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RESEARCH ARTICLE

IMPORTANT FACTORS AFFECTING THE RECOVERY SATISFACTION WHEN MANAGING RETURNS

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Abstract

After conducting an extensive literature review, on the link between reverse logistic and satisfaction with service recovery, many questions have been emerged regarding the robustness and validity of the theoretical construction. This is how exploratory studies, allow to retrace the theoretical choices according to solid foundations and from real ground. By this paper, we hope to present the results of the qualitative study that we have established, whose main objective consists of determining, the factors affecting the recovery satisfaction when managing returns.

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Introduction:-

The risk factors that accompany Internet sales, have made the emergence of failure situations an indisputable thing. Cyber consumers buy the products without trying them (Dissanayake, 2007), which can cause an unsatisfactory surprise after delivery. As well, the individuals do not evaluate products in the same way (Ulrich, 2006). This means that company efforts may not be perfectly aligned with the expectations of cyber consumers. This is how the context of shopping on the Internet is qualified as complex, its specificities are not mastered by all customers, because of the substitution of 'store, seller and product' by 'a virtual commerce' (Gefen and al., 2003; Dissanayake, 2007; Hamadi, 2010).

The return of the product is a kind of ineffectiveness (Bai and Sarkis, 2013). In this context, when the customer realizes that what he bought does not meet his expectations, we are talking about a negative incident (Zeithaml and al., 1993). Errors, confusions, nonconformities and size issues are the most important factors, in terms of the causes of product returns.

The return rate is high in e-commerce. According to Mahindroo et al. (2018), it signifies the frequency of return. There is no consensus between researchers regarding its value, however, Dissanayake (2007) claims that it is high online. According to Rogers and Tibben-Lembke (1998), returns can reach 35% of internet sales.

Originally, the exchange relationship is based on a principle of value transmission. In this way, the seller is responsible not only for customer satisfaction, but also for recovery satisfaction after the failed shopping experience. This problem-solving dimension constitutes the customer-oriented marketing approach. Indeed, if technological progress has made it possible to establish an interactive, personalized and close relationship with the customer, only the management of this relationship in all situations will strengthen ties.

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The management of dissatisfaction is a priority vector, it makes it possible to avoid additional losses and to manage failures (Najar et al., 2014). At this level, reverse logistic is the service for recovery and management of failures in products returned by the consumer to the seller, due to non-conformities and dissatisfactions (Jalil, 2019). In another way, the reverse logistic offering the return management service, is the recovery service which aims to restore satisfaction (Sajjanit, 2015). So what are the most important factors when managing product returns in e-commerce?

Literature Review:-

Reverse logistic :

It is hard to speak about the date of the appearance of reverse logistic. At the beginning, the term reverse logistic has been linked to the reversed distribution. But it was not conclusive, which made the translation of the concept the subject of several debates. In this sense, the terms usually used are known as reverse logistic and return logistic. The researchers affirm that there is a difference between the activities of classical logistic and those of reverse logistic (Rogers and al., 2001), in particular, returns are not efficiently treated by logistic classic, which no longer makes reverse logistic an optional function for the company (Stock, 2001).

Operationally, direct logistic is different from reverse logistic in terms of flows. However, this conclusion does not mean that they are contradictory in terms of objectives, we distinguish the work of Pimor and Fender (2008) who claim that reverse logistic is particularized by the method, so it composes the overall logistic; in reality, the logistic in the large sense includes reverse logistic, distribution logistic, after-sales service logistic, etc. (Pimor and Fender, 2008).

The main definitions of reverse logistic are listed below. Fleischmann and Kuik (2003) see it as a management of return flows, unlike those classic ones, from seller to customer. For Boudier and al. (2007), they state that reverse logistic, within the company results from related motivations to a Marketing aspect. According to Pimor and Fender (2008), reverse logistic has the function of managing physical flows coming from the consumer. According to the literature, by reverse logistic, the company wants to manage returns effectively. According to Dawe (1995), reverse logistic meets the objective of managing and structuring returns. In concrete terms, reverse logistic includes the activities after the distribution of the product, which have as finality the effectiveness of the customer service (Reverse Logistics Association, 2009). We recall that the motivations for reverse practices, within the company, have become increasingly linked to marketing aspects.

We retain in our context the approach which defines reverse logistic by management practices that arise after the delivery process and are aimed at improving the quality of after-sales service (Reverse Logistics Association, 2009). The other definitions do not meet the specificities of our field of study, which are defined by three important elements: the context (commercial context), the moment of appearance of the returns (returns after sale) and the type of these returns (finished products).

And for more precision, we add another definition, very recent, proposed by Jalil (2019), which stipulates that reverse logistic is: the service of recovery and management of failures of products, returned by the consumer to the seller, because of nonconformities and dissatisfaction.

Reverse logistic and recovery:

When the need to manage dissatisfaction appeared in companies, theories of "recovery" emerged, in particular, in Anglo-Saxon context. Indeed, the field of research is known as "service recovery", this concept was proposed by researchers Bell and Zemke (1987). Initially, the researchers were interested in the dissatisfactions produced during the failure of the services, thereafter, the research field has expanded to include the recovery during dissatisfaction following product purchases.

The paradigm of recovery satisfaction is a real contribution, in terms of satisfaction research after the shopping failure. Recovery is the response established by the company following a poor quality offer (Gronroos, 1988 ; Boshoff and Staude, 2003).

In term of reverse logistic, according to Ogunleye (2013), the company that cannot take benefit of the value it can generate from the return management, loses the opportunity to satisfy the customer and reduce dissatisfaction. In this matter, reverse logistic have naturally emerged as a need, among customer-oriented companies that are in a state of looking for a method to serve the disgruntled customer. When reverse logistic is done correctly to the customer's

expectations, it allows satisfaction. In this work below, the recovery satisfaction will be explained by the appreciation of the dissatisfied cyber consumer, of the quality of the reverse logistic service applied by the company. According to Autry and al. (2001), there is a link between reverse logistic and satisfaction.

Like Morrisson (2006), recovery relates to the actions implemented by the company to transform the dissatisfied into satisfied. It is in this sense that Jiang and Rosenbloom (2005), Tiwari (2013) and Mohamed et al. (2015) concluded that reverse logistic strengthens customer satisfaction. In fact, thanks to the return policies deployed, companies are able to overcome weaknesses. In his study on the contribution of reverse logistic in customer relationship management, Smith (2005) concluded that e-commerce companies must master all aspects of reverse logistic.

Reverse logistic and justice theory

The resolution of problems according to the contributions of the theory of justice, is based on the perception formed by the dissatisfied consumer on three dimensions: what was given to him as compensation, what led to the solution and how the results are obtained (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998; Sabharwal et al., 2010). Likewise, the dimensions of reverse logistic, namely: the return policy, the return procedure and the interactional quality allow the dissatisfied to find a perception compared the established solution.

The theory of justice has been the subject of much research into the study of satisfaction after dissatisfaction, because the perception of dissatisfied is fundamental in the appreciation of satisfaction after recovery.

The return policy represents the distributive aspect. In the commercial context, there are mainly three policies namely repair (Fall, 2016), replacement and refund (Park et al., 2014). For the procedural aspect, it's about how to achieve results, it includes the rules and instructions to follow to make the return correctly. As regards the quality of contact, it characterizes the interactional aspect. The quality of the relationship started with the person in contact plays a relevant role in the execution phase of reverse logistic.

The determinants of satisfaction recovery

In this section, we are going to focus on the most important determinants of recovery satisfaction, when managing returns.

The Compensation:

It has been studied in the literature on reverse logistic (Autry and al., 2001), the recovery service (Lewis and McCann, 2004; Parasuraman and al., 2005) and the theory of justice (McCole, 2004). In fact, the recovery of the satisfaction is obtained thanks to the compensation given to the dissatisfied customer via the service of recovery, aimed at remedying the failure of the initial offer. (Kim and Wansink, 2012) claimed that the refund or exchange of the product is a real source of value and satisfaction.

Reliability:

In terms of reverse logistic, Sajjanit (2015) considers reliability as a factor which has a positive influence on service performance and satisfaction. It gives concrete expression to the respect of all commitments.

The accessibility:

The access to the means of contact is a component fundamental of the procedural dimension of reverse logistic, it determines the individual's perception of the recovery service. According to Bressolles (2012), the access to the services provided by the company on the website is very desirable by the customer.

Flexibility:

Rigidity isn't wanted when handling returns. According to Sabadie and al. (2006), flexibility is a kind of adaptation to needs, in terms of managing dissatisfaction, it positively influences satisfaction.

Explanations:

Concerning the information component, the explanations provided by the company are fundamental. Abaaoukide (2016), the contact must allow, to provide information on solutions and deadlines. Similarly, when the dissatisfied obtains adequate explanations, he becomes more satisfied (Dunning and Pecotich, 2000; Sajjanit, 2015).

Methodology and conducting of the qualitative study:

We followed a dual approach, which consisted of interviewing, on the one hand, a target expert including cyber consumers having made a product return, and on the other hand, a business target comprising Moroccan commercial e-commerce companies.

Three main steps must be respected, it is the making of appointments and confirmation, administration of interview guides and data analysis. To administer the interview guides, we followed the approach proposed by Jolibert and Jourdan (2011), they suggested four principal steps:

1. Introductory phase
2. Introduction of the interview
3. Discussion
4. Conclusion of the interview

The cyber consumers interviewed (See Table 1) all had a return experience. For return managers (See table 2), they confirmed the presence of a return service in the company, we remind that in Morocco, by article 36 of law 31-08, returns must be necessarily managed by e-commerce companies.

We used two interview guides, each one with a different questions responding the characteristics of the corresponding target. The questions focused on some definitions, the process of the management of returns and the expectations of cyber consumers versus this service.

We respected the principle of theoretical saturation, to define the number of interviews to be carried out. Regarding cyber consumers, ten is the total of participants.

Table 1:- Target, field of study and summary of characteristics of the cyber consumers .

Gender	
Women	5
Men	5
Age	
Less than 21 years old	2
21 to 30 years old	5
31 to 40 years old	3
Professional category	
Student	4
Private and public sector employee	4
Freelance job	2
Level of studies	
Bac+1	0
Bac+2	3
Bac+3	4
Bac+5	3

Regarding returns managers, saturation was reached at the number of "eleven".

Table 2:- Summary of characteristics of return managers.

Interviewees	Activitysector
INT1	Sale of Moroccan handicrafts
INT2	Sale of computer equipment
INT3	Sale of computer equipment
INT4	Sale of gifts and any product
INT5	Sale of children's games
INT6	Sale of parapharmacy, beauty and health products
INT7	Sale of women's ready-to-wear
INT8	Sale of tires
INT9	Sale of men's ready to wear
INT10	Sale of gardening, swimming pool, house and garage products

INT11	Sale of different type of product
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Data processing and analysis:

We opted for the manual analysis grid. Thematic content analysis was used to interpret the content after the transcription. Regarding this method, Jolibert and Jourdan (2011) stated that the factors allowing the coding of the data are predefined by the searcher.

For the unit of analysis, it is the individual level, which means: the consumer. All the informations collected are analyzed from a consumer's opinion. As a result, two analysis grids were drawn, the first is for the expert target, and the second is for the target business. Each grid contains the verbatim of the interviewees classified according to the themes, defined in the interview guide.

Interpretation of results:

In this section, we will present the main results from the qualitative study.

The commercial return corresponds to any product which does not satisfy the customer's need, and does not meet the desired expectations. Cyber consumers interviewed (See Table 1) have said that dissatisfaction is the main cause that pushes them, to return a product. According to them, the size problems, the nonconformities and the non-correspondence of the product received, with the product appearing in the site descriptions, are the main returns factors. Moroccan cyber consumer never intends to keep a product that does not satisfy his needs. All interviewees said this, which is consistent with 8/11 statements by returns managers.

From this perspective, the factors that generate the motivations for returns are spread throughout the purchasing process and derive from multiple sources. Meyer (1999) determines an online return rate ranging from 50% up to 70%. As such, by managing returns, the brand is committed to recovering customer satisfaction.

Below are some testimonials from some cyber consumers expressing this:

1. "I asked for the return because the seller delivered me shoes in large size" (RESPONDENT2)
2. "The USB cable that was delivered to me does not work, I asked for the return to change it" (RESPONDENT8)

Also, 7/11 returns managers interviewed have confirmed, that the first question asked by the Moroccan cyber consumer before the purchase, is about the possibility of making the return. This shows that the return of the product is one of the main behaviors of Moroccan cyber-consumers.

In addition to theory, the validation of a definition of reverse logistic which meeting the contextual requirements was not possible without examining the terrain. In fact, according to all of the companies interviewed, reverse logistic mean managing returns. This aligns with the definitions proposed by Stock and Mulki (2009) and Sajjanit (2015).

Regarding the return process, the return managers interviewed (see Table 2) affirmed the presence of four main stages: the contact of the service, the complaint of the return, confirmation of return and receipt of refund or replacement. It is during the returns process that the dissatisfied assesses the company's efforts and the level of interest in its request. Dawe (1995) thinks that customer service is closely related to reverse logistic. Indeed, it allows understanding and eases the access to politics of back.

In fact, the literature reviews conducted allowed us to understand, that there are factors necessary to repair the dissatisfaction of the cyber consumer. It's for this reason that, throughout our interviews, our attention was focused on the determinants considered interesting. Cyber consumers have insisted on access to the means of contact and practicality of the instructions.

Also, the return managers claimed that the complicated instructions, cause delay in their reverse logistic. Practicality is fundamental in this context. Indeed, complexity remains the main obstacle to the implementation of logistic effective reverse. Here are some examples of verbatim from cyber consumers expressing this:

1. "... I visited the seller's site to find a way to contact him" (RESPONDENT2)
2. "Customer service was very responsive, they have quickly responded to my return request" (RESPONDENT8)

For compensation, a huge importance has been given to it. According to 80% of managers interviewed, the Moroccan cyber consumer remains in doubt and confusion until receipt of the compensation. However, the reliability of the compensation is desirable, it means, the respect of the promises, which makes it possible to guarantee to the dissatisfied the compensation which was affirmed to him, during the confirmation of the return. Below is one of the verbatim interpreting this:

1. "I received the amount paid by bank transfer in addition to the shipping costs" (RESPONDENT7)

For the interactional dimension, it is also important for recovering satisfaction in the context of return. Explanations of causes and solutions and responsiveness of the person in contact are all desirable factors. Listening to the customer is fundamental to the success of reverse logistic. Kolsaker and Payne (2002) emphasize the role of all these components, in strengthening the relationship quality with the customer, the testimonies of the return managers below confirm this:

1. "...For a dissatisfied customer, you have to respond to their needs and not get angry against him, we try to explain to him the causes of the problem and solutions as well" (INTERVIEWE4)
2. "Communicating with the client makes him feel better" (INTERVIEWE5)

So, satisfaction after the return depends on the behavior of the company and the way in which the return was made, the totality of cyber consumers affirmed this. Which means that non-client-oriented random approaches do not make it possible to repair dissatisfaction.

Conclusions:-

By this article, we first presented the process of conducting the qualitative study carried out, thereafter, the method of analysis of the data collected, in the end, a brief presentation of the results achieved. After studying the relationship between the variables of reverse logistic and recovery satisfaction, it has indicated that managing returns on the Internet should meet expectations, on the distributive, procedural and interactional level.

The accentuated risk factors in the electronic commerce cause a lot of failure, in this context, product returns increase. Through reverse logistic, the company aims to recover value to the consumer dissatisfied and remedy the ineffectiveness of the offer.

Recovery satisfaction is based on the perception formed by the dissatisfied compared to three dimensions (Hamadi et al., 2018) :

1. What was given to him compared to the damage suffered (return policies);
2. What led to the solution (return process);
3. How the results are obtained (quality of the contact)

The first dimension is presented by return policies. According to Abdullah and Yaakub (2014), reverse logistic encompasses the return policies implemented by the company to deal with any returned product. They are considered as a solution to the problem and compensation compared to the damage sustained. The second dimension is the return process, in fact, return policies require the presence of a defined procedure explaining all the instructions and rules to follow. Accessibility and practicality are the most important factors. The third is defined by the interactional level. The contacted person plays a relevant role in the execution phase of reverse logistic. That's why, the contact person is a key component that enables the successful management of dissatisfaction (Sabadie and al., 2006).

In conclusion, we note that the reverse logistic service, in the electronic commerce sector in Morocco, is appreciated by the compensation obtained and the respect of promises (distributive dimension factors), flexibility and access to means of contact (procedural dimension factors) and explanations interactional dimension factors).

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