

## **Measuring Consumers' Attitude towards Internet Service: A Study on Selected Firms in Bangladesh**

**Meher Neger\***

### **Abstract**

*The study integrates past research and proposes a framework for the analysis of consumers' attitude toward internet service in Bangladesh. Internet service related (Intrinsic/Internal) construct where two features are included i.e. easy access, technical excellence, and (Extrinsic/External) construct where three individual attributes are also included i.e. guaranty/warranty, reasonable service charge, and corporate image. The study identifies some features that are considered by the Bangladeshi consumers for using internet service with the help of simple arithmetic mean method. Attempts have been made in the paper to examine the consumers' attitude towards internet service using Fishbein's Multiattribute Attitude model and ranked internet service providing firms' position in Bangladesh depending upon five attributes of different internet service providing firms. This paper also identifies some influential factors, which are helpful to form positive attitude among the Bangladeshi consumers towards internet service by using percentages method. The implications of these findings can be applied to the enhancement of competitive position of different internet service providing firms in the competitive market.*

### **1. Introduction**

At present computer is very important in our everyday life and internet service is needed for globalization and changing the environment, society as well as business. It helps us in the field of education, business, official function, telecommunication, recreation, space station and so on. The term 'measuring consumer's attitude' is used to identify what types of feelings the consumers show on specific branded product or service. Attitudes are learned predisposition to behave in a consistently favorable or unfavorable way with respect to a given object. Attitudes are not overt behaviors but rather are covert or unobservable internal reactions (Kim, 2002). Consumers learn these attitudes over time by being exposed to the object directly or through receiving information about the object. The attitude of the consumers toward a product or service depends on benefit expected from the concern product and how will the product or service delivering the benefit (Mia, 1999). Favorable attitude can be the cause of favorable buying decisions. It is related with the intention of buying a product or service. This study is conducted to find out the total attitude of consumers towards internet service providing firms in Bangladesh and to see how these are influenced by the total attributes of the product or service. The consumers make decisions about the quality of products or services based on a systematic process of acquisition, evaluation and integration of product or service cues. A cue is defined as all informational stimuli available to the consumer before consumption (Monroe and Krishnan, 1976), and it can be intrinsic or extrinsic. Internet service related intrinsic constructs are easy access, seamless connectivity and extrinsic constructs are guaranty/warranty, reasonable service charge and so on. These features

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\* Former Sr. Lecturer in Marketing, Faculty of Business, ASA University Bangladesh

are important from marketing perspective as they can have different important influences on attitudes of consumers toward a product or service. With the help of overall attitude toward the service, marketers can implement appropriate marketing strategies to achieve market share. Multiple researchers have found a relationship between service quality and intrinsic/ extrinsic cues. However, in recent times internet service providing firms have been constantly expanding their service by providing multiple services together in one offering for the consumer. Besides, different competitors are available in Bangladesh markets. As people of the third world country, consumers are very much price conscious but simultaneously they consider the quality of the product or service. The quality of the product or service can increase with adding intrinsic attributes as well as increasing the image of extrinsic attributes. Consumer's basically expect desired service from the internet service providing organizations of Bangladesh. The study has tried to measure the attitude of the consumer towards internet service providing firms in Bangladesh on the basis of intrinsic and extrinsic cues of internet service. Information cues have also been analyzed in this study clearly. The paper is organized as follows : **Section 1** focuses on introductory issues, **Section 2** analyzes the objectives of the study, **Section 3** reviews the literature relevant to quality perception and competitiveness in the market, **Section 4** discusses the methodology of the study, **Section 5** discusses the attitude measurement procedure, **Section 6** depicts the findings of the study and **Section 7** concludes and recommends. Finally, limitations of the study and future research directions are discussed in **Section 8**.

## 2. Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the study is to measure consumers' attitude towards internet service in Bangladesh. The specific objectives of the study are stated below:

- ☐ to identify the different attributes which are considered by Bangladeshi consumers while using internet service;
- ☐ to measure the attitudes of consumers towards internet service providing organizations based on Fishbein's Multi – attributes Attitude Model;
- ☐ to identify the factors that exert influence on forming positive attitude of Bangladeshi consumers towards internet service.

## 3. Relevant Literature Review

Anderson, Engledow, and Banker's (2004) objective was to test a simple structural model – relating attitude toward business to produce satisfaction, experience, and search effort. Automobiles were selected to measure attitude towards business. The confirmatory factor analysis (COFAMM) and the LISREL model were used to test the hypotheses. All hypotheses of the model were supported. The relationships among business attitude and experience and product satisfaction are positive and the relationships between business attitude and search effort is negative.

The study "Attitude of Owners, Managers, and Workers: A Case Study in Bangladesh" conducted by Taher (1998), is based on the attitudes of the owners, managers and workers of some selected companies in Bangladesh. It highlights some issues like technology transfer, feeling of the respondents on managerial factors, responsibilities of personnel and also production-oriented phenomena. Basically, the study has measured the attitude of the respondents to various aspects

from psychological point of view. For measuring the attitudes, the rating scale was applied. It is noted that the study was not comparative in nature between the conventional and the Islamic banks.

Ahmed, (1997) conducted a study, "Attitude towards National Development as a Function of Value and Self – Role perception of different Socio-Economic Classes in Bangladesh," which was, basically, the matter of attitude measurement of different classes of people in Bangladesh towards some issues regarding national development, But it did not include the customers' attitudes towards banking service and bank related issues.

After review of literature it is clear that all the articles discussed above reflect on different branded product and their attention toward service items. We know that products have their physical evidence but services have no physical evidence. Services are intangible. So, to measure consumers' attitude towards internet service, still remains an unexplored field. Besides, these literatures considered either internal attributes or external attributes and some of these literatures considered both attributes at a time. But, still there are some factors still unexplored which serve to influence consumers' attitude toward any product or service. Moreover, in our country no in depth research has been conducted yet in this area. So, this study tries to fill up this gap by using internal and external attributes and some factors at a time for measuring consumers' attitude towards internet service.

## 4. Methodology of the Study

### 4.1 Firms Selection

At present, there are many internet services providing firms in Bangladesh. Among these, the firms having 30% or above response out of total respondents have been selected for the convenience of the study. This information has been collected from 160 respondents where approximately 70% are students and rest of the 30% are professionals. When the respondents were asked about the different internet service providing firms, the name of 9 firms came to their mind at that moment. The following table shows the name of internet service providing firms that are considered by the consumers:

**Table 01: Consumers' opinion on different internet service providing firms which are available in Bangladesh market:**

No.	Firms' Name	T.R.	T.R.D	%
1.	Akij online ltd.	160	150	93.75
2.	Grameen Cyber Net Ltd.	160	145	90.62
3.	Link <sub>3</sub>	160	90	56.25
4.	Librabd.Net	160	45	28.12
5.	BTTB	160	42	26.25
6.	Ranks IT	160	40	25.00
7.	Khulna Vision	160	39	24.38
8.	ISN	160	35	21.88
9.	Raj ISP	160	32	20.00

*TR = Total Respondents, TRD = Total Respondents' Response*

Source: Neger, M. (2009), M.Phil Thesis (unpublished).

From Table 1, it is found that Akij Online Ltd., Grameen Cyber Net Ltd. and Link<sub>3</sub> have got the highest importance, that means those firms bearing up to 30% and above have been selected for the convenience of the study.

#### 4.2 Attributes Selection

The purpose of this stage is to select the attributes which are considered by the consumers. This information cultivated among 160 respondents in the same ration of firms selections. When asked about the attributes of the internet service firms that are basically considered for service, they mentioned 12 attributes. Those having up to 30% and above have been selected for the convenience of the study. The following table shows the attributes that are considered by the consumer while receiving internet service:

**Table: 02 Consumers' opinion on different attributes that internet service providers should have:**

No.	Attributes' Name	T.R.	T.R.D	%
1.	Easy Access	160	120	75
2.	Technical Excellence	160	95	59.38
3.	Reasonable Service Charge	160	85	53.12
4.	Corporate Image	160	70	43.75
5.	Guaranty / Warranty	160	60	37.50
6.	Freedom of Service	160	42	26.25
7.	Seamless connectivity	160	40	25.00
8.	Round the Clock Help Line	160	35	21.88
9.	Less Radiation	160	30	18.75

*TR = Total Respondents, TRD = Total Respondents Response*

Source: Neger, M. (2009), M.Phil Thesis (unpublished)

From table – 02, it is found that easy access, technical excellence, reasonable service charge, corporate image and guaranty / warranty are opined by 75%, 59.38%, 53.12%, 43.75%, 37.50% respondents respectively. So, those five attributes bear up to 30% and above have been selected for the convenience of the study. Among the five attributes two intrinsic and three extrinsic are considered for the final study.

#### 4.3 Sample Respondents

Since sampling frame of the respondent is unavailable, probability sampling method for the research purpose is not appropriate. So for time and budget constraints, the data have been collected on the basis of convenience sampling method with 250 desired sample sizes. Total 250 respondents who have directly or indirectly influenced for receiving internet service are used as sample respondents in this study. Among 250 there are 200 students of BBA and MBA from the department of Marketing; University of Rajshahi, who have been taken into consideration for the convenience of the study. Rests of the data have been taken from 50 different professionals such

as: IT officers, Teachers at various positions of the University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh and from some business users of University area.

#### **4.4 Types of Data**

In order to achieve the specific objectives of the study, primary and secondary sources of data are used. The relevant primary data have been collected from the respondents directly through a set of structured questionnaires. The majority of the secondary data have been collected from unpublished thesis paper (Neger, M., 2009) of the researcher, various publications, newspapers and published books etc.

#### **4.5 Data Collection Method and Procedures**

Data have been collected from students and professionals through a set of structured questionnaires. In the surface page of the questionnaire, the purpose of the study is well described. After the surface page of the questionnaire, the respondents are asked to turn the page including information regarding the attributes of individual internet service providing firms those are usually providing the internet service in Bangladesh. To measure the overall evaluation (ei) regarding the selected attributes of the specific firm rating scale ranging from Extremely Good to Extremely Bad (+3 -3) has been used and the respondents were asked to encircle the point to express their opinion. The respondents are also asked through the Seven point Likert Scale ranging from 7 indicates Very Strongly Believe, and 1 indicates Very Strongly Disbelieve to know how strongly they believe that the individual firm contains the said attributes.

#### **4.6 Data Analysis Procedures**

Simple statistical tools have been used to analyze the data. Statistical tools including simple arithmetic means and percentage method have been used. The analysis has been done in the light of the analysis procedures used by Fishbein's for measuring attitude of consumers towards objects.

### **5. Attitude Measurement Procedure**

The Martin Fishbein's model has been established as the most influential tool for analyzing the consumer's attitude. This multiattribute attitude model focuses on consumer's belief about multiple products or service attributes which are considered as a useful tool for investigating attitude formation and prediction attitude. The key proposition in Fishbein's theory is that evaluations of salient beliefs cause overall attitude. Simply stated, people tend to like objects that are associated with "good" characteristics and dislike objects they believe have "bad" attributes. In Fishbein's multiattribute model, overall attitude toward an object is a function of two factors: the strengths of the salient beliefs associated with the object and the evaluations of those beliefs. Formally, the model proposes that:

$$A_0 = \sum_{i=1}^n b_i e_i$$

Where,

$A_0$  = Attitude towards the object

$b_i$  = Strength of the belief that the object has attributed (i),

$e_i$  = The evaluation of attribute (i),

$n$  = The number of the salient attributes.

This multiattribute attitude model accounts for the integration process through which product or service knowledge (the evaluations and strengths of salient beliefs) is combined to form an overall evaluation or attitude (Fishbein, 1963).

## 6. Findings and Their Analysis

### 6.1 Results of Consumers Consideration Based on Intrinsic and Extrinsic Attributes for Using Internet service

Table 03 reveals that all the respondents consider five attributes which affect consumer mind for using internet service. Of the five attributes, “reasonable service charge” has got the highest importance, weighted average being 4.26 for it. The other important attributes are i) easy access and technical excellence (weighted average being 4.04); ii) corporate image (weighted average being 2.72); iii) guaranty / warranty (weighted average being 2.66). The last attribute guaranty / warranty falls below weighted average of 2.66; hence, it is not important to the respondent.

Table- 03 Considering attributes for using internet service

Attributes	Responses						Ranks
	Not important (1)	Below important (2)	Average important (3)	Above Average important (4)	Very important (5)	Weighted Average	
Easy Access	0	20	50	80	100	1010/250 = 4.04	2
Corporate Image	60	50	55	70	15	680/250 = 2.72	3
Technical excellence	0	20	50	80	100	1010/250 = 4.04	2
Guaranty/ warranty	75	45	40	70	20	665/250 = 2.66	5
Reasonable service charge	0	10	30	95	115	1065 /250 = 4.26	1

Note: Weighted average is calculated given weight 1 for “Not important” to 5 for “very important”

Source: Neger, M. (2009), M.Phil Thesis (unpublished)

## 6.2 Result of Fishbein's Multiattribute Attitude Model

Strength of belief (bi) is the perceived probability of association between an object and its relevant attribute. This belief was measured by having consumer rate in probability of association for each of their salient belief (Table: 04). The belief associated with belief evaluation (ei) that reflects how favorably consumers perceived the attributes (Table: 04). It is clear from the table that the attitude towards different internet service providing firms on the basis of Fishbein's Multiattribute Attitudes (A<sub>o</sub>) Model are; A<sub>o</sub> for Akij online Ltd. is  $X_{AK} = 12.41$ , Grameen Cyber Net Ltd. is  $X_G = 29.63$ , and A<sub>o</sub> For Link<sub>3</sub> is  $X_{LI} = 8.022$  (Table : 04).

The findings suggest that firm X<sub>G</sub> is viewed as the topmost favorable position because it received total (eibi) 29.63 on all desired attributes. X<sub>AK</sub> has second topmost position among the selected firms by samples. X<sub>LI</sub> has next position based on overall attitude towards the object. From the Fishbein's model, overall position of the consumers' attitude towards the individual object have been found on the basis of different attributes.

**Table – 04 Consumer' overall evaluations (ei) and strength of beliefs (bi) for different internet service providing firms based on different attributes**

Attributes	Akij online Ltd.			Grameen Cyber Net Ltd.			Link <sub>3</sub>		
	ei	bi	eibi	ei	bi	eibi	ei	bi	eibi
<b>Easy Access</b>	0.96	4.96	4.77	1.54	5.1	7.85	1.18	4.56	5.38
<b>Technical Excellence</b>	0.56	5.36	3.00	1.32	5.45	7.19	0.08	3.28	0.262
<b>Reasonable Service Charge</b>	0.04	4.04	0.17	0.72	4.25	3.06	0.44	4.08	1.796
<b>Corporate Image</b>	0.74	4.74	3.50	1.76	4.85	8.53	0.1	2.66	0.266
<b>Guaranty/warranty</b>	0.26	3.72	0.97	0.75	4.01	3.00	0.1	3.18	0.318
<b>A<sub>o</sub> = <math>\sum</math> eibi</b>			12.41			29.63			8.022

According to Positions: (  $A_{oXG} = 29.63$ ,  $A_{oAK} = 12.41$ ,  $A_{oLI} = 8.022$ )

Source: Neger, M. (2009), M.Phil Thesis (unpublished)

## 6.3 Results of Consumers Positive Attitude Based on Some Influential Factors

When a service receiver wants to receive the internet service, he/she also depends on service quality of the internet service providing firms. Another sense, the service quality also depends on some factors. Under this study 24% respondents show their positive attitude to the internet service only for that "freedom of service". The other factors for which the respondents show their positive attitude towards internet service are – "reasonable service charge", "technical

excellence”, “un-compromised security”, “round the clock help line”, as opined by 22%, 20%, 18%, 16%, respondents.

**Table – 05 Factors influencing the formation of positive attitude of Bangladeshi consumers towards internet service**

Sl. No.	Factors	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
1.	Freedom of service	60	24
2.	Reasonable service change	55	22
3.	Technical excellence	50	20
4.	un-compromised security	45	18
5.	Round the clock help line	40	16

Source: Field survey

## 7. Concluding Remarks

This study is conducted empirically to measure consumers’ attitude towards internet service based on Fishbein’s Multiattribute Attitude Model. Internet service is considered as a sophisticated service item in our country. The consumers have more or less knowledge about the different attributes of internet service that lead consumers’ attitude toward individual internet service providing firm. Fishbein’s Multiattribute Attitude model has been applied for three internet service providing firms which are widely providing the internet service in Bangladesh. Five features have been selected as determinants of firm choice. The result has been reported here. Grameen Cyber Net Ltd. enjoys the highest attitude of consumers. Akij Online Ltd. is the second most popular and the Link<sub>3</sub> lowest popular in Bangladesh. The findings highlight the need to gain an understanding of the separate impact of both intrinsic and extrinsic attributes and their contribution to the service providing firms’ preference individually. Finally, the measurement of attitude towards internet service and managerial implementation of internet service providing firms have become top priority marketing issues in the recent years, according to the growing literature on the subject. Based on the findings we put forward the following recommendations:

- (i) The managers can take various strategies such as, maintaining and developing both the intrinsic and extrinsic attributes, operating effective promotion etc. for gaining the competitive advantage on the basis of service differentiation.
- (ii) The service providers of different firms can follow all possible attitude change strategies, which are: to add new salient belief about the attitude object – ideally, one with a positive to increase the strength of an existing positive belief, to increase the evaluation of a strongly held belief to make an existing belief more salient.
- (iii) It may be said that as the markets are ever changing in relation to changing consumers’ attitude, so for gaining the competitive advantage in the marketplace in the long run, the marketers should take various marketing strategies on the basis of customization.

## 8. Limitations and Future Research

There are some limitations of this study that future research should continue to test and refine. The study reveals that five attributes are considered for measuring consumers' attitude towards internet service of some selected firms, which have five strength of belief (bi) that always may not be true. There might be more attributes, which could influence the consumers for receiving internet service like model variation, availability, home service etc. Therefore, further research may be conducted to assess service benefits and risks of each feature of internet service considering more attributes including exogenous variables. Besides, the major limitation of this study is that the study attempts to consider only three internet service providing firms. It would have been more representative if the total number of internet service providing firms of Bangladesh could have been taken under this study. But it is not possible due to financial and time constraints. It is the responsibility of the future researchers to overcome these shortcomings. Moreover, we used only Martin Fishbein's Multiattribute Attitude model for measuring consumer attitude in this field, so other researchers have the options to measure the consumers' attitudes toward the object and can also use the other techniques in sampling and in measuring attitudes.

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