

Users' Attitudes towards Website Characteristics

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Abstract—This research looks into the influence of web design, content and ease of use on users' stance towards websites. Elements that reflect such stances or attitudes include user satisfaction, trust, usage intention, and willingness to recommend the site to others. For this study, the researchers chose a convenience sample and a questionnaire distributed among Yemenis in Sana'a, Yemen. SPSS was used to analyze the responses to the questionnaire. Study outcomes revealed that the site's content is of significance and more attention should be paid by retailers in this regard. Feedback from users should also be taken into high consideration. It was also found that users favor resorting to formal sources of information and users are more encouraged to use the site based on the level of ease of use and user experience. Good navigability and friendliness of a site are significant to encourage consumer usage of sites.

Index Terms— Ease of use, intension to continue using, recommendations for others, trust, user satisfaction website content, website organization.

1 INTRODUCTION

Some of blocks that hinder the spread of e-commerce sites is user satisfaction [1], which is highly dependable on website features and design [2]. It is essential in the web-design process to understand the elements that impact user behavior [3] as each website should be easy and comprehensible to general users [4]. Design, content, user experience and site experience are all significant factors that influence users [5]. This is to say that the level of acceptance of users is of essential consideration when designing sites [6].

Site designers should keep users in mind and must insure that the site is easily found using search engines [7]. The more enjoyable a technology is to a user, the higher is its perceived ease and usefulness [8] and [9]. Studies done in the past proved the effect of conventional design on users' acceptance [3], [10] and [11].

This work seeks to pinpoint the elements of website design on the standpoints of users towards sites. It is worth noting that their standpoints are measure by user satisfaction, trust and usage intention as well as readiness to recommend the site. [9]. This work is divided into: sections 2 and 3- Literature Review and conceptual framework, section (4) - analysis and discussion, section (5) - conclusion.

2 PREVIOUS STUDIES

Using the outcomes of a user survey, Panda et al. [12] studied usage-related problems of on online shopping from the point of view of user preferences. They looked into the relative significance of elements

such as navigability, content, design, ease of use, and structure. According to the survey, navigability was the first priority in assessing usability of shopping websites followed successively by content and design. Fourth and fifth priorities were ease of use and structure. It is worth noting that, for navigation features, the survey showed a substantial statistical variance between novice users and expert users of e-commerce sites. In another research carried out by [13] it was found that advertisements, whether website ads or SMS ads, are generally disliked by consumers. Users have reported that, due to cultural and religious issues, advertisements add no value to their experience. Nevertheless, Ismail & Heng [13] stated that internet speed, landing website language and its user-friendliness have an impact on consumer stance towards website ads. A paper conducted by [14] investigated ways to boost business benefits by means of enhancing e-commerce quality. They looked into the connection between enhancing quality attributes (information quality, system quality, and service quality) and customer loyalty and retention. This paper showed that the three quality attributes significantly influence customer loyalty and retention, which can be reflected by the level of customer trust and satisfaction. On a more technical side, a study researched the level of acceptance among consumers towards mashups, a technology that provides simple search techniques, combine and reuse data but has not yet been given much consideration. The paper, carried out by [4] with a proposed user acceptance model, sought to accurately identify what encourages consumers to

use mashups and to what level. The outcomes of the paper revealed that the most important element to predict and understand consumer usage of mashup technology is 'performance acceptancy'.

This form of consumer acceptance towards a website or technology was in some measure studied by [5]. They found that website acceptance is in part affected by users' experience of the website. Yet, another element was found to be of a higher importance in predicting consumer preference of a website and that is 'perceived ease of use'. This was seen at minimum for inexperienced users. With more experienced users, however, 'perceived usefulness' was found to have a higher influence. Among the recommendations of the study was that website designers must seek to pinpoint any barriers against user acceptance and remove them. Also in the field of user acceptance and usage of e-commerce sites, Ahn et al. [15] have found that perceived ease of use, playfulness, and usefulness are significantly influenced by the quality of a website (system quality, data quality and service quality). The better quality a site has, the more a consumer is encouraged to revisit and shop from it.

In the field of e-learning, and according to [16], it was found that acceptance and usage of e-learning systems are deciding factors that determine the success level of a system in this field. To empirically explore the willingness of students to use an e-learning platform, the researched added social, institutional and individual factors in the structural model of the technology acceptance model (TAM) used for their paper. Outcomes of the study showed that perceived ease of use (PEOU), perceived usefulness (PU), social norms (SN), quality of work life (QWL), computer self-efficacy (SE) and facilitating conditions (FC) positively impact the adoption and usage of Blackboard systems. Noteworthy is that the most influential element was the newly added variable: QWL. Other factors that may influence students' willingness to use web-based learning (WBL) were investigated by [3] using an enhanced TAM. The factors they found to have an influence were: Perceived Usefulness of Homepage Content Structure, Perceived User Friendly Interface, Perceived Hedonic Component, and Perceived (homepage) Visual Attractiveness.

3 PROPOSED MODEL

The proposed model in figure 1 is a modified version adapted from [9]. There are three dimensions presented by [9] in the model: website content, website organization and technology. Website content and organization, in addition to ease of use, were the three dimensions selected for the model of this research. In

this study the researches seek to investigate the impact those three elements have on consumer perception towards an online site. Consumer attitudes were represented by user satisfaction, trust, site usage intension and recommendation. The following is the said model and description of dimensions:

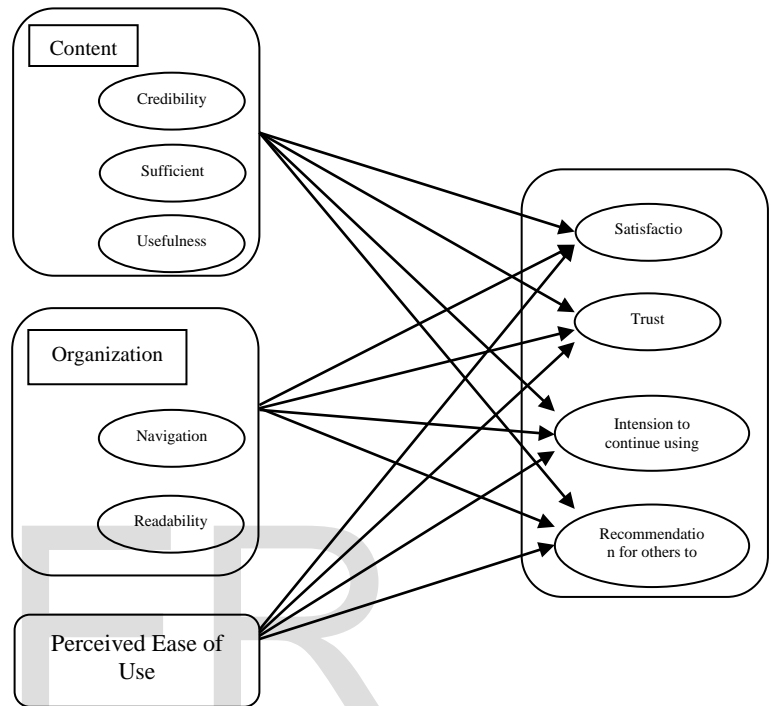


Fig 1: The study model

3.1 Website Content

Website content, as stated by [17], is the material observed by site users. Textual work (literature or articles), performing arts (music, sound, videos, etc.) and two-dimensional art (drawings, photos, etc.) on a site are all parts of a site's content. According to [9], several underlying factors of a website can be used to assess content including credibility, currency, relevance, and sufficiency. For this study, however, only three were chosen: credibility, sufficiency, and relevance. Below is a brief description of them:

A) WEBSITE CREDIBILITY

Credibility is the degree to which the information on the site is considered reliable [9]. Credibility is often related to trustworthiness, however, according to [18] trustworthiness is "the goodness or morality of the sources and can be described with terms such as well intentioned, truthful, or unbiased".

B) WEBSITE USEFULNESS

Relevance is the level of the site's content usefulness, as defined by the original model. The model of our study will use the usefulness variable to assess the level to which the content helps users to decide on what they want [19]. Davis [21] defined the concept of usefulness as user's perception of how much the usage of a system would improve his/her performance at work.

C) WEBSITE SUFFICIENCY

Sufficiency can be defined as the completeness of the relevant contents of a website [9].

3.2 Website Organization

Navigation attributes (organization, arrangement, layout, and sequencing) are deciding factors of a site's success [22]. The structuring and design of a site is the site's organization, as said by [9]. Navigation, readability, speed, design, and interactivity are its main lower order constructs. This study chooses navigation and readability to assess organization [9]. As for the dimensions used in this research to study website's organization, they are as follows:

A) WEBSITE NAVIGATION:

The easy movement of a user in the website it roughly what is meant by 'navigation' [23]. When navigation is at its best, empirical researches revealed that this advantage raises performance of a website and lowers chances of errors. One of the golden rules of website design is, according to [24], consistency. Similarly, [25] state that consistent menu bars and links highly impact consumer behavior. In order to achieve navigability on a page, [26] suggests that the page should answer three questions: Where am I? Where have I been? and Where can I go? Clear structure of a site is a must regardless of any design types.

A UNICEF document titled "Accessibility Standards for UNICEF Websites" notes that navigability of a site should be uniform, well-structured and logical. Having those three previous attributes decreases confusion or disorientation of site users. When fundamental components are repeatedly shown in the same manner on the site it strengthens user-friendliness of the site and makes it easy for users to find that they look for.

B) WEBSITE READABILITY:

Readability indicators are the factors that assess how easy it is to read and understand site content [28]. A readable site is one with easy to read text [29].

3.3 Website perceived Ease of Use

Vijayarathy [29] defined perceived ease of use as consumer perception towards the amount of effort

he/she need to use a system. It was defined as well by [9] as the friendliness of a system.

In the literature review, we noted that aforementioned variables are likely to enhance user satisfaction, trust and willingness to use a site. It will also encourage users to recommend the site to others. Below are the variables we talked about.

3.4 User satisfaction

Satisfaction is one of the significant consumer outcomes in business-to-consumer online environments [30]. Satisfaction, according to [31], is the "consumer's fulfillment response". A user's contentment towards the design of a site is, according to [32], what defines e-satisfaction. As for [33], satisfaction is the user's positive stance of a product. Such satisfaction is essential to building long-enduring consumer loyalty [32], and consumers are more likely to recommend a site, by word of mouth, when satisfaction is high [34]. Client fulfillment is identified with clients' subjective evaluation on a specific framework regarding its content, organization, and ease of use. In this way, one might say that both user interface and content together decide clients' level of satisfaction.

Based on the previous literature the following hypotheses are formulated:

- H1: Website content is positively related to users' satisfaction.
- H2: Website organization is positively related to users' satisfaction.
- H3: Website ease of use is positively related to users' satisfaction.

3.5 User trust

Coulter and Coulter [35] believe that user's set of opinions towards an online supplier and its future performance is what defines the concept of 'customer trust'. Further, [36] agree with [38] that this concept of trust pushes consumers towards utilizing e-commerce from sellers.

Additionally, trust can also be reflected in consumers' confidence in the way others perform transactions [38]. Another meaning 'online trust' suggests is consumer faith in a site, and reduction in risk and uncertainty [39]. Based on the previous literature the following hypotheses are formulated

- H4: Website content is positively related to users' trust.
- H5: Website organization is positively related to users' trust.
- H6: Website ease of use is positively related to users' trust.

3.6 Intension to Continue Using Website

An individual readiness to continuously use a technology is what is defined as behavioral intention,

and it is a factor that controls in part the usage of a technology [40]. It is suggested in this research that user stance toward a site, per say, influences his/her intention to use the site.

Based on the previous literature the following hypotheses are formulated

H7: Website content is positively related to users' Intension to Continue Using Website

H8: Website organization is positively related to users' Intension to Continue Using Website

H9: Website ease of use is positively related to users' Intension to Continue Using Website

3.7 Recommendations for others to use the Website

The internet has changed the way e-commerce users interact. Globalization increased the use of the web as a medium to share with others product and service information. Consequently, a user's personal network is no longer the only source of suggestions; even stranger's recommendations are now visible to users. Social networks allow users to view the recommendations of their network's friends while knowing who they are as well which is known as the word of mouth [41]. Word-of-mouth (WOM) has been defined as "informal communication between private parties concerning evaluations of goods and services" [42].

Based on the previous literature the following hypotheses are formulated:

H10: Website content is positively related to users' recommending others to use the Website

H11: Website organization is positively related to users' recommending others to use the Website

H12: Website ease of use is positively related to users' recommending others to use the Website

4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The study started with an online questionnaire. We have got 101 responses, 97 of them were valid. Table 1 shows the demographic profile for our respondents. The majority of the sample was males, youth and has their own experiences in using websites. Moreover, they were educated.

Measure	Item	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	88	0.91
	Female	9	0.09
Education Level	Secondary School	9	0.09
	College or diploma	21	0.22
	Bachelor degree	53	0.55
	Masters	11	0.11
	Ph.D.	3	0.03
Age	15-25	56	0.58
	26-35	34	0.35
	36-45	4	0.04
	More than 45	3	0.03
Internet Experience	Less than one year	4	0.04
	2-4 years	29	0.3
	4-6 years	23	0.24
	More	41	0.42

Figure 2 below illustrates hypotheses testing results

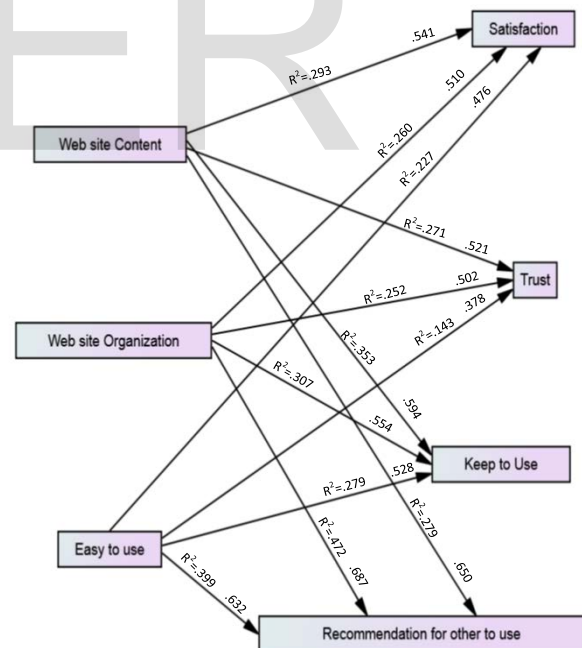


Fig 2: Results

TABLE1
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The analytical results at confidence coefficient 95% showed that website content positively affects user satisfaction ($\beta=0.541$, $P<0.05$), user trust ($\beta=0.521$,

$P < 0.05$), user intention to continue using the website ($\beta = 0.594$, $P < 0.05$), and user recommendation for others to use the website ($\beta = 0.650$, $P < 0.05$), providing support for H1, H4, H7, H10.

Furthermore, website organization positively affects user satisfaction ($\beta = 0.510$, $P < 0.05$), user trust ($\beta = 0.502$, $P < 0.05$), user intention to continue using the website ($\beta = 0.554$, $P < 0.05$), and user recommendation for others to use the website ($\beta = 0.687$, $P < 0.05$) which also provide support for H2, H5, H8, H11.

Finally, statistical analysis shows that perceived ease to use is positively related to user satisfaction concerning website ($\beta = 0.476$, $P < 0.05$), user trusting website ($\beta = 0.378$, $P < 0.05$), user intention to continue using the website ($\beta = 0.528$, $P < 0.05$), and user recommendation for others to use the website ($\beta = 0.632$, $P < 0.05$) which again support H3, H6, H9, H12.

5 CONCLUSION

The most significant factor for websites failure is neglecting the user benefits. It was found that each independent variable had an impact (website content, website organization, perceived ease of use) on each dependent variable (user satisfaction, trust, intention to continue using the website and finally recommendations for others to use the website). We also found a strong relation between the site's content, organization, and perceived ease of use and the users' recommendations to use the site. In addition, the results show that users from Yemen care more about site content. Therefore, a recommendation can here be made regarding enriching site content to increase satisfaction towards it. Furthermore, content was found to have a higher significance than site organization.

Given that organization ranked in second place in terms of importance after content, it is recommended to enhance this element, according to study sample. Applying global standards concerning website organization, such as convenience and navigation, is sure to enhance users' satisfaction towards websites. It is essential to take all the mentioned elements (website content, website organization, perceived ease of use) when designing a website to build user satisfaction, acceptance, confidence, and usage intention in addition to increasing the chances of such users recommending the site to others.

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