
Average variance extracted (AVE)	>.5		

(Figures in brackets shows the actual calculated values)

Thus, the explanatory power of the model appears strong (see Figure 3).

Table 2. Study 2: Descriptive Statistics, Composite Reliabilities, Squared Correlations, and AVEs.

Variable	M	SD	CR	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Usefulness	3.92	.82	.92	.67					
2. Response time	3.74	1.05	.93	.38	.81				
3. Entertainment	4.12	.80	.92	.66	.31	.70			
4. Delight	3.46	1.03	.87	.52	.24	.50	.68		
5. Surprise	3.21	1.10	.83	.26	.13	.22	.60	.71	
6. Purchase intentions	3.65	.98	.84	.14	.06	.12	.25	.14	.64

Note. AVE = average variance extracted; CR = composite reliability; SD = standard deviation. Values on the main diagonal are AVEs; values below are squared correlations.

Discussion

Study 1 compared the effect of delight with satisfaction on purchase intention. The study shows that an aroused attitude forms consumer intent and their further actions. This confirms that satisfaction and delight are two different constructs. Therefore, the knowledge of satisfaction cannot be applied for delight. Also, delight has powerful effect then satisfaction on buying intention on an e-commerce website. Thus, the e-commerce players should focus on delighting the customers instead of mere satisfying them. Doing so can have better positive consequences.

Table 3. Structural Parameters Estimates and Overview of Dimension Effects.

Paths	Path estimate	Accepted
Hypothesis 1 Affect of E-commerce website satisfaction on Purchase Intentions	0.1	No
Hypothesis 2 Affect of Delight on Purchase Intentions	0.36	Yes
Hypothesis 3 Affect of Surprise on Delight	0.73	Yes
Hypothesis 4 Affect of Delight > affect of Website satisfaction on purchase intentions	.36 >.10	Yes

Hypothesis 5	Affect of Usefulness on surprise	0.4	Yes
Hypothesis 6	Affect of Usefulness on Delight	0.29	Yes
Hypothesis 7	Affect of Response time on Surprise	0.06	Yes
Hypothesis 8	Affect of Response time on Delight	0	Yes
Hypothesis 9	Affect of Entertainment on Surprise	0.18	Yes
Hypothesis 10	Affect of Entertainment on Delight	0.22	Yes
Hypothesis 11	Affect of Surprise on Delight	0.55	Yes
Hypothesis 12	Affect of Delight on Purchase Intentions	0.5	Yes

Findings in study 2 confirm the relationship between three of the WebQual dimensions of surprise and delight. E-commerce websites can work upon perceived usefulness and entertainment value to arouse surprise and delight and thus improve purchase intents. While website usefulness has a stronger impact on both satisfaction and delight, entertainment has high impact on delight. The response time dimension had very little impact on surprise and delight. High internet speed, probably, made consumers to take this factor for granted. Presence of good response time may not satisfy or delight consumers but the absence of the same would spoil their experience. Therefore a good response time is the basic necessity for an e-commerce website. The finding also demonstrates that positive surprise in the antecedent of delight. Only hypothesis 1 is not accepted in the study.

Conclusion

Usefulness and entertainment are the two important factors which has significant positive effect on satisfaction and delight. Response time (low) may not be the deciding factor for customer satisfaction and delight but the absence of the same would spoil customer experience. Therefore the e-commerce website should have low response time, should be useful, attractive and entertaining. Visual effects and technology can be used for this purpose. The e-commerce players should focus on delighting the customer instead of mere satisfying them for enhancing repeat buy and increasing the wallet share through building long term relationship.

References

[1] Adams, Dennis A., R. Ryan Nelson, and Peter A. Todd (1992), “Perceived Usefulness, Ease of Use, and Usage of Information Technology: A Replication,” *MIS Quarterly*, 16 (2), 227-247.

[2] Anderson, E. & M. Sullivan (1993). The antecedents and consequences of customer satisfaction. *Marketing Science*, 12 (Spring), 125-143.

- [3] Anderson, E., C. Fornell, & D. Lehman, (1994). Customer satisfaction, market share and profitability. *Journal of Marketing*, V 58 July, pp. 53-66.
- [4] Berman, B. (2005). How to delight your customers. *California Management Review*, 48(1), 129-151.
- [5] Bolton, Ruth N. (1998), "A Dynamic Model of Duration of the Customer's Relationship with a Continuous Service Provider: The Role of Satisfaction," *Marketing Science*, 17 (1), 45-65.
- [6] Bonnardel, Nathalie, Annie Piolat, and Ludovic Le Bigot (2011), "The Impact of Colour on Website Appeal and Users' Cognitive Processes," *Displays*, 32 (2), 69-80.
- [7] Ching-Chow Yang (2011), "Identification of customer delight for quality attributes and its applications", *Total Quality Management*, 22(1), 83-98.
- [8] Chitturi, Ravindra, Rajagopal Raghunathan, and Vijay Mahajan (2008), "Delight by Design: The Role of Hedonic Versus Utilitarian Benefits," *Journal of Marketing*, 72 (3), 48-63.
- [9] Christopher Bartel, Matthias H. J. Gouthier, and Markus Lenker (2013), "Delighting Consumers Click by Click: Antecedents and Effects of Delight Online," *Journal of Service Research*, 00 (0), 1-14.
- [10] Cynthia Ruppel, Linda Underwood-Queen and Susan J. Harrington (2003), "e-Commerce: The Roles of Trust, Security, and Type of e-Commerce Involvement," *e-Service Journal*, 2 (2), 25-45.
- [11] Davis, Fred D. (1989), "Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, and User Acceptance of Information Technology," *MIS Quarterly*, 13 (3), 319-340.
- [12] Donald C. Barnes, Nicole Ponder, and Kranti Dugar (2011), "Investigating the key routes to customer delight," *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 19 (4), 359-375.
- [13] Dustin S. Klein (2012), "Surprise and Delight," *Smart Business Cleveland*, 1-2.
- [14] Geissler, Gary, George Zinkhan, and Richard T. Watson (2001), "Web Home Page Complexity and Communication Effectiveness," *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, 2 (1), 1-46.

- [15] Geissler, Gary, George Zinkhan, and Richard T. Watson (2006), "The Influence of Home Page Complexity on Consumer Attention, Attitudes, and Purchase Intent," *Journal of Advertising*, 35 (2), 69-80.
- [16] Ginsburg, Suzanne (2010), *Designing the iPhone User Experience: A User-Centered Approach to Sketching and Prototyping iPhone Apps*. Boston, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- [17] Haque A, Sadeghzadeh J, Khatibi A (2006), "Identifying Potentiality Online Sales In Malaysia: A Study On Customer Relationships Online Shopping". *J. Appl. Bus. Res.* 22(4): 119-130.
- [18] Joelle Vanhamme (2003), "What If You Surprise Your Customers ... Will They Be More Satisfied? Findings from a Pilot Experiment," *Advances in Consumer Research*, 30 , 48-55.
- [19] Jung-Gyo Lee and Esther Thorson (2009), "Cognitive and Emotional Processes in Individuals and Commercial Web sites," *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 24 (1), 105-115.
- [20] Marret K. Noordewier¹ and Seger M. Breugelmans (2013), "On the valence of surprise," *Cognition and Emotion*, 27 (7), 1326-1334.
- [21] Matthew Dixon, Karen Freeman, and Nicholas Toman (2010), "Stop trying to delight your customer," *Harvard Business Review*, July- August, 1-16.
- [22] Michieal KSd (1998). *E-shock the electronic shopping revolution: Strategies for retailers and manufactures*. London, Mac Millan Business.
- [23] Min Gyung Kim and Anna S. Mattila (2015), "Does a surprise strategy need words? The effect of explanations for a surprise strategy on customer delight and expectations," *Journal of Services Marketing*, 27 (5), 361-370.
- [24] Narges Delafrooz , Laily H. Paim , Sharifah Azizah Haron , Samsinar M. Sidin and Ali Khatibi (2009), "Factors affecting students' attitude toward online shopping, *African Journal of Business Management*, 3 (5), 200-209.
- [25] Oliver, Richard L., Roland T. Rust, and Sajeev Varki (1997), "Customer Delight: Foundations, Findings, and Managerial Insight," *Journal of Retailing*, 73 (3), 311-336.
- [26] Oliver, R.L. (1999). Whence consumer loyalty? *Journal of Marketing*, 63(October, Special Issue), 33-44.

- [27] Lin, Hsiu-Fen (2007), "The Impact of Website Quality Dimensions on Customer Satisfaction in the B2C E-Commerce Context," *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, 18 (4), 363-378.
- [28] Loiacono, Eleanor T., Richard T. Watson, and Dale L. Goodhue (2007), "WebQual: An Instrument for Consumer Evaluation of Web Sites," *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 11 (3), 51-87.
- [29] Schneider, Benjamin and David E. Bowen (1999), "Understanding Customer Delight and Outrage," *Sloan Management Review*, 41 (1), 35-45.
- [30] Segars, Albert H. and Varun Grover (1993), "Re-Examining Perceived Ease of Use and Usefulness," *MIS Quarterly*, 17 (4), 517-525.
- [31] Sharad Borle, Siddharth S. Singh and Dipak C. Jain (2008), "Customer Lifetime Value Measurement," *Management Science*, 54 (1), 100-112.
- [32] Sinmoy Goswami and Mrinmoy K Sarm (2011), "Guest Delight: Its Significance in the Hotel Industry," *The IUP Journal of Marketing Management*, 10 (2), 64-84.
- [33] Sinmoy Goswami and Mrinmoy K Sarm (2014), "Management of Guest Delight in Hotels: An Exploratory Study," *Vision*, 18 (1), 29-45.
- [34] Steenkamp, Jan-Benedict E. M. and Inge Geyskens (2006), "How Country Characteristics Affect the Perceived Value of Web Sites," *Journal of Marketing*, 70 (3), 136-150.
- [35] Szymanski, David M. and David H. Henard (2001), "Customer Satisfaction: A Meta-Analysis of the Empirical Evidence," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 29 (Winter), 16-35.
- [36] Westbrook, R. A., & R.L. Oliver (1991). The dimensionality of consumption emotion patterns and consumer satisfaction. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 18(June), 84-91.
- [37] Xueming Luo and Mojtaba Seyedian (2003), "Contextual Marketing and Customer Orientation Strategy for E-Commerce: An Empirical Analysis," *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 8 (2), 95-118.