Evaluating the Success of a Customer Relationship System: The Case of an Auto Retail Business in Belize

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Abstract

An extended amount of research has been conducted on auto retail business globally, however little research has been conducted in Belize to analyse customer relationship systems within the nation. A quantitative research was used to obtain information about the success of a relationship system through the aim of a survey, which was conducted throughout the month of April, 2017 at an auto retail business in three districts of Belize. The Delone and Mclean model which consists of six dimensions: information quality, system quality, service quality, use, user satisfaction, and perceived net benefit. Structural equation modelling techniques is applied to data collected by questionnaire. The findings about the customer satisfaction within the auto retail business shows that the system was moderately successful. This paper concludes by discussing the limitations of the study, which should be addressed in future research.

Keywords: Customer relationship system, information system success model, perceived net benefits

Introduction

In developing countries, researchers have examined the use of technology and how it has lead to information systems (IS) success in many organizations. This type of research is aimed at seeing how effective it is to implement mediums such as software and tangible technology within an organization. One of the leading research papers that supports the information systems success is The DeLone and McLean model "Information systems success: The quest for the dependent variable." (DeLone et al. 1992; McLean et al. 1992) The model seeks to measure the success of IS (information systems) (DeLone et al. 1992; McLean et al. 1992) through system quality, information quality, use, user satisfaction, individual impact, and organizational impact.

In Belize the use of information systems has increased significantly. Many companies; large and small, have been seeking the latest methods by which they could get business done. With the emergence of technology, the companies and firms invest in the latest equipment, and either buy or get the latest programs made in order to increase productivity. The question arises however, of whether or not the use of these information systems actually bring forth information systems success particular for a customer relationship system (CRM). This research aims to zero in on the impact the CRM has on a local auto retail store, by testing the effectiveness of the customer relationship system. Here the employees are a customer of the systems itself as they are the ones who operate the program which facilitates sales.

Literature Review

Information Systems Success

In the past researchers on the international scene in developed countries have delved into IS success and how effective it can be for a particular firm or organization. The information systems success research that is most comprehensive is the 1992 paper by DeLone and McLean (DeLone et al. 1992; McLean et al. 1992). DeLone and McLean later did a follow up research paper "The DeLone and McLean model of information systems success: a ten-year update" refining their previous findings. One of the refined aspects focuses on the user satisfaction which can also be viewed as a customer relationship. (DeLone et al. 2003; McLean et al. 2003)

Customer Relationship Systems from Communications

In order to understand what CRM (Customer Relationship Systems), we refer to what DeLone and McLean used as a guide in their first paper. The model referred to the communications research of Shannon and Weaver which gave a comprehensive look at the technical level of communications which refers to the accuracy and efficiency of the communication system that produces information, the semantic level which refers to the success of the information in conveying the intended meaning, and the effectiveness level which refers to the effect of the information on the receiver. (Shannon et al. 1949; Weaver et al. 1949) These levels: the technical, semantic, and effectiveness is a part of the bedrock that the original DeLone and McLean Model is based on. This brought forth the D&M IS Success Model, which states that "systems quality" measures technical success; "information quality" measures semantic success; and "use, user satisfaction, individual impacts," and "organizational impacts" measure effectiveness success.

This then poses a question: How effective is the use of Customer Relationship Systems in Belize; a developing country, which is striving toward development? In the developing world, and particularly in Belize, no such research exists. This research however intends to survey how effective a customer relationship system is in a business locally. In particular, the effectiveness of business's information system. How does the information system facilitate the smooth flow of sales? How does the information system allow the sales representative to access information requested by patrons? How does it improve the overall running of the retail business?

Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

The fundamental idea behind all those questions is the concept of service quality which was dubbed SERVQUAL. One body of work that makes this concept clearer is the works of Pitt, Watson, and Kavan. Their research is called Service quality: a measure of information systems effectiveness.

In this research they observed that "commonly used measures of IS effectiveness focus on the products rather than the services of the IS function. Thus, there is a danger that IS researchers will mismeasure IS effectiveness if they do not include in their assessment package a measure of IS service quality" (Pitt et al. 1995; Watson et al. 1995; Kavan et al. 1995). This simply questions if the: "IS has up-to-date hardware and

software" (tangible); "IS is dependable" (reliability); "IS employees give prompt service to users" (responsiveness); "IS employees have the knowledge to do their job well" (assurance); and "IS has users' best interests at heart" (empathy).

All linking back to the customer relationship system success. In a developing country such as Belize how can retail businesses gain optimal satisfaction from using their information? The simple answer to that is through the guarantee of user satisfaction and in turn this creates the net benefits the DeLone & McLean model explains.

Research model and hypothesis

The counter sales representatives use the IS system to look up part numbers, check stock availability and request parts from other branches. The updated DeLone and McLean (2003) IS success model can be modified to measure the success of this particular system's success. Therefore we included the six constructs in our questionnaire as follows: information quality (IQ), which focuses on the quality of the information provided by the IS and how useful it is to the sales person, system quality (SQ) which measures certain areas of the IS, like how user friendly it is and if it has interactive features, service quality (SVQ), measures how effective the IS's technical support staff is (in this case the company's information technology department), user satisfaction (US), measured how effective and valuable the sales person perceives the IS to be, use (U), measures how much the sales persons depend on the IS to complete their tasks, perceived net benefits (NB), this is designed to measure productivity, performance and if the IS helps the organization to achieve its goal. Along to the six constructs from DeLone & McLean, two constructs were added, complimentary technology quality (CTQ) Teece, D. J. (1988) to measure the technical aspects of the hardware and software and computer self-efficacy measure (CSE) aimed at measuring the confidence the sales person has in himself in completing the tasks using the IS Compeau, D. R., & Higgins, C. A. (1995).





Research model for developing countries

Therefore the hypothesis follows the following 12 relationships based on the DeLone & McLean model along with the two constructs added (see figure 1 above):

H1. Complementary technology quality will positively impact user satisfaction.

H2. Complementary technology quality will positively impact system use.

H3. Computer self-efficacy will positively impact system use.

H4. System quality will positively impact user satisfaction.

H5. Information quality will positively impact user satisfaction.

H6. Service quality will positively impact user satisfaction.

H7. Use will positively impact user satisfaction.

H8. Information quality will positively impact use.

H9. System quality will positively impact use.

H10. Service quality will positively impact use.

H11.User satisfaction will positively impact perceived net benefit.

H12.Use will positively impact perceived net benefit.

Research Methodology

Construct Measurement

A measurement scale from a previously verified instrument was used on the data so that content validity was maintained. All constructs were measured using a Likert scale from 1 to 7, one being strongly disagree and 7 being strongly agree. The IQ construct included a six item scale, the SQ, SV, US and U constructs used a four item scale each, constructs CTQ and NB used a three item scale each and the CSE construct used a ten item scale.

Construct	struct Survey questions			
Information	IQ1: WIS provides information that is exactly what you need	DeLone & McLean (2003)	&	
quality	IQ2: WIS provides information you need at the right time			
	IQ3: WIS provides information that is relevant to your job			
	IQ4: WIS provides sufficient information			
	IQ5: WIS provides information that is easy to understand			
	IQ6: WIS provides up-to-date information			
System quality	SQ1: WIS is easy to use	DeLone	&	
	SQ2: WIS is user-friendly	McLean (2003)		
	SQ3: WIS provides high-speed information access	(0)		
	SQ4: WIS provides interactive features between users and system			
Complementary technology	CTQ1: The software on the desktop computer, used to access WIS is adequate	Teece, D. (1988)	J.	
quality	CTQ2: The desktop hardware used to access WIS is adequate			
	CTQ3: The desktop computer, used to access WIS has an adequate internet connection in regards to speed and reliability			

Construct	Survey Questions	Source
Computer self- efficacy measure	CSE1: I could complete the job using WIS if there was no one around to tell me what do as I go	Compeau, D. R., &
	CSE2: I could complete the job using WIS if I had never used an information system like it before	Higgins, C. A. (1995)
	CSE3: I could complete the job using WIS if I had only the information system manuals for reference	
	CSE4: I could complete the job using WIS if I had seen someone else using the information system before trying it myself	
	CSE5: I could complete the job using WIS if I could call someone for help if I got stuck	
	CSE6: I could complete the job using WIS if someone else had helped me get started	
	CSE7: I could complete the job using WIS if I had a lot of time to complete the job for which the information system was provided	
	CSE8: I could complete the job using WIS if I had just the built-in help facility for assistance	
	CSE9: I could complete the job using WIS if someone showed me how to do it first	
	CSE10: I could complete the job using WIS if I had used similar	
	information systems before this one to do the same job	
Service quality	SV1: The support staff keep WIS software up to date	DeLone &
	SV2: When users have a problem the support staff show a sincere interest in solving it	McLean (2003)
	SV3: The support staff respond promptly when users have a problem	
	SV4: The support staff tell users exactly when services will be performed	
User satisfaction	US1: Most of the users bring a positive attitude or evaluation towards the function of WIS	DeLone & McLean
	US2: You think that the perceived utility about WIS is high	(2003)
	US3: The information has met your expectations	
	US4: You are satisfied with WIS	
Use	U1: The frequency of use with WIS is high	DeLone &
	U2: You depend upon WIS	McLean (2003)
	U3: I was able to complete a task using WIS even if there was no one around to tell me what to do as I go	
	U4: I have the knowledge necessary to use WIS	
Perceived net	NB1: WIS helps you improve your job performance	DeLone & McLean

benefits	NB2: WIS helps the organization save cost	(2003)
	NB3: WIS helps the organization achieve its goal	
	NB4: Using WIS improves the assessment and training	
	NB5: Using WIS on job increases my productivity	
	NB6: Overall, using WIS enhances recruitment and performance management	

Table 1 Measurement items for questionnaire

Sampling and data collection

The data for this study was collected from a sample of counter sales representatives for an auto retail business in Belize. The business has 44 counter sales representatives throughout four branches, throughout the Belize, Cayo and Orange Walk Districts. Out of the 34 questionnaires distributed to counter sales representatives, 34 were returned, all usable, which made the response rate 100%. The respondents' characteristics is presented in Table 2. The company has no female counter sales representatives so all participants were male, mainly between the ages of 23 to 33 (approximately 56%). The completed sample was composed largely of participants with 3 to 6 years' experience with the company (approximately 53%) and holding High school diplomas or Associate degrees (approximately 38% in both levels).

Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Male	34	100
Female	0	0
Age		
From 16 to 18	0	0
Over 19 to 22	6	17.7
Over 23 to 33	19	55.9
Over 34 to 40	5	14.7
Older than 40	4	11.8
Education		
Primary School	5	14.7
High School	13	38.2
Associates	13	38.2
Bachelors	3	8.8
Masters	0	0
Work Experience		
Less than 1 to 2 years	11	32.4
From 3 to 6 years	18	52.9
More than 7 to 10 years	5	14.7
More than 10 years	0	0

Data Analysis and Results

Firstly we used a sample size calculator to determine the sample size needed and the confidence interval. Our size was 34, therefore our confidence interval was 8.1. The survey was carried out on different days during the month of April 2017. Each branch of the business was visited and the respondent was given a questionnaire with 41 questions (8 constructs). We analyzed our data by calculating the average of each construct as seen below in figure 2.







Histogram of Information Quality

Figure 3 Average of information quality



The larger number of respondents (over 12) agreed that the information quality is good, the average for this construct being 5.26.

Figure 4 Average of system quality

The average for the system quality construct by a narrow margin was 5.4, most respondents agreeing that the system quality of the IS is easy to use and user friendly.

Histogram of Complimentary Technology





The average for the complimentary technology quality was 5.18, the majority of respondents agreed that the quality of the complimentary technology is adequate. Although a number of respondents disagreed or only slightly agreed or were neutral.



Figure 6 Average of computer self-efficacy measure

The average of this construct (figure 6) was 5.1, although most respondents agreed with the IS's self-efficacy measure, there were a few respondents that disagreed.





The average for this construct (figure 7) was 5.29, while the majority of responses did not strongly agree with the service quality, no one strongly disagreed.





The average for user satisfaction was 5.43, the majority of respondents agreed that IS met their expectations, with only a minimal number (3) disagreeing.



Figure 9 Average use

The average for this construct (figure 9) was 5.88, many of the respondents agreed that the IS is very useful and only one person disagreed.



Figure 10 Average perceived net benefits

The average for perceived net benefits was 5.86, most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the IS helps the organization achieve its goal.

Discussion, Limitations and Conclusion

Discussion

Information system success is a hot button topic in most developed nations, and a google search of the term will most certainly bring you across many articles primarily citing DeLone & McLean. However there is no research on the topic in developing countries, especially Belize. Our aim was to find out the IS success of an information system being used here in Belize. We settled on the biggest auto retail business in Belize that had developed their own IS and used it in four different branches.

Although our sample data was relatively small due to limitations that will be discussed later on it gave us a pretty clear picture of the success of the IS in this particular business. All constructs had an average above 5 and none of the respondents was completely unhappy with the IS. The respondents agreed that the IS provides useful information in a timely manner. They also agreed that they depend on the IS although the information does not always meet their expectations. Participants agreed that the IS helps the organization to achieve its goal and that their frequency of use of the IS is high.

Limitations

We encountered many limitations throughout the process of accomplishing the final research paper. A limitation was that due to where the research was done, we had a limited amount of participants all of which were male. Since we were only able to visit each branch once we were only able to receive thirty-four (34) questionnaires as some of the employees were off on the days visited. Another limitation faced was the location of the different branches, we had to travel to Spanish Lookout and Orange Walk to deliver our questionnaires which due to lack of resources was a challenge. It was also a challenge to explain to the employees that we were not there on behalf of the business, that it was confidential and that they could not be penalized for their answers. They were hesitant to answer the characteristic questions honestly because they worried they could be identified through that means.

Conclusion

There needs to be more research carried out in the country or in developing countries to have some data comparison. However from this small research it can be said that IS success is definitely being achieved in

Belize. DeLone & McLean's model of IS success can definitely be of use here in Belize. The constructs are helpful to identifying the IS success of local businesses even though we adapted the model a bit to be more useful to us. The auto retailer should continue investing in their system as it helps the company to achieve its goal but there is still quite a bit of room for improvement. Also they should consider investing more time and effort into training new employees as it was generally agreed that there is not much time spent on training, there is a lot of self-learning but the IS can be more successful if everyone knows how to use it properly and efficiently.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire I – "Effectiveness of Westrac Information System" (Sales Representatives)

Purpose

This questionnaire asks for your perceptions on WIS, how effective it is and how user friendly it is. Please answer the questions in relation to the WIS. Your individual responses to the questionnaire will be strictly confidential.

Instructions

This is a survey; there are no right or wrong answers. Please print in the spaces provided and tick the boxes to mark your answers.

1. Background Information	Answers:
Please indicate your age range:	16-18 🔲 19-22 🔲 23-33 🗍 34-40 🗌 >40 🗌
Please indicate the number of years you have been working for this company:	1-2 🔲 3-6 🗌 7-10 🗌 >10 🗌
Please indicate your gender:	Male 🗌 Female 🗌
Please indicate highest education level attained:	Masters Bachelors Associates High School Primary School

Indicate your agreement with each statement by rating it from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree.

WIS provides information that is exactly what you need 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 WIS provides information you need at the right time 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 WIS provides information that is relevant to your job 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 WIS provides sufficient information 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 WIS provides information that is easy to understand 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 WIS provides up-to-date information 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 WIS is easy to use 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 WIS provides high-speed information access 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 WIS provides interactive features between users and system 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 WIS provides interactive features between users and system 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 The software on the	2. Information & System Quality	Disagree
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The desktop computer, used to access WIS has an adequate internet connection in regards to speed and reliability 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	The desktop hardware used to access WIS is adequate	1 🗌 2 🗌 3 🗌 4 🗌 5 🗌 6 🗌 7
	The desktop computer, used to access WIS has an adequate internet connection in regards to speed and reliability	1 🗌 2 🗌 3 🗌 4 🗌 5 🗌 6 🗌 7

4. I could complete the job using WIS	DisagreeAgree
if there was no one around to tell me what to do as I go	1 🗌 2 🗌 3 🗌 4 🗌 5 🗌 6 🗌 7 🗌
if I had never used an information system like it before	1 🗌 2 🗌 3 🗌 4 🗌 5 🗌 6 🗌 7 🗌

if I had only the information system manuals for reference	1 🗌 2 🗌 3 🗌 4 🗌 5 🗌 6 🗌 7 🗌
if I had seen someone else using the information system before trying it myself	1 🗌 2 🗌 3 🗌 4 🗌 5 🗌 6 🗌 7 🗌
if I could call someone for help if I got stuck	1 🗌 2 🗌 3 🗌 4 🗌 5 🗌 6 🗌 7 🗌
if someone else had helped me get started	1 🗌 2 🗌 3 🗌 4 🗌 5 🗌 6 🗌 7 🗌
if l had a lot of time to complete the job for which the information system was provided	1 🗌 2 🗌 3 🗌 4 🗌 5 🗌 6 🗌 7 🗌
if I had just the built-in help facility for assistance	1 🗌 2 🗌 3 🗌 4 🗌 5 🗌 6 🗌 7 🗌
if someone showed me how to do it first	1 🗌 2 🗌 3 🗌 4 🗌 5 🗌 6 🗌 7 🗌
if I had used similar information systems before this one to do the same job	1 🗌 2 🗌 3 🗌 4 🗌 5 🗌 6 🗌 7 🗌

5. Service Quality	DisagreeAgre
The support staff keep WIS software up to date	1 🗌 2 🗌 3 🗌 4 🗌 5 🗌 6 🗌 7 🗌
When users have a problem the support staff show a sincere interest in solving it	1 _ 2 _ 3 _ 4 _ 5 _ 6 _ 7 [
The support staff respond promptly when users have a problem	1 🗌 2 🗌 3 🗌 4 🗌 5 🗌 6 🗌 7 🗌
The support staff tell users exactly when services will be performed	1 🗌 2 🗌 3 🗌 4 🗌 5 🗌 6 🔲 7 🗌

6. User Satisfaction & Use	Disagree
Most of the users bring a positive attitude or evaluation towards the function of WIS	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
You think that the perceived utility about WIS is high	1 _ 2 _ 3 _ 4 _ 5 _ 6 _ 7
The information has met your expectations	
You are satisfied with WIS	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
The frequency of use with WIS is high	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
You depend upon WIS	
I was able to complete a task using WIS even if there was no one around to tell me what to do as I go	1 _ 2 _ 3 _ 4 _ 5 _ 6 _ 7
I have the knowledge necessary to use WIS	
7. Perceived Net Benefits	Disagree
WIS helps you improve your job performance	1 🗌 2 🗌 3 🗌 4 🗌 5 🗌 6 🗌 7
WIS helps the organization save cost	1 🗌 2 🗌 3 🗌 4 🗌 5 🗌 6 🗌 7
WIS helps the organization achieve its goal	1 🗌 2 🗌 3 🗌 4 🗌 5 🗌 6 🗌 7
Using WIS improves the assessment and training	1 🗌 2 🗌 3 🗌 4 🗌 5 🗌 6 🗌 7
Using WIS on the job increases my productivity	1 🗌 2 🗌 3 🗌 4 🗌 5 🗌 6 🗌 7

Overall,	using	WIS	enhances	recruitment	and	performance	
manager	nent						

Please return this survey to the person who gave you the form.

Thank you for your participation.