

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

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**To the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Management Studies
In September 2010**

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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.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout the PhD journey a large number of individuals have supported me to complete this thesis, which has been so far the most enjoyable and intellectually challenging time of my life.

Firstly, I would like to thank the almighty God, for providing me continuous courage, strength and support at each step during this journey. I would also like to express my deep appreciation and sincere gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Roger Maull for all his patience, invaluable guidance, and support throughout my PhD journey. Thank you for your encouragement and confidence to develop both my professional knowledge and career. I would like to extend my warmest thanks to my co-supervisor Dr. Andi Smart whose constructive ideas and suggestions have improved the quality of my thesis. I would also like to thank XSPO Research Centre for providing me with the scholarship to pursue my doctoral research and to Francine Carter, PA to XSPO Research Centre for her generous help and support throughout the thesis writing process.

I would like to give special thanks to my mentor from undergraduate studies Prof. M. K. Tiwari for his invaluable guidance and support. I am also grateful to my colleague Dr. Luciano Batista for helping me to get access to the data for my thesis and other colleagues and staff members at the Exeter Business School for their continuous support and encouragement. I am also thankful to my friends Niraj Kumar, Maneesh Kumar, Abhishek Thepade, Tatiana Fedyanina, Saptarni Chaki and Rahul Midha who have helped me with their inspirational contributions and provided emotional support during this PhD journey.

Finally, I am also indebted to all my family members, especially my parents – Dr. Satyendra Kumar Chaudhary, Dr. Neelam Chaudhary, my sister Nivedita, brother Navneet and uncle Sumnendra Kumar Suman for encouraging me to start and sustaining me on the PhD journey. This thesis would not have been possible without their continued patience, support, encouragement and understanding.

I am eternally grateful to you all.

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