

An Investigation into the Effect of Online Customer Satisfaction on Purchase Intention and Word-of-Mouth Advertisement

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of online customer satisfaction on purchase intention and word-of-mouth advertisement. This applied research was carried out in a descriptive-survey method from field studies. The statistical population of the research is the customers of Webpoosh Website and the size of the population is unknown. The level of analysis in this research is the customers of Webpoosh Website and questionnaires will be sent to the customers online due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 in the country and the lack of access to the accurate statistical population. The minimum sample size is 385 people due to the unknown size of the population. We will distribute and complete the questionnaire based on available non-probability sampling. Considering the novelty of the research variables, the information collection tool, its validity and reliability have been tested. Hypothesis testing and data analysis were conducted using multivariate regression method and SPSS and PLS software. The research methodology is structural model and path analysis determines the outcome. The result of the path analysis shows that customer satisfaction has a direct effect on the repurchase intention and word-of-mouth advertisement among the customers of the Webpoosh Online Store, and this effect is positive and significant.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, repurchase intention, word-of-mouth advertisement.

1. Introduction

The success or failure of companies depends on how much of their customers they are able to retain. Retaining a large number of customers, which is possible based on the level of customer satisfaction, is considered a success in itself, which greatly contributes to measure the quality of goods and services comprehensively through measuring the quality of real behavior of the customer (Nam, 2021). In a heavy competitive environment, the existence of a non-customer-oriented company is dangerous, as many markets are very competitive and organizations need to produce high-quality goods and services that include the customer loyalty and satisfaction. In fact, the loss of a customer is more than the loss of the sale of a product, but means the loss of the entire flow of purchases that the customer could make during the time he/she was a customer of the organization. Take into account the personal wishes and interests of the customer and take steps towards trust and image of the brand through the website. Online shopping is the use of communication and information technology to change the structures and work processes of buying and selling (trade) (Emrich, 2019). In the dynamic and competitive environment of services, it is necessary to provide satisfactory value with the customer, and failure to do this will cause the loss of the customer and reduce the revenue flow in the future, which has a high replacement cost (Sadeghi, 2021). Organizations should increase the value to customers by reducing the price of goods or services, increasing the quality of goods or services, or reducing non-monetary costs such as time and energy required to obtain or consume goods or services. Customers, who are limited in terms of time, look for service providers that provide them with easy search, easy access, and finally purchase, which indicates the important role of service convenience. Customers do not look for the service they want, but what is important for them is to have services that are available whenever and wherever they need to use (Hair, 2019).

Due to the rapid global growth in e-commerce and most businesses turning to the internet and using websites to supply, introduce, and sell the imported or manufactured products, most organizations feel the need to design a website under the name of the company. There are many factors on websites that are designed in the form of an online store to attract the opinion and trust of customers who visit the website so that the customers feel satisfied with all the service factors that are on this website and spend a longer time in the environment of that store on time and achieve a level of understanding of the quality of the electronic services provided by the online store such as website design, reliability, responsiveness, trust, overall quality service and customer satisfaction with a complete review of the products introduced on it (Bush, 2019).

In fact, what is important for the customer is the use of products and services that save time and increase their well-being. Consequently, the willingness to use the services of companies, which pay attention to customer convenience, is due to the customer's willingness for a comfortable lifestyle, and the convenience of using services is considered a substantial criterion for them. The customer's perception of the ease of using the services affects the customer's overall evaluation of the service, as well as his/her satisfaction, perceived service value, trust, and loyalty. The importance of each aspect of ease of use of services in all kinds of services varies according to the type and taste of the customer, customers, who attach importance to save time, place more value on the ease of use of services. The goal of the service-providers is to increase the positive output that the customer receives. One of these positive results is satisfaction (Hennig-Thurau, 2017).

Accordingly, managers of online sales companies look for identifying the ways and factors to be able to attract the attention of customers to the company and its services and to cause the increase in repurchases and customer retention. The importance of this issue comes from the fact that nowadays, many people visit the website of various electronic stores, but the number of actual buyers is not high compared to the number of visitors, and many buyers are reluctant to return to the e-stores website after making a purchase. Therefore, the most important issue that companies should consider is to identify the obstacles and problems in the repurchase of customers and try to convert the visitors into real customers.

2- Theoretical Literature

Word-of-mouth advertisement

Word-of-mouth advertisement is a communication between a receiver and a communicator and is perceived as a non-commercial communication. It is often reported that when word-of-mouth advertisement is positive, it has a significant impact on the consumer's decision to purchase a product, and when there is negative information or rumors about it, it causes switch from that product or tradename.

Word-of-mouth advertisement refers to informal communications about products that can be in the form of goods or services; A listener is usually seriously concerned about whether he/she can trust the speaker's opinion or not. And the speaker is concerned with whether the listener engages in a particular behavior as a result of the communications or not.

The main elements of word-of-mouth advertisement marketing are: 1- Interpersonal communications, preferably face-to-face and without the use of mass communication (media) tools 2- Exchange of information about the product, service or brand 3- The communicator, who should be treated as an individual without prejudice and orientation (Ennew, 2015).

Types of word-of-mouth advertisements

Word-of-mouth can be positive or negative. Positive word-of-mouth advertisements encourages people to choose a brand, and negative word-of-mouth advertisement discourages people from choosing a brand. The probability of buying a brand is relatively influenced by registered and negative word-of-mouth advertisement about the brand. Based on previous research, it has been observed that negative information is recognized as more useful than positive ones, because it can often be assumed; If evidences indicate that a brand name is unreliable, then it is more useful than evidences

that a brand name is reliable because reliability may be considered a default condition for modern products. Exceptionally, when the receiver's expectation is negative and the received information is positive; then there will be a positive effect on the product. Negative word-of-mouth advertisement can be expressed as a result of the concept of dissatisfaction and imbalance between expectations and perceptions. A number of researchers have investigated the possibility of a hierarchy of expectations. Miller mentioned four levels of expectations including; Ideal to the lowest acceptable level. He introduces the levels of expectation with the following titles: "could be", "will be", "must be" and "must" (in the sense of having to). There are evidences that the customers, who have social support in a service, are more willing to recommend the services. Where service-providers can strengthen the relationship by providing social support, the desire for absolute positive word-of-mouth will become greater. Negative word-of-mouth is thought to be a form of customer complaint behavior. Harrischman stated that when the customers' expectations are not met, they face two options: expressing their dissatisfaction or leaving the relationship. New theorists stated three forms of punitive action that an unsatisfied customer may take (Jaafari, 2014).

According to research on the influence of word-of-mouth, negative word-of-mouth appears to have a stronger effect on the brand evaluation of customers and the purchase intention of potential buyers than a positive word-of-mouth. Authentic websites are more readily accepted by consumers than the websites that are unknown. If consumers find it difficult to judge product quality or if the criteria for judgment are ambiguous, then the value of available information for analysis purposes increases. It is because the influence of word-of-mouth advertisement may be greater in some situations than in others in particular. The effects of word-of-mouth advertisement are greater when the consumer is in an ambiguous situation. Higher levels of brand familiarity are developed through experiences related to the brand that are directly or indirectly produced, along with the knowledge structure related to the brand and its characteristics. Consumers, who are less familiar with a brand, are more inclined to process the information related to a new brand and to change the brand evaluation based on the path (direction) of information. Advertising (positive/negative) frames have a stronger effect when the product is ambiguous and when the quality is difficult to be determined for a consumer (Khorshidi, 2019).

Therefore, it is expected that customers, who spread positive word-of-mouth, are among those customers who have a high satisfaction, hence, they have a positive capacity when they express word-of-mouth. There will be a direct relationship between satisfaction and word-of-mouth (higher satisfaction is positively related to higher word-of-mouth), on the other hand, it is expected that customers who spread negative word-of-mouth will be those with the lowest level of satisfaction, such as those who experience a service failure followed by unfavorable compensation. This is because disappointed customers (those who are dissatisfied with their expectations) often experience negative emotions such as regret, disappointment, and anger. Consequently, they use negative word-of-mouth as a way to "vent" their negative feelings and achieve a sense of relief after commenting on the incident (Hong, 2019).

Customers, who spread negative word-of-mouth, are those with little or no loyalty. Positive word-of-mouth is often cognitive, more carefully talked about, and considered more related to the services quality. In contrast, negative word-of-mouth is more based on emotion and spreads immediately. Negative word-of-mouth may be more related to behavioral intentions, and positive word-of-mouth can be a stronger (attitudinal) evaluation, through a logical and detailed evaluation (Baloglu, 2019).

Word-of-mouth advertisement models

It is a main and necessary framework to understand why the word-of-mouth advertisement affects the consumer behavior, attribution theory, and diagnosis access model.

Attribution theory

In the attribution theory, it is stated whether the consumer attributes his/her buying behavior to the product's characteristics or to the purchasing conditions. Accordingly, if the person attributes

his/her buying behavior to the product, then his/her attitude towards the product will be positive and there is a possibility that the person will buy the product again. For example, if the consumer attributes the purchase of a particular brand of biscuits to the strength of the product, then his/her attitude towards the product will be positive and the probability of buying that product from that brand will increase, but if the reason for buying from that brand is its availability inside the store (attribution to conditions), then his/her attitude towards the product will not be evaluated that positive and the probability of repurchasing that product is very low. In fact, this approach has been used to analyze consumers' reaction to promotional messages. Accordingly, when consumers attribute the sales motivation to the seller's guidance or attribute to the company's advertising message, they do not pay much attention to these recommendations and messages (Kim, 2020).

Accessibility-Diagnosticity Model

In this model, it is stated that the effect of a certain type of information depends on the availability of that information when making a purchase decision. This information enables a person to classify the available options and solutions and to choose the best option among them (Najib Moghadam et al., 2015).

Intent to repurchase

Repurchase intention is a typical behavior based on cognition, and as most researchers have stated, repurchase intention is a behavioral indicator and customer loyalty. The consumer's purchase intention reflects the predictable behavior of people in future purchase decisions (for example, which product or brand to buy in the next situation), which indicates the consumer's perceptions, purchase intention is a pattern of future purchase attitude formation. The purchase intention towards a particular product depends on the perception and belief about it. According to Reasoned Action Theory by Fishbein & Ajzen, the purchase intention is considered as an intermediate variable between people's attitude towards the quality of a product and actual behavior, and also believes that purchase intention is an interface between consumers' reaction to the quality of the product and their use of the product (Wazifehdoost, 2018).

Model associated with repurchase intention

Stephen Zielke model

In the research conducted by Stephen Zielke in 2008, they considered five independent variables, which were price balance, money value, price comprehensibility, price processability, and precision in price evaluation, and in contrast, he considered his dependent variable to be the intention to purchase for his study and investigated the effects of each one on the purchase intention and the conceptual model of his research are shown in the figure below.

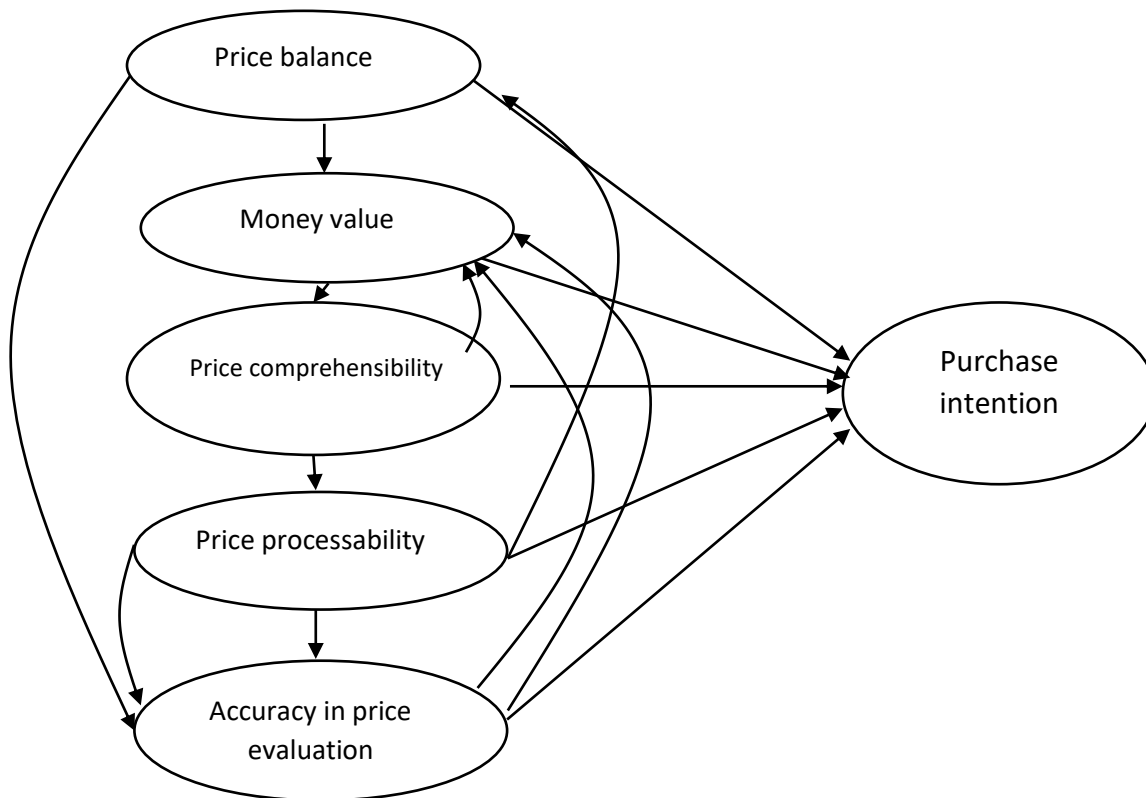


Diagram 1- Stephan Zielke's model (source: Zielke, 2008, 755)

- ❖ Understandability of the price and processability of the price are related to ease of purchase and non-cash costs in the purchase process. Previous research reinforces the idea that ease of purchase and non-cash costs in the purchase process affect the purchase intention. Accuracy in price evaluation should have an effect on the purchase intention because the uncertainty leads to the feeling of risk in purchase. Customers can reduce this risk by buying from stores whose prices are definite and accurate. However, many indirect effects are also involved in the process of forming the price image in addition to direct effects. Therefore, it seems important to analyze the relationships between these five aspects. First, price comprehensibility should have a positive effect on money value. Such a relationship is compatible with the definition of value and its example has been seen in such research (Abdul, 2018).
- ❖ It is also assumed that the comprehensibility of the price and the processability of the price have an effect on the accuracy in evaluation. Difficulty in learning and processing information related to the price cause uncertainty about the price. This assumption is supported by previous literature. Zeithaml proved that the brand item causes an increase in accuracy in price recall, while an organized list of items' price causes an improvement of accuracy in prices' comparison. Zielke also found a large effect of price comprehensibility and price processability on accuracy in evaluation. One of the effects of the image of the price level on the accuracy in the evaluation has been hypothesized. This hypothesis is based on the argument that low prices can be easily processed but higher prices should be processed by evaluating the quality of services and goods.
- ❖ The previous relationship affects the balance price comprehensibility and price processability. The research conducted in relation to the analysis of the effect on the unit price shows that monitoring the unit price leads to the selection of a more economical product and leads purchases to cheaper products. Other researchers proved that the structure of shelves in stores affects the selection of cheap products. Therefore, if the low-priced products are not hidden on the bottom shelves of the

stores, then they can have a greater effect when extending the price of a product to the entire price balance by the customer. Until now, the hypotheses were based on the fact that the aspects of the price image have several direct and indirect effects on the purchase intention in retail stores. Although previous researches have addressed some of these effects, a comprehensive model of all these effects has not been prepared yet. In addition, how the stores' structure changes these relationships has not been addressed (Chang, 2018).

Customer satisfaction

Satisfaction is an internal state that results from satisfying the needs of customers from products. In general, customer satisfaction is a judgment evaluation process that the customer generally has about his/her recent purchases. Elsewhere, customer satisfaction with a brand has been defined as the general emotional evaluation of customers of a brand's products and services at any moment of time (Anderson, 2018).

In addition to the emotional nature of satisfaction, researchers also consider it as a cognitive process. Therefore, in general, customer satisfaction can be seen as a judgmental, cognitive, and positive emotional process of the customer towards the brand. People have diverse needs that they expect to be satisfied by consuming certain brand products. Some of the needs that a brand can satisfy are the brand distinctiveness and the brand prestige. The more distinctive and prestigious the brand identity is, the stronger and more attractive it will be from the perspective of customers (Beristain, 2019).

Customer satisfaction can be seen as a special consequence of marketing activity that helps customers make purchase decisions (Nikolskaya, 2021). If the provision of certain services makes customers satisfied, then it can be said that the purchase possibility and using that service again will be more. In addition, customers, who are satisfied with the services, can be good ambassadors of their useful business for others. Positive word-of-mouth advertisement about a product will be very useful, especially in the collective culture of Central Asian countries, where people's lives are based on the expansion of social relationships with others. On the other hand, the lack of customer satisfaction can also lead to negative advertisements by customers, their switching to other competitors' goods and services, and consequently, the company's market share will decrease. Obviously, the company will only discover the reasons for increasing customer dissatisfaction to prevent the decrease in profitability (Haidari, 2018).

2- Importance of customer satisfaction

Customer is the key to the success of any organization and any economic business activity. The credibility of a successful organization is based on the long-term relationships of that organization with customers. The most key factor to gain customer satisfaction and loyalty is to provide appropriate services. An organization that has planned one of its practical goals to provide appropriate services based on customer expectations and needs can be a successful organization by relying on other principles of business. Providing appropriate services will not be possible except for based on recognizing the customers' expectations, possibilities, interests, and needs. Gathering such information in an integrated manner helps the organization to provide appropriate services in accordance with the needs and expectations of customers (Davar, 2019).

Cumulative (or overall) customer satisfaction is the customer's overall evaluation of all experiences of purchasing and consuming a product or service over a long period of time. While transactional satisfaction provides information about an individual's encounter and experience with a specific product and service in a specific case, the overall satisfaction is a more appropriate indicator of a company's past, present, and future performance. This is important because customers make their repurchase decision based on all their experiences with a brand until the present time, not based on a single purchase at a specific time and place (Wu, 2020).

Customer satisfaction is manifested in several ways. Satisfied customers recommend the services they have used to others and are less likely to change the company whose services they use.

Therefore, the customer satisfaction is measured from two aspects in this research:

- ✓ The level of positive and negative word-of-mouth from customers or recommendation to others
- ✓ Level of Loyalty or repurchase intention

3- Research objectives

- An investigation into the effect of customer satisfaction on customers repurchase intention on Webpoosh Website
- An investigation into the effect of customer satisfaction on word-of-mouth advertisement among Webpoosh Website customers.

4- Research Methodology

This survey research is applied in terms of purpose; since the researcher looks for how the subject is in descriptive research, which includes collecting information to test the hypothesis or to answer questions related to the current state of the subject being studied. Descriptive researches have both an applied aspect and a basic aspect in applied aspect of which the results of these researches are used in decision-making and policy-making as well as planning.

5- Statistical population and research sample

The statistical population of the research is the customers of the Webpoosh Website, the size of the population is unknown. The level of analysis in this research is the customers of the Webpoosh Website and the questionnaires will be sent to the customers online due to the outbreak of the coronavirus in the country and the lack of access to the statistical population.

Various methods are used to determine the sample size, including Cochran's formula for the unknown population, which determines the minimum sample size for us. First, pre-sampling will be conducted from the statistical population consisting of 30 people in this formula to determine the sample size, and the minimum sample size is 385 people according to the standard deviation of this pre-sample (which should be 0.50) and due to the unknown size of the population. We distribute and complete the questionnaire based on available non-probability sampling.

6- Conceptual model of research

The conceptual model of the current research is based on the studies conducted and based on the model of Duarte et al. (2018) as follows:

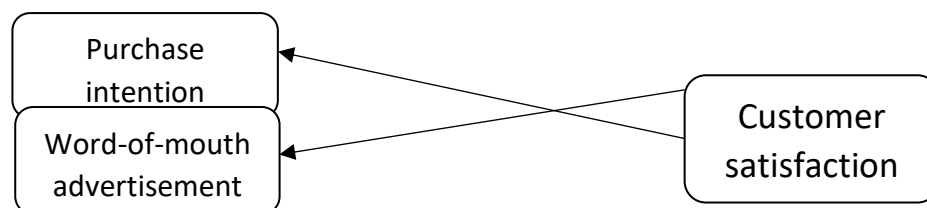


Figure 1- Conceptual model of the research (Duarte et al., 2018)

7- Findings

Path coefficients and t-statistics were used to test the hypotheses. Path coefficients, which are interpreted as standardized beta coefficients of OLS regression, were used to determine the strength of the relationship between the two variables. The t-value, which is obtained in the Smart PLS software using bootstrapping, was used to check the significance of the relationships (Azer et al., 2013). It should be mentioned that if the value of the path coefficient between the independent latent variable and the dependent latent variable is positive, then we conclude that as the independent variable increases, we will see an increase in the dependent variable, and vice versa, if the value of the path coefficient between the independent latent variable and the dependent latent variable is negative, then we conclude that as the independent variable increases, we will see a decrease in the dependent variable.

The first hypothesis: Customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on the purchase intention of customers of Webpoosh Online Store.

As can be seen in the table, the value of the path coefficient is positive, which indicates a positive relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Considering that the value of significance coefficient (t-statistic) for the two variables of the research is more than 1.96, the first hypothesis of the research entitled “customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on the purchase intention of customers of Webpoosh Online Store”, is confirmed.

Table 1- Results of the first hypothesis test

| Path | Path Coefficient (B) | t | Result of the relationship |
|---|----------------------|------|----------------------------|
| Customer satisfaction on repurchase intention | 0.74 | 48.7 | Confirmed |

The second hypothesis: Customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on the word-of-mouth advertisement of Webpoosh Online Store customers.

As can be seen in the table, the value of the path coefficient is positive, which indicates a positive relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Considering that the value of the significance coefficient (t-statistic) for the two variables of the research is more than 1.96, therefore, the second hypothesis of the research, entitled “customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on the word-of-mouth advertisement of Webpoosh Online Store customers, is confirmed.

Table 2- Results of the second hypothesis test

| Path | Path Coefficient (B) | t | Result of the relationship |
|--|----------------------|------|----------------------------|
| Customer satisfaction on word-of-mouth advertisement | 0.69 | 51.5 | Confirmed |

8- Discussion and Conclusion

The first hypothesis of the research is stated: Customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on the purchase intention of customers of Webpoosh Online Store. The value of the path coefficient is positive, which indicates a positive relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Considering that the value of the significance coefficient (t-statistic) for the two variables of the research is more than 1.96, therefore, the first hypothesis of the research entitled “customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on the purchase intention of the customers of the Webpoosh Online Store, is confirmed. The results of this hypothesis are in line with the research of Wang (2016).

The second hypothesis of the research is stated: Customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on word-of-mouth advertisement among the customers of Webpoosh Online Store. The value of the path coefficient is positive, which indicates a positive relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Considering that the value of significance coefficient (t-statistic) for the two variables of the research is more than 1.96, therefore, the second hypothesis of the research entitled “customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on word-of-mouth advertisement among the customers of the Webpoosh Online Store, is confirmed. The results of this hypothesis are in line with the research of Wang (2016).

9- Practical suggestions in line with the results of the hypotheses

According to the results of the first hypothesis, it is suggested:

- ❖ It is suggested to Webpoosh Website designers to consider flexible payment methods and the process of exiting the payment and settling the account on the website should be fast.
- ❖ In Webpoosh Website design, designers should keep in mind that the customer can easily find what he/she wants without looking for elsewhere, and the website should provide useful information of the product so that it can be compared with similar products.

- ❖ Customer after-sales-services should be in a way that if a problem arises after purchase, it should be quickly resolved by the online customer satisfaction website.
- ❖ Creating a simple design on the Webpoosh Website that makes online shopping from this website a pleasant experience for the customer and makes them be satisfied with their previous online shopping experience.

According to the results of the second hypothesis, it is suggested:

- ❖ It is suggested to Webpoosh Website administrators to use text and graphics in the product information on the website, which attracts customers and makes him/her remember it in his/her mind and tell others about them.
- ❖ Designing a section on the website to provide customer knowledge and information about buying goods and sharing with others, such a design makes the customers always read the opinions of online consumers when shopping.
- ❖ Making it possible to chat with the customers of the products and providing different comments about the products will make the customer continue to shop online on this website and encourage others to shop online on this website.
- ❖ Increasing useful and beneficial factors such as periodical discounts for customers to buy more from the website and introducing the Webpoosh Website to others.

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