



# Formation of e-satisfaction and repurchase intention: Moderating roles of computer self-efficacy and computer anxiety

Heeseok Lee<sup>a</sup>, Sue Young Choi<sup>b</sup>, Young Sik Kang<sup>a,\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Business School, Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, Seoul 130-012, South Korea

<sup>b</sup>School of Business Administration, Myongji University, Seoul 120-728, South Korea

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## ABSTRACT

The exploration of online customer satisfaction (called e-satisfaction hereafter) and repurchase becomes increasingly important in e-commerce. Yet, the process of e-satisfaction and repurchase formation and the context under which this process may vary have not been investigated rigorously. In order to fill this knowledge gap, this paper attempts to develop a conceptual model to decipher how e-satisfaction is formed. Furthermore, it investigates how computer-related individual differences such as computer self-efficacy and computer anxiety moderate this formation. The analysis results from a survey of 274 online buyers confirm that our antecedents play key roles in forming e-satisfaction and repurchase and the proposed moderators are important.

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## 1. Introduction

The rapid growth of e-commerce reflects its compelling advantages such as enhanced market outreach, lower cost structure, greater flexibility, broader product lines, greater convenience, and faster transactions. The evolution is foreshadowed by the growing popularity of online environments in which millions of people interact with one another. However, e-commerce also comes with its own set of challenges. Competitors are only a few mouse clicks away. Currently, an agreement seems to favor better customer service and its consequent effect on e-satisfaction and repurchase, even though low price and web presence were believed to be the drivers of success in nascent days of e-commerce. Especially, e-satisfaction is not only the primary driver of online consumers' continuous behavior (Bhattacharjee, 2001b; Cenfetelli, Benbasat, & Al-Natour, 2005; Hsu, Yen, Chiu, & Chang, 2006; Lin, Wu, & Tsai, 2005; Thong, Hong, & Tam, 2006), but also the key to building and retaining a loyal base of long-term customers (Evanschitzky, Iyer, Hesse, & Ahlert, 2004).

Recently, the exploration of e-satisfaction has gained increasing importance in the IS and marketing disciplines (e.g. Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003; Bhattacharjee, 2001b; Evanschitzky et al., 2004; Hsu, 2008; Lin et al., 2005; McKinney, Yoon, & Zahedi, 2002; Szymanski & Hise, 2000). Drawing from user satisfaction and technology acceptance, IS researchers have investigated e-satisfaction. From the user satisfaction perspective, Molla and Licker (2001) and McKinney et al. (2002) have investigated the constructs for

the process by which e-satisfaction is formed based on the DeLone and McLean IS success model (DeLone & McLean, 1992). The instrument for measuring web customer satisfaction has been developed and validated (Wang & Tang, 2004; Wang, Tang, & Tang, 2001). From the technology acceptance perspective, IS researchers have explored e-satisfaction as an antecedent to continuous intention of e-commerce services (Bhattacharjee, 2001a, 2001b; Cenfetelli et al., 2005; Hsu & Chiu, 2004; Hsu et al., 2006; Lin et al., 2005; Thong et al., 2006). In marketing fields, antecedents to e-satisfaction and its consequent effects have also been examined in a variety of resources (Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003; Balasubramanian, Konana, & Menon, 2003; Bansal, McDougall, Dikolli, & Sedatole, 2004; Cao, Gruca, & Klemz, 2003, 2004; Evanschitzky et al., 2004; Luarn & Lin, 2003; Szymanski & Hise, 2000; Yang & Fang, 2004; Yang & Peterson, 2004; Yen & Gwinner, 2003). Among these studies, Anderson and Srinivasan (2003), and Yang and Peterson (2004) have explored the conditions under which the effect of e-satisfaction on e-loyalty may vary.

Although much progress has been made for the exploration of e-satisfaction from these two disciplines, the following two issues have not been explored rigorously. First, in the IS discipline, based on the model by Spreng, MacKenzie, and Olshavsky (1996), McKinney et al. (2002) posit that e-satisfaction has two antecedents – website information satisfaction and its system satisfaction. However, their study fails to include service quality delivered by a website, or e-service quality, because it focuses on the information search phase only. In the marketing discipline, based on the service quality and satisfaction literature (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988; Spreng & Mackoy, 1996), it has been demonstrated that e-service quality is a key antecedent

\* Corresponding author. Tel.: +82 2 300 0776; fax: +82 2 300 0734.  
E-mail address: [yskang@mju.ac.kr](mailto:yskang@mju.ac.kr) (Y.S. Kang).

**Table 1**  
Research on moderating effects of individual differences toward online consumer behavior.

Study	Research method	Individual differences studied	Key findings related with moderating effects
Citrin et al. (2000)	Survey	Consumer innovativeness (domain-specific innovativeness, general innovativeness)	Domain-specific innovativeness $\times$ Internet usage $\rightarrow$ Internet shopping
Garbarino and Strahilevitz (2004)	Survey and experiment	Gender	Gender $\times$ site recommendation by a friend $\rightarrow$ willingness to buy online
Chiu et al. (2005)	Survey	Gender	Gender $\times$ personal awareness of security $\rightarrow$ attitude, online purchase intention; Gender $\times$ perceived ease of purchasing $\rightarrow$ attitude, online purchase intention
Elliott and Speck (2005)	Survey and experiment	Product involvement (PI), online shopping experience (SE)	PI $\times$ currency $\rightarrow$ ARW; PI $\times$ product information $\rightarrow$ ARW; SE $\times$ ease of use $\rightarrow$ ARW; SE $\times$ product information $\rightarrow$ ARW; SE $\times$ customer support $\rightarrow$ ARW
Sanchez-Franco (2006)	Online survey	Gender	Gender $\times$ attitude $\rightarrow$ intention; Gender $\times$ flow $\rightarrow$ attitude, intention, usefulness; Gender $\times$ ease of use $\rightarrow$ flow

Attitude toward a Retailing-oriented Website (ARW).

to e-satisfaction (Janda, Trocchia, & Gwinner, 2002; Wolfinbarger & Gilly, 2003). Yet, few studies have explored these three antecedents to e-satisfaction simultaneously and possible relationships among them. Second, perhaps more important, few studies have investigated the condition under which the formation of online consumers' e-satisfaction and repurchase may vary. In view of the significance of the computer interface for the consumer-business relationship in the context of e-commerce, it is important to explore how computer-related individual differences such as computer self-efficacy and computer anxiety serve as these moderators. Despite the importance of such an insight, few studies have been investigated toward this direction.

To fill this knowledge void, this paper attempts to explore the key antecedents to e-satisfaction and the moderating effects of computer self-efficacy and computer anxiety on the possible relationships among them. While computer self-efficacy represents one's belief about his or her ability to use computers in diverse situations, computer anxiety is associated with negative attitudes toward use of computers (Venkatesh, 2000). Within the context of innovation diffusion research, computer self-efficacy and computer anxiety represent well-established dynamic, situation-specific individual differences (Thatcher & Perrewe, 2002). These individual differences reflect malleable inclinations that influence responses to stimuli. These two constructs are potentially critical to connecting website information and system satisfaction found in IS with e-satisfaction and other antecedents found in marketing because they can play an important role in affecting customers' responses to a retail-oriented website.

For the above exploration, we employ the theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), and synthesize past research on service quality and satisfaction in marketing and self-efficacy and anxiety in social psychology. This paper can help managers understand online customers' e-satisfaction formation and repurchase behavior, and retain long-terms customers.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Research on the moderating effects of individual differences toward online consumer behavior is reviewed in the next section. The conceptual model is then developed. The method used to test the hypotheses and the results of the data analysis are then presented. In the ensuing section, the contributions and implications are summarized. The final section summarizes the results of the paper.

## 2. Moderating effects of individual differences toward online consumer behavior

As website users become representatives of the consuming public (Sanchez-Franco, 2006), IS and marketing researchers seek to identify individual differences such as gender and consumer innovativeness as moderators toward online consumer behavior. Sev-

eral individual differences have been identified as moderators toward online consumer behavior, as summarized in Table 1. For example, Citrin, Sprott, Silverman, and Stem (2000) found that domain-specific innovativeness moderates the relationship between Internet use and Internet shopping. Elliott and Speck (2005) identified the moderating effects of two individual differences, product involvement and online shopping experience, on the relationship between specific website factors and attitude toward a retail-oriented website. Finally, Chiu, Lin, and Tang (2005) and Sanchez-Franco (2006) confirmed that gender serves as an important moderator toward online consumer behavior based on research of the gender role within the technology acceptance literature (Sun & Zhang, 2006; Venkatesh & Morris, 2000; Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, 2003). However, few studies have explored which individual differences lead to the condition under which e-satisfaction formation may vary, although e-satisfaction has been identified as the primary driver of continued usage (Bhattacharjee, 2001a, 2001b; Cenfetelli et al., 2005; Hsu & Chiu, 2004; Lin et al., 2005; Thong et al., 2006).

In particular, with computer interfaces serving as the primary, or even sole, points of customer contact for many online firms, researchers have reexamined service quality and customer satisfaction in the e-commerce context (e.g. Evanschitzky et al., 2004; McKinney et al., 2002; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Malhotra, 2005; Szymanski & Hise, 2000; Wolfinbarger & Gilly, 2003; Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Malhotra, 2002). These studies may imply that computer-related individual differences such as computer self-efficacy and computer anxiety can play important roles in the formation of service quality and customer satisfaction. Yet, to our knowledge, few studies have explored this issue, although a few studies on the moderating effects of gender toward online consumer behavior have implied the possible moderating ability of the two variables (Chiu et al., 2005; Sanchez-Franco, 2006).

## 3. Conceptual model: theory and hypotheses

Our research model is derived from TRA, which hypothesizes that an individual possesses a variety of beliefs that ultimately create an overall evaluative attitude which, in turn, influences behavior. As depicted in Fig. 1, the model posits that e-satisfaction affects repurchase intention directly. Overall e-service quality, website information satisfaction, and its system satisfaction are believed to affect e-satisfaction. To explore e-satisfaction in a sufficient fashion, we may need these three notions. Overall e-service quality is supposed to be influenced by efficiency and fulfillment, which are salient dimensions of e-service quality (Parasuraman et al., 2005). The effects of website information and system satisfaction on overall e-service quality are mediated by efficiency and fulfillment. Website system satisfaction leads to website information

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