



STUDY ON THE EFFECT OF THE USE OF FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION (FAQ) TEMPLATES IN MANAGING AUCTION PROCESS

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Abstract: In the present days, Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) templates are almost vital and essential for every service and product websites. It operates as automated customer support personnel where potential clients may acquire substantial information on the services and products offered in these websites. Administrators for companies' auction websites have been used to be posed with the same questions repeatedly from the joining parties about the process and procedures of the auction. Thus, the administrators need to spend hours to answer these typical queries. The FAQ templates have been developed to overcome this problem. This study is to determine the effect of the use of FAQ templates on both the Administrators of the auction websites ("the Purchaser") and on the parties offering their products ("the supplier") in such auction. The survey is conducted by providing questionnaires to both the administrator and the supplier before and after incorporating the FAQ templates. The result shows the level of agreement from the administration is at 4.88/5.00 and from the suppliers is at 4.62/5.00 in favour of the usage of FAQ templates. Hence, it may be concluded that most respondents are more inclined that the use of FAQ templates are helpful in the conduct of the auction.

Keywords: *frequently asked question; auction process; questionnaire; suppliers; purchaser*

1. Introduction

The Question Answering (QA) system using either a pre-structured database or a compilation of natural language documents is evolved as a powerful platform for automatically answering questions asked by people in normal language (Ansari et al., 2016). In other words, QA systems may be considered as an advanced form of Information Retrieval (IR) (Cao et al., 2010) since the system make a potential asking questions and save the answers using normal language queries (Abdi et al., 2018). A wide-ranging attempt to resolve open-domain questions depend on the direct extraction of answers from respondents through the web or document compilations, but the assortment of the final answer(s) is regard as a ranking drawback that gains from the redundancy of the data sources employed (Calijorne Soares & Parreiras, 2020; Mendes & Coheur, 2013). As said by (Raazaghi, 2015; Karan and Snajder, 2018) FAQ remarkably two purposes which is firstly is to provide users with an easy access to search the



important information in resolving problems, and secondly is to support the person or group which accountable for frequently answering the similar questions from persons concerned in the same issue. The target of FAQ creation for the researchers is to have a list of questions and answers for FAQ sheets automatically or semi-automatically. The possibility of the problems that appear in automatic FAQ creation is very wide. Such problems include extracting and determining the same or repetitive questions, designing of answers, knowledge base construction, and further challenges in automatic content creation (Raazaghi, 2015). Consequently, for much faster and more efficient alternative, users can use FAQ collections themselves, by means of FAQ retrieval system. An FAQ retrieval system offers a normal language interface for querying the FAQ compilation by referring to questions from the clients, then the system generates a list of FAQ sets ordered by the importance of questions (Mass et al., 2020; Sakata et al., 2019; Karan and Snajder, 2018). Numerous places in the customer service system can applied the FAQ retrieval system since it can offer clients with useful access to information concerning company's products and services. Furthermore, it affords customer service agents with rapid access to internal FAQ collections, increasing the quality and efficiency of customer service. Additionally, it permits partial automation of some client service tasks, such as sending answers to the most typical user queries via automated e-mail (Sneiders, 2010). The most reason why FAQ template need to be established is due to meet the clients' demand by directing them directly to the FAQ template to get information about the products and services (Cappel & Huang, 2007).

One of the departments in the company related of using FAQ template basically is for auction process. There are many advantages if administrator in any companies implement FAQ template during especially for auction process. One of them is to eliminate client service calls experience if the answers for the questions are readily available in the FAQ template. Further, it can also offer a quick answer to the issues need to know by clients. To achieve that, the answers for all the questions that might be asked by client should be readily available. Other than that, FAQ template help in increasing the competence of work for both administrators and clients where they can focus on the auction process without facing any problems and can save time. The statement was supported by the research done by (Mittal et al., 2021) which stated that the proposed system is a better solution for data extraction which functioning as a decent communication network for both users and administrators and beneficial in reducing the crowd. It was also encouraged by (Dutta et al., 2021) which proposes TI-S2S, a novel learning framework linking TF-IDF based keyword removal and Word2Vec embeddings for preparing a Sequence-to-Sequence (Seq2Seq) construction. With that, it accomplishes great accuracy for FAQ retrieval by improve knowledge on the fundamental intent of a customer request obtained via the representative keywords.

In the company being selected in the research which is under Sourcing & Procurement Department, which located in Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia, a lot of auctions need to be done. Such categories include project, service, purchase, supply, delivery, and installation that provided by suppliers or clients. During the auction process, there are three documents that need to be submitted to suppliers after they accept the condition of auction. The documents consist of Terms and Condition (T&C), Step of Bidding and Event Information. Suppliers that join auction need to stamp the T&C, then revert to the administrator or purchaser before they can focus on auction process if the process is approved. During the period of auctioning, many suppliers will enquire about the auction especially for the new suppliers that never join the auction process earlier. The purchaser will always receive the same queries repeatedly from



various suppliers where quick response is required by suppliers. Therefore, the FAQ template had been developed to overcome this problem in the company which was chosen in this research which is under Sourcing & Procurement department. With the developed FAQ template, hence the study is to determine the effect of the use of FAQ templates on both the administrators of the auctions which is called as purchaser and, on the parties, offering their products, called the supplier in such auction.

2. Materials and Methods

A questionnaire is a valuable research instrument that consists of a series of questions or other types of prompts asked to a large number of individuals, often referred to as respondents with the aim is to collect statistically wide range of information. Questionnaires are frequently used in quantitative marketing research and social research. When properly created and appropriately administered, questionnaires become a dynamic mechanism by which statements can be made about particular groups or people or entire populations (Ikart, 2019; Roopa & Rani, 2012). In this research, questionnaire was distributed to clients known as suppliers and administrators known as purchasers in obtaining data before and after implementing the FAQ templates during the auction process.

2.1 Before Implementing FAQ Template

The questionnaire was categorized into two categories, namely suppliers and purchasers which both categories consists of 7 different questions. For supplier side, 100 people of suppliers were selected to answer the survey while on the purchasers side, only 7 people were chosen. All selected purchasers were staffs who are working under the auction team in Sourcing & Procurement department, in the company being selected in this research. The questions was designed as in the form of close-ended and open-ended questions. According to (Roopa & Rani, 2012; Jenn, 2006), close-ended questions provide options to the respondents and require them to choose one or more items from the list while open ended questions allow the respondent to express their opinions freely and they are not restricted by the options. The survey was conducted using Google Form created and the respondent need to answer the survey regarding to the step below:

1. Open the Google Form software;
2. Click on the plus icon – untitled form will be display;
3. Fill in the title and description to let the respondent know what is the objective of this survey;
4. Fill in the questions with the choices of answers;
5. Data collection - this is the data before FAQ template development;
6. Implement the FAQ template during the auction process;
7. Conduct another survey to suppliers and purchasers on customer's satisfaction - to collect data after the implementation of FAQ template

2.2 Evaluating the Effectiveness of FAQ Templates After Implementation

When designing a questionnaire, it is crucial to pre-empt what kind of method will be used to investigate the data collected. One practical way to do that is to draw up a question-analysis table (Jenn, 2006). Thus, Table 1 was created and outline the data distribution of the mean score used to represent the level of agreement of respondents on the development of FAQ templates.

Table 1. Distribution of mean score (Agreement Level) Source: Jenn, 2006

Mean score	Representation of Mean Score
4.20 – 5.00	Very High
3.40 - 4.19	High
2.60 - 3.39	Medium
1.80 - 5.59	Low
1.00 - 1.79	Very Low

3. Results

3.1 Before developing the FAQ template

The questionnaire was distributed to suppliers and purchasers before developing the FAQ template to gain some feedback from them towards the importance of necessitating on development of FAQ template. With the questionnaires distributed to 100 suppliers, a total of 51 suppliers had respond within the time provided. Currently over 98% of respondent had deal a business with the companies' auction websites selected in the research. Most associated type of business is supply goods and delivery jobs. 90.2% of respondent had participated in an auction with the company, previously. Majority of respondents always have inquiries during the auction process and 98% of them will contact the purchasers back to solve the related problem. More than 95% of respondent agreed that if purchasers can compile all the questions with answers within one template, then it will be more helpful and convenient to them.

A total of 7 purchasers had been responded to the questionnaire given who 42% of respondent had been working in purchasing department for more than a year. All the purchasers totally agreed that the supplier frequently contact them to inquire about the auction and that they repeatedly confront the same questions. Hence, with the existence of FAQ template, it may ease the auction process between the suppliers and the purchasers. Through the data that had been analysed, all purchasers which is 100% of them were totally agreed with the development and implementing the FAQ template.

3.2 Effectiveness of FAQ templates on supplier side after implementation

Figure 1 illustrates the level of mean score on supplier after implementing the templates during the auction process for each question on FAQ template.

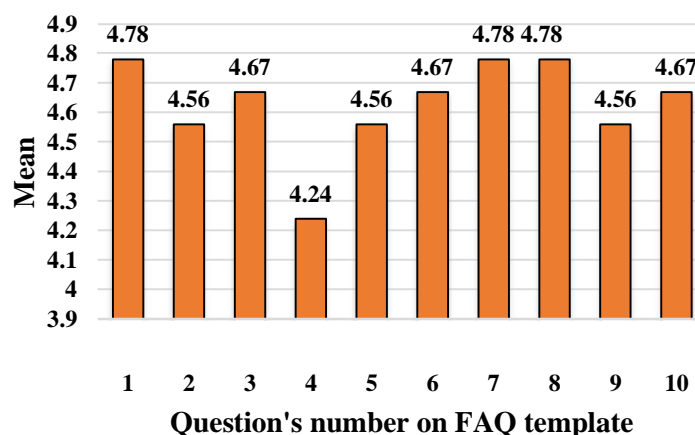


Figure 1. Level of mean score on each question after implementing FAQ template on supplier.

Table 2 displays level of mean score on each question after implementing FAQ templates which distributed to the supplier. With an average data of 4.63, the data analysis supports the assertion that all the suppliers entirely agreed and satisfied with the FAQ document implementation as it may ease the flow for the auction procedure.

Table 2. Level of mean score on each question after implement FAQ documentation for supplier

No	Effectiveness of the FAQ Template	Mean	Level
1	Satisfaction usage of FAQ document during auction process	4.78	Very High
2	FAQ document is helpful for auction process	4.56	Very High
3	FAQ document is simple to use.	4.67	Very High
4	The FAQ document very user friendly	4.24	Very High
5	The FAQ document is easy to understand	4.56	Very High
6	The FAQ document very useful	4.67	Very High
7	The FAQ document helps to avoid the problem and mistake during auction process	4.78	Very High
8	The FAQ document was straightforward	4.78	Very High
9	The FAQ document provided clear guidance in many ways	4.56	Very High
10	Rate of FAQ documentation	4.67	Very High
Average:		4.63	Very High

3.3 Effectiveness of FAQ templates on purchaser side after implementation

Figure 2 shows the bar chart of level mean score for purchaser on each question after the FAQ template has been applied during the auction process.

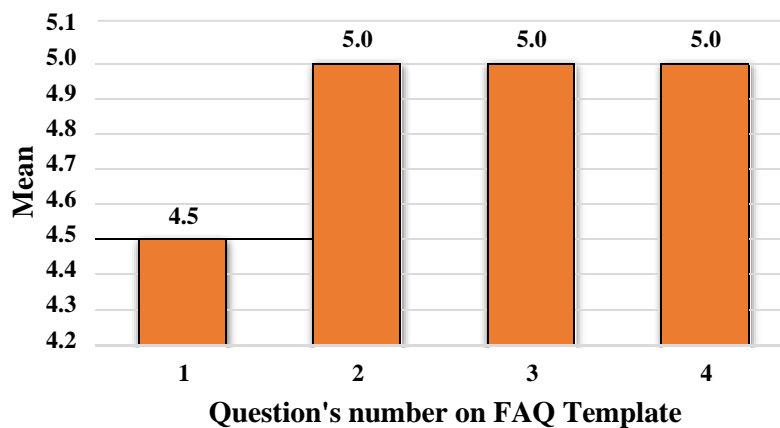


Figure 2. Bar chart of level of mean score on each question after implementing FAQ template on purchaser.

According to Table 3, all purchasers with 7 of them had answered the questionnaire given. Question number 1 with the very high value mean which is 4.5 shows that the supplier seldomly find or contact the purchaser after implementing the FAQ template. Meanwhile, the other statement, which is statement number 2, 3 and 4 with the mean value of 5.0 demonstrated that

everyone strongly agreed with it. To summarise, the efficacy of this implementation was successfully achieved by looking through the feedback given by purchasers. This is a good sign to express that FAQ template used is very helpful and beneficial for supplier in getting information that they needed regarding auction process without wasting time.

Table 3. Level of mean score on each question after implementing FAQ template on purchaser.

No	Effectiveness of the FAQ documentation	Mean	Level
1	Supplier did not find or contact purchaser if they got problem during auction process	4.5	Very High
2	Supplier satisfied to refer FAQ document during auction process instead of contact purchaser.	5	Very High
3	FAQ document helpful during auction process	5	Very High
4	Rate for the FAQ document?	5	Very High
Average:		4.88	Very High

4. Discussion

The responses given by the respondents show that they agree that the FAQ template is effective and helpful if used during the auction process. It is a good method on both supplier and purchaser in increasing the efficiency of working during the auction process. More than 90% respondents from supplier side and 100% respondents from purchaser side give high rate on the FAQ template created since it is a friendly user template and contains enough information regarding the auction process, thus can avoid wasting time for both parties, suppliers, and purchasers, hence highly recommended to be used at any time for assisting the suppliers to answer their enquiries during the auction process. The FAQ template developed in the company being selected in this research is highly recommended to be used continuously and permanently in assisting the suppliers in an easy way.

5. Conclusion

The research was done in one of the companies under Sourcing & Procurement Department, located in Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia, which previously having some difficulties on suppliers and purchasers regarding giving or getting information in auction process. Suppliers will keep asking purchasers while purchasers always getting the same enquiries from various suppliers, which interferes a lot with the purchaser's time to perform other work. Therefore, FAQ template was developed to resolve the problem, hence increase the efficiency of process during the auction with supplier and purchaser. The aim of the study is to investigate the effectiveness of the template created after the implementation was performed. The data was verified by conducting a survey before and after incorporating the FAQ templates to supplier and purchaser by providing the questionnaires. The respondents agreed that all issues arise regarding auction in Sourcing & Procurement Department had an impact on their work. The result shows the level of agreement from the administration is at 4.88/5.00 and from the suppliers is at 4.62/5.00 in favors of the usage of FAQ templates. Hence, it may be concluded that most respondents are more inclined that the use of FAQ templates are helpful and beneficial as well as more reliable in the conduct of the auction.



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