Chapter 10
Consumer Behavior in the E–Marketplace

ABSTRACT

Retailing in the twenty-first century is highly occupied with the virtual marketplace as a large number of companies are engaged in developing boundary-less markets for consumers and delivering value by offering an abundance of shopping convenience. E-shopping is influenced by the attributes of time, product attractiveness, and competitive advantage. It has been argued in the chapter that shopping behavior of consumers has shifted from conventional shopping to the virtual marketplace with the increasing applications of Internet forcing retailers to redefine their roles to ensure their place in the Internet age. The discussions also focus on the omni-channel strategy of most global retailers to acquire and retain consumers by facilitating the shopping experience irrespective of time and place. In addition, to the arguments for and against the borderless markets, discussions in the chapter also critically examine the shifts in the consumer behavior driven by the growth of information and communication technology over the years.

INTRODUCTION

Many organizations have been responding to new reality on on-line interface with customers and other market players involved in the marketing activities of products and services. Customer centric companies realizing the power and the potential of social media for corporate life enable virtual collaboration in cross-functional...
projects through internal blogs, discussion boards, and YouTube channels. Such interactivity among the market players encourages global conversations and sharing of knowledge. Successful consumer companies engage in sophisticated virtual media campaigns to drive customers and create brand loyalty. Next-generation products are co-developed in open-innovation processes, and companies work on shaping their enterprise with Web 2.0 strategy. Online retailing and the digitization of merchandizing has changed the commercial landscape where virtual shelf space is infinite and consumers can search through innumerable options. Traditional marketing research methods such as test markets, focus groups and controlled field experiments observe certain limitations. Some are vulnerable to observation and manipulation by competitors while the virtual store not only addresses those limitations but also broadens the horizons of marketing research (Raymond, 1996).

Information technology is undergoing a relentless shift with the advances towards virtualization, grid computing, and Web services that are enabling the companies to grow their business in customer centric platforms and gain competitive advantage in the marketplace. The virtualization of business has passed through the three stages in reaching the business pattern of today, where consumer feels that he has access to the company from products to the stakeholder rights. First, home computers and e-mail spawned as the tools of freelancing and offering both consumers and company to demonstrate new flexibilities, followed by the mobile technology, which gave the 360° business access-anywhere and shop anytime flexibility to the consumers. Now, in a third wave of technology, new ways of providing community opportunity in involving business and share thinking space are driving the effect of virtualization through increased consumer-company collaboration (Johns and Gratton, 2013). Virtualization enables personal computing platforms to run applications designed on one operating system to be deployed elsewhere. Grid computing allows large numbers of hardware components such as servers or disk drives to effectively act as a single device, pooling their capacity and allocating it automatically to different jobs, while Web services standardize the interfaces between applications, turning them into modules that can be assembled and disassembled easily (Carr, 2005).

E-shopping is influenced by time and attractiveness of virtual sales offers and effectiveness of customer relations. These factors vary widely in reference to consumer segments and markets attractiveness, and induce compulsive buying behavior among customers, which is judged by the satisfaction in spending and perceiving pleasure of buying occasionally exercising choice and passing time in knowing new products, services, technologies and understanding fellow customers (Watkins and Bond, 2007). Retailers using a “store as the brand” strategy invest in creating a specific, unique shopping experience for their target customer and
Do Managerial Strategies Influence Service Behaviours?: Insights from a Qualitative Study
www.igi-global.com/article/managerial-strategies-influence-service-behaviours/45731?camid=4v1a

A Parallel Methodology for Reduction of Coupling in Distributed Business-to-Business E-Commerce Transactions
www.igi-global.com/chapter/parallel-methodology-reduction-coupling-distributed/6991?camid=4v1a