An Empirical Investigation of the Linkage between Dependability, Quality and Customer Satisfaction in Information Intensive Service Firms

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Vikas Kumar
ABSTRACT

The Information service sector e.g. utilities, telecommunications and banking has grown rapidly in recent years and is a significant contributor to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the world’s leading economies. Though, the information service sector has grown significantly, there have been relatively few attempts by researchers to explore this sector. The lack of research in this sector has motivated my PhD research that aims to explore the pre-established relationships between dependability, quality and customer satisfaction (RQ1) within the context of information service sector. Literature looking at the interrelationship between the dependability and quality (RQ2a), and their further impact on customer satisfaction (RQ2b) is also limited. With the understanding that Business to Business (B2B) and Business to Customer (B2C) businesses are different, exploring these relationships in these two different types of information firms will further add to existing literature. This thesis also attempts to investigate the relative significance of dependability and quality in both B2B and B2C information service firms (RQ3a and RQ3b). To address these issues, this PhD research follows a theory testing approach and uses multiple case studies to address the research questions. In total five cases from different B2B and B2C information service firms are being investigated. To explore the causality, the time series data set of over 24 to 60 months time and the ‘Path Analysis’ method has been used. For the generalization of the findings, Cumulative Meta Analysis method has been applied.

The findings of this thesis indicate that dependability significantly affects customer satisfaction and an interrelationship exists between dependability and quality that further impacts customer satisfaction. The findings from B2C cases challenges the traditional priority afforded to relational aspect of quality by showing that dependability is the key driver of customer satisfaction. However, B2B cases findings shows that both dependability and quality are key drivers of customer satisfaction. Therefore, the findings of this thesis add considerably to literature in B2B and B2C information services context.
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