ASSESSING NET PROMOTER SCORE FOR VARIABLES, AFFECTING ONLINE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE OF CUSTOMERS FOR B2C E-COMMERCE AT TIER II CITIES OF INDIA

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Abstract: E-commerce is a progressively significant part of the global economy. Users of the e-commerce web sites or web applications often have high expectations for the quality of services and if those expectations are not met, the next site is only a click away. The trust of the customer is at stake when shopping online, as they virtually see and choose the product without any kind of physical touch.

This paper attempts to measure the Net Promoter Score (NPS) for different independent variables which affect the online shopping experience of customers for Business to Consumer (B2C) E-commerce at tier II cities of India.

The mean of Net Promoter Score for all the variables was found to be a single digit positive score. The score so gotten through the survey of customers residing at tier II cities of India could be categorized as "Good". It could be construed from the study that significantly decent percentage of customers are having good online shopping experience at the said geographical areas. Some of the variables such as security of payment, 24x7 availability and lower prices and better deals at B2C E-commerce were having NPS as double digit positive scores.

It's a good signal for the companies operating in e-commerce space at tier II cities of India. However some of the variables having low or negative NPS could be visualized as opportunities for marketers to work upon and deliver better customer experience in future.

Index Terms **- Consumer Behaviour, E-commerce, B2C, Net Promoter Score (NPS), Customer experience.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Electronic Commerce commonly known as E-commerce or eCommerce, is trading in product or services using computer networks, such as the internet. E-commerce draws on technologies such as internet marketing, mobile commerce, electronic funds transfer, online transaction processing, supply chain management, etc.

In a Business-to-Consumer (B2C) E-commerce environment, companies sell products and services to end consumers through online. Some of the conceptual definitions which is relevant to the study are discussed below.

Customer Expectations: Customer's anticipation of the quality of a company's products or services is a measure of the customer expectation. Expectation signifies both earlier consumption experience, which includes some non-experiential information like advertising, word-of-mouth etc. and a projection of the company's ability to deliver quality in the future.

Perceived Quality: Perceived quality is a measure of the customer's evaluation via recent consumption experience of the quality of a company's product or services. Quality is measured in terms of both customization, that is the degree to which a product or service serves the customer's individual needs and reliability, the number of times things don't work with the product or service.

Perceived Value: Perceived value is a measure of quality relative to the price paid. Although price (the value for money) is often very important to customer's initial purchases, it usually has a somewhat lesser impact on satisfaction for repeat purchases.

Customer Loyalty: Customer loyalty is a combination of the customer's professed likelihood to repurchase from the same company in the future, and the likelihood to purchase a company's product or services at various price points (price tolerance). The criticality of the Customer loyalty could be understood by the fact that it stands as a proxy for profitability.

1.1 Net Promoter Score

Net Promoter Score is a customer loyalty metric familiarized by Reichheld in his 2003 Harvard Business Review article titled, "One Number You Need to Grow". Net Promoter Score (NPS), gauges customer experience and predicts business growth.

Respondents are grouped as follows:

Promoters (having score of 9 and 10): are loyal enthusiasts who will keep buying and refer others, fueling growth.
Passives (having score of 7 and 8): are satisfied but unenthusiastic customers who are vulnerable to competitive offerings.
Detractors (having score from 0 to 6): are unhappy customers who can damage the brand and impede growth through negative word-of-mouth.

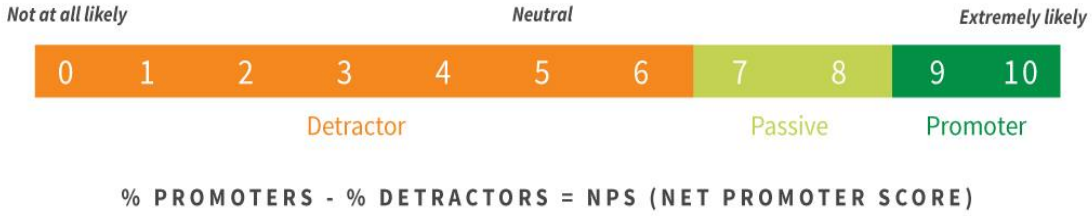

Figure1.1.1: net promoter score scale

Net Promoter Score [NPS] = [Percentage of Promoter Customers] – [Percentage of Detractor Customers]
NPS can range from a low of -100 (if all customers are Detractors) to a high of 100 (if all the customers are Promoters).
An NPS that is positive (i.e., higher than zero) is felt to be good, and an NPS of +50 is considered to be excellent.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies have been done in the areas of customer online buying behavior, customer attitude, customer satisfaction measurement towards B2C e-Commerce. Some of the exclusive research papers having relevance with the research undertaken has been briefed below.

Raassens Neomie & Haans Hans (2017), in their research article titled "NPS and Online WOM: Investigating the relationship between Customer's Promoter Scores and eWOM Behavior", have tried to draw a relationship between Net Promoter Score (NPS) and the online Word Of Mouth (WOM) behaviour. NPS according to Reichheld, is the single most reliable indicator for company's growth. Many companies use this recommendation based technique to measure the customer loyalty. Despite its widespread acceptance across the industries, the debate about its validity goes on. The major drawback is that its practitioners treat NPS as being equivalent across the customers, which is often very misleading. This research used a unique data set that combined Customer's Promoter Scores and online word-of-mouth behaviour. The authors then studied how individual customer's promoter scores were related to eWOM, including its varience with the three categories of customers as defined by NPS as, promoters, passives and detractors. The result showed that there was a relationship between customer's promoter scores and the valence of online messages. Further the messages of detractors and promoters were homogeneous with respect to valence of the eWOM messages they spread. However the passives showed message valance heterogeneity. As according to NPS calculations the passives have no weight although they form the largest group of customers. The results reveal that companies should pay focused attention to passives to convert them to promoters.

Keiningham Timothy L., Aksoy Lerzan, Cooil Bruce & Andreassen Tor Wallin (2008), in their research paper titled "A Holistic Examination of Net Promoter", had tried to reinvestigate the measurement and management of customer loyalty and its link with company's growth. The research is qualitative in nature and provides the summary of claims made regarding Net Promoter Score (NPS). It provides an exhaustive examination of two studies that test the claims made. The claims which were tested were, 1) NPS was the single most reliable indicator to gauge the company's growth ability, 2) NPS was superior to customer satisfaction and the later had no link to measure the firm's growth. Macro and micro-level investigations that tested the link between NPS and the firm's growth and NPS and the customer satisfaction metrics respectively, showed that neither of these claims were support.

DeLone, W. H. & McLean, E. R. (1992), in their research paper titled "Information system success: the quest for the dependent variable", had attempted to identify factors that contribute to Information System success and also to depict a more unified view of the concept of Information System success.
A comprehensive taxonomy was introduced which posits six major dimensions or categories of Information System success - System Quality, Information Quality, Use, User Satisfaction, Individual Impact and Organizational Impact. A descriptive model was developed by drawing together many aspects of Information System success and its implications for future Information System.

Gupta Vibha (2013), in her research aimed to measure the customer satisfaction level using ACSI (American Customer Satisfaction Index) model, to find out the market potential for Indore city for E-tailing. It was concluded in the paper that the online shoppers of Indore city were satisfied with the respective services provided by the online vendors. The customer satisfaction index for e-tailing was found to be around 84, which was supposed to be very good score. It was concluded that customers were really happy while purchasing online and would love to do in future. It was suggested to the vendors, not only invest in online marketing to satisfy customers but also should invest, to boost the customer loyalty to generate revenues in long run through e-tailing.

Khanna Preeti & Brinda Sampat (2015), the paper tries to find out the positive and negative influencing factors responsible for online shopping in India. The research explores that digital technologies and platforms are revolutionizing the traditional shopping processes. It was observed that price and product specifications remain key factors in selecting a particular product or services. However understanding the consumer behavior with the help of shopping history and analyzing the same with other relevant data for making customized recommendations can further improve the positive response from customers.

Balaji Makam S. (2009), the study investigates the antecedents of customer satisfaction with Indian mobile services. The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) model was used as the benchmark to examine the causal relationships among quality, value, satisfaction, loyalty and customer expectations. The result from SEM showed that perceived quality is an important predictor to customer satisfaction, which finally results in customer loyalty, trust and price tolerance.

Yong-Jae Park, Pil-Sun Heo & Myung-Hwan Rim (2008), the study was undertaken to measure the Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI), to derive practical implications for the service providers of mobile Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), to facilitate the improvement of the services. The result showed that the level of satisfaction with mobile RFID services among Korean customers was slightly lower than the estimated corresponding values for mobile services of a similar type in the other countries. The performance indices of the quality factors liable to affect customer satisfaction with mobile RFID services were generally quite low, ranging below 60 points. These results indicated need for the service providers to concentrate on their efforts on improving the performance of the overall quality factors in order to raise the level of customer satisfaction.

Fornell, C., Johnson, M. D., Anderson, E. W., Cha, J., & Everitt Bryant, B. (1996), the authors discusses the nature and purpose of ACSI and explain the theory underlying the ACSI model. They also illustrate the use of ACSI in conducting benchmarking studies, both cross-sectional and over time. The study finds the customer satisfaction to be greater for goods than for services and, in turn, greater for services than for government agencies. It was observed that the customer satisfaction in the USA is declining, because of decreasing satisfaction with services. The highpoints of the findings were 1) customization was more important than reliability in determining customer satisfaction, 2) customer expectations played greater role in sectors in which variance in production and consumption is relatively low, and 3) customer satisfaction was found to be more quality driven than value or price driven.

Anderson, Rolph E. & Srinivasan, Srini S. (2003), in their research paper titled "E-Satisfaction and E-Loyalty: A Contingency Framework" investigated the impact of satisfaction on loyalty in the context of e-commerce. Findings indicated that although e-satisfaction had an impact on e-loyalty, this relationship is moderated by consumer's individual level variables and firm's business level variables. Among the customer level factors, convenience, motivation and purchase size were found to strengthen the impact of e-satisfaction on e-loyalty. With respect to business level factors, both perceived value and trust as developed by the firm, significantly strengthen the impact of e-satisfaction on e-loyalty.

Mustafa I. Eid. (2011), conducted study on determinants of E-Commerce Customer Satisfaction, Trust, and Loyalty. The study drew on previous research to build a conceptual framework which hypothesizes relationships between three e-commerce constructs - customer trust, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty and their antecedents. The findings of the study showed that the B2C e-commerce customer loyalty in Saudi Arabia is majorly influenced by customer satisfaction but minorly influenced by customer trust. The identified key determinants which influence customer satisfaction, trust and loyalty are: the user interface quality, service information quality, security risk perception and privacy perception. Both user interface quality and information quality of e-commerce websites were found to have a significant positive impact on consumer satisfaction. While it was found the user interface quality is strongly related to customer trust, information quality was not. It was also found that both perceived security risk and privacy were highly related to customer trust, however lowly related to customer satisfaction.

Kettiramalingam, A. Y., Mathivanan, R. & Mangayarkarasi (2014), published paper on "A Study on Customer Satisfaction towards Online Shopping (With Special Reference to Coimbatore City)". The study intend to find the online shopping behaviour of customers and also examine the customer satisfaction level vis a vis with different influencing factors during online shopping. The findings of the study show that there is no relationship between the age of respondents and the hourly usage of internet in a day. Result also shows that there is no relationship between the respondent's gender and importance paid to price of the product while shopping online.

III. FINDING THE RESEARCH GAP

Various research papers have attempted to gauge the Net Promoter Score for various product or services at different locations around the world. However, this paper attempts to measure the Net Promoter Score at tire II cities of India. The variables have been moderated to suite Indian consumer behaviour towards B2C E-commerce environment.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Following are the objectives of the study:

I) To analyze the variables affecting Customer's online shopping experience for B2C E-commerce.

II) To calculate and analyze the mean of Net Promoter Scores for all the variables.

V. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The outcome of the research will help B2C E-commerce industry to understand the consumer behaviour of tire II cities in a better way. This will help marketers design their Marketing Strategies more effectively. Researchers can take cue on latest developments in B2C E-commerce space with regards to consumer behaviour, to take further their research.

VI. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is restricted to consumer behaviour towards B2C, E-commerce of top 10 tire II cities of India having majority of respondents from Nagpur city. Further, there is likelihood of casual approach of respondents while answering the questions. This may result in dilution of quality of the primary data which may ultimately affect the results. The research, examines the consumer behavior and attitude in B2C E-commerce environment, as these factors keep on changing, it is hard to find the exact information. The paper examines the NPS in light of customer experience and does not focus on the prediction of the business growth. This research can improve the quality of decision making however, it cannot guarantee cent percent success.

VII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is descriptive in nature and intended to find the Net Promoter Score for different variables affecting customer experience during B2C E-commerce transactions. In order to meet the objectives planned for the study, the primary data was collected using the questionnaire method. The questionnaire was split into two parts:

Part – I, had questions relating to demographics, general preferences about product or services, usage of internet, frequency of visits to E-commerce sites etc.

Pant – II, had questions consisting of 25 variables which were derived from literature review in the concerned area. The respondents were asked to rate these variables on the satisfaction scale of 1 to 10, where 10 was highest score and 1 was least.

7.1 Type of Research

Multiple Cross-Sectional type of Descriptive Research design was used to conduct the research. The multiple cross-sectional design enabled the researcher to study the net promoter score and factors affecting it, at given point of time for two or more samples of respondents from the population of interest. Descriptive Research is typical to have an expectation of the relationship to be explained, such as degree to which the variables influence the net promoter score.

7.2 Sample Unit

Any person having an experience of B2C E-commerce transaction belonging to top 10 tier II cities of India was considered as a sample unit. The cities which were considered for the collection of the samples were; Ahmedabad, Surat, Pune, Jaipur, Lucknow, Kanpur, Nagpur, Indore, Bhopal and Visakhapatnam respectively in order of decreasing population count.

7.3 Sampling Technique

A nonprobability Judgmental or Purposive sampling technique was used in the research. Researcher had selected the sample based on his judgment about some appropriate characteristic required of the sample member. This has been done to serve a specific purpose, even if this makes a sample less than fully representative of the population.

7.4 Sample Size

The sample size taken for the study constituted of 212 respondents. The inappropriate responses were rejected to get higher precision value in results.

7.5 Data Collection and Measuring Instrument

Questionnaire method was used to collect the primary data from respondents through electronic and social media. The questionnaire covered questions relating to factors influencing customer experience with regards to B2C E-commerce transactions.

7.6 Statistical Analysis

Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire. The Net Promoter Score was found out with the help of formula.

VIII. DATA ANALYSIS

8.1 Reliability Test

The reliability of the research instrument was tested using Cronbach's alpha. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, version 20, was used to carry out the analysis.

Table 8.1.1: cronbach's alpha reliability statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.962	.962	25

Table 8.1.2: cronbach's alpha reliability statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q1	87.53	302.800	.702	.699	.961
Q2	87.42	306.407	.745	.733	.960
Q3	87.15	305.652	.780	.767	.960
Q4	87.33	311.778	.692	.664	.960
Q5	87.15	312.201	.652	.640	.961
Q6	87.41	310.498	.650	.615	.961

Q7	87.43	308.360	.681	.570	.961
Q8	87.52	307.720	.696	.658	.960
Q9	87.42	307.345	.716	.716	.960
Q10	87.31	306.661	.785	.727	.960
Q11	87.22	306.420	.776	.732	.960
Q12	87.27	309.934	.709	.678	.960
Q13	87.36	313.626	.582	.618	.961
Q14	87.35	308.342	.718	.698	.960
Q15	87.37	308.292	.780	.704	.960
Q16	87.44	306.513	.728	.713	.960
Q17	87.35	307.224	.719	.662	.960
Q18	87.43	312.692	.690	.730	.960
Q19	87.60	309.928	.675	.747	.961
Q20	87.49	312.062	.617	.771	.961
Q21	87.36	313.142	.612	.573	.961
Q22	87.24	311.207	.751	.726	.960
Q23	87.29	306.974	.796	.745	.959
Q24	87.59	312.366	.632	.686	.961
Q25	87.41	314.139	.541	.635	.962

Discussion:

A reliability analysis was carried out on the data comprising 25 items. Cronbach's alpha showed the questionnaire to reach acceptable reliability, $\alpha = 0.962$. Anything above score of 0.7 is considered to have high internal consistency.

Almost all items appeared to be worthy of retention, resulting in decrease in the alpha if deleted. The one exception to this was the item 25, which would make no change in value of alpha. As such, there is no point in removing this item. However it was noticed that the item 25 was least correlated to other variables, which is apparent from the correlation value of 0.541.

8.2 Customer Experience Analysis

The following table shows the detailed analysis of all the variables which play important role in affecting customer experience. The table has been developed on the basis of respondent's experience of B2C E-commerce transactions. The responses were recorded on 10 pointer scale. For the purpose of analysis, pointer 10 was designated as Delighted, pointers 5 & 6 were Neutral and pointer 1 was designated as Quitters. The readings are shown in percentage.

Table 8.2.1: nps for different variables affecting online shopping experience of customers

Net Promoter Scores for different variables affecting online shopping experience											
Sl No.	**Variables**	**Quitter [1]**	**Highly Dissatisfied [2]**	**Dissatisfied [3]**	**Slightly Dissatisfied [4]**	**Neutral [5 & 6]**	**Slightly Satisfied [7]**	**Satisfied [8]**	**Highly Satisfied [9]**	**Delighted [10]**	**NPS**
1	Security of payment	2.83	3.3	2.83	2.83	8.01	7.54	17.92	17.92	36.79	**34.91**
2	Lower prices & better deals	2.35	4.24	0.94	3.3	15.56	9.43	16.98	33.96	13.2	**20.77**
3	24 x 7 availability	5.66	1.41	2.35	1.88	8.96	4.71	27.35	15.56	32.07	**27.37**
4	Authentic advice	1.88	1.41	0.94	5.18	16.5	20.75	17.45	24.52	11.32	**9.93**
5	Availability of brand	4.24	0.94	2.35	5.18	17.92	10.37	19.81	17.92	21.22	**8.51**

	options										
6	Information privacy	2.35	4.71	2.83	4.71	25.94	7.07	16.03	20.75	15.56	**-4.23**
7	One stop shopping	5.66	1.88	5.18	11.79	12.26	10.37	18.86	17.45	16.5	**-2.82**
8	On time delivery	4.71	3.3	12.26	2.35	9.9	11.79	20.28	20.28	15.09	**2.85**
9	Shopping Convenience	5.18	11.79	5.66	2.83	8.96	7.07	19.33	23.58	15.56	**4.72**
10	Ease of Product comparison	9.43	5.18	5.18	4.71	8.01	11.32	19.81	19.81	16.5	**3.8**
11	Time saving	3.77	9.9	4.71	3.77	8.96	9.43	23.11	18.39	17.92	**5.2**
12	Brand Image of the website	3.77	4.71	7.07	5.18	10.37	8.49	22.16	20.28	17.92	**7.1**
13	Discounts	2.35	5.18	6.13	9.43	13.67	8.01	24.52	19.33	11.32	**-6.11**
14	Exclusive product availability	3.3	6.13	2.83	6.13	12.26	13.2	19.33	23.58	13.2	**6.13**
15	Product Information	2.35	4.71	6.6	7.07	13.67	9.43	22.16	22.64	11.32	**-0.44**
16	Global reach	2.35	6.6	5.66	3.3	14.62	13.2	16.98	21.69	15.56	**4.72**
17	No obligation of buying	6.13	6.13	3.77	7.07	9.43	6.13	16.5	22.16	22.64	**12.27**
18	Product Quality	3.77	5.18	5.66	5.66	14.15	12.26	16.98	24.52	11.79	**1.89**
19	After Sales Services	1.41	6.6	6.6	4.71	18.86	9.43	19.81	19.81	12.73	**-5.64**
20	Guarantee	3.3	7.07	3.3	8.01	13.2	9.9	18.39	23.58	13.2	**1.9**
21	Favourable return policy	2.83	3.3	6.6	6.6	10.84	8.96	19.81	25	16.03	**10.86**
22	Price range availability	1.88	6.13	2.83	7.54	9.43	11.32	17.92	25.94	16.98	**15.11**
23	Product Packaging	3.3	2.83	5.66	4.71	14.62	4.71	23.58	22.64	17.92	**9.44**
24	Insurance of goods	3.3	7.07	4.24	8.01	17.45	9.43	14.62	25.94	9.9	**-4.23**
25	Physical appearance	5.18	4.24	3.3	6.13	14.15	12.26	21.69	16.5	16.5	**0**

Mean of Net Promoter Score [NPS] for all the variables = 164.01 / 25 = 6.5604
Net Promoter Score [NPS] = 7.

8.3 Result Analysis

It could be observed that the mean of Net Promoter Score (NPS) for all the variables is approximately Positive 7. Which means that overall the experience of the customers for online shopping for B2C E-commerce could be categorized as "Good" if not excellent.

The grey shaded portions in the table shows the highest percentage of response for a specific variable. It could be easily observed that for majority of the variables the customers are highly satisfied & delighted, which is a good signal for marketers. However there are many variables were customers are just satisfied or neutral, like, one stop shopping, on time delivery, after sales services, information privacy etc. These are the factors on which marketers should work to improve the satisfaction level of customers, which in turn will increase the customer loyalty.

IX. CONCLUSIONS

The decent Net Promoter Score (NPS) of Positive 7 is a proof that the customers of tier II cities of India are overall satisfied if not delighted with the online shopping experience. Some of the variables such as security of payment, 24x7 availability and lower prices and better deals at B2C E-commerce were having NPS as double digit positive scores. At the same time there were variables which required marketers attention as the customer experience is below expectation level. The NPS is negative for variables such as discounts offered, after sales services, information privacy etc. So it could be inferred that customers are not satisfied with discounts offered by marketers as they perceive it to be deceiving or not up to their expectations. Similarly with after sales services and information privacy the expectation of customers is much higher than what is offered and the way it is managed. It's a good sign for the companies operating in e-commerce space at the said geographical locations, to visualize these factors as opportunities, to differentiate their product/services and offer better experience to customers.

The loyal customers are the critical component for any organization as it is considered to be proxy for profitability. The loyal customers not only do repeat buying, hold positive attitude about the product or services but also are price tolerant.

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