Modeling Web Site Design Across Cultures: Relationships to Trust, Satisfaction, and E-Loyalty

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ABSTRACT: Despite rapidly increasing numbers of diverse online shoppers, the relationship of Web site design to trust, satisfaction, and loyalty has not previously been modeled across cultures. In the current investigation, three components of Web site design (information design, navigation design, and visual design) are considered for their impact on trust and satisfaction. In turn, relationships of trust and satisfaction to online loyalty are evaluated. Utilizing data collected from 571 participants in Canada, Germany, and China, various relationships in the research model are tested using partial least squares analysis for each country separately. In addition, the overall model is tested for all countries combined as a control and verification of earlier research findings, although this time with a mixed country sample. All paths in the overall model are confirmed. Differences are determined for separate country samples concerning whether navigation design, visual design, and information design result in trust, satisfaction, and ultimately loyalty—suggesting design characteristics should be a central consideration in Web site design across cultures.


In 2007, there were over 1 billion Internet users worldwide representing a 183 percent increase since the year 2000.1 Of those Internet users, the primary language is English (35.6 percent), followed by Chinese (12.2 percent), Japanese (9.5 percent), Spanish (8 percent), and German (7 percent). Internet vendors aim to capture this burgeoning international market through the creation of positive shopping experiences that encourage shoppers to return to the Web site or to purchase from it in the future, termed e-loyalty [20]. There is a business case for this goal. According to Reichheld and Schefter [44], an increase in customer retention rates by only 5 percent can increase profits by 25 percent to 95 percent.