

Research Paper

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Examining the key success factors in e-commerce during widespread crises (Case study of digikala online sales company)

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to identify the key factors of success in e-commerce during widespread crises (the case study of digikala online sales company). The current research is applicable in terms of purpose, and descriptive-correlative in terms of the nature and method of data collection, and is specifically based on structural equation modeling. The statistical population of the current research is all the customers of digikala online sales company in Tehran who have made at least 2 online purchases from 2019 to the time of the research, and according to Morgan's table, 384 people were selected as a sample, and the sampling method is simple random. The collection tool in the current research was Sharma and Agarwal (2019) questionnaire which was distributed electronically among the sample, and data analysis was done by structural equation modeling in SmartPLS 3 software. The research findings showed that the quality of website services and customer support system according to the standard factor loading coefficients of 0.771 and 0.673, respectively, are more important than the personalization components and electronic word-of-mouth advertising with the standard factor loading coefficients of 0.608 and 0.517. The findings of the research showed that besides paying attention to hardware and software factors related to information technology in e-commerce, paying attention to human factors can increase the efficiency of e-commerce even more.

Keywords:

e-commerce, pervasive crises, word-of-mouth advertising, internet sales of goods

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Internet-based technologies have enabled e-commerce companies to test different marketing strategies based on product information, advertising, and sales services. However, the performance of a website may be affected by these variables and any failure may rob customers' trust in these platforms, which in turn, leads to buyer dissatisfaction (Choshin & Ghaffari, 2017; Sing et al., 2017). The success of an e-business shows the satisfaction of customers who have experienced online shopping while browsing the website (Abdallah & Jaleel, 2015). Satisfaction is considered as the driving force of behavioral intention to repurchase. Many modifications have been reported in e-commerce success models, and one of them has been the considering of website service quality as the main independent variable (Lin & Fu, 2012). Consumer behavior research shows that: fear refers to the negative consequences of a specific event that may lead to changes in consumer behavior and attitudes (Solomon, 2017). As a result of the impact of the Covid-19 disease, consumers have increasingly turned to online shopping, accordingly, the Covid-19 pandemic has caused a change in consumer purchasing behavior, as consumers are afraid of contracting the disease (Laato et al, 2020; et al, 2020 Prentice).

Therefore, according to the said material, the researcher is trying to answer the main question, what are the key factors of success in e-commerce during widespread crises (Case study of digikala online sales company)?

Theoretical framework

According to Molla & Licker (2001), the success of an electronic business system is completely dependent on the response that is created at the system's individual and organizational level. Then, they proposed the dimensions of success, namely "e-commerce system quality, content quality, consumption, trust and support". The fear of covid-19 increases the role of e-commerce because it increases social interaction and stakeholder participation in online buying and selling of products and services (Addo et al, 2020). Website service quality considered to be as a combination of information quality, system quality and service quality. The amount of website support to the customer during and after the sale of goods or services and its usefulness determines the success of the online platform. Personalization; The strategy adopted by online sellers is to proactively offer products/services to browsers based on their previous browsing patterns, and the provision of information by customers willingly (Bhati et al, 2017). A distinctive feature of electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM) is its rapid dissemination and scalability. This includes; an asynchronous mode of information exchange related to an online product/service, accessible to the interested browsers and buyers (Baek et al, 2017).

Mark Peterson et al, (2021) paid for their research entitled sustainable marketing and consumer's support of sustainable business. This study includes an online survey and large-scale sampling in the United States (304 respondents) with data analysis using structural equation modeling. Three important findings of this study show that 1) consumers' intrinsic values have the most positive effect on consumers' support of sustainable businesses, 2) next, attitudes toward corporate altruism, and 3) and then, concerns about corporate ethics; had the most effect. Assessing social justice and recognizing the contribution of business in improving the quality of life of the customer had no effect on consumers' support for sustainable businesses.

Emami Meibodi (2021) conducted his research entitled the effect of effective management of e-commerce platforms and dimensions of responsibility on sustainable consumption during the pandemic disease (corona) (case study: online shoppers). The results of the research show

that the perceived effectiveness of electronic platforms has a positive effect on economic benefits with the moderating role of the fear of the epidemic. Economic interest has a significant effect on sustainable consumption with the moderating role of epidemic fear. Responsibility has a significant impact on sustainable consumption. Also, according to the results of the research, the main suggestions of the research are to increase the perceived effectiveness of electronic platforms and interactive communication with online consumers. Also, companies not only offer online products and services, but also provide e-commerce platforms that include an online care center to ensure the health and safety of consumers.

Methodology

The current research is an applicable research from the point of view of the goal, and a descriptive-correlative research from the method used. The statistical population of this research is all the customers of online goods sales companies (Case study of digikala online sales company). Considering the large number of users and the high number of the target community; 100 thousand people have been considered. The way to choose the best option is to select the people who have made at least 2 online purchases from 2019 to the time of the research, and were selected to answer the questions of the questionnaire. The size of the population is unlimited and uncertain; therefore, based on Morgan's table, 384 people who have shopped online at least twice a year were selected as a sample in this research. The sampling method in this research will be random simple. Also, the method of distributing the questionnaire in this research is electronic. A research questionnaire (Sharma & Aggarwal, 2019) was used to collect relevant data.

Discussion and Results

In order to investigate the hypothesis of the research, the modeling of structural equations, the method of structural equation modeling with the help of spss software was used to test the hypotheses from inferential statistics. Then PLS software was used to test the hypotheses or the conceptual model of the research, and the results of the first hypothesis showed that this hypothesis is confirmed according to the standard coefficient of 0.771 and the significance coefficient of 5.966. It can be said that there is a relationship between the quality of website services and success in e-commerce (Case study of digikala online sales company). The results of the second hypothesis showed that according to the standard coefficient of 0.673 and the significance coefficient of 7.909, this hypothesis is confirmed. It can be said that there is a relationship between the customer support system and success in e-commerce (Case study of digikala online sales company). The results of the third hypothesis showed that this hypothesis is confirmed according to the standard coefficient of 0.608 and the significance coefficient of 4.205. It can be said that there is a relationship between personalization and success in e-commerce (Case study of digikala online sales company). The results of the fourth hypothesis showed that according to the standard coefficient of 0.517 and the significance coefficient of 13.702, this hypothesis is confirmed. It can be said that there is a relationship between electronic word-of-mouth advertising and success in e-commerce (the case study of DJ Kala online sales company).

Conclusion

The current research was conducted with the aim of identifying the key factors of success in e-commerce during widespread crises (Case study of digikala online sales company). This finding is in line with researchers such as Darvishi (2021), Abdolmaleki (2020), Nekoei (2021) Gazivand & Habibi (2020), and Jalali (2021); the quality of website services makes the online store accessible at any time and from any place; therefore, it

facilitates referring new customers to the store. A high quality website service is a powerful sales tool and increases the value of advertising and can help the store connect with potential customers. In this way, the contact address of potential customers can be collected and letters or newsletters can be sent to them periodically. Satisfaction of customers with online shopping and the services provided by the website can increase and improve the amount of use of the services provided, and repeat the number of purchases. According to the results of the research, it is suggested to collect personal information of customers in order to provide purchase alternatives to each buyer. It also emphasizes the creation of content-based filters for preferences created by a particular user; which is tracked to provide suggestions to customers. It is suggested that reliable platforms for delivery of products and services be established as a strategic marketing direction to promote online transactions, to reduce the spread of the pandemic disease of Covid-19.