An Investigation into The Relation Between User Experience on Website Design and The Quality of Customer Services of Online Retailers in Saudi Arabia

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Science (Honours) in {Business Information Systems}

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Cardiff School of Management
Cardiff Metropolitan University

April 2017
Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation entitled *Systems of An Investigation into The Relation Between User Experience on Website Design and The Quality of Customer Services of Online Retailers in Saudi Arabia* is entirely my own work, and it has never been submitted nor is it currently being submitted for any other degree.

Candidate: Omar Alhumayyani

Signature:  
Omar Alhumayyani

Date:  

Supervisor: Dr. Taslima Begum

Signature:  

Date:  

Abstract

This research aims to study the online users’ perceptions about the website design of online retailers in Saudi Arabia and to relate their perceptions to the quality of customer service. It also aims to provide recommendations to the Saudi online retailers on how to implement website design tools and the elements for serving the customer better in order to gain their approval. This research uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodology as it employs two questionnaires and interviews to assess Saudi users. The study concludes that there is a huge difference in the perception of Saudi online customers between online shopping and in-store shopping experience. With the high dissatisfaction level of online experience, customers shop online mostly on a monthly basis but if their experience were enhanced they are liable to increase the frequency of their online shopping. The most unacceptable issue for customers is website contents. Customers believe that companies can provide better content to its clients and it is a major disaffection issue with Saudi online customers, who feel the need to have more interaction in terms of online buying and services making this one of the dissatisfaction reasons they have. The Saudi online customers are easily willing to switch to other competitors if there is a problem on the retailer’s website. Most customers think that if a company has a good level of customer service at their stores, this will not indicate that they have a good customer service on their website. The online business in Saudi Arabia still needs a great deal of development. As there are chances for Saudi businesses to participate more in the marketplace and utilize the proficiency and different effective global practices to develop and grow the capacity and presentation of online shopping.
Acknowledgement

I am using this opportunity to express my appreciation to everyone who supported me during my study at Cardiff Metropolitan University. I also express my warm thanks to my family and I thank my research supervisor, in person of Dr. Taslima Begum for giving me the proper guidance and insights necessary to put this research paper together and make it a success.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Table 2

Question 2: Rate generally your view on online Saudi retailers on these customer service factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Number of Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall quality</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-store buying experience</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online buying experience</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After sales experience</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. **Table 3**

Question 3: Provide a name for your favourite website design of an online Saudi retailer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>extrastores.com</th>
<th>jarir.com</th>
<th>saco-ksa.com</th>
<th>izone-stores.com</th>
<th>tokyogames.com</th>
<th>pattz.com</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. **Table 4**

Question 1: Do you Agree with the following statement “Website design for most of the online Saudi retailers is appealing to me’’?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. **Table 5:**

Question 2: Rate, generally, your view on online Saudi retailers’ websites design factors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Number of Rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usability &amp; Navigation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functionality</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layout &amp; Appearance</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. **Table 6:**

Question 3: Provide a name for your favourite website design of an online Saudi retailer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pattz.com</th>
<th>jarir.com</th>
<th>beazwear.com</th>
<th>dokkanafkar.com</th>
<th>izone-stores.com</th>
<th>tokyogames.com</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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1- Graph 1

**Frequency of Shopping**

- Weekly: 28%
- Monthly: 55%
- Quarterly: 10%
- Yearly: 7%

2- Graph 2

**Overall quality**

- Strongly Satisfied: 11%
- Satisfied: 19%
- Dissatisfied: 43%
- Strongly Dissatisfied: 27%
3- Graph 3

Online buying experience

- Strongly Satisfied: 15%
- Satisfied: 30%
- Dissatisfied: 35%
- Strongly Dissatisfied: 20%

4- Graph 4:

In store buying experience

- Strongly Satisfied: 75%
- Satisfied: 23%
- Dissatisfied: 0%
- Strongly Dissatisfied: 2%
5- Graph 5

After sales experience

- Dissatisfied: 18%
- Strongly Dissatisfied: 13%
- Satisfied: 14%
- Strongly Satisfied: 55%

6- Graph 6:

Favourite Website

- extrastores.com: 36%
- jarir.com: 32%
- saco-ksa.com: 22%
- tokyogames.com: 5%
- izeone-stores.com: 2%
- pattz.com: 3%
7- Graph 7:

Website Design Impression

- Strongly Disagree: 7%
- Disagree: 68%
- Agree: 18%
- Strongly Agree: 7%

8- Graph 8:

Usability & Navigation

- Excellent: 5%
- Poor: 18%
- Average: 77%
9- **Graph 9:**

**Layout & Appearance**

- Excellent: 23%
- Average: 64%
- Poor: 13%

10- **Graph 10:**

**Content**

- Poor: 82%
- Average: 15%
- Excellent: 3%
11- Graph 11:

**Functionality**

- Poor: 36%
- Excellent: 23%
- Average: 41%

12- Graph 12:

**Favourite Website**

- tokyogames.com: 22%
- pattz.com: 25%
- izone-stores.com: 17%
- dokkanafkar.com: 15%
- jarir.com: 7%
- beazwear.com: 14%
Chapter One: Introduction

1. Introduction:

Most customers around the world search the internet and depend on websites to give them relevant information about a product, service or even to compare offers and form an opinion about a company, a product or a brand. The development in technology offers great opportunities to businesses to serve their customers in a much faster, easier and better way. One of the most developing areas of business nowadays is the field of electronic commerce, and the adoption of online shopping has become the top priority of any business on this planet. E-commerce may help companies to generate more profit but on the other hand many companies fail to provide good customer services through their websites’ facilities and the result of this can sometimes be dissatisfied customers (Hausman & Siekpe, 2009).

High quality websites design can be the foundation upon which to improve a company’s sales and customers’ expectations. Companies can provide varying degree of services through their websites in order to facilitate the buying process of the customer and increase the sales made by the companies. Providing high level customer services will not only increase the company’s sales but also increase the level of customer satisfaction. However, customer service is about acknowledging the needs of the customer and maintaining the promises of the company as well as offering the company’s products or services of great quality and in a consistent way. In fact, customer service means the company promises to provide best quality of both sales and communication. It also means providing clear and attainable information, resolving clients’ issues and using a feedback system to help the customer in all conditions (BSI Group, 2017).

However, the main focus of this study is to understand the Saudi online market and specifically to understand the relation between User Experience on Website Design and The Quality of Customer Services of Online Retailers as the research philosophy is interpretative while the approach employed in this research is deductive. This dissertation is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is the introduction to the dissertation and it will state the research aim and objectives as well as the limitations of this study. The second chapter is the literature review of the dissertation; it will explain the background of the dissertation and illustrate the literature of
this research. The third chapter will discuss the research methodology and what tools were used by the researcher to fulfil the research objectives and how the data was collected. The fourth chapter explains the results of the research methodology and of the whole research in general and it provides data analysis. The fifth chapter of this research is the conclusion while the sixth chapter is the recommendations for the Saudi online retailers on how to implement website design tools and element to serve the customers’ better and gain their trust.

2. Research Aim and Objectives:

The main aim of this research is to understand online users’ perceptions about website design of online retailers in Saudi Arabia and to relate their perceptions to the quality of customer service.

The objectives of the research are:

1- Study and investigate customers' point of view about customer service with online retailers in Saudi Arabia.
2- Study and investigate customers’ view of website designs of online retailers in Saudi Arabia.
3- Investigate if there is any relation between the provided customer service by the online Saudi retailers and the design of their websites.
4- Provide recommendations to the Saudi online retailers on how to implement website design tools and elements to serve the customer better and gain their approval.

3. Limitation of The Study:

Although this research was thoroughly constructed, it still has some limitations and shortcomings. One major limitation of this study is the language of the participants. This research was designed to be done in English language but the sample language of this research is in Arabic. Therefore, translating from Arabic to English and vice versa consumed a lot of time and could produce some errors. The fact that the questionnaires were given in English language demotivated some of the potential participants to take a part in this research. Those who participated in the questionnaires have a good command of the English language. The language
factor was also a limitation in the interviews conducted, where the researcher had to translate the questions to the interviewees and some answers were also given in Arabic and he had to also translate them into English for data collection purpose. The inability of the researcher to visit Saudi Arabia in person and conduct the interviews face-to-face was another one of the limitations. All interviews were conducted online and via Skype video call. Lastly, some of the potential participants who agreed to take the interviews were not available and some changed their mind about participating in the research.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

1. Background

The Saudi nation gives a great competitive edge among the Middle Eastern countries as they are considered to have the largest economy of 168 billion dollars with around 13 million internet users in the country (Tawil, 2001). Moreover, one of the fastest growing industries in the country is the retail sector as sales income of this sector alone is around 100 Billion dollars. Even at that, the adoption of e-commerce technologies by Saudi retailers is quite late and local banks only recently started to offer payment gateways to e-commerce websites, there is around one in ten Saudi online consumers who has previously dealt with and used local e-commerce sites (Hudhaif & Alkubeyyer, 2011). The statistics of e-commerce market today shows that souq.com is the main retailer with a 13 per cent market share. Sukar.com has 8 %, Namshi has 7 % and MarkaVIP has 5 %. Saudi consumers prefer to pay cash upon delivery for lack of trust in e-commerce transactions. The Government has launched many guidelines to organize and monitor electronic transactions and has assigned 800 million dollars to the implementation of the e-government plan (ITA, 2016). A study conducted by (Alam & Elaasi, 2016) concluded that the Saudi customers doubt the use of websites that are provided by retailers and believe that companies can provide better services in terms of products, delivery and security. However, this research aims to understand the perception of the Saudi consumer from a different angle.

2. The Adoption of Electronic Commerce

E-Commerce is a widely-argued issue in businesses and nowadays it is redefining the relationship between buyers and retailers. It is also changing the way businesses operate and in some cases, it might influence a whole industry (Goode & Stevens, 2000). In general, electronic commerce comprises of any type of economic activity performed via electronic networks (Wigand, 2006). It is also defined as the process of purchasing and selling products or services by electronic data transmission through the Internet (Ngai, & Wat, 2002). One element of the e-commerce issue is electronic transaction, which is defined as the trade or buying of products or services through computer facilitated networks and in most of the buying orders payment and delivery may be done off-line (OECD, 2002).
E-commerce adoption delivers many values to both vendors and buyers alike. As vendors, they can approach narrow market segments while buyers can benefit by getting into global markets with more product accessibility from a diversity of vendors at cheaper costs. The existence of global competition between companies to provide excellent products is one of the most important values to customers. However, companies that own a website and conduct e-commerce activities as part of its sales strategy, are not guaranteed to have competitive advantages. E-commerce depends mainly on high website traffic, high orders and sales income and the most important factor is to have repeat customers. Meanwhile, this international competition has made it easier for customers to find a substitute if they are unsatisfied (Bhatti et al., 2000).

3. Customer Service

To start with, a consumer or a customer can be referred to as the person who uses the products and facilities of a company and he or she may be an internal or external person. The customer can also be an entity such as organizations or other businesses (Zeithaml, 2009).

Customer service can be defined as the method of satisfying each customer’s needs and to resolve any issue they may have during their dealing with the company. It is not possible to expect customer satisfaction by only product sales or customer retention. Customer service can be a very easy task and it can also be a very complicated one as it concerns satisfying the customer’s needs regarding all aspects of service, product and company (Zeithaml, 2009). Customer service is the effort provided by the company before, during and after dealing with the company. It is a collection of activities that makes prospective and existing customers satisfied and it facilitates the sales process as well. Customer service also differs by product, industry and customer and it is an important part of customer value proposition by the company. It could be provided by an employee or electronically such as through a telephone or phone application system. Many customers claim that the quality of the provided customer service has decreased due to the fact that company managers pay more attention to the financial aspect of the business more than anything. Thus, the significance of customer service allows companies to constantly improve customer experience and satisfaction, to provide quality in a competitive market (Schneider &
Bowen, 1999). Customer service also means the processes and activities of creating an easier environment for consumers to conduct work with a company (Kotler, 2000). According to Zeithamel et al. (2006) customer service cab can be defined as all the services that can support the delivery and sales of a company’s main and key products as those services are nor chartable by the company. Sandoff (2005) argues that it is important for companies to standardize its services and the strategy for customer service. Standardization is a process to control the results of customer service and to provide consistent customer service quality. It is widely believed that customer service standardization makes companies perform better and eliminate errors in the provided services. It does not only improve productivity but can also decrease the company’s expenses. Another concept that improves the customer service of companies is personalization. This means designing services that meet specific needs of customers but this concept can lead the company to increase its prices as these types of services require more operational costs and it has some difficulty to manage and control, and requires the company caution (Kelly et al., 1996).

As stated by Harris (2000), customer service is any service the company can deliver to the client in which it improves his or her experience. Similarly, Zemke & Woods (1998) stated that customer service is any action the company can take in order to build the relationship with the customer and this includes and is not limited to fulfilling the customer’s needs and requirements to create a shared platform and common ground of benefits between the customer and the company.

Some scholars consider customer service as every action that forces a company and its customers to advance a sales connection. Others see customer service as a set of assessable actions which offer facilities to customers (Disend, 1991). Below is a discussion on some important concepts of customer service.

### 3.1 Service Quality
Service quality is a concept that has attracted significant attention and argument since it is difficult to define and assess with no general agreement on the definition and assessment (Wisniewski, 2001).

There is a quantity of various definitions to service quality. One that is frequently utilized describes service quality as the degree to which a service encounters customers’ requirements or expectations (Wisniewski and Donnelly, 1996). Therefore, service quality can be defined as the delivery of services as expected and perceived by the consumer. If the customer receives a service less than what was expected then customers will be dissatisfied (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Customer service quality should consider both the expectation of the customer and the perceptions of service. One of the models that assess service quality is the SERVQUAL model that was developed by Parasuraman et al (1985). The model has been used widely as an approach to assess and evaluate the quality of services and to compare between customer expectations and service perception. The model has five different elements and they are Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy. Tangibles mean the physical amenities, tools, and look, while Reliability means the capability to deliver what was pledged consistently and precisely. Responsiveness means the readiness to assist customers promptly while Empathy means the grade of considerate and individual kindness that may be visible to customers. Lastly, Assurance means the information and consideration that companies demonstrate to customers and their capability to deliver trust, proficiency, and assurance.

The SERVQUAL model for assessing service quality has been exposed to a large amount of critiques. Some researches do not support the model that were introduced by Parasuraman et al. (1985) as some factors in this model were considered unimportant (Carman, 1990). Additionally, Cronin and Taylor (1992) have introduced the SERVPERF model which depends mainly on performance assessment and contains 22 items to provide more accurate result of assessment by understanding the perception of the customer.

To sum it up, Trustworthy customer service may be perceived as a vital advantage for most companies. While customer service is an intangible matter, the approach to understanding the level of its quality and how it meets customers’ expectation is very difficult. It is consumable and
it is individual so assessing it can be complex and less than direct. Most businesses assess success by their sales figures. If sales continue to grow, then company must be rising. Nevertheless, one small aspect is ignored, which is the customer (Kotler, 2000).

Long-standing effectiveness in a fluctuating market is not only the outcome of improved sales; it's more about resolving the needs of the consumers than meeting those requirements. If companies cannot assess customer service at any company, then they cannot manage. Businesses universally discuss the significance of delivering outstanding customer service. This is not only because of the invention of the internet and how it changed the way commerce and customer service work but to fulfil the purpose of the company. Studies revealed that it consumed six times more in acquiring new customer than in retaining an existing one. It also has been argued that customer satisfaction and service quality delivers a theoretical outline that is valuable in identifying, reasoning, and discussing about service quality and customer satisfaction (Kotler, 2000).

### 3.2 Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty:

Customer satisfaction is the consequence of the relationship between a customer’s expectation and a customer’s state of mind. Customer satisfaction is defined as the difference between expected quality of service and the customer’s engagement or feelings after the service. Customer satisfaction helps consumers to discuss their requirements directly with the retailers. Customer satisfaction is very vital since it aids to understand the business’ strong point and weak points (Bateson & Hoffman 2000).

Oliver (1999) explained that customer loyalty is a highly held promise to rebuy favoured products, services, or brands constantly, which can lead to frequent buying of the same brands, regardless of situational impacts and promotion efforts. He also explained loyalty as a combination of both promise to the rapport between a customer and supplier. Dick and Basu (1994) stated that loyalty has two extents: attitudinal and interactive, which are formed by the extent of the connection between related approaches and repeat support. Furthermore, Cronin and Taylor (1992) provided an explanation of the variation between these two extents: from the attitudinal viewpoint, loyalty results from psychological participation and favourite; and loyal customers
continuously pay consideration to brand statuses and prices. Nonetheless, the standpoint of behavioural attitude is constantly on the base of observing the frequent purchase occurrence and brand swapping.

Furthermore, Lovelock (1996) stated that Customer Loyalty is the motivation of customers to have an on-going dealing regarding a company’s product or services for long period of time on a continuous basis and expresses about the company’s product with everyone. As an estimate, customer will be loyal to specific company if trust and commitment is fulfilled and good value presented through their relations. Consequently, it is most vital for companies to offer high customer value to achieve high customer loyalty (Kotler, 2000). Customer satisfaction is also a significant element to be obtained so as to construct solid relationship. Bolton et al. (2000) said that satisfaction and value produces enormous influence on loyalty in customer relationships. To grow the number of loyal customer, businesses have to give more attention to customer satisfaction. Some scholars assert that growth, maintenance and increase of customer loyalty indicate the importance to have a good marketing strategy to attain competitive advantages (Bolton et al. 2000).

Service loyalty is another concept of customer service and it means the company’s commitment and promise to its customers in order to build a long-term relationship with them. It has been argued that if a company is not loyal to itself then it cannot provide service loyalty to its customers. Service loyalty goes before consumer loyalty, and consequently it is important that companies influence their customers of their promise to greater quality service. Companies must continuously try to build and retain their customer’s loyalty in all of its relation with the customer in order to keep its clients (Kandampully, 1998). As stated by Bowen and Chen (2001), pleasing the customer is not enough as it should be extremely pleasing to them since satisfying their needs is tantamount to gaining their loyalty and developing customers’ loyalty is not an option for businesses because it is the only way of sustaining the relationship with customers.

4. Website Design

One of the very important factors that companies should take into consideration is the website design element of an ecommerce site. This is due to the fact that the website plays an important
role as a crossing point between a user and a company (Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Website design is defined as the process of constructing, organizing, and building a website and it comprises of the process of gathering ideas, information and requirements, arranging and applying them in order to reach a certain goal and within some certain criteria. Website design means the process of planning the website pages and generating websites and that includes technical building, information structure, visual design, and networked conveyance (Powell, 2002). Below are some explanations of website design elements:

4.1 Website Layout and Appearance:

A web layout is fundamentally the organization of the several web contents on a web page and it is an extremely vital and important element of website design. Usually, every website from different viewpoints has its own unique web layouts and appearance. As commercial websites employ more consumer forms and accounts compared to educational websites. Every industry has its own requirement in terms of design layout and appearance but an effective website layout and appearance is based on modern trends and latest technologies (Bajwa & Choudhary, 2012). The appearance and layout of a website also comprises the graphics, colours and styles, as well as all the visual elements of the website design (Kyrnin, 2016).

4.2 Website Structure & Function:

As the construction of websites depend merely on pages and links between those pages, web designers have the main role of arranging the organization and planning of these pages and the element inside each page. The structure and function of a website can be built on two types of structures and they are hierarchical and network structures (Hoffma et al., 1995).

Rosen and Purinton (2004) have stated that website structures should have the followings:

- Coherence – this means the minimalism of a design. The general site construction must be easy to understand by removing less meaningful things and adding a lot of information. Furthermore, the website has to employ an acceptable font size and text colour.
- Complexity – the information presented should be classified in different subjects in order to decrease the difficulty of the website structure and look.
- Accuracy – users must scan the information and surf through the website easily. Users should easily recognize the pages they want to visit so as to find their needs.

4.3 Usability and Navigation

Nielsen (2000, p.10) discusses website usability and navigation as one of the customer experience of a website before utilizing it and even before making any purchase or buying from it. Usability evaluation has been discussed in many studies but the best way to do that is by understanding the opinion of a user as long as these matters are not tangible (Agarwal & Venkatesh, 2002). The standards and matters of evaluation differ from user to user and from one study to another. For example, Nantel and Senecal (2007) argue that there is a definite association between the time that passes between customers expecting a web page to open and the likelihood of not completing their task. Other studies are founded on Microsoft Usability Guidelines (MUG) that explains that five main categories are planned as applicable while planning websites for commercial and they are content, simplicity, advancement, customization, and personalization and excitement (Agarwal & Venkatesh, 2002). Of the numerous aspects that influence usability of a website, ease of navigation has been believed to be significant by most scholars. Ease of navigation associates with the intensity of time and effort necessary to achieve certain tasks (Venkatesh, 2000). Suitable navigation plan helps consumers obtain more of the information they are looking for and enable them to find information easily. Therefore, a main encounter in constructing a website is to create a good navigational construction and suitable hyperlinks (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989).

The navigation system of websites has an important role in the customer experience of that website as chaos is a major hindrance in the design. There are two opposite needs for designing a website: one to satisfy the human user and the other to satisfy the search engines (Nielsen, 2000). Designing a website in general has to include several elements including usefulness, accuracy, suitability, reliability and flexibility (Palmer, 2002).

4.4 Website Content
Content can be defined as the selected information that appears on a website and the way how it is classified and planned (Proctor & Salvendy, 2002). In an ecommerce context, it is important that the website should have guidelines, a set of benchmarks on how information displayed as this data has to be clear to everyone as customer may use them to compare, analyse and also make important decisions (Honeycutt et al, 1998).

The informational aspect of websites identifies what information the site should deliver to the clients. Marketing experts and academic scholars agree that the main aim of a company’s website is to offer information to potentials, consumers and other investors. Business websites are usually used to offering broad information about the business, commerce or products (Chen et al, 2002). In an investigative report by Keeney (1999), the necessity to increase product information was conveyed as one of the key purposes linked to e-commerce, while Palmer (2002) discovered content of business websites to be an important factor to predict a company’s success. Chen et al. argued that the information shown on a website is one of the important factors that come after the structure.

Website content is a significant component of consumer satisfaction and buying decisions. This is because customers search for information before any buying actions could occur. The more the customer is educated, the better decision he or she will make and the higher level of satisfaction he or she may get. Information includes a wide range of data concerning every detail of the website and this decreases the level of uncertainty and feeling of risk (Montoya-Weiss et al, 2003).

One of the most important topics on website content is personalization to restructure the difficult task of evaluating and handling large amounts of information. Website personalization is defined as any activity that adjusts the information or services delivered by a website to the requirements of a specific user or a group of users. It can also be defined as modifying some structures of a product or service that the consumer likes such as, having relevant content of his preferences appear to him or her with more suitability, lower cost, or some other benefits (Moon et al., 2008).
Essentially, personalization decreases the perceived complication produced by disproportionate information, thus decreasing consumers’ search times and boosting consumer satisfaction. Additionally, for the average website, personalization is characteristically better as it considers individual requirements and generates a trusting connection between the website and client by converting e-commerce into connection commerce (Jackson, 2007). As stated by Yang et al. (2007), when consumers are given personalized content, they have a tendency to pursue less information and possibly use less time in advance to make the buy. Likewise, it has been suggested that by offering direction to individual consumers through the buying procedure, website personalization lets the shopping experience happen at ease and builds up buyers’ feelings of trust and loyalty. In brief, online retailers must make consumer information quests effectual and easy by delivering tools such as website personalization which, by adapting website information to suit individual requirements, improves online customer satisfaction, purchase target, and reliability (Jackson, 2007).

5. Online Users Experience of Website Design and Customer Service

5.1 Online Consumer Behaviour

When customers visit the website of any company, they may search for information or search for a specific product. Online consumer shopping is very different than the actual retail shopping and companies have to understand the theory of consumer behaviour because to log out means losing to another company’s competitive rate. It is an extremely significant matter for the companies to study the issues affecting consumer behaviour as different kinds of websites may need to serve different kinds of consumers with different characteristics (Hill D., 2003). Moreover, online customers have different backgrounds but mainly, the common behaviour between all users is the preference to deal with website, thereby facilitating the ease of use and security in the e-commerce activities. Business characteristics signify the service quality of the electronic commerce website, the rank of privacy and security and the brand name. Purpose, acceptance and extension refers to the causes of a consumer’s online aim to buy a product, the acceptance of the customer by employing factors that influence his/her pleasure and the retention of the customer to visit the website another time (Hill D., 2003). Lewis & Lewis (1997)
have identified five different types of website users. First are the Focused information-hunters. These customers search for a specific sort of product in order to consider buying it. Second are the unfocused information-hunters. These customers usually surf by clicking on hyperlinks with no particular direction. Focused buyers are the third type of customers and they surf pages and website in order to immediately buy a product. The fourth type of customers is the Fun seekers and these users look to spend spare time entertaining themselves. The final type of customers is the bargain hunters and they visit many websites for the purpose of finding offers and sales. However, Hofacker (2001) explained how information that exists on any website is being handled by the consumer and the human being in general. The process has five stages and they are revealing, consideration, perception, approval, and retention. Revealing happens when content should be shown for a long time as to be handled by the user and he or she may not handle the information very quickly but this stage is the first contact with the website design elements. Consideration is the second phase of information handling and it is the effect that happens by visual element of the design and it is also associated with addressing their needs. Perception phase is linked with understanding content and relating that to the data stored in the user memory. If a user sees a picture or reads words it automatically links to a previous experience he or she had earlier. Approval is the fourth step and it means all information must look reliable in order to be approved by the user. Customer may not approve any website that does not look serious or professional. Retention is the stage where the website becomes remembered by users and they are willing to visit again and deal with them repeatedly.

5.2 Online Service Quality:

It is vital for a company that expands its markets into the field of e-commerce to provide service quality. This implies that companies should reconsider some marketing outlines for deciding intensity of service quality. Service Quality was described as the capability of a website to provide shopping, buying and sending of products and services professionally and successfully. Academic investigation has established standards that affect the quantity of service quality approach through a website. These comprises of obtainable material and content, simplicity of usage, confidentiality and security, layout and completion. In general and nowadays, online customers
have a preference to gather all the material they want from the websites rather than go to a physical retail store. Simplicity of usage has been known as the level to which the customer handles the website easily. In contrast, confidentiality and security are the core standards in assessing online services. Confidentiality is linked to the defence of customer’s personal data. Moreover, layout is linked to design and style element of a website and completion means the consistency of information and content that a user depends on (Swaminathan et al, 1999).

Moreover, it should be mentioned that Perceived Service Quality is built on communication between consumer and service suppliers (Zeithaml et al., 2002). Perceived Service Quality is defined as a type of approach related, yet not equivalent, to satisfaction, which results from the degree to which consumers’ expectations match with the provided service (Zeithaml et al., 2002). The significance of Perceived Service Quality is discussed as companies distinct from competitors and it gives companies the chance to grow Customer Satisfaction and it is argued to enhance loyalty. There is a model that is dedicated to describe Perceived Service Quality in online settings. Nonetheless, this model is mostly concentrated on the practical features of a website such as security and layout. The model explains that Perceived Service Quality consists of four important components and they are Dependability, Openness, Reassurance and Responsiveness (Zeithaml et al., 2002).

5.3 E-Services:

Electronic services are the online tools that enable customers to be served automatically that which is offered by the company on its website. Companies’ websites have to be dependable, and answerable to aid the consumers with precise responses and rapid service. E-service excellence can provide companies the edge they demand to supersede the competition in the market and improve consumer relation. Vendors must be cautious in selecting the correct e-services that supports their commerce in order to develop and maintain the satisfaction of their customers. There is a big number of online tools to assist businesses deliver online services to their clients such as customized website pages, FAQs, online Chat, E-mail notifications and automatic answer. In the customized website pages’ service feature, consumer’s buy is
documented as well as the information about the products they have chosen. For example, when a customer enters an e-commerce website, the page shows results based on his or her preferences. Customization is beneficial for all companies in order to increase customer loyalty regardless of the security issues as stated by some researchers. FAQs are another service that companies can give to their customers as it is very simple, common and helpful. Online chat is one of the services that companies offer to their clients too by assigning a customer agent to solve their problem. It offers a written communication system between the customer and the employee. It gives the services a human element rather than dealing with systems only. Potential customers can inquire about any product or services of the company which leads to more satisfaction and trust. Lastly, E-mail notifications and automatic response, is a good resolution for all businesses that aim to send fast and simple information about its products to a diversity of customers. Automatic e-mail replies buyer requests by differentiating key elements and directly responds to normal enquiries. This service saves valuable time for the business and aids the consumers with their queries precisely (De Ruyter et al., 2001).

5.4 Website Design and Customer Satisfaction:

McKinney et al., (2002) defines that it does not matter to a customer if a website is comprehensive and has a lot of information as long as it is difficult to search and navigate; they will feel uncomfortable and leave the site immediately. A website should be organized in a smart way that will assist customers on many levels of understanding to surf smoothly and obtain the things they are looking for (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

Furthermore, a significant feature is the appearance of the data. Presentation components such as the colour, fonts, links and menus must be used to build a coherent layout throughout the website. A coherent layout and location of the website parts help consumers in knowing more promptly and taking more time to examine the information and get all the advantages the website can give (Badre, 2002). The appearance of the website has to be eye-catching to support and hold the attention of the consumers but Cunningham (2000) stated that Content is what will
decide long-term website success and it could be one of website design’s most important element.
Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Data Collection

This section explains the general process used to collect data for the dissertation. This research uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodology. Qualitative research involves some technical processes. These processes are vital for the understanding of the research questions and to meet the goal of the research. Next is the explanation for qualitative data collection.

3. Qualitative Research & Primary data
3.1 The Research Questionnaires

This research undertakes two different questionnaires. The first one is dedicated to understand Saudi customers’ perspectives on website design of local retailers. The second questionnaire is to understand the customers’ level of satisfaction about the provided services by those retailers.

3.1.1 Understanding Customers’ Perspectives on Website Design.

This questionnaire is divided into two parts. The first part is to answer research questions in order to know if it asks the participants if they agree with this statement “Website design for most of the online Saudi retailers are appealing to me” and the answer to this question has to fall under the choices of, strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. The main aim of asking this question is know the overall opinion of the Saudi customers regarding local online retailers. This part also questions the customers’ point of view on the Usability & Navigation, Content, Functionality and Layout & Appearance as they have to answer the question by selecting how these factors are handled by the retailers. They have to choose based on their own opinion one of these answers such as Excellent, Average and Poor. The last thing they have to answer in this part of the questionnaire is to name their best website owned by a Saudi retailer in terms of the design element. The second part of the questionnaire is devoted to understanding the participant personal information such as name, age, city and email in order to understand and analyse the sample and result of this research.

3.1.2 Understanding the Customers’ Level of Satisfaction of the Saudi Retailers’ Websites
This questionnaire is also divided into two parts; the first part is the research aim questions. The first question is to ask customers about the frequency of dealing with and buying from the Saudi online retailers. This question will let us understand if the candidate has enough experience with the retailers to be able to judge and make a generalization about the status of the customer satisfaction. Secondly, the questionnaire asks participants about their overall point of view of the quality of customer service provided by the retailer. Answers of this question have to fall under the choices of strongly satisfied, Satisfied, Strongly Dissatisfied and Dissatisfied. The questionnaire also asks participants to rate their experience with the Saudi retailers in different context such as store, online and after sales. The reason to ask this question is to understand if the satisfaction or dissatisfaction cause is resulting from their online or other retailing experience. The last question of this part is to also ask the participants about their favourite website of Saudi retailers in terms of design and to know if there is a correlation between their rating of customer service and choice of best website. This question will help to link the two questionnaires together. Lastly, the questionnaire also asks about the customers’ personal information for understanding and analysing the sample and result of the research reason.

3.2 The Questionnaires Design

Hays (2008) argues that designing the questionnaire is the most significant part in a research. As stated by him, the questionnaires’ questions should be brief and clear. He also mentioned that, the questionnaire’s questions should be written in an easy language. The reason for this is to avoid misunderstanding as interaction with participants is limited. However, the format of these research questionnaires appears to have a scaling response methodology.

3.3 The Research Interview

The interview of this research has eight questions. The answer of these questions does not take more than 3 minutes and the overall time spent on the questionnaire is around 20 minutes. The main aim of conducting an interview in this research with some of the participants was to understand the general point of view of the Saudi online customers and to know their perspectives about both the level of quality of customer service and website design. The questions of the interviews were as follow:
1- Do you think there is any overall relation between website design and the quality of customer service of Saudi online retailers?

2- From your point of view, how can website usability & navigation impact the quality of customer service?

3- From your point of view, how can website content impact the quality of customer service?

4- From your point of view, how can website Layout & Appearance impact the quality of customer service?

5- What recommendations do you give to each retailer to enhance the quality of website design?

6- From your point of view, is there any relationship between in-store buying dissatisfaction and website design?

7- From your point of view, is there any relationship between online buying experience dissatisfaction and website design?

8- From your point of view, is there any relationship between after sales experience dissatisfaction and website design?

3.4 Interview Format

The format of this research interview was semi-structured interview. According to Bernard (1988), semi-structured interview is the best method to be used when it is conducted for only once with the research participants. The semi-structured interview runs a well-defined set of questions for questioners and can give dependable, equivalent qualitative data. Semi-structured interviews are regularly preceded by watching, informal and formless interviewing so as to permit the researchers to acquire a strong understanding of the subject of interest.

3.5 The Research Sample:
The research uses probability sampling technique and it reaches the study sample through online channels where they exist. Online methods were employed to include announcing taking the questionnaires through social media channels. Same method was used to take the permission of customers to be interviewed and their consent was taken before conducting the interviews. However, sample size is around 60 participants in different age, gender and region. All participants took the questionnaires, while 12 of them were interviewed. Interviews were done via Skype video calls. The selection of customers will consider differences in gender and age to represent Saudi nation and to prevent bias in the research and all participants have to be at least 18 years old.

3.5.1 The Research Sample Design:

According to Teddlie and Yu (2007) there are three simple sorts of probability sampling and techniques and they are random sampling, Stratified sampling, Cluster sampling and Sampling using multiple probability techniques. The focus of this study and the sampling method is the random sampling of probability sampling technique. Random sampling happens when each sampling element in an evidently distinct population that has an equal opportunity of being involved in the sample (Teddlie & Yu, 2007).

As stated by Doherty (1994), the first thing to be done in a probability-based sampling in order to decide upon the nation of interest and it may include age, gender and so on. After that, a framework of further classification is carried out. In this study, candidates were determined to be 18 years old, Saudi candidates, online customers of online retailers all comprising of both genders from different regions.

4. Data Collection

As the primary methodology of this website is two questionnaires and one interview, the questionnaires were distributed to participants online. Social media posts were employed to announce the request of the public to take part in this research. Participants who agreed to it but did not fit the requirement of this research were excluded and the number of those participants chosen in the questionnaires is 60 for each of them. Making the total number of participants to
be 120. The interviews were conducted via Skype video calls and the total number of interviewees is 12. All data was collected, translated, coded and then analysed.
Chapter 4: Data Analysis & Evaluation

In order to understand the result of the questionnaires, all answers of candidates were collected and then analysed. The results were grouped based on the provided set of answers that was given to the candidates.

4. Customers’ Perception on Retailers’ Customer Service

Table 1, 2 and 3 show the result of analysing participants answers based on the questionnaire questions. Participants’ answers on the questionnaire questions were analysed as shown in graph to 6. From the these charts, it is clearly evident that most participants are shopping monthly by 55% and participants who shop weekly are around 28% while 7% of the participants shop yearly. Moreover, almost one-third of the customers are having no problems with the online retailers as 11% are strongly satisfied and 19% are satisfied. This also shows that two-third of the Saudi customers are dissatisfied with the quality of customer services. Among those customers, 98% are satisfied with their in-store experience, 75% are strongly satisfied while 23% are satisfied. Only 2% of customers are dissatisfied with their in-store experience. More than half of the customers are by 55% not happy with online customer service experience of which 20% are strongly dissatisfied and 35% are dissatisfied. Customers generally, are happy with the after sales experience and 55 % of them are strongly satisfied and 14% are satisfied. The dissatisfied customers are 18 % and those who are strongly dissatisfied are 13%. The most favoured website is jarir book store.

5. Users’ Perceptions on Quality of Website Design

Table 4, 5 and 6 show the result of participants’ answers based on the questionnaire’s questions. As shown in the graphs from 7 to 12 above, more than two-third of the customers and 75% of them do not like the overall website design of the Saudi online retailers. 68% disagree with the given statement that “Website design for most of the online Saudi retailers are appealing to me” and 7% strongly disagree. 18% of the customers agreed with the statement while 7% strongly agreed. Secondly, 5% of the customers rated the usability of the websites of the Saudi online retailers as excellent, 77% said its average, and 18% said it is poor. 82% of the customers think
that content on the websites are poor, 3% rated them as excellent and 15% rated them as average. In terms of websites’ functionality, 41% of the customers said its average, 36% said it is poor and 23% rated them as excellent. For the layout and appearance, 64% of the customers think that Saudi online retail websites look average, 23% think they are excellent and 13% think they are poor. The most favoured website is pattz.com

6. The Relationship Between Quality of Website Design and Customer Service.

To understand this part of the research, an interview was conducted with 12 participants. As explained in the previous chapter, there are eight questions for the interview and below is an analysis of the interviewee answers.

- Question 1: Do you think there is any overall relationship between website design and the quality of customer service of Saudi online retailers?

Among the twelve participants that were interviewed, three of them think that there is a strong relationship between customer service and website design as those participants think a company that cares about its customers will dedicate an enormous amount of effort into how they display important data for them and this gives an impression about their whole operation in the company. One participant said that if a company was encouraging people to use their online facilities and not improving or maintaining those facilities, this might be considered as a sort of disrespect to the client.

On the other hand, the majority of the participants believe that if the customers’ service is delivered through online tools then there is a big relationship between website design and quality of customer service. Two participants think there is no relationship between customer service and website design at all.

- Question 2: From your point of view, how can website usability & navigation impact the quality of customer service?

Nine out of twelve participants think that website usability and navigation is an important factor of any website and most of the Saudi retailers miss some of important elements regarding
website design not dealt with such as, online chatting. They also believe that not giving attention to some details of the company website that serve the customers’ needs may lead them to switch to another provider. Moreover, two participants think that the website navigation and usability is not an indication of customer service of any company.

- **Question 3:** From your point of view, how can website content impact the quality of customer service?

Ten out of twelve participants think that the most important factor of any website is content and that it is an important element in providing high quality customer service. They also believe that this can play as a direction for their needs and most of the time they find themselves unable to buy from a website or deal with it if they do not give them enough description about anything they are looking for. One participant said that if the company does not provide enough description about a product they have, this will make me doubt their services. Furthermore, two other participants think that content is an important factor of the website but if there is a misleading content or lack of content about anything, this will make them to buy from the company but not to judge the company as it does not provide a good level of customer service.

- **Question 4:** From your point of view, how can website Layout & Appearance impact the quality of customer service?

The participants were further divided in two groups in terms of their point of view. The first group think that layout and appearance is part of the company branding and image and has nothing to do with the quality of customer service but the other group thinks that the impression given in layout and appearance impacts their opinion regardless of their experience with the company.

- **Question 5:** What recommendations do you give to each retailer to enhance the quality of website design?

Most comments in this question were for online retailers to provide clear information on how to reach them. Participants think that the use of contact forms is not a good way of answering their questions. One participant stated that there is a huge difference for her between online shopping and going to the physical location of a store because her questions are answered promptly while
finding information and elaborating that in Saudi, online shops are very frustrating for her. However, comments were also made regarding speed of the website functions and waiting times for pages to open as one of the things that participants wanted the companies to take care of.

- Question 6: From your point of view, is there any relationship between in-store buying dissatisfaction and website design?

All participants did not agree with this statement and think that website design or even website structure has no relationship with in-store buying at all but they all agreed that in-store buying experience in Saudi Arabia is much better than online shopping.

- Question 7: From your point of view, is there any relationship between online buying experience dissatisfaction and website design?

All participants agreed with this statement and they also think that website design could be one of reasons why they leave a website or even do not buy regardless of their need. They also mentioned the fact that they all prefer dealing with international online retailers such as Amazon and Best Buy.

- From your point of view, is there any relation between after sales experience dissatisfaction and website design?

All participants did not agree with this statement and think that website design or even website structure has no relationship at all on their judgement of their unsatisfactory shopping experience.
Chapter 5: Conclusion

This dissertation was aimed to know online users’ perceptions about website design of online retailers in Saudi Arabia and to relate their perceptions to the quality of customer service. The study was done based on qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. With the consideration of the primary data collection methods of this research, the final conclusion can be summarized in the following points:

1- There is a huge difference in the perception of the Saudi online customers between online shopping and in-store shopping experience. Customers are more satisfied with their in-store experience and they are not totally satisfied with their online shopping experience.

2- With dissatisfaction level of the online experience, customers shop online mostly on a monthly basis and if their experience were enhanced they may increase the frequency of their online shopping.

3- Most Saudi online customers are not keen on the design of the Saudi online retailers’ websites and they compare it with international websites such as Amazon and Best Buy.

4- Customers of Saudi online retailers’ websites think that the level of navigations in these websites is acceptable but the most unacceptable problem is the time spent waiting for their website pages to load and open.

5- The most unacceptable issue for customers is websites’ contents. Customers believe that companies can provide better content to its clients and it is a major disaffection issue.

6- Among all users, jarir book store and pattz.com are believed to be the best websites in terms of design.

7- Most of the customers suppose that if the customers’ service is delivered through online tools then there is a big relationship between website design and quality of customer service.

8- Saudi online customers need to have more interaction in terms of online buying and services and this is one of the dissatisfaction reasons they have.

9- The Saudi online customers are quite willing to switch to other competitors if there is a problem with the retailer’s website.
10- Most customers think that if a company has a good level of customer service at their stores, this will not mean them having a good customer service on their website.

The writer believe that the consequence of this analysis will significantly impact the way online companies now function in Saudi Arabia. From this study, it is highly conclusive that the online business in Saudi Arabia still needs to be developed to a great deal. As there are chances for Saudi businesses to participate more in the marketplace and utilize the proficiency and different effective global practices in order to develop and grow the capacity and presentation of online shopping. This study also concludes that there is a relationship between online customer service or E-services and website design from the customers’ point of view.
Chapter 6: Recommendations:

Based on the investigation of the research primary and secondary outcomes, this research aims to give recommendations to Saudi online retailers.

Firstly, Saudi online retailers have to provide information for customers on how they reach them. It is recommended that they provide online tools for their customers to interact and pass across their worries, inquiries and to answer all their questions. One tool that can be provided is website notifications that tell the customers how to use the website and how to order and what happens after buying online. Customers need to trust online retailers and for these companies, it is important to address their customers’ needs and fulfil them. It is a great thing if these retailers can provide high quality level of customer services in their physical locations and in their shops but online experience has to be compatible with this level of quality. It is important also for customers to feel that the store they patronize is available at all times because if they are not available to help on their website another competitor will take their business. Being available means to provide help at every stage of using the website and providing every possible electronic service that the customer may find useful. Another recommendation for Saudi online retailers is to build online communities to help customers. This means to bring direct interactions into their websites.

Moreover, company’s image is merely as good as the customer service it delivers. Paying attention to the website layout and appearance could change the customers’ view about the company and may also change their perspectives about the service. It is also recommended for the Saudi retailers to provide personalized content and experience to its customers and to offer them tools like product recommendation engine that helps them in making buying decisions. Emails and follow up tools can additionally be a great asset to those retailers as customer can feel engaged and updated all the time. Companies can also build feedback tools into their websites so they can listen to their customers closely and then react to that.
Furthermore, it would be a great decision if companies built a comprehensive FAQ page. The FAQ page responds to most of the inquiries customers might have about the company’s products or services. Companies should also generate a FAQ e-mail address and monitor all the inquiries that consumers or website visitors may request, the answers can then go under the FAQ page.

Lastly, companies must ensure that their websites are optimized for fast load time. They should investigate the problem and react accordingly. In addition, it would a good idea if companies encourage a rate or a review for their products or services so customer trust concerns can be relieved. It would be a good thing also if companies had a contact person dedicated to each type of product whether to integrate an SMS massaging system or a telephone system.


Appendix

Customer Service Experience Questionnaire Sheet

This questionnaire is a part of a dissertation research in order to study and investigate customers' point of view about customer service with online retailers in Saudi Arabia. The questionnaire is divided into two parts, first is the customer service experience that study your experience of the online Saudi retailers. Second is your personal questions. This questionnaire will not take more than 5 minutes of your time.

Please Answer The Below Questions

How frequently do you buy from a Saudi online retailer?

- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Quarterly
- ☐ Yearly

Rate generally your view on online Saudi retailers’ on these customer service factors

- Overall quality
  - ☐ Strongly Satisfied
  - ☐ Satisfied
  - ☐ Strongly Dissatisfied
  - ☐ Dissatisfied
- In store buying experience
  - ☐ Strongly Satisfied
  - ☐ Satisfied
  - ☐ Strongly Dissatisfied
  - ☐ Dissatisfied
- Online buying experience
  - ☐ Strongly Satisfied
  - ☐ Satisfied
  - ☐ Strongly Dissatisfied
  - ☐ Dissatisfied
- After sales experience
  - ☐ Strongly Satisfied
  - ☐ Satisfied
  - ☐ Strongly Dissatisfied
  - ☐ Dissatisfied

Provide a name for your favourite website design of an online Saudi retailer
### Personal Information

Name:
Age:
City:
Email:

"I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purpose of this research study. I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the provision of the Data Protection Act 1998."
Website Design Questionnaire Sheet

This questionnaire is a part of a dissertation research in order to study and investigate customers' view of websites designs of online retailers in Saudi Arabia. The questionnaire is divided into two parts, first is the website design that study your experience of the online retailers. Second is your personal questions. This questionnaire will not take more than 5 minutes of your time.

Please Answer The Below Questions

Do Agree with the following statement “Website design for most of the online Saudi retailers are appealing to me” ?

- [ ] Strongly Agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly Disagree

Rate generally your view on online Saudi retailers' websites design factors:

Usability & Navigation
- [ ] Excellent
- [ ] Average
- [ ] Poor

Content
- [ ] Excellent
- [ ] Average
- [ ] Poor

Functionality
- [ ] Excellent
- [ ] Average
- [ ] Poor

Layout & Appearance
- [ ] Excellent
- [ ] Average
- [ ] Poor

Provide a name for your favourite website design of an online Saudi retailer
Personal Information

Name:
Age:
City:
Email:

“ I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purpose of this research study. I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the provision of the Data Protection Act 1998.2”
Interview Questions Sheet

This interview is a part of a dissertation research in order to study and investigate customers' point of view about the relation between user experience on website design and the quality of customer services of online retailers in Saudi Arabia. This interview will not take more than 20 minutes.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Question</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Do you think there is any relation overall between website design and the quality of customer service of Saudi online retailers?</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>From your point of view, how can website usability &amp; navigation impact the quality of customer service?</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>From your point of view, how can website content impact the quality of customer service?</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>From your point of view, how can website Layout &amp; Appearance impact the quality of customer service?</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>What recommendations do you give to each retailer to enhance the quality of website design?</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>From your point of view, is there any relation between in-store buying dissatisfaction and website design?</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>From your point of view, is there any relation between online buying experience dissatisfaction and website design?</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>From your point of view, is there any relation between after sales experience dissatisfaction and website design?</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
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</table>
When undertaking a research or enterprise project, Cardiff Met staff and students are obliged to complete this form in order that the ethics implications of that project may be considered.

If the project requires ethics approval from an external agency (e.g., NHS), you will not need to seek additional ethics approval from Cardiff Met. You should however complete Part One of this form and attach a copy of your ethics letter(s) of approval in order that your School has a record of the project.

The document Ethics application guidance notes will help you complete this form. It is available from the Cardiff Met website. The School or Unit in which you are based may also have produced some guidance documents, please consult your supervisor or School Ethics Coordinator.

Once you have completed the form, sign the declaration and forward to the appropriate person(s) in your School or Unit.

PLEASE NOTE:
Participant recruitment or data collection MUST NOT commence until ethics approval has been obtained.

PART ONE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of applicant:</th>
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<td>Dr Taslima Begum</td>
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<tr>
<td>School / Unit:</td>
<td>Cardiff School of Management</td>
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<td>Student number (if applicable):</td>
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<td>Project Title:</td>
<td>An Investigation Into The Relation Between User Experience on Website Design and The Quality of Customer Services of Online Retailers in Saudi Arabia</td>
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<td>Expected start date of data collection:</td>
<td>12/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate duration of data collection:</td>
<td>2 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Body (if applicable):</td>
<td>The Saudi Embassy in London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other researcher(s) working on the project:</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the study involve NHS patients or staff?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the study involve taking samples of human origin from participants?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your project fall entirely within one of the following categories:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper based, involving only documents in the public domain</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratory based, not involving human participants or human tissue samples</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice based not involving human participants (e.g., curatorial, practice audit)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory projects in professional practice (e.g., Initial Teacher Education)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A project for which external approval has been obtained (e.g., NHS)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- If you have answered **YES** to any of these questions, expand on your answer in the non-technical summary. No further information regarding your project is required.
- If you have answered **NO** to all of these questions, you must complete Part 2 of this form.

**In no more than 150 words, give a non-technical summary of the project**

The research will be studying online users’ perceptions about website design of online retailers in Saudi Arabia and to relate their perceptions to the quality of customer service. Research data will be collected through a secondary data research and a primary data research. The secondary data research will be mainly obtained through Sources/Bibliography, University library, Google Scholar and Retailers publications while the primary data collection will be done through conducting two questionnaires and a one interview. The sample for the primary data collection will be chosen as online customers who dealt with those retailers with the consideration of representing the Saudi nation.

**DECLARATION:**

I confirm that this project conforms with the Cardiff Met Research Governance Framework.

I confirm that I will abide by the Cardiff Met requirements regarding confidentiality and anonymity when conducting this project.

STUDENTS: I confirm that I will not disclose any information about this project without the prior approval of my supervisor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of the applicant:</th>
<th>Date: 1/12/2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Omar Alhumayyani</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FOR STUDENT PROJECTS ONLY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of supervisor:</th>
<th>Date: 1/12/2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Taslima Begum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART TWO

A RESEARCH DESIGN

A1 Will you be using an approved protocol in your project? No

A2 If yes, please state the name and code of the approved protocol to be used

N/A

A3 Describe the research design to be used in your project

1. **Research Title**: An Investigation Into The Relation Between User Experience on Website Design and The Quality of Customer Services of Online Retailers in Saudi Arabia.

2. **Introduction**: The research philosophy is interpretative and it will give an answer to understand online customers’ perceptions about website design of online retailers in Saudi Arabia and to relate their perceptions to the quality of customer service. A deductive approach will be used as a strategy for this research.

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1 An Approved Protocol is one which has been approved by Cardiff Met to be used under supervision of designated members of staff; a list of approved protocols can be found on the Cardiff Met website here.
3. **Aim:** The main aim of this study is to know online users perceptions’ about website design of online retailers in Saudi Arabia and to relate their perceptions to the quality of customer service.

4. **Objectives:** The research will investigate the following main points.
   - Customers' point of view about the cause of customer service dissatisfaction.
   - Customers' view of websites designs and link that to customer service.

5. **Recommendations:**
   The study will give recommendation on improving poor quality of website designs from the customers’ points of view to improve customer service.

6. **The Selection of The Setting:**
   The setting of the research will be divided into two parts, first, while collecting the secondary data as it will take a place in Cardiff and for the primary data collection the setting of the research will be conducted in Saudi Arabia.

7. **Methodology and Approach**
   7.1. **Data collection**
   7.1.1 **Secondary data (Literature Review):** in this part of the research, the collection of the data will be through Sources/Bibliography, University library, Google Scholar and Retailers publications.
   7.1.2 **Primary data**
   - A questionnaire to online customers and it will investigate customers' point of view about the cause of customer service dissatisfaction and It will take around 5 minutes to fill.
   - Another questionnaire will be given to online retailers’ customers and it will also investigate customers' view of websites designs.
   - Lastly, Semi-structured interviews to the dissatisfied customers. It will take about 20 minutes and will be recorded and then translated from Arabic into English.

7.2 **Sample:**
   - The research will use probability sampling technique and it will reach the study sample through online channels where they exist. Online methods will include social media, Google Ads and blogs. These online methods will be used to invite participants to take a part in the questionnaire. They will be provided with an optional space to write their contact details. For the interview, a random choice of the participant will be contacted for the interview participation in order to give more clarification. Oral confirmation will be taken first from the interview participants and then written consent form will be gained.
   - Sample size will be around 250 participants in different age, gender and region. All participants will take the questionnaires, while 50 of them will be interviewed.
   - The selection of customers will consider differences in gender and age to represent Saudi nation and to prevent bias in the research.

7.3 **Data Analysis:**
   - Thematic analysis method will be used to analyse the data of the research.
### Ethics:
- Permission from the candidates will be gained in order to record the interview.
- All participants will remain anonymous; any data provided will not be traceable back to specific people.
- Invitation to the candidates will be sent and confirmed via emails.
- All data will be kept confidential and will be stored securely in a password protected computer system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A4 Will the project involve deceptive or covert research?</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A5 If yes, give a rationale for the use of deceptive or covert research</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A6 Will the project have security sensitive implications?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A7 If yes, please explain what they are and the measures that are proposed to address them</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### B Previous Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B1 What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project do you have?</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B2 Student project only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project does your supervisor have?</td>
<td>My supervisor has 6+ years of research experience involving human participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### C Potential Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C1 What potential risks do you foresee?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risks for the researcher</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Travelling to Saudi Arabia may involve some delays which may not compatible with the interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risks for the project</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Primary data candidates may not represent the Saudi nation as per age, gender, region etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risks for the participants</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Data privacy for personal information or for the recoded audiotapes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C2 How will you deal with the potential risks?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risks for the researcher</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interviews will be done through a video application and it will be videotaped instead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risks for the project</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Results that do represent the Saudi nation will be eliminated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risks for the participants</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Personal information, audiotapes and videotapes will be destroyed after analysing the data and confirming the interviews.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics Number</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>