

Enactment of a Local Laptop Brand: A Study on DOEL Laptop

Imranul Hoque^{*}, Mahmudul Hasan Fouji^{**} and Bidyut Kumer Balo^{***}

Laptops are quickly replacing desktops in the PC market across the globe. Bangladesh has been no exception. Here the laptop market has also been experiencing a rapid expansion. To capture a share of this lucrative market, the state owned Telephone Shilpa Shangstha (TSS) had introduced DOEL laptop in 2011. Since then it has not been an easy ride for DOEL. This study attempts to evaluate the performance of DOEL by identifying its key features and performance regarding the features. To gain a deeper insight both primary and secondary data had been collected. These data reveal customers' as well as DOEL executives' evaluation of the performance of the brand. The study found that customers of DOEL complain about standby duration/battery, RAM, processor, Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, audio, I/O connectivity, charger and screen resolution of DOEL laptops. On the other hand, customers are satisfied with the touch-point services offered by DOEL. The study concludes by presenting some improvements in the complaint features in order to succeed in a competitive but yet prospective market.

Keyword: Laptop, DOEL, Touch-point, Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, I/O connectivity, RAM.

1. Introduction

Gradually laptop computers and notebooks are getting popular in Bangladesh and frequent organizing of laptop fairs every year indicates how the popularity is increasing at a more than rapid pace. Netbooks first came to the fore in the Bangladeshi market back in 2008; when the Taiwanese high-tech giant duo Acer and Asus brought their groundbreaking Acer Aspire One and Asus EEE PC in the Dhaka outlets followed by their successful launch in the international scene (Bhuiyan 2009). Just three years ago, laptop was considered a luxury item to most people because of its high price in comparison to their income (Ahmed 2010). Now desktop computers are getting replaced by the laptop computers with its unique feature of portability and are becoming a necessity for all individuals from businesspersons to students to teachers and even for the kids (Bhuiyan 2009). Because of high market demand, other big names in the PC market followed soon and by the beginning of 2009, almost every laptop brand available in the market had their own version of notebooks to offer. This market trend was a signal for Government of Bangladesh to do something at its own initiative.

Currently different developing countries are trying to reduce their dependency on foreign technologies by starting local production depending on indigenous technologies and by taking support from different partner countries. These nationalized technology efforts are becoming more common in different countries like China (design its own processors), India (subsidizing a national tablet), and recently in Bangladesh as they launched the national brand DOEL at \$130 (Coldewey 2011). Realizing the current situation, Prime Minister of

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Marketing, Jagannath University, Dhaka, Bangladesh, Email: imran_du6@yahoo.com

²Assistant Professor, Department of Marketing, Jagannath University, Dhaka, Bangladesh, Email: foujii@gmail.com

³Lecturer, Faculty of Business, Dhaka International University, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Email: bidyutkumerbalo@yahoo.com

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the Government of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina launched DOEL laptops at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka on October 11, 2011. It is the first laptop made in Bangladesh with an intention to distribute it to different government sectors initially, and then to the public and to the students later on (Ethirajan 2011). This low-cost local brand laptop has been assembled by state-run Telephone Shilpa Sangstha (TSS) in collaboration with Dhaka-based 2M Corporation and Malaysian TFT Technology. The four different models of DOEL laptop were available at BDT 10,000, BDT 13,500, BDT 22,000, and BDT 26,000 (Ethirajan 2011). However, shortly after starting the journey, DOEL faced crisis from both the users and the government ends. Users' demand got reduced due to inferior quality and they complaint about web-cam, Wi-Fi, battery, and other technical supports (Uddin 2012). At the same time, because of fund crisis and different technical difficulties, Telephone Shilpa Sangstha (TSS) was forced to stop their operations (Baroi 2012). On January 31, 2012 the Government of Bangladesh temporarily stopped the assembling and marketing of DOEL lowest cost (BDT 10,000) primary model laptops. However, from March 2012 its operations started again.

DOEL promised to provide better quality product and better quality after sale service to capture the market. We have tried to point out how and to what extent they keep their promise. As DOEL is a new brand in the market and very soon after its operation faced a meltdown in the market, we found it interesting to explore the reasons behind its breakdown and to suggest the DOEL authority how they can assure the smooth flow of operation by satisfying customer expectations. As we couldn't find out any previous scientific study on the DOEL, this study is the inception of research on this local laptop brand. To get more understanding, current study should be followed by further studies.

This study attempts to assess the performance of DOEL since its inception almost two years ago. To explore the current position of DOEL in Bangladeshi market and customer's perception about it are the main concerns of the current study. By considering these issues, the research question of the study is-

What is the performance level of local laptop brand DOEL regarding customer satisfaction in Bangladeshi market?

The paper has structured in different sections. Section two gives an overview about relevant recent literatures. Objectives of the study and its significance have been discussed in section three and four. Detailed methodology of the study has been mentioned in section five. Study findings with necessary discussion have been mentioned in the next section. The paper concludes by underlining the limitations of the study.

2. Literature Review

Understanding consumer behavior is crucial for the success of companies around the world (Khasawneh and Hasouneh 2010), especially when this understanding factor is related to high-tech products like a laptop. For buying such kind of complex products, customers try to gather as much information as possible and take time before reaching the final decision of purchasing. More precisely, complex buying-behavior occurs when significant brand differences are present and consumers are highly involved, such as comparing features, quality, and prices of different brands (Kotler and Armstrong 2010). Because of complexity and high price, different perceptions have developed within the customer groups about that product and its related service quality. Customer perception is how a consumer views a company's product or service. A company may have the best

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product but if people consider it as awful its customer perception would be terrible. On the contrary, people are willing to pay a high price for a cheap product when they believe it offers high value. Organizations are increasingly being customer centric and are embracing customer-driven initiatives that seek to understand, attract, retain and build intimate long-term relationships with profitable customers (Kotler 2006; Gro'nroos 1994; Narver & Slater 1990).

Many other factors affect customer perception that leads to customer retention and satisfaction. Product quality and product features are thought to be two of the most significant contributors to customer satisfaction. Product quality is one of the major positioning tools of the marketer and quality has a direct impact on product or service performance (Kotler et al., 2008). Selnes (1998) argued that quality affects not only customer satisfaction, but also reputation of a brand. Sureshchandar et al. (2002) examined that service quality and customer satisfaction are indeed independent but are closely related, implying that an increase in one is likely to lead to an increase in another. A product can be with various features. Features can distinguish the company's product from competitors' products. Different products have different qualities & features and customers select products depending on features such as choosing a laptop computer taking into consideration product quality and price. Customers may consider performance of a laptop without considering its price or customers may consider lower price without considering extra features. There are different features that can be considered in choosing a laptop brand, generally most important features are processor speed and capacity of RAM, CD-ROM, USB, and floppy drives, standby durations and hard disk space.

Price of a product or service is another factor that can affect customer satisfaction and retention. According to Kotler et al. (2008), price is the amount of money charged for a product or service, or the total value that consumers exchange for the benefits of having or using the product or service. Price becomes a crucial quality indicator whether other information is lacking or not (Zeithaml 1981). It is considered as the most important measurement of repurchase intentions (Oh 2000; Parasumanan & Grewal 2000). In deciding to return to the service provider, the customers normally judge whether they have received their value for money or not (Zeithaml 1981). Therefore, it has been proven that customers usually buy products based on price rather than other attributes (Peter & Donnelly 2007). Price is one of the major determinants while choosing a brand in Bangladesh. Prices of notebooks can vary as much as the number of brands and models, so that they range from BDT 36,000 to as high as BDT 1, 55,000. However, an average laptop usually is priced between BDT 50,000 to BDT 70,000 (Bhuiyan 2009).

According to Kotler & Keller (2006), satisfaction is a person's feeling of pleasure or disappointment that results from comparing a product's performance (outcome) to his or her expectations. Customer expectations can vary just like product features, cost of buying that product and other factors involved with it. Firms in the developing countries are now realizing the significance of customer-oriented philosophies and turning to quality management approaches to facilitate managing their businesses. If expectations are greater than performance, then perceived quality is less than satisfactory and hence customer dissatisfaction occurs (Parasumanan et al. 1985; Lewis and Mitchell 1990). Customer perception about product and service is at all times relative to expectation. Zeithaml et al. (2006) stated that customer expectations are dynamic and evaluation may shift over time from person to person and from culture to culture. Customer perception about service is ever changing, service which is considered as quality service today, may

be different tomorrow. Mainly customers' satisfaction depend on customers' perceptions of the service rather than preset objective standards of what service is or should be.

3. Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to evaluate the performance of DOEL as a local laptop brand.

To justify the broad objective, researchers specified the following objectives:

- ❖ To identify the features of DOEL laptop.
- ❖ To illustrate the performance of each feature.
- ❖ To evaluate the satisfaction of users regarding each feature.
- ❖ To demonstrate the user-company interaction to solve drawbacks.

4. Significance of the Study

As Bangladesh has a vision to be digital within 2021, inception of DOEL low cost Netbooks/Laptops in Bangladeshi market was a great initiative in that regard. At the beginning of its journey, it was expected that the brand will be popular and capture market very soon. Unfortunately the operation of DOEL has stopped after four months of inception and started again after one month. As DOEL laptop was a very lucrative and prospective product in the market, it is interesting to see why the product operation stopped and how it has been meeting the expectation of customers. So this situation creates demand and scope to conduct research on the new product DOEL laptop.

5. Methodology

For better understanding of DOEL performance and customer perception about DOEL, a systematic research process has been followed for this study. As it is a kind of preliminary study, we organized this paper according to a standard structure of a scientific paper. The methodology discussion started with research design of the study followed by research instrument, scaling techniques, detailed sampling design process, data collection, and finally data analysis.

5.1 Research Design

This is an exploratory research by nature and was conducted based on primary and secondary data. Quantitative research technique was applied to explain the performance of different features of DOEL laptop.

5.2 Research Instrument

Both structured and unstructured questionnaires were used as research instruments of the study. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data from customers of DOEL laptop and unstructured questionnaire was used to collect data from executives of DOEL customer touch points.

5.3 Scaling Technique

Non-comparative itemized rating scales were used for preparing questionnaire and collecting data from respondents. Five point Likert scale was used for preparing structured

questionnaire and collecting data from customers of DOEL laptop. Likert scale was used as this scale considers both negative and positive responses and even the neutral option. In addition, the Likert scale is very easy to understand and administer.

5.4 Sampling Design Process

The sampling design process for the current study is–

5.4.1 Target Population

All male and female users of DOEL laptops in Dhaka city of Bangladesh and all executives of DOEL laptop customer touch points in 2013 were considered as population of the study. Sampling unit includes users of DOEL laptop at university, home, office, fair, customer touch point of DOEL laptop or at any other location of Dhaka city.

5.4.2 Sampling Technique

Nonprobability-convenience sampling technique was used to select respondents from both the group of users of DOEL and the group of executives of DOEL. The convenience sampling technique was used as no complete listing of DOEL laptop users or no formal sampling frame found and the technique is least expensive and least time consuming.

5.4.3 Sample Size

Total sample size for the study was fifty (50) in two groups of respondents. Forty (40) users of DOEL laptop as first group and ten (10) executives of DOEL customer touch point as second group of respondents were selected. Users of DOEL were selected as respondents because of their experience of using the laptop and to get their satisfaction level which represent the performance of DOEL. At the same time, executives of DOEL were selected, as they have to directly handle the customer complaints and they know better how to improve the performance of DOEL. Only 40 DOEL laptop users were selected as users still not available in the sampling unit because of DOEL short duration of operation and only 10 executives were selected as it is difficult to get the appointment of DOEL executives because of their busy time schedule.

5.5 Data Collection

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources-

5.5.1 Primary Data Sources

Primary data were collected from DOEL laptop users and executives of DOEL touch point through personal interview. The structured and unstructured questionnaires were prepared on the basis of the research objectives and the research question to collect primary data.

5.5.2 Secondary Data Sources

The secondary data were collected from different research articles, promotional materials of DOEL, website of DOEL, different text books, and other internet websites related to the study topic.

5.6 Data Analysis

After collecting data from primary and secondary sources, data were coded and analyzed by using SPSS software. SPSS outputs are presented in tables and different graphs with necessary analysis.

6. Analyses and Findings

In this section, SPSS outputs are presented regarding problems faced by DOEL laptop users, user’s perception of DOEL laptop, and the analysis of different customer satisfaction factors which depict a clear understanding about the performance of DOEL laptop in Bangladeshi market.

Table 1: Problems Faced by DOEL laptop User

	Frequency		Percentage	
	Don't Face Problem	Face Problem	Don't Face Problem	Face Problem
Processor Problem	33	7	82.5%	17.5%
RAM Problem	26	14	65.0%	35.0%
Hard Disk Problem	40	0	100%	0%
Stand by Duration	7	33	17.5%	82.5%
Audio, I/O Connectivity Problem	37	3	92.5%	7.5%
Bluetooth and Wi-Fi Problem	34	6	85%	15%
Key Board Problem	40	0	100%	0%
Charger Problem	36	4	90%	10%
Screen Resolution Problem	38	2	95%	5%
Other Problems	40	0	100%	0%

Source: Computed from Primary Data by using SPSS 16 version

Analyses and findings about problems faced by DOEL laptop users according to Table 1:

The above table illustrates that 17.5% of the users complain about the processor, 35% of the users complain about RAM, 82.5% of the users face stand by duration/battery, 7.5% of the respondents complain about audio & I/O connectivity, 10% of the customers face charger problem, and 5% of the users complain about resolution problem of DOEL laptop. But users don't have any complain about hard disk and key board. So, study clearly illustrates that customers have both sided opinions about DOEL laptop features. Most of the customers face stand by duration, processor, and RAM problem. Overall customers' opinions about DOEL laptop features are not positive and customers are not very satisfied with the features of DOEL laptop.

Table 2: User Perception about Touch Points of DOEL laptop

Descriptive Statistics		
	Mean	Standard Deviation
Every touch point carefully listen to my problems	4.04	.508
Every touch point keep record of my problem in written form	3.89	.567
I am satisfied with the touch point service	3.32	.723
I got 24/7 service from the customer care	3.46	1.138
I am satisfied with the number of customer care and service centers	3.25	1.005

Source: Computed from primary data by using SPSS 16 version

Analyses and findings of the user perception about touch points of DOEL laptop according to Table 2:

Table 2 shows that users' average perceptions about statements of each touch point carefully listen to users' problems; each touch points of DOEL laptop writes down and keeps records of an individual customer's problem; customer satisfaction from touch points; customers receive 24/7 service from DOEL customer care; customer satisfaction with number of customer care and service center are 4.04, 3.89, 3.32, 3.46, 3.25 respectively. Study shows that each touch point of DOEL laptop listen carefully about customer complain, write down and keep record of individual customer complain and provide some extra services for customers. So, it can be said that user-company interaction point of DOEL is effective.

Table 3: User perception of different attributes of DOEL

Descriptive Statistics		
	Mean	Standard Deviation
Processor and RAM Speed	2.39	.629
Hard Disk Space	3.86	.848
Standby Duration (Battery Backup)	3.46	.637
Audio, Connectivity, Bluetooth and Wi-Fi Speed	3.57	.634
Availability of Accessories	3.29	1.049
Maintenance and Repair Service	3.61	.916
Guarantee and Warranty Conditions	3.75	.701

Source: Computed from primary data by using SPSS 16 version

Analyses and findings of user perception about different attributes of DOEL according to Table 3:

Users' average perception about DOEL laptop's processor and RAM speed, hard disk space, stand by duration, audio, I/O connectivity, Bluetooth and Wi-Fi speed, availability of accessories, maintenance and repair services, guarantee and warranty conditions are 2.39, 3.86, 3.46, 3.57, 3.29, 3.61, 3.75 respectively. The study demonstrates that

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processor and RAM speed of DOEL laptop is poor and hard disk space is enough for the users. Study also illustrates that stand by duration and audio, I/O connectivity, Bluetooth and Wi-Fi speed is up to the mark. Accessories are available at DOEL laptop customer touch points. Maintenance and repair service, guarantee and warranty conditions are fulfilled by the DOEL authority.

Table 4: User view about Product and Process Up-gradation of DOEL

	Frequency		Percentage	
	Not upgraded /modified	Upgraded /modified	Not upgraded/ modified	Upgraded /modified
Processor	40	0	100%	0%
RAM	37	3	92.5%	7.5%
Hard Disk	38	2	95%	5%
Battery	5	35	12.5%	87.5%
Audio and I/O connectivity	40	0	100%	0%
Bluetooth and Wi-Fi	40	0	100%	0%
Key Board	40	0	100%	0%
Charger	38	2	95%	5%
Screen resolution	40	0	100%	0%
Software	2	38	5%	95%
Customer and Service Center	0	40	0%	100%
Other Services	40	0	100%	0%

Source: Computed from primary data by using SPSS 16 version

Analyses and findings of users' views about product and process up-gradation according to Table 4:

From table four, it can be deduced that most of the users think battery of DOEL laptop has been modified by its authority. They also believe that software and customer care facilities have been upgraded by DOEL and some users also think processor, RAM and charger have been upgraded. 7.5%, 5%, 87.5%, 5%, 95%, 100% of the users respectively think RAM, hard disk, battery, charger, software and customer care have been modified or upgraded by DOEL authorities. Except charger and hard disk, users have positive views about product and process up-gradation.

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Table 5: User Complain from DOEL Executives' Perspective

	Frequency		Percentage	
	Do not face problem	Face problem	Do not face problem	Face problem
Processor problem	8	2	80%	20%
RAM problem	8	2	80%	20%
Hard disk problem	8	2	80%	20%
Stand by duration	8	2	80%	20%
Audio/o connectivity problem	8	2	80%	20%
Bluetooth and Wi-Fi problem	8	2	80%	20%
Key board problem	8	2	80%	20%
Charger problem	8	2	80%	20%
Screen resolution Problem	8	2	80%	20%
Mixed up with different problem	2	8	20%	80%

Source: Computed from primary data by using SPSS 16 Version

Analysis and findings of user complain from DOEL Executives' Perspective according to Table 5:

The above table 5 shows that 20% of the selected executives of DOEL informed that they face processor problem. In contrast, 80% executives argue that they do not face processor problem at a regular interval. Study also illustrates that 2 of the 10 respondents face RAM problem. 20% of the executives find hard disk problem, battery backup problem, audio, I/O connectivity, Bluetooth ,Wi-Fi, key board, charger problem, and screen resolution problem respectively. Study supports that 80% of the executives argue that they find a set of mixed bag problems. Therefore executives argue that they do not find any specific problem common to all, but rather they only experience mixed bag problems.

Table 6: Executives' and Authority Response regarding Customer Complain

Descriptive Statistics		
	Mean	Std. Deviation
We listen carefully about users' problems	4.40	.516
We write down and keep record of individual user's problems	4.60	.516
We maintain a database to keep records of user problem	4.60	.516
We can consult with higher authority always regarding user problems	3.30	1.160
We maintain a database from which higher authorities can easily get information about problems	4.60	.516
We listen to user complain carefully	4.10	.568
We keep record of user complain	4.50	.527
We discuss with higher authority about user complain	3.40	.516
Higher authority tries to solve user problem	4.60	.516
We involve user to product and process modification	3.00	.000

Source: Computed from primary data by using SPSS 16

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Analyses of Executives' and authority's response regarding customer complain according to Table 6:

Study demonstrates that users' average opinion about the statements- 'we hear user complain carefully', 'we keep record of user complain', 'we discuss with higher authority about user complain', 'higher authority tries to solve user problem', 'we involve user to product and process modification' are respectively 4.10, 4.50, 3.40, 4.60 and 3.00. Study demonstrates that executives think customer touch point of DOEL is effective enough to solve and give proper solution to users.

Table 7: Executives' View about Product and Process Modification by DOEL

	Frequency		Percentage	
	Not upgraded / modified	Upgraded / Modified	Not upgraded / modified	Upgraded / modified
Processor	1	9	10%	90%
RAM	5	5	50%	50%
Hard disk	8	2	80%	20%
Battery	1	9	10%	90%
Audio or I/O connectivity	10	0	100%	0%
Bluetooth and Wi-Fi	10	0	100%	0%
Key board	10	0	100%	0%
Charger	10	0	100%	0%
Screen resolution	10	0	100%	0%
Software	1	9	10%	90%
Customer and Service Center	1	9	10%	90%
Other Services	10	0	10%	100%

Source: Computed from primary data by using SPSS 16

Analyses and Findings according to Table 7:

According to the above table, 90%, 50%, 20%, 90%, 90%, 90% of the executives respectively opines that processor, RAM, hard disk, battery, software, customer care facilities have been upgraded/modified by its authority. On the other hand, executives have a fifty-fifty opinion about RAM modification and small percentage (20%) of executives has positive opinion about modification. Executives feel that audio or I/O connectivity, Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, Key board, charger, and screen resolution are not modified by DOEL authority.

7. Conclusion

DOEL is a local laptop brand to satisfy not only users' demand but also to carry the name and fame of the country in the technology sector. The current study provides a good understanding about the current enactment of DOEL. It has both negative and positive perceptions amongst the users. Customers of DOEL complain about stand by duration/ battery, RAM, processor, Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, audio, I/O connectivity, charger and screen resolution of DOEL laptop. Executives of DOEL agreed that some features/parts of DOEL

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laptop are not up to the quality standard. Executives argued that they face mix bag problems of DOEL laptop. On the other hand, most of them are satisfied with the touch point service.

DOEL is one of the most affordable brands in the global context also. It has a very good prospect to be one of the leading laptop sellers in not only in the Bangladesh but also in some lower income countries in African and other continents if they can improve their performance in the areas which we have identified through this study and if they maintain the low price strategy. Therefore, the Telephone Shilpa Shangstha (TSS) can take a comprehensive plan to export laptop to some countries in different markets.

Still DOEL has an image crisis in the market. It can improve its image by addressing the problems identified in this study and take a step ahead in providing better solutions to customers. DOEL has to consider the quality of laptops with sincerity and priority. This would surely turn DOEL into a tech success, rare for local companies. It can take an inclusive plan to improve its features and start a promotional campaign to improve its image. DOEL has been using offline touch point efficiency for parts modification/up-gradation. DOEL can use information and networking technology to offer online chat rooms, forums and instant messenger to share customer complain within shortest possible time. Necessary initiatives and supports from concerned authorities can ensure DOEL laptop's promising future.

This study is an initiative to get an understanding about the present scenario of DOEL laptop in Bangladeshi market. The study has some limitations. We selected only fifty (50) respondents from Dhaka city. If sample size could be increased and data were collected from different locations of the country, getting a more accurate scenario was possible. Only ten (10) executives were selected from DOEL customer touch points. If more executives from different managerial levels were selected, getting good strategic understanding was possible. Researchers considered different variables based on literature reviews. Unfortunately literatures were not available on Bangladeshi laptop market. If more literatures could find out, findings on other related variables could also have been analyzed. So further study is necessary on DOEL in future.

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