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A new understanding of satisfaction model in e-re-purchase situation

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to investigate the satisfaction consequences in repurchase situations.

Design/methodology/approach – Online travel services are chosen because customers in these types of services had direct contact with firms. A conceptual model of CS-RPI link is developed and used to test proposed hypotheses. A total of 514 respondents are used to test the proposed model.

Findings – The empirical findings indicate that psychological mediators are useful when repurchase situations are considered. The study provides the roles of positive attitude in the formation of CS-RPI link. Also, three factors: adjusted expectations, trust, and positive attitude, are found to have a significant mediating influence on the link of CS-RPI.

Research limitations/implications – Future researchers attempting to replicate and extend these findings may wish to collaborate with companies marketing products and services online and track customers' actual behaviors. This would be an excellent way to validate the current model relationships, particularly those involving repurchase intentions and customer satisfaction.

Practical implications – The results can be used by web site designers to tailor their sites' features and marketing analysts to monitor the changes of click-through rates as a parameter of the CS-RPI. The discovery of significant interrelationships between satisfaction and trust, such as adjusted expectation, positive attitude and repurchase intention, reinforces the importance of the psychological state when repurchasing behavior is considered. For instance, it was observed that the three mediators result in lower levels of the indirect effect, but this is not limited in the whole process of the CS-RPI.

Originality/value – The conceptual framework is tested in an understudied e-service context that is characterized by consumer-focused competition. This context is noteworthy because no research has investigated determinants between the two parties. Research suggests that companies should understand how to capture determinants on post-satisfaction, since competing businesses are only a mouse-click away in e-commerce settings.

Keywords Customer satisfaction, Customer loyalty, Internet, Shopping, Consumer behaviour

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Customer satisfaction has been extensively studied for the last four decades. Seminal articles, particularly, Oliver's (1997) on customer satisfaction laid the foundation for numerous studies on the construct. Relatively more recently, studies have enunciated the constructs of adjusted expectation (Yi and La, 2004), trust (Kennedy *et al.*, 2001;

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Singh and Sirdeshmukh, 2000), and attitude toward the web site (Chiu *et al.*, 2005), and, their linkages to satisfaction and repurchase intention (Lambert-Pandraud *et al.*, 2005; Tsai *et al.*, 2006; Yi and La, 2004). Thematically, these constructs and their interrelationships have been prominently featured in the customer behavior literature, as one would expect. Still, our understanding of the mediating roles between customer satisfaction and repurchase intention, which is also central for online shopping behavior, is much more limited. More specifically, a number of potential mediating variables that are evident in the literature should be addressed. The literature is uncertain regarding potential mediating constructs between satisfaction and repurchase intention in different online contexts (Lin and Wang, 2006).

Following Oliver (1977, 1980, 1981), a number of studies have confirmed the importance of customer satisfaction on firm profits. Scholars have critically examined these constructs in terms of their impact on customer profitability and firm performance. Although numerous academic studies offer a positive portrait of the effects of satisfaction on firm performance, many important research topics are not yet studied in the context of online retailing (Evanschitzky *et al.*, 2004; Hsu, 2008; Jiang and Rosenbloom, 2005; Kim *et al.*, 2006; Szymanski and Hise, 2000). While the importance of these concepts for business has been recognized and established, a full understanding of the relationship between customer satisfaction and repurchase intention in online environments is still essential.

Prior research has mainly focused on the relationship between customer satisfaction and repurchase intention, but particularly, there may be several mediators linking to the relationship in online repurchase situations (Järvenpää *et al.*, 2000; Wu and Chang, 2007). Although customer satisfaction has been regarded as an antecedent of repurchase, Yi and La (2004) assert that such traditional beliefs need to be challenged as counterarguments arise that higher customer satisfaction does not necessarily result in higher repurchase. Evidence is also supported by (Jones and Sasser, 1995). Yi and La (2004) also suggest that investigating new paradigm of post-purchase satisfaction is necessary since the link between customer satisfaction and repurchase intention seems to be more complex than expected (e.g. Anderson and Srinivasan, 2003). One recent research outlined by Seiders *et al.* (2005) confirms that the relationship between two parties is contingent on the mediating effects of several variables. Their study focused mainly on consumers' purchasing situation and their income in a retail context, but consumers' psychological judgments may also play a crucial role in building the relationship between satisfaction and repurchase. Taking into account findings from prior research, an evaluation of the determinants of the customer satisfaction-repurchase relationship on the Internet is necessary to further our understanding in this context.

We test the conceptual framework in an understudied e-service context that is characterized by consumer-focused competition. In an increasingly competitive online marketplace, this study especially makes an important contribution to the literature by uncovering key constructs that play a role in mediating satisfaction's influence on repurchase intentions. Research also suggests that companies should understand how to capture determinants on post-satisfaction since competing businesses are only a mouse click away in e-commerce settings (Anderson and Srinivasan, 2003). In line with this observation, this study extends current scholars' knowledge by capturing determinants that are linked to the satisfaction-repurchase relationship in e-service settings.

In sum, this study makes three major contributions:

(1) it advances the extant satisfaction literature by exploring the role of key mediators between satisfaction and repurchase intentions;

(2) it provides further insights into the relationship between satisfaction and repurchase intentions in an online setting; and

(3) it establishes the role of trust in reinforcing the effect of satisfaction on repurchase intentions.

Theoretical linkages of satisfaction-repurchase relationship

This study defines online customer satisfaction as "the perceived degree of contentment with regard to a customer's prior purchase experience with a given electronic commerce firm" (Anderson and Srinivasan, 2003, p. 125). Repurchase intentions represent the customer's self-reported likelihood of engaging in further repurchase behavior (Seiders *et al.*, 2005). Several prior studies have confirmed that there is a significant positive relationship between customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions (Mittal and Kamakura, 2001; Oliver, 1997; Yu and Dean, 2001). Other studies, however, have questioned this relationship (e.g. Jones and Sasser, 1995; Seiders *et al.*, 2005; Yi and La, 2004). Despite these divergent perspectives, there is considerable support for obtaining a better understanding of variables that may potentially affect the relationship between satisfaction and repurchase intention (e.g. Ha and Perks, 2005; Magi, 2003; Oliver, 1997; Yi and La, 2004). Table I provides a brief summary of this literature.

To better understand the linkage between customers satisfaction and repurchase intention, researchers have looked at several potential mediators. For example, Seiders *et al.* (2005) looked at customer involvement and several demographic characteristics, whereas Bloemer and Ruyter (1998) looked at elaboration. The elaboration process seems to be a useful way of understanding post-purchase satisfaction since this approach involves cognitive, affective, and behavioral states which impact intentions (Foxall *et al.*, 1998). As shown in Table I, these factors have been well established as mediators. In an effort to advance extant literature, this study incorporates multiple mediators in an effort to build a theoretical framework of the relationship between customers satisfaction and repurchase intentions.

Adjusted expectations as a cognitive process of post-satisfaction

Although the satisfaction literature recognizes the importance of consumer expectations, there is no general agreement on how the concept should be defined (Yi, 1990). For example, Oliver (1980, p. 460) conceptualized expectations as belief probabilities of what the consequences of an event will be, whereas Parasuraman *et al.* (1988, p. 16) has defined expectations in terms of "what they feel service firms should offer with their perceptions of the performance of firms providing the services". It indicates that expectations can range from being subjective desires to more objective predictions. This lack of consensus implies that expectations may not have similar connotations to everyone.

The formation and revision of expectations is a central theoretical issue for consumer research (Oliver and Winer, 1987). Scholars' knowledge on the expectancy-disconfirmation theory is that expectations are understood as an

Table I.
Summary of research relevant to mediators of CS-RPI

Author	Mediators	Research aims	Relevant findings of CS-RPI	Shortcomings of prior studies
Oliver (1997)	Attitude and expectations of satisfaction	Investigates satisfaction's consequences in repurchase situations	Consumer post-consumption has a cycle of satisfaction and both attitude and satisfaction expectations exert influence on repurchase intention	One's attitude may capture the totality of the expectation level and it may provide the baseline for other cognitions of an overall nature, particularly satisfaction
Roest and Pieters (1997)	Attitude	Examines the nomological net of perceived service quality	In a post-consumption situation, the perceived service quality → satisfaction → attitude → repurchase intention relationship is essential	Satisfaction research is needed on the transactional level as research and measurement on a relationship level has attracted the bulk of marketers' attention
Bloemer and Ruyter (1998)	Elaboration	Investigates consumer judgments in the context of post-satisfaction	Elaboration process is a useful approach method of post-purchase satisfaction judgments since such an approach involves consumer psychological state	As their study focused on consumer loyalty, other attitudinal and behavioral outcomes of satisfaction should be considered
Dubé and Menon (2000)	Emotion and attribution	Focuses on the emotional experience (cognitive and behavioral determinants) of consumption and its impact on satisfaction in the context of extended service transactions	Once an attribution has been formed, an individual tends to search for and perceive subsequent events (e.g. repurchase situations after first event) in a manner to confirm the attribution basis	A better understanding of how psychological processes work in real-life service transactions is difficult to provide detailed frameworks into how they influence relationships between satisfaction and behavioral outcomes
Söderlund (2002)	Familiarity	Examines how customer familiarity affects customer satisfaction and two (RPI and WOM) of the commonly assumed consequences of satisfaction	When service performance is high, a high level of customer familiarity moderates the link between CS and RPI	As consumer evaluations of products, particularly in terms of satisfaction, are usually framed (by researchers) as isolated and individualized phenomena, evaluation differences between subjects with different levels of familiarity occur for other types of products
Hellier *et al.* (2003)	Brand preference	Develops a general service sector model of repurchase intention from the consumer theory literature	Customer satisfaction does not influence repurchase intention directly, but indirectly via brand preference	Although their study focused on the mediating effects between satisfaction and repurchase intention, more specific model components can play in influencing repurchase intention

(*continued*)

Table I.

Author	Mediators	Research aims	Relevant findings of CS-RPI	Shortcomings of prior studies
Mägi (2003)	Economic orientation and purchase volume	Examines the effects of customer satisfaction and loyalty cards on customer share spent	The level of purchase volume and economic orientation of shoppers moderate the effect of satisfaction on customer share	The relationships between satisfaction and behavioral outcomes are much more complex than initially assumed, but the researcher has looked only at a limited part of the puzzle of how customer satisfaction translates into behavioral outcomes
Yi and La (2004)	Adjusted expectation	Examines how loyalty influences the relationship between CS and RPI and introduces adjusted expectations, which are expectations updated after consumption experience	The impact of adjusted expectations on the relationship between CS and RPI is significant and the construct plays a crucial role in making a link of CS-RPI relationship	As the CS-RPI relationship could be stronger for loyals than for non-loyals, the construct of cumulative CS needs more refinement in terms of conceptualization and measurement
Ha and Perks (2005)	Trust	Investigates the relationship between satisfaction and trust, taking into account and exploring the effects of online experience	Consumer satisfaction based on prior experiences directly links to web site trust. Such a trust is related to online repurchase intention	As customer experience, satisfaction, and trust often undergo changes over time, the temporal nature of online consumer behavior should be considered
Seiders *et al.* (2005)	Involvement and household income	Examines moderating influences on CS-RPI relationship	The relationship between CS and RPI is contingent on the moderating effects of convenience, customer involvement, and household income	Their study focused on the three moderating effects (customer moderators, relational moderators, and marketplace moderators) between satisfaction and purchase intention, both moderating and mediating effects of psychological characteristics may play an important role in enhancing the relationship between CS and RPI
Ha (2006)	Attribution	Examines determinants on customer satisfaction and moderators on CS-RPI	While the marketing literature shows that attribution is an antecedent of customer satisfaction, the construct on re-purchase situation serves as a moderator of CS-RPI	Although online satisfaction has been defined by the disconfirmation paradigm, most studies point out that customer satisfaction arises from multiple standards of comparison

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antecedent of customer satisfaction. Prior expectations play a role of standards in evaluating satisfaction on consumption experience (Oliver, 1980, 1981; Yi, 1993), whereas (Yi and La, 2004, p. 355) advocate a new paradigm of post-satisfaction judgments, adjusted expectations, which are defined as "expectations updated through accumulated or current consumption experiences (post-purchase satisfaction)". Evidence is supported by Johnson *et al.* (1995): consumer expectations adjust over time in an adaptive manner. This new paradigm may be also explained by the cycle of satisfaction outlined by Oliver (1997); that is, experienced satisfaction is shown as an influence on satisfaction expectations in the next repurchase cycle. Similarly, Tear (1993) and Anderson and Salisbury (2003) proposed a concept of revised expectations based on consumers' experiences.

The attribution theory and recent studies show that consumer satisfaction judgments in a repurchase situation are updated spontaneously only when previously formed satisfaction evaluations are available from memory and consumers are faced with an expected consumption experience (e.g. Mattila, 2003). Consistent with cognitive judgment process after post-purchase experience, Yi and La (2004) assert that adjusted expectations can guide repurchase behavior in the next period and serve as an anchor in evaluating future customer satisfaction. For example, if a consumer experiences good feelings at lesser-known web sites, the consumer will be willing to revisit these web sites. More specifically, the more consumers positively experience, the higher their expectations are adjusted. This is consistent with previous research showing that customer expectations for higher satisfaction adjust based on experience over time (Ganesh *et al.*, 2000). Rust and Oliver (2000) and Szymanski and Henard (2001) argue that programs that exceed a customer's expectations can heighten repurchase expectations. Such a satisfaction leads customers to engage in repurchase intentions. In line with this observation, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1. Satisfaction will have a positive influence on repurchase intention.

H2. Satisfaction on a particular experience will have a positive influence on adjusted expectations.

H3. Adjusted expectations will have a positive influence on repurchase intention.

Trust as an affective process of post-satisfaction

For the purpose of this study, we define trust as "a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations of the intentions or behaviors of another" (Rousseau *et al.*, 1998, p. 395). Trust, in a broad sense, is the confidence a person has in his/her favorable expectations of what other web sites will do, based, in many cases, on previous experiences (Gefen, 2000). Thus, trusting beliefs reflect consumers' confidence that the web site has a positive orientation toward its consumers' updated expectations. Trust weakens or strengthens by experience (Yoon, 2002). Although researchers show that trust serves as an antecedent to satisfaction (Grewal *et al.*, 1999), such a trust is depended on consumers' prior experiences or satisfaction judgments (Ha and Perks, 2005).

From the relationship marketing perspective, Yoon (2002) addressed that the level of trust has been conceptualized to be contingent upon the consumers' perceived level of interaction between company which provides information and consumers who

receive it. In online consumer literature, Ha and Perks (2005) show that web site trust goes beyond consumer's satisfaction with the functional performance of the product. Consistent with the importance of online trust, Grewal *et al.* (2004) emphasize the role of post-purchase trust on the Internet. Furthermore, the absence of trust may be unable to retail those customers who are satisfied (Ranaweera and Prabhu, 2003). This suggests that trust may act as a moderator to satisfaction in strengthening further behaviors. In line with this observation, we expect that online trust built by prior experience plays a significant role in better understanding the linkage between customer satisfaction and repurchase intention.

The buyer's overall satisfaction with the buying experience is proposed to have a positive impact on his/her trust of the manufacturer. Prior research has shown that constructs of trust and satisfaction are positively correlated (Crosby *et al.*, 1990; Yoon, 2002), but the causal ordering of the two has not been assessed. However, evidence outlined by Kennedy *et al.* (2001) shows that customer satisfaction is an antecedent of trust of the manufacturer.

Trust has been linked to a variety of outcomes. Hennig-Thurau and Klee (1997) theorize that trust will play important roles in repurchasing decision. Such arguments are supported by the empirical findings of Bart *et al.* (2005) who find a strong relationship between online trust and behavioral intent. Behavioral intent may include willingness to navigate further activities, such as revisiting to the same site, engaging in interactivity with the web site, and purchasing or repurchasing from the site. Bart *et al.* (2005) have investigated the mediating role of trust, which mediates the relationship between web site and behavioral intent. Although trust mediates the relationship between two parties, we expect that online trust based on prior affective experience play a crucial role in facilitating consumers' further behavioral intentions. Furthermore, trust affects the consumer's attitude, which in turn influences the willingness to buy in a particular web site (Järvenpää *et al.*, 2000). Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H4. Satisfaction will have a positive influence on trust.

H5. Trust will have a positive influence on repurchase intention.

H6. Trust will have a positive influence on attitude.

Positive attitude as a behavioral process of post-satisfaction

Positive attitudes play an important role in the intention formation process of consumer behavior (Kraft *et al.*, 2005). In this study we define positive attitude as "a consumer's positive motivational tendency to deal with a satisfactory experience or purchase" (Ha, 2006). Social science research has been recently proposed for the purpose of elucidating and predicting consumer online behavior. Despite this move forward, Elliot and Fowell (2000) go even further by strongly recommending that further research is urgently required to explore the nature of Internet shopping behavior and that it should be linked to the theoretical framework of e-purchase behavior. Indeed, previous research on online purchase behavior was mainly focused on consumer's purchase motive, but rarely looked into the effects of customer attitudes on purchase intentions (Yoon, 200). In order to make a linkage with the theoretical framework, more recent evidence suggests that those who use the Web tend to characterize their online experience (Ha, 2006). Eagly and Chaiken

(1993, p. 191) have demonstrated that "theories of behavior should consider how people conceptualize and then execute the set of actions required to engage in a consequential behavior". In accord with these recommendations, therefore, in this study the role of positive attitude is further investigated in the context of post-purchase satisfaction.

Typical studies in this area have shown that the attitudes of people who have had direct experience with an attitude object (e.g. with the target or final behavior) correlate immediately with subsequent attitude-relevant behaviors (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). In Oliver's (1981) words, "satisfaction soon decays into one's overall attitude toward purchasing products". Oliver (1997, p. 388) also suggests that "the resulting level of satisfaction is a major influence on the consumer's revised attitude, which is influenced by the prior attitude". The central feature of a satisfaction-positive attitude-repurchase intention hierarchy is that satisfaction represents the basis for an attitude toward engaging in a repeated behavior. Evidence is supported by Roest and Pieters (1997). Further, customer satisfaction is an important determinant of post-purchase attitude (Yi and La, 2004). Once a customer has been satisfied from a particular web site, the customer will be more likely to generate positive attitudes.

Satisfaction is overall level of customer pleasure and contentment resulting from experience with the service (Hellier *et al.*, 2003). Positive attitude is the customer's positive disposition with respect to good performance. It is not surprising that consumer attitudes mediate the relationship between his/her emotional judgments and future behavioral intentions (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). Thus, attitudes based on direct experience or satisfaction have clarity and are held with confidence (Fazio and Zanna, 1981). In line with this observation, we expect that customer satisfaction based on direct experience is linked to positive attitude.

It is posited that positive attitudes with the preferred online web site are an important determinant of purchase intention (Sundar and Kim, 2005). Congruent with the proposition that adjusted expectations are related to consumer's behavioral attitudes (Yi and La, 2004), which mediate the relationship between satisfaction and high loyalty, it is acceptable that positive attitude is also mediated by the relationship between customer satisfaction and adjusted expectations. Because adjusted expectations are evaluated by post-satisfaction they may be linked to positive attitude, which is presumed to have the underlying confidence of adjusted expectations.

According to online consumer behavior, attitudes toward the web site are an antecedent of behavioral intention (McMillan *et al.*, 2003). Stronger attitudes might have more impact on other behavioral intentions because of related properties of such attitudes (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). Evidence is supported by (Chiu *et al.*, 2005; Jee and Lee, 2002). Therefore, the following hypotheses are also proposed:

H7. Satisfaction will have a positive influence on attitude.

H8. Adjusted expectation will have a positive influence on attitude.

H9. Attitude will have a positive influence on repurchase intention.

Methodology

Sampling and data collection procedures

We chose online travel services because customers in these types of services had direct contact with firms. The main criteria for selecting participants for the sample were:

(1) a minimum of six months' experience shopping on the internet; and

(2) at least one travel-related purchase within that period.

This is because the present research focuses on the cumulative customer satisfaction construct.

As e-mail surveys generally result in a lower response rate than those of direct telephone or Web-based research (Patwardhan and Yang, 2003), completed scale items were measured by over 500 subjects via the marketing research firm. More specifically, our questionnaire was sent to 1,500 subjects. The data were collected over a two-week period in these service sectors. After several follow-up procedures (e.g. repeated reconfirm e-mails), 23 questionnaires were returned as undeliverable. Thus, we obtained responses from 573 respondents. Owing to missing information, the final sample comprized of 514 respondents (34.2 percent response rate).

Finally, response bias was examined using the method proposed by Armstrong and Overton (1977). One viable check for non-response bias is to split the sample into early ($n = 368$) and late respondents ($n = 146$). Both comparisons showed that the subjects' demographic profiles were similar, and that on the satisfaction and adjusted expectation scales, ratings were statistically the same. Thus, we are reasonably assured that the data set used in this study is not biased.

Variable measurement

All the focal constructs of the model were measured using multiple items based on validated scales obtained from the literature, and the items were assessed via a five-point Likert-scale ranging from not at all to completely or strongly disagree to strongly agree. The four constructs measured were the following: satisfaction, with three items adapted from Mägi (2003); adjusted expectations, with four items adapted from Yi and La (2004); trust, with five items adapted from Bart *et al.* (2005); and repurchase intentions, with three items adapted from Jones *et al.* (2000).

Positive attitude was developed in order to measure online shopping behavior. Scale items for these constructs were developed based on the guidelines suggested by Churchill (1979). We first conducted in-depth discussions with 42 online shoppers to generate the initial pool of scale items (these individuals were different from those who participated in the main study). Two academic researchers then evaluated this pool of items for face validity. Based on their feedback, several items were deleted or modified. We then conducted a focus group study with 23 online shoppers. In focus-group, the goal was not only to test item scales for our questionnaire, but also to collect data to justify developing a robust scale and provide directions on how to administer it. Inputs from these respondents were used to further refine and modify the final items. Based on the procedures, we tested positive attitude with five items.

Common method bias

As satisfaction and repurchase intentions tend to be highly correlated when measured in the same survey, due to common method variance, we checked common method

bias. To determine the presence of common method variance bias among the proposed variable, a Harman's one-factor test was performed following the approach outlined by previous researchers (Mattila and Enz, 2002; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). All self-report variables were entered into a principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation. According to this technique, if a single factor emerges from the factor analysis, or one "general" factor accounts for over 50 percent of the covariation in the variables, common method variance is present (Mattila and Enz, 2002, p. 272). Our analysis revealed a four-factor structure, with each factor accounting for less than 50 percent of the covariation. Thus, no general factor was apparent.

Analytical techniques

The research model was tested with structural equation modeling (SEM) using the partial least squares (PLS) procedure (Ranganathan *et al.* 2004; Wold, 1989) because PLS seeks to explain the relationships within a model (Fornell and Bookstein, 1982). Unlike other SEM techniques, such as LISREL, that use maximum likelihood estimation to gauge the fit between a theoretical model and covariance matrix of the observed data, PLS assesses the relationships between constricts, and between the constructs and their measurement items, so that the error variance is reduced (Ranganathan *et al.*, 2004). Further, PLS enable a simultaneous analysis of whether the hypothesized relationships at the theoretical level are empirically confirmed (Khalifa and Liu, 2003). Therefore, PLS is better for analyses of exploratory models, which explain the desirability of construct interrelationship (Ranganathan *et al.*, 2004).

Measurement checks

The most important set of considerations in PLS methods is to assess the reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity (Chin, 1998; Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hulland, 1999) using factor loadings, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE). Internal consistency was tested using composite reliability. The traditional reliability measure of Cronbach's α assumes equal weigh for the items measuring the construct and is influenced by the number of items in the construct (Ranganathan *et al.*, 2004). In PLS, however, composite reliability relies on actual readings to compute the factor scores and is a better indicator of internal consistency.

A principal component factor analysis was performed on each of the multiple-item scales. A factor loading of at least 0.60 was established as the cut-off point for the selection of measurement items for this study. As shown in Table II, the standardized loadings of the first-order factors ranged from 0.603 to 0.864 ($p < 0.01$), indicating an acceptable degree of convergence among the first-order factors (Bagozzi and Heatherton, 1994). Furthermore, all composite reliability estimates were significant and ranged from 0.810 to 0.871.

In addition to factor loadings, another test for checking convergent validity is average variance extracted (AVE). The AVE for a construct reflects the ratio of the construct's variance to the total amount of variance among the items. Table III shows that the AVE values for each construct were above the limit of 0.50 recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981), except for trust, whose AVE was 0.47.

Discriminant validity was evaluated by comparing the square root of the AVE for a given construct with correlation between the construct and all other constructs and by

	Factor loadings	Eigen value	Percent total variance
Satisfaction [a,b]			
How satisfied are you with your travel agency?	0.795	4.12	Meth18.4
How well does your travel agency match your expectations?	0.840		
Imagine a perfect travel agency. How close to this ideal is your travel agency?	0.625		
Adjusted expectations [c]			
After using the travel package, now I expect the web site will provide quality service that I want to be offered	0.754	3.46	15.8
After using the travel package, now I expect the web site will provide benefits corresponding to its price	0.786		
After using the travel package, how good do you expect now the web site to be overall?	0.626		
Are your current expectations higher than your prior expectations?	0.672		
Trust [d]			
This site appears to be more trustworthy than other sites I have visited	0.659	2.88	10.5
The site represents a company or organization that will deliver on promises made	0.618		
My overall trust in this site is	0.864		
My overall believability of the information on this site is	0.731		
My overall confidence in the recommendations on this site is	0.679		
Positive attitude [e]			
Good	0.745	3.07	12.7
Beneficial	0.730		
Enjoyable	0.608		
Pleasant	0.684		
Willing to revisit	0.679		
Repurchase intention [f]			
Likely	0.796	3.52	16.3
Very probably	0.768		
Certain	0.603		

Notes: [a]Was measured by a customer's prior purchase experience; [b]Not at all-completely or very dissatisfied-very satisfied; [c]Not at all-quite a lot or much worse than prior expectation-much better than prior expectations; [d]Not at all-completely; [e]Strongly disagree or strongly agree; [f]Strongly disagree or strongly agree; Five-factor solution accounted for 73.7 percent of the total variance

Table II.
Factor loadings

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the loadings for the hypothesized relationships between the construct and its measures (Table II). Table III presents the construct interrelationships and the values of AVE.

Results

PLS does not offer significance tests based on statistical distributions. The size and significance of the paths in the model were tested by using bootstrapping to estimate parameters, standard error, and *t*-values (Monczka and Handfield, 1998). Also, PLS does not generate an overall goodness-of-fit index, the primary assessment of validity

is by examining R^2 (Chewlos *et al.*, 2001). The resulting PLS structural model, along with the path coefficients and their significant values, are shown in Figure 1.

All the hypothesized paths were found to be significant ($p < 0.01$). The model accounted for 10.5 percent of the variance in adjusted expectation, 43.9 percent of the variance in positive attitude, 13.6 percent of the variance in trust, and 44.8 percent of the variance in repurchase intention from online post-satisfaction settings. These results imply that current study's constructs and the predicted paths accounted for a significant portion of the variance in the online post-satisfaction environment.

All hypothesized paths from satisfaction to repurchase intention were significantly supported. In particular, the link of customer satisfaction-repurchase intention was explained by the five indirect effects of satisfaction → adjusted expectations → repurchase intention, satisfaction → adjusted expectation → positive attitude → repurchase intention, satisfaction → trust → repurchase intention, satisfaction → positive attitude → repurchase intention, and satisfaction → trust → positive attitude

	M	SD	X1	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	AVE
Satisfaction (X1)	2.86	0.72	(0.84)					0.64
Adjusted expectation (Y1)	3.38	1.03	0.22	(0.84)				0.57
Trust (Y2)	3.14	0.92	0.30	0.36	(0.81)			0.47
Positive attitude (Y3)	3.27	1.26	0.51	0.54	0.58	(0.87)		0.58
Repurchase intention (Y4)	2.94	0.85	0.54	0.58	0.47	0.75	(0.86)	0.68

Table III.
Descriptive statistics

Note: Coefficient alpha (α) presented along diagonals; $n = 514$

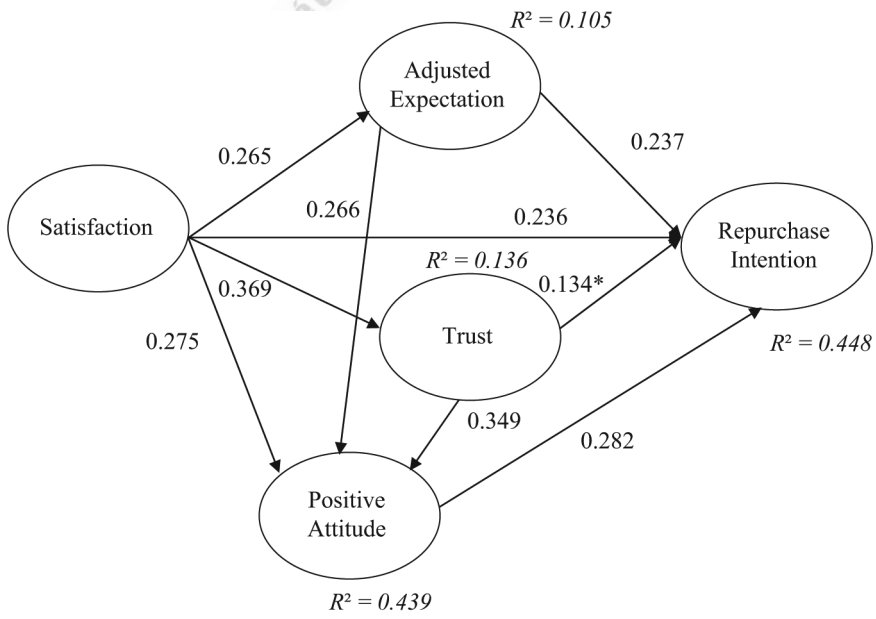

Figure 1.
A structural model

Note: Apart from H5 (*$p < 0.05$), all paths are significant at $p < 0.01$

→ repurchase intention relationships. These linkages imply that a full understanding of the online CS-RPI is to find which mediating variables are involved. Three mediating variables proposed in the study are essential for understanding the interrelationships between customer satisfaction and repurchase intention.

Similarly, three constructs mediated the link of customer satisfaction-repurchase intention. We confirmed that there were three mediating effects between the two constructs:

(1) satisfaction → adjusted expectations → repurchase intention;

(2) satisfaction → trust → repurchase intention; and

(3) satisfaction → positive attitude → repurchase intention.

The standardized estimates for the three mediating effects ranged from 0.049 to 0.078, suggesting that the link of customer satisfaction-repurchase intention have considerable influence on the three variables that are theorized to be important for understanding mediators of customer satisfaction-repurchase intention. Further, positive attitude plays a significant role in making linkages between the constructs. The positive attitude among the constructs demonstrates that improving adjusted expectation and trust increases repurchase intention. This indicates that positive attitude is the strongest mediator of the CS-RPI.

Discussion and conclusions

We believe this study extends the existing literature on the link of customer satisfaction-repurchase intention in several ways. First, we investigated the theoretical linkage between customer satisfaction and repurchase intention with a representative database. In doing so, this study shows that the three mediators (adjusted expectations, positive attitudes and trust) are more adaptive than single or demographic mediators investigated in prior research. Although recent research shows that online demographic characteristics play a significant role in revisit duration and thus an indicator of future earnings (Danaher *et al.*, 2006), the current study reveals that consumers' psychological variables enhance the relationship between customer satisfaction and repurchase intention (which has been previously found to lead to actual behaviors). Whereas Roest and Pieters (1997) and Yi and La (2004) propose single mediator of CS-RPI, our findings suggest that the effects of three mediators are more systematically understood to capture the effect of satisfaction on repurchase intentions.

Second, this study extends current knowledge related to the interrelationship between satisfaction and trust in online repurchase environments. B2B marketing literature indicates that increasing satisfaction between two parties might strengthen their partnership, increase competitiveness and information exchanges, and improve trust (Abdul-Muhmin, 2005; Geyskens *et al.*, 1999). Our results thus indicate that trust in post-satisfaction situations can play a significant role in bridging a gap between consumer judgment and behavioral intention.

Third, our findings show that three constructs mediate the relationship between customer satisfaction and repurchase intention. These mediators thus enhance the effect of satisfaction on repurchase intentions. Investigating the role of these mediators thus provides a more comprehensive understanding of post-satisfaction in an online

setting. The strong mediating relationships uncovered in this study imply that these variables can considerably magnify satisfaction's effect on repurchase intentions.

Finally, this study suggests that psychological variables should be considered when the process of the CS-RPI model is developed. Although previous studies have proposed several psychological constructs of CS-RPI link, these studies have mostly looked at single mediators. Consistent with our propositions that consumer's cognitive (i.e. adjusted expectation), affective (i.e. trust), and behavioral state (i.e. positive attitude) may play a crucial role in making the linkage of CS-RPI, this study reveals that adjusted expectation, trust, and positive attitude provide a much more comprehensive understanding of mediation in this context.

Managerial implications

Results of this study offer several useful implications for practitioners interested in enhancing the value of their offerings by encouraging satisfied customers to engage in future purchases. The role of the three mediators (adjusted expectations, trust, and positive attitudes) in affecting the relationship between satisfaction and repurchase intentions indicates that companies that market products and services online need to pay special attention to policies and practices that are designed to ensure that customers:

(1) are affected in a positive way *vis-à-vis* their expectations;

(2) feel that the web site is trustworthy; and

(3) develop a positive attitude toward the web site.

These policies and practices will in turn positively affect repurchase intentions thus enhancing the company's bottom-line. The following paragraph provides a few brief examples.

Company-wide policies must be in place to ensure that customers are not just satisfied with the purchase but also feel good about the company and its practices so that expectations, attitudes, and trust can be enhanced, thus affecting the likelihood of future purchases. There are several good ways of accomplishing this goal. One is to make sure that customer service representatives receive proper training such that in every instance a customer contacts a representative with a complaint or concern, the company representative should take responsibility and volunteer to be a problem solver, for instance by willingly accepting returns or by proactively rewarding satisfied customers with positive reinforcement such as offers for future discounts or free merchandize. These types of actions will enhance customer attitudes and expectations thus positively affecting repurchase intentions. Such policies will also enhance trust over time since customers will remember that the company will always be there for them in case they do not wish to keep the purchase. These feelings of trust will have the effect of reducing risk and thus future purchase intentions will be enhanced. An example of an online travel web site that accomplishes this very well is Orbitz.com. Orbitz enhances trust as well as positively affects customer expectations and attitudes via offering their frequent customers the option to make changes on travel purchases without a fee. Satisfied customers are thus much more likely to engage in future purchases at Orbitz.com. Wotif.com is another online travel web site that provides a plethora of reservation service for hotels in Australia, as well as some international hotels.

Limitations and further research

As with any study, the findings should be considered in light of their limitations. A limitation of our study is that we have focused on the travel industry, which tends to be more service oriented. To maintain equanimity of research in CS-RPI, it will be important to test these moderators (adjusted expectation, trust, and positive attitude) from a wider audience, which could encompass both product and service sectors.

Although the survey methodology was useful in establishing the relationships in our model, future researchers attempting to replicate and extend these findings may wish to collaborate with companies marketing products and services online and track customers' actual behaviors. This would be an excellent way to validate the current model relationships particularly those involving repurchase intentions and customer satisfaction. Secondly, empirical evidence of customer psychological variables impacting on the enhancement of the relationship between satisfaction and repurchase intention leading to behavioral action in an online setting can be regarded as an advancement in knowledge in the realm of relationship between customer satisfaction and repurchase intention. Researchers can build on this to extend the current framework to other online services sectors with a broad database. Third, we selected respondents who had six months experience with internet shopping with a minimum of one travel related purchase, but this may have had bias in the results. Future research has to be carefully approached to select respondents to further generalize the results obtained in this study. Finally, a major contribution to the literature would involve integrating findings from this study with findings from numerous recent studies focusing on online customer retention (e.g. Bendoly *et al.*, 2005; Schlosser *et al.*, 2006; Tsai *et al.*, 2006) and online post-consumption evaluation (e.g. Mattila, 2003). Despite these limitations, such an integrative study would certainly be a very worthwhile addition to extant knowledge in this area.

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