Chapter 29
Measuring Quality of Electronic Services:
Moving from Business-to-Consumer into Business-to-Business Marketplace

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ABSTRACT
This study tries to answer questions regarding the factors that affect electronic service quality perception in the Business-to-Business (B2B) domain using quantitative and qualitative measures through surveys and interviews targeted at the German companies that are enrolled in providing service activities in the B2B marketplace. The study reviews past research in the field and the efforts that were conducted in the Business to Consumer (B2C) model, and moves toward explaining the service quality measure in the B2B domain. The study found that there are clear differences in the determinants of service quality perception between the B2C and B2B domains.

INTRODUCTION
During the past 20 years, professional life has changed significantly from a pure industrial landscape to an information-high tech oriented landscape. In the course of this change, the importance of computer technology to the professional life has significantly increased. These new technologies enabled the customers to easily search and compare different products and services that are offered and sold online. That led many companies and businesses to begin studying the quality of services provided through this medium, in order...
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to enhance its performance and increase loyalty 
of their customers.

Electronic services are no longer regarded as trendy internet applications; rather, customers have become more and more demanding, and became less tolerant to poor services performance. This delivery of high quality services is what makes customers come back and buy again (Fassnacht & Koese, 2006). In this easily accessible cyberspace, the customers are always looking and searching for companies that provide them with services that meets or exceeds their expectations (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Malhotra, 2005). As we can see in study of (Fassnacht & Koese, 2007), the turnover of a company also depends on customer satisfaction. A customer who gets positive experience with a company is potentially willing to pay more than he has to pay to an alternate seller.

Unfortunately for some companies, they normally do not get any feedback from their customers regarding customer satisfaction of the services offered by the enterprise. In most cases the usual way of determining whether the user is satisfied or not is to see if he/she comes and buys again or not. In order to solve this issue, scientists in the fields of social sciences, marketing, and information systems proposed different models and theories on how to enhance company’s performance and providing better services for their customers. Whether it’s directly aimed toward the end customer in the Business to Consumer (B2C) domain, or aimed toward the enterprises as in the Business-to-Business (B2B) domain. This led many studies to examine how customer’s satisfaction can be measured in order to give companies an instrument helps them to respond to the necessities of their customers. In addition, according to (Homburg & Rudolph, 2001) research on customer satisfaction in B2B relationships is still modest and lagging far behind consumer marketing.

Service can be defined as deeds, processes, and performances (Zeithaml, Valarie A. & Bitner, 1996). One example is the services provided by IT companies, these services are not tangible so they cannot be physically touched nor felt, but are actually intangible deeds and performances. Such companies provide maintenance services for its equipments, offer consulting services for systems and eBusiness applications, web design and hosting, training, and other services. At the end of this process of providing intangible services, we might find some tangible services provided as an end product, for example a final tangible report, a website, or some kind of guides and instruction manuals (Shostack, 1977). The most important and probably the most evident difference between traditional and electronic service quality is the replacement of interpersonal interaction with human-machine interaction. This distinction raises many questions concerning the types of dimensions that can or must be considered to assess service quality in the e-commerce context (Bressolles, Durrieu, & Giraud, 2007).

By examining the process of providing service, we notice that service is provided to the customer by some means of problem analysis activities, meetings and interviews with the customer. On the same level, the main offerings of hospitals, hotels, banks, and utilities consist of deeds and actions provided to the end customer (Kandampully, Mok, & Sparks, 2001). (Zeithaml, 2002) defines the electronic service quality as “the extent to which a web site facilitates efficient and effective shopping, purchasing, and delivery,” which had significant impact on the companies in the service sector. In this sector, the definition usually focuses on meeting customer’s needs and requirements, and tries to explain how the service delivered can meet the company’s expectations (Lewis & Booms, 1983).

Many researchers tried to understand the factors that affect customer perception of service quality whether physical face-to-face contact or using electronic mediums, these models varied and covered wide range of market segments, and specifically concentrating on the B2C domain of the market. During our previous research efforts
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