



The impact of product category on customer dissatisfaction in cyberspace

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Abstract *How do online customers judge a product's attributes in cyberspace? Previous studies of online product category suggest that all goods are not equal on the Web, because products have different attributes. Furthermore, the literature assumes that the customer's ability to evaluate product quality on the Web differs according to product attributes. Based on these considerations, the purpose of this study is to determine whether a customer's dissatisfaction and propensity to complain on the Web differ depending on product category. This study examines how selected variables (i.e. monetary, and non-monetary effort, and the degree of involvement) influenced the impact of product category on customer dissatisfaction. The analysis was performed using survey data, collected both online and offline. The findings suggest the most appropriate strategies online companies should employ for each product category in question.*

1. Introduction

Purchasing behavior in traditional physical markets and in online markets differs depending on what type of products/services customers have in mind. Although e-businesses expend a major effort in maximizing customer satisfaction and minimizing customer dissatisfaction, they face critical limitations. Online customers cannot see/touch/smell/hear the actual products via online transactions. For example, for products such as clothes, shoes, and cosmetics, the general tendency of customers is to try and see the products, since online information regarding their actual ingredients, such as type of fabric, for instance, does not provide enough information to make a purchase decision. Another common reason that customers wish to try and see such products physically is that even clothes of the same size may differ in actual sizes across companies. For example, size "medium" from the A company maybe almost like size "large" from the B company.

