Dimensions of Business-to-Consumer (B2C) Systems Success in Kuwait: Testing a Modified DeLone and McLean IS Success Model in an E-Commerce Context

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ABSTRACT

An extensive body of research has tested the DeLone and McLean (2003) information systems success model in many contexts. Surprisingly, few of these studies have applied it to e-commerce. A study by Wang (2008) represents one such initiative, but it is crucial to address several remaining gaps associated with that study. Moreover, no e-commerce success model has considered the Arab world, which exhibits unique cultural factors influencing e-commerce. The authors' study proposes an improved IS success model for e-commerce in the Arab world. This model, based on that of Wang (2008), adds several enhancements to the validity and generalisability of his efforts, uses the latest SEM techniques, including both monetary and nonmonetary value conceptualisations, uses a multidimensional conceptualisation of system quality, and proposes specific factors of e-commerce service quality. The authors tested the proposed research model with a truly randomised sampling approach using 288 experienced business-to-consumer (B2C) consumers in the Arab world. The results largely support our hypothesised model. The most important difference between our results and those of previous studies is our finding that although service quality influences value, it has no bearing on user satisfaction in an Arab context. This study will be useful for practitioners and researchers seeking to improve the understanding of B2C e-commerce success in the Arab world.

Keywords: Arab World, Business-To-Consumer (B2C), E-Commerce, Information Quality, IS Success Model, Kuwait, Perceived Value, Satisfaction, Service Quality, System Quality

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INTRODUCTION

Given the growing importance of electronic commerce (EC), few businesses can succeed in the global economy without a successful EC strategy. It is thus surprising that many more EC research studies have investigated adoption and diffusion issues than have investigated broader EC success. Although adoption and diffusion are important, other factors need to be considered to predict a successful EC strategy. For example, a user of an EC system might actually be highly dissatisfied with the system or feel it does not provide the necessary information quality (Cho, 2011)—raising the chances that the consumer will switch to another system. Hence, a focus only on use and adoption leaves EC companies blind to the strategic threats and opportunities of their offerings. Evaluating the success of business-to-consumer (B2C) EC systems can be a challenging task for business owners. Therefore, identifying the dimensions of EC systems that predict more comprehensive success should be a critical strategic goal of EC businesses (Brown & Jayakody, 2008; Chen & Cheng, 2009; DeLone & McLean, 2004; Wang, 2008; Wang & Liao, 2008).

The focus of EC research on adoption and diffusion largely at the expense of attention to success is particularly surprising given the extensive body of research that has tested the DeLone and McLean (1992, 2003) information systems (IS) success model in many contexts. Only a few studies have attempted to apply this success model to EC (Brown & Jayakody, 2008; Cao, Zhang, & Seydel, 2005; Chen & Cheng, 2009; Sharkey, Scott, & Acton, 2010; Wang, 2008; Wang & Liao, 2008). For brevity, we refer to these authors as D&M and their model as the D&MM. The D&MM is a particularly compelling success model because it is comprehensive, has been carefully developed over time, and has been validated extensively. The main D&MM dimensions leveraged by these studies are information quality, system quality, service quality, use, perceived value, and user satisfaction.

One likely reason that few researchers have applied the D&MM to EC is that certain key differences between IS and EC success make the application to EC challenging (Chen & Cheng, 2009): (1) The usage purpose is different, because online consumers desire to purchase, whereas organizational employees use IS primarily for work purposes. (2) Employees are consistent in their use of IS in the workplace, whereas online customers can be inconsistent and fickle, especially if their loyalty has not been earned. (3) The context is different, because organizations use context-specific IS to support their business, whereas most online shopping websites interact with their customers using the same product, service, and interfaces. Consequently, understanding EC success requires a theory distinct from that which explains IS success (Chen & Cheng, 2009).

Although these studies have provided a useful foundation for studying B2C EC success using the D&MM, the difficulty of applying a model of IS success to EC success has resulted in several missed opportunities—all of which are addressed in this paper—to provide unique contributions that build on the literature. One of these key studies is by Wang (2008), whose model we aim to improve. Our study therefore aims to answer the following question: What makes EC successful in the Arab world based on an enhanced Wang model? To answer this question, we build on the full D&MM from Wang (2008) in the following ways: improving it with a multidimensional conceptualisation of system quality that includes ease of use, reliability, and security; including monetary and nonmonetary value conceptualisations for perceived value; and using EC-specific factors of site intelligence, service quality, order tracking, and customer-support responsiveness. Moving beyond typical Western applications of the D&M, we tested our model using professionals working in an Arab country and a rigorous sampling methodology with 288 respondents, as analysed with the latest standards of structural equation modelling.

The following section provides the necessary background on IS success research and how
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