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UTILIZING THE CONCEPT OF CONVENIENCE AS A BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY IN EMERGING MARKETS

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Abstract. *Non-store retailing is dominated by the Internet and is a potential strategy for manufacturers, brand owners, and retailers entering emerging markets. Consumers in developed markets shop online for a variety of retail goods, and motives for choosing e-commerce are often referred to as convenience reason. Convenience is essential for understanding why consumers prefer one channel to another. By revisiting the concept of convenience as a significant variable in e-commerce and exploring its complexity and the multiple meanings of the concept with regard to emerging markets, the paper considers a business opportunity in terms of new ways of reaching emerging markets and proposes potential lines for future research with regard to this concept.*

Key words: *e-commerce, emerging markets, convenience, retail strategy, non-store retailing.*

Introduction

Non brick-and-mortar store retailing in the business-to-consumer market (B2C) has a long history; the non-store-based formats are dominated by the mail order industry, but they also include direct selling, home-party, TV-shopping, telemarketing etc. (Sundström, 2008). In many ways non-store-based formats now are transformed due to the internet communication technologies (ICT). Traditional research on why consumers adopt new technology or choose new channels is performed based on adoption theories, focusing on the premises that something "new" must be understood and conquered. However, ICT and the advent of smart phones have altered the way businesses are done within retailing. The digital era has impacted the retail business and digitalization has empowered customers with possibilities to shop online anyplace and at any time. The choices of non-store-formats have increased and fundamentally changed the manner in which consumers shop from retailers (Hagberg et al., 2015).

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The modern retailing landscape offers consumers a variety of channels such as catalogue selling, direct selling, pure e-commerce, mobile commerce (m-commerce), fixed store settings; mixed formats such as click-and-collect and pop-up-stores are also available. Up until two decades ago, retailers had the option of integrating e-commerce into their operations. Now it is a necessity and businesses often start with the launch of their web site with e-commerce built-in. Global online retail sales have become a competitive channel to the traditional retail channels, which is driven by growth in emerging markets (eMarketer, 2014). This paper addresses the potential in retailers, manufacturers and brand owners' ability to start e-commerce in markets where there are few established retail networks, where legislation might be a barrier for retailers to physically enter a market, or where it may be counterproductive to invest in own bricks-and-mortar stores. The question has been posed as to what it is that determines foreign market entry strategies. Much of the existing literature has focused on the characteristics of the entering firm, in particular its resources and capabilities (Barney, 1991; Anand & Delios, 2002) and its need to minimize transaction costs (Buckley & Casson, 1976; Anderson & Gatignon, 1986; Hill, Hwang, & Kim, 1990). While not doubting the importance of resources and capabilities (Peng, 2001), it has also been suggested that strategies are moderated by the characteristics of the particular context in which firms operate (Hoskisson et al., 2000; Meyer & Peng, 2005; Tsui, 2004; Meyer, 2006, 2007). This paper departs from entry strategy literature which either focuses on the institutional side (Brouthers & Brouthers, 2000; Meyer, 2001; Hitt et al., 2004) or the resource-based side (Anand & Delios, 2002) and focuses upon the readiness of emerging markets and the concept of convenience instead. The potential of e-commerce in emerging markets cannot be capitalized upon unless retail business realizes the profound need of consumer insight in different markets and the motives which drive the choice of the channel. This article suggests that the concept of convenience might be a key to understanding the consumer channel choice.

There is a knowledge gap on how convenience motivates the choice of channel and what convenience means to different consumers in different cultural and economic contexts. By addressing the importance of understanding different consumer perspectives and perceptions of a convenient way of shopping online we see a particular relevance of this when aspiring to enter new or emerging markets. Elaborating on convenience to understand the consumer channel adoption is particularly important in light of the Internet no longer being a novelty, this meaning that traditional theories on adoption such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) may no longer be sufficient or even adequate. Such theories focus on technological adoption and acceptance, on how people behave when confronted with new technology (the Internet), and their intentions to act (e. g., Dabholkar, 1996; Lockett & Littler, 1997; Howcraft, Hamilton & Hewer, 2002; Lee, Lee & Schumann, 2002; Lee, Lee & Eastwood, 2003; Venkatesh, Morris, Davis & Davis, 2003; and Schepers & Wetzels, 2007). The recourse to such theories was logical with the advent of the Internet, but with the rapid progression of digitalization there is a reason to revisit basic assumptions and theories used to explain e-commerce and the adoption of channels and focus specifically on the notion of convenience in order to better assess the opportunities and potential for e-commerce in emerging markets.

Marketers have for long now addressed issues such as growth strategies within emerging markets (Arnold & Quelch, 1998) and modes of entry (Elg et al., 2008), competing effectively in emerging markets (Ghemawat & Hout, 2008), and the structure of the market (Khanna & Palepeu, 2006). The focus in this idea-generating paper takes a different and somewhat novel approach and instead makes the assumption that convenience can be a driving force for a business opportunity in emerging markets. Whereas more mature markets have had a different journey in light of e-commerce and digitalization, the emerging markets have skipped some of the steps that other markets have gone through (e. g., catalogue shopping). Coussy (2009), for instance, developed a typology of emerging countries, suggesting that such emerging economies display the following three characteristics: they are (1) latecomers to development that (2) attain very high growth rates of about 10 percent, and (3) their growth challenges the economic situation of developed countries. Many emerging markets have not built up the distribution networks in the same way as developed countries and thus do not face all of the same challenges. Instead, there is a readiness for commerce that can be utilized by assessing convenience as a motivational driver for consumers, which as such provides a business opportunity.

The need to understand convenience as a driver of business opportunities

E-commerce has become a prominent element in the everyday life of consumers in steadily eroding markets and the digital technologies that are being used are developed as we speak. With increasing storage capacity and processing capabilities, smart phones are becoming more powerful and are making this power accessible to users around the world. The widespread digital technology in the form of smartphones creates global business opportunities, i.e. local retailers can be both local and global (glocals) if they understand the driver for consumers often put in the argument: convenience. It was not by accident that the term *convenience store* was made up, it was a strategy by retailers who identified a business opportunity in offering a new retail format based on the self-service idea (Kirby, 1986). The argument consumers where confronted with when supermarkets were offered instead of over-the-counter services was – convenience. The argument when building kiosks was also convenience. And the argument when offering e-commerce was convenience. It is clear that convenience is an advantage communicated in most consumer markets, nevertheless, it is not often discussed and used as a business opportunity (Sundström, 2007).

Our suggestion is that emerging markets might entail business opportunity for retailers who have the digital readiness in providing e-commerce, but in order to be successful, they need to know how convenience drives consumer behavior. In order to capitalize on a business opportunity with glocal retailers there is a strong need to avoid mistakes such as using a push-strategy with heavy advertising or price offerings. This was early identified by Prahalad and Lieberthal (1998), who claimed that they must delve deeper into the local consumer base in order to deliver on the promise of tapping into billion-consumer markets (Prahalad & Lieberthal, 1998). Further, Dawar and Chattopadhyay (2000) claimed that this calls for a shift in emphasis from the "global" to the "local" consumer, and from globally standardized to locally adapted marketing programs (Dawar & Chattopadhyay, 2000). A sustainable strategy might be to offer true customer value and with such knowledge, design attractive e-commerce alternatives. We suggest that convenience is a strong driver for consumers choosing a shopping channel, but we also believe that convenience is a complex notion colored by culture and norms. The advent of new technologies is transforming the structure of competition, the conduct of business, and it might even be so that new technologies will change our way of categorizing markets, i.e. industrialized markets and emerging markets. Most emerging markets are highly local and suffer from inadequate infrastructure (Sheth, 2011). These are historic barriers stopping global retailers from entering emerging markets. However, with new technology the business opportunities are evident and e-tailing might be the next industry successful in export activities. To keep ahead of the competition, managers will need to challenge some of their assumptions on why customers adopt new channels and seek consumer insight from a different retail logic and a digitized society. This suggests a need for increased research into the theoretical framework of online shopping, in order to better understand why customers adopt non-store retail formats. These theoretical frameworks must be something else than the traditional adoption theories. Promising areas of investigation include the development of distinct dimensions of trust (Park & Goetzinger, 2006), as well as understanding and interpreting shopping motives with respect to channel preferences (Schramm-Klein, Swoboda & Morschett, 2007). However, we suggest an alternative way to build a theoretical framework by revisiting the concept of convenience, then transforming the findings into the context of e-commerce and emerging markets.

One of the main reasons to revisit the concept of convenience when focusing on e-commerce in emerging markets is the fact that the Internet has grown strongly, especially in the Asia-Pacific region accounting for over a third of global B2C e-commerce sales (Research and Brand, 2013), but there is a gap of knowledge regarding why consumers in that kind of emerging markets adopt the e-business channel. Recent studies suggest that we need to examine how beliefs and attitudes influence online retail behaviour of consumers in lower-income countries (Ahmed & Akhlaq, 2015). Khanna, Palepu, and Sinha (2005) offer what they refer to as the five contexts framework that helps executives identify institutional voids in any country. The five contexts are: (1) political and social system, (2) openness, (3) product markets, (4) labor markets, and (5) capital markets. Based on the analysis using this five context framework, companies can adapt their strategies, work toward changing one or more of the contexts to fit company needs, or stay out of the emerging market. We suggest that contexts of interest, which also include the meaning of convenience, are the social system, product markets and labor markets, as they probably also reflect attitudes towards a convenient way of shopping. As a reply to that suggestion, the ambition to develop knowledge on the concept of convenience and its connection to online shopping is evident. Future growth of e-commerce in countries like India, Russia and Brazil show positive growth figures, although barriers such as payment methods and product fulfilment need to be addressed. (Chiu et al., 2014) Studies regarding convenient payment methods suggest that emerging markets also must improve their payment arrangements to foster economic growth (Humphrey et al., 1996).

As previously argued, one of the main motives to choose online shopping in mature markets is said to be convenience (Kaufman-Scarborough & Lindquist, 2002; Sundström, 2007), however, the concept of convenience is not fully covered in the existing marketing literature. The theoretical support of its present use is equivalent to efficiency in time savings. What consumers mean by convenience in the context of online shopping has been researched to some extent (Kaufman-Scarborough & Lindqvist, 2002; Sundström, 2007), but remains yet to be fully explored in the western world, and is also needed to be explored in emerging markets. Convenience can act as a driver in different situations around the purchasing situation, before the purchase and after the decision has been made. A convenient e-tail purchase might be considered convenient in terms of a wide range of offerings, different delivery services, and/or convenient payment methods along with convenient ways of returning products. To sum up, the theoretical understanding of convenience is unsatisfactory, leaving many ambiguities in the notion, and with regard to emerging markets, the concept of convenience remains very much under-researched, despite the potential in this concept specifically for emerging markets.

This paper presents a literature review of the theoretical concept of convenience, exploring its implications and connecting the concept to channel adoption and emerging economies as there are still few studies focusing e-commerce to emerging markets (see, for instance, Rouibah, Khalil & Hasanien, 2008). Wells (2009) highlights the importance of innovation in today's global marketplace, and Sull, Ruelas-Gossi, and Escobari (2004) suggest that there is a tendency to envision developed-world companies (e.g., USA's IBM, Japan's Sony, South Korea's Samsung, Finland's Nokia, or Switzerland's Novartis) when thinking about innovation. While citing challenges to innovating in an emerging economy, Sull, Ruelas-Gossi, and Escobari (2004) identify three innovation strategies applicable to both advanced and emerging economies: (1) understanding the customer, (2) innovating around, rather than through technology, and (3) scouring the globe for good ideas. For this research strong focus lies on the understanding of the customer in different markets and innovating around.

2. Convenience as a complex notion

Reports establishing the importance of convenience in online shopping stress time management (Jiang et al., 2013; Chen & Hung, 2015), but feature other convenience dimensions of time as well. One example is the importance of time-based delivery services (Goebel et al., 2012). Explanations often heard in conjunction with convenience also include *fast, easy, and safe* (Sundström, 2007; Shoenberger & Thorson, 2014). An illustration of this may be seen in the advertising of the Eurocard, which encourages European customers to shop online by stressing efficiency: "Shop conveniently this Christmas by sitting on your sofa!" (Eurocard, 2014). Thus, convenience is a more complex notion than simply ease and speed of purchasing and browsing (Kaufman-Scarborough & Lindqvist, 2002). In emerging markets it is less likely that consumers define convenience in terms of time-saving value, but rather in terms of a rich supply, as many emerging markets have suffered from chronic shortage of resources. It might also be a business opportunity if e-tailers could offer unbranded products or services as consumption is more of a make versus buy decision (Sheth, 2011). Reports emphasising the importance of convenience in mature markets stress other dimensions than time involving attractiveness, such as easy to reach, and easy to find (Kaufman-Scarborough & Lindqvist, 2002; Ganesh & Agarwal, 2014). In some emerging markets consumers are less likely to define convenience in terms of attractiveness, giving preference to accessibility. That is also one of the arguments for Project Loon, launched by Google with the ambition to provide free WiFi to the world (Project Loon, 2015). We argue that many beliefs fundamental to retailing and e-commerce are at odds with the realities of emerging markets. But we also see the great business opportunities to develop and discover new perspectives in e-commerce which might be valuable for both retailers and consumers in emerging markets.

Although former research studies have taken convenience into consideration, few of them have investigated what the concept of convenience means to consumers in the shopping situation, and how it plays a role when adopting new channels. This is important due to the fact that consumers of today demonstrate a new frame of mind regarding the activity of shopping. Even fewer studies have focused on convenience as a driver in emerging markets. The believed value dimensions of shopping defined as hedonic or utilitarian have been developed in a context where e-commerce did not exist (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982a; 1982b), and need to be revised. In mature markets purchasing activities are in many cases no longer seen as fulfilling (Passyn et al., 2011). Online shopping relieves customers from such unpleasant chores and gives them a more convenient and time-saving way to buy goods. Other aspects supporting the idea that people are in need of convenience are the increased time demands among consumers in the western world in general, as well as greater affluence and increased consumption (Sundström, 2007; Yale & Venkatesh, 1986). These trends together with the fact that consumers in mature markets use communication technology in their everyday life, point to the assumption that the meaning of convenience in general might be changing in mature markets. A customer described as a convenient consumer is no longer seen as a "bad" or "lazy" customer (Sundström, 2007). On the contrary, a convenient consumer could be seen as a "smart" and "rational" customer. This trend leads to the deduction that convenience as a notion will become increasingly important to mature markets, thus leading to a challenge in providing convenient ways to shop online, and to communicate to potential customers with the argument of convenience. On the other hand, we also know little about how convenience is perceived in emerging markets, and the knowledge about convenience as a driver derived from mature markets might not be the same in markets with shortage of resources. The challenge lies within the fact that different markets have their own definition of what convenience entails. Opportunities for e-commerce in emerging markets must be capitalized on with this insight, and how to reach new customers with a convenience argument must be communicated differently to each market and segment. Convenience is no longer a unisex fragrance and one size does not fit all.

The construct and use of convenience

Convenience has been used historically as an important variable in many different retail transformational changes such as locations (Wood & Browne, 2007), formats (Kinsey & Senauer, 1996), and payments (Szmigin & Foxall, 1998). Convenience has also been used in terms of categorizing products. It was Copeland (1923) who first introduced the idea of convenience with regard to how buying decisions were made. Convenience goods were familiar products, easy-to-buy and requiring little, if any, cognitive decision-making effort. Empirical researchers later operationalised the construct and attached another meaning to it: time-buying or time-saving (Douglas, 1976; Strober & Weinberg, 1977). The theoretical framework was built on the assumption of the household as a production unit, optimising value with income as the constraint production capability. Value in this sense was bringing goods to consume and such goods were paid for with money and time. It was Becker (1965) and Michael and Becker (1973) who expanded the classical behaviour model of economic choice to include time as a constraint to the household's "full income", something that may explain why the more modern construct of convenience in mature markets stresses time management (Yale & Venkatesh, 1986). In the late 1950s convenience was considered an important element when planning shopping centres (Kelley, 1958). The aim was to build shopping centres in a way that provided the customer with a convenient and time-saving shopping atmosphere, including stores placed in a logical order, comfortable lanes between the stores and wide aisles between the shelves. In maximizing advantages related to *place convenience* retailers could place products in a spatial position perceived by customers as convenient. The examples above, despite being very specific, all refer to a store-based-context. With regard to non-store-based retailing it also gives place to convenience according to Kaufman-Scarborough and Lindquist (2002), but different compared to the fixed-store settings. Customers shopping online can order without having to leave their current location, and have the goods delivered in a convenient way. Also, in terms of consumer typologies convenience has been used to segment specific target groups. Convenience-oriented customers were identified with the help of family demographic characteristics such as: stage in a family life cycle, family size, socioeconomic status, annual income, and education (Anderson, 1972; Gehrt & Yale, 1993; Berry, Seiders & Grewal, 2002). In different times the typical characteristic for such a consumer typology has shifted. At first the convenience-oriented typology was seen as positive, describing an individual as being smart and rational (Anderson, 1971). This, however, shifted to a more negative view of this consumer group, suggesting an individual being lazy and with no energy (Sundström, 2007). Thus, the construct of convenience so far has involved different perspectives, where time and timing are perhaps the most commonly used explanations.

Time and timing motivates innovations

It is suggested that many Western consumers feel the pressure of anxiety and stress, often referred to as a lack of time. In response to these feelings, the industry has developed a variety of time-saving products and services, often referred to as "convenience goods" or convenience services (i.e., self-service technologies such as scanners, on-line reservations, self-check-in, etc.). In emerging markets there are probably also convenience needs based on the feeling of time pressure; however, there might also be other feelings that drive a convenience need when shopping. In many emerging markets the social activity connected to shopping is evident and perhaps an e-tailer can innovate different online services that also provide convenient social interaction. It might be possible that time convenience in emerging markets should provide consumers with an online shopping context that expands the shopping activity and is constructed in order to take time instead of saving time.

Another aspect of time-convenience is timing, and Brown (1989) points out that the flexibility to choose the exact moment for making a purchase could also be perceived as a matter of convenience, which is also supported by Bellinger and Korgaonkar (1980). Convenience could also mean selecting a convenient occasion, which, in turn, is about *timing*. In many parts of the world there may be more reluctance to do something at a certain time than willingness to save or spend time. In other words, when something is convenient it could mean saving time as well as spending time and doing it at the right moment. Regarding online shopping and e-commerce, the media are suitably designed both for time saving consumers and for those who want to spend time. But it is absolutely necessary to know your target groups and design virtual shopping contexts that are attractive for both of these segments. Compared to fixed store settings, virtual store settings can be designed in a variety of ways and offer different tools to different customers with much lower costs and with much more flexibility.

Symbolic value and convenience

Innovations can provide convenience or offer symbolic value (Oropesa, 1993). Based on the work conducted by Walker and Walker (1996) and Roger's diffusion of innovation theory (1995), it is well known that in order to adopt a technological innovation, an individual goes through five steps: awareness, interest, evaluation, trial, and adoption. It is not so well researched how diffusion behaves in emerging markets , but we know that foreign innovations call for greater efforts and those indigenous and foreign efforts are complementary (Fu et al., 2011). In the western world several key technologies could be classified as convenience technology: scanner-equipped grocery stores, electronic funds transfer, automated teller machines, and custom telephone calling services (Gilly & Zeithaml, 1985). The ability to shop online can also represent a technological innovation that gives convenience and benefits and, at the same time, changes customer behaviour (Hansen, 2005). Both awareness and interest are steps in the adoption process that may be awakened when the need for convenience is uppermost. In this way, the Internet alters the behaviour as a result of information access. The Internet provides individuals with an enormous amount of information and the possibility of comparing information (Kaufman-Scarborough & Lindquist, 2002). This is also likely to be the case in emerging markets, but there is also strong evidence that other symbolic values might be associated with convenience.

Low consumer adoption regarding online buying in mature markets was formerly explained by the presence of transaction obstacles, such as slow loading times, the inability of locating items, incomplete information, and lack of human interaction (Kaufman-Scarborough & Lindquist, 2002). These steps of adoption are not so likely to occur in emerging markets. Explanations as to who might be an online customer referred to characteristics such as innovativeness and risk taking (Lockett & Littler, 1997) but these segments are also less likely to be true in emerging markets. Today, most of the former obstacles are gone and in most countries customers shop online.

Decision making and convenience

One question of importance to a business aspiring to enter new consumer markets is how and why people shop. Attempts to answer it have led to proposals of different shopping typologies in the western world, two of which oppose recreational and convenience shoppers. Stone (1954) introduced and defined shopping orientations in order to characterise consumers according to lifestyles, interests, and opinions. This has led to the systematic measurement of shopping orientations using decision making instruments. Pioneer work in this area was conducted by Sproles and Kendall (1986), who profiled consumers according to different consumer decision making (CDM) styles. The CDM in retailing has a fairly long and varied history. It focuses on substantiating the existence of "styles of thinking" applied to consumer shopping (Wesley, LeHew & Woodside, 2006). According to Kaufman-Scarborough and Lindquist (2002), a central dimension of convenience in the decision making process is the convenience of information search. This aspect is closely connected to the structure and form of the Internet as a huge information database. A customer could find it convenient because a great deal of information is gathered in one place, facilitating extensive search and comparisons. As to why and how people shop online, theoretical approaches have been based on CDM and on information search theories (Ariely, 2000; Bakos, 1991, 1997; Brynjolfsson & Smith, 2000; Hoffman & Novak, 1996). Combinations of theories have been proposed (Senecal, Kalczynski & Nantel, 2005). However, the centre of interest remains directed to what online customers do in the decision-making process, not what they wish or require in terms of convenience. Convenience, in this sense, becomes a motivator to a decision. We argue that decision-making styles in emerging markets might look different from those derived from studies in mature markets in the western world. This is an important knowledge gap that needs to be investigated.

The specific context of online shopping assumes that consumers act alone, have an abundance of information, and are dependent on technical skills and/or a mobile phone. A customer with extended experience of online shopping tends to be less risk-averse, more skilful in information searching, more price conscious, less patient with regard to waiting time, and generally places a higher value on convenience (Sundström, 2007). These circumstances suggest that convenience-driven decision making in an online store consists of a situation that provides ample information, effective tools for comparing both information and prices, a website with an easy-to-use design/layout, options for payment, and useful information between the point of delivery and the point of ordering. What convenience-driven decision making in emerging markets looks like, we know less about.

The academic literature with empirical data from mature and/or industrialized markets has discussed retail convenience by focusing on the elements of time and searching (Brown, 1989; Kaufman-Scarborough & Lindquist, 2002). Nevertheless, the meaning of convenience differs, depending on the shopping situation, the customer and the market characteristics. Emerging markets are a business potential to retailers as the communication technology is widespread. On the other hand, emerging markets might react differently to global e-tailers, and might also behave differently in terms of convenience reasons for shopping online. Another aspect of business opportunities is that some of the best capitalist markets today are ex-communist countries, and all advanced countries are maturing. Naturally, we realize that there are other barriers to a growth in e-tailing in emerging markets, such as suffering from inadequate infrastructure and country-specific taxes and regulations, but we believe that there is a need to develop knowledge on how convenience might be a driver for choosing online shopping in these markets.

3. Toward a framework for e-commerce convenience in emerging markets

Different customer needs and preferences towards convenient online shopping are reshaping the expectations of e-commerce and individual point of purchase. Almost every product or service available in global markets must incorporate the characteristic of convenience. Any product can be seen as convenient when buying on the Internet. It is not a product's characteristics but a shopping situation perceived as time-saving which determines whether it is convenient or not. Furthermore, convenience is no longer seen as disgraceful or bad. It is generally a means of freeing leisure time for other activities, such as sports or hobbies (Scarborough Research, 2008; Sundström, 2007).

Another aspect of convenience in the online shopping context is place convenience, that is, the web site atmosphere. When the web site is perceived as convenient, the product is also thought of as convenient. Also, the aspect of timing is critical with regard to why a customer chooses an online store. Many do so because they value the freedom to buy at a time of their own choosing. While many retailers are investigating in the possibility of going multi-channel and manufacturers aiming to enter new markets, the basic consumer requirement of convenience should not be forgotten. The same argument applies to retailers investing in high-tech self-service facilities in their brick-and-mortar stores.

Following Coussy's (2009) typology of emerging countries, suggesting that emerging economies display, among other, the characteristic of being latecomers to development, this paper suggests that being a latecomer to certain aspects of retail and e-commerce has led to a certain readiness which has not been observed in developed countries that had a longer startup towards e-commerce. And by revisiting the concept of convenience, put in the context of online shopping, it is here suggested that it is not only valuable to gain consumer insight when wanting to enter an emerging market with the help of e-commerce, but crucial not to asses the market using the same criteria and standards as for markets where e-commerce has been long established.

The complexity in the concept of convenience has been shown, and questions have been raised about the role and importance of customer-perceived convenience when entering emerging markets. It is vital to take a customer's perspective on convenience in different shopping situations, and on individual preferences for perceived convenience. Furthermore, one must view convenience as a significant variable whose understanding involves complexity and multiple meanings. It is proposed that there is an academic need to develop a framework for customer-perceived convenience in order to facilitate retail development in non-store settings.

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