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Identifying Key Factors influencing Internet Shopping Behavior for E-Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

With Internet shopping gaining more attention and momentum, a better understanding of the online consumer is now in the forefront of most retail strategies. The growth of online retailing or Internet shopping has provided the apparel industry with additional avenues to reach the consumer. Previous research has shown that consumers' intent to purchase online is highly driven by their satisfaction.

Studies have touted the growth of on-line shopping and the growing purchases of those with Internet access (Lin & Sun, 2009). In fact, apparel products have been consistently ranked as one of the most frequently purchased items through the Internet (Seckler, 2001). One of the drivers for the growth of Internet shopping is satisfaction [with online shopping]. There is a plethora of studies that provide empirical support to the relationship between satisfaction and purchase intention (Lin & Sun, 2009; George, 2002; Fenech & O'Cass, 2001). Meanwhile, studies on satisfaction specific to niche markets have been sporadic. One major theoretical model often utilized as the platform for online retail satisfaction studies is the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). This model focuses on a person's intention to perform a specific behavior based on his/her attitude [toward that specific behavior along] with the subjective norms and/or held by that person's associates (Ajzen 1991). Among other authors, Yoh et al. (2003) and George (2002) have applied Ajzen's theory to online shopping.

But, what variables influence e-satisfaction? After two extensive pre-test surveys, a very large sample of students and community members were used to solicit and understanding of many variables on E-satisfaction. The regression analysis results indicate Experience and Shopping Innovation had the strongest effect on E-satisfaction while all other variables Interest, Perceived Usefulness, Attitude, Tactile Importance, and Convenience are significant.

Results indicate that if consumers have positive predispositions and interests toward online shopping, then they are more likely to be satisfied with the shopping outcome. The analysis indicated that 60.1 percent of the variance in E-satisfaction was explained by the model's independent variables, with a significant F-value of 176.63 (p<.001). The regression analysis results indicate that all variables were significant. Experience and Shopping Innovation had the strongest effect on E-satisfaction having beta weights of .647 and .275 respectively, with both being significant at p<.01. Interest, Perceived Usefulness, and Attitude were also significant with beta weights of .292, .196, and .185, respectively, with both being significant at p<.01 also. Tactile Importance and Convenience are significant at p<.05 with beta weights of -.073, and -.106. As expected most variables had the model's hypothesized direction of the effect. However, contrary

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to what was expected, the direction and strength of Convenience was not captured in the data.

Although recent research has been directed to Web retailing; there has been little research to examine issues related to consumer characteristics on niche product category with consumers knowledgeable in the category such as this. Internet shopping is an alternative to the traditional in-store environment. If consumers have positive predispositions and interests toward online shopping, then they are more likely to be satisfied with the shopping outcome. From a strategic point of view, the challenge is for marketers to engage its target in order to enhance positive attitudes and maintain their interest with the product. From a customer relationship management perspective, this will help in developing long-term relationships with customers when satisfaction is prevalent. Surprisingly, a negative effect of convenience on satisfaction was found. One plausible explanation for this finding may be related to the context of the niche product utilized in this study. That is, when dealing with a specialty product like hospital gowns, convenience may not be as important as it is to get the right customized product.

The study has illustrated the benefit of incorporating constructs from the MIS field to examine retailing opportunities. Specifically, that Experience and Shopping Innovation are strong predictors of web retailing in an Internet mediated environment. As new retailing opportunities, such as wireless shipping, are offered to shoppers, of current technology, (i.e. smartphones), marketers may use this model and key antecedents to predict E-satisfaction which is an important determinant of purchase behavior.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Chris Anthony Myers, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor of Marketing at the College of Business and Technology of Texas A & M University – Commerce. His undergraduate degree is a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) and his MS in Marketing Degree and Ph.D. (Marketing, Management Science) are from the University of Texas at Dallas. He is on the Editorial Advisory Board for *The* Journal of Product and Brand Management. His specific research interest is in understanding how theories and concepts related to consumer behavior can improve marketing outcomes. His research has been published in many top level journals --Journal of Promotion Management, Services Marketing Quarterly, Journal of Academy of Business and Economics, Journal of Product and Brand Management, International Journal of Business Research, Journal of International Management Studies, and Journal of International Business and Economics. Additionally, in the sociology and medical area, his research investigates the impact of acculturation and related factors upon the quality of care received by cardiovascular and diabetes patients. This work has appeared in the Baylor University Medical Center Proceeding. Myers received his degree under the direction of Dr. Frank Bass (1926-2006), a leading academic in the field of marketing research. Bass is considered to be among the founders of Marketing Science, and became famous as the creator of the Bass diffusion model that describes the adoption of new products and technologies by first-time buyers.