The Impact of E-service Offerings on the Demand of Online Customers

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Abstract:
With the rapid growth of online shopping, online sellers are facing more sales opportunities and challenges in the highly-competitive e-commerce market. Sellers that can generate high customer cumulative ratings may experience higher demand and profits. We explore the question of how sellers can attain those high ratings. Using leading online shopping websites in China and the U.S., we collected data for 200 online sellers in both countries for each of 40 product categories (16,000 observations) pertaining to the sellers’ respective customer cumulative ratings, history, price, and e-service offerings (customized website design, credit card payments/autopay, purchase security/seller communication, fast shipping, customer support, and refund opportunities). Via path analysis, we examine the extent to which online sellers’ e-service offerings and characteristics influence customer cumulative ratings and demand. We find that the effects of online sellers’ e-service offerings on customer cumulative ratings are moderated by product positioning (utilitarian/hedonic) and high/low perceived risk. Our evidence also suggests that high customer cumulative ratings positively influence demand. We discuss implications for customer online shopping behavior and online sellers’ sales strategies.

Keywords: E-service, Customer Satisfaction, Demand, E-commerce, Service Operations Management
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