An Empirical Examination of Saudi Consumers Attitudes Towards Online Shopping

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to empirically examine Saudi consumers’ attitudes towards online shopping. The papers test a framework that was developed to understand, evaluate and examine the different factors affecting consumer attitudes towards online shopping in Saudi Arabia. Data were collected using a non-probability sample of 1000 Saudi consumers. The paper investigated several independent variables which were used in previous research studies and its relation with the dependent variable (online shopping attitude among Saudi consumers). The findings indicated that ease of use and reliability were positively related to attitude of consumer towards online shopping. The findings also illustrated a positive relationship between the research remaining independent variables (privacy and security, customer service, trust, product information, satisfaction) and online shopping attitude in KSA. The paper also provides a discussion of its limitations as well as direction for future research in the field.

KEYWORDS

Attitudes Towards Online Shopping, Commerce, E-Empirical Examination, KSA, Online Shopping, Saudi Arabia, Saudi Consumers

1. INTRODUCTION

Shopping through the Internet is becoming a main theme for customers worldwide. It is becoming very popular among consumers for many reasons which provide them with a lot of benefits for shopping online such as: low prices, convenience shopping experience, genuineness of the service, individual tailored care and free access to huge amount of information regarding products and services (Seock and Norton, 2007). Such kind of shopping experience has changed the buying behaviour of consumers and customers around the world. Nevertheless, the only limitation of shopping online is that consumers cannot feel or touch the product rather than just interacting with Web-enabled computer systems (Park and Kim, 2003). Thus, factors affecting the behaviour of online consumers need to be treated with especial care by the online retailers. This paper is aimed to examine those factors that affect the attitudes of consumers towards online shopping.

1.1. Research Objectives

This research aims to achieve the following aims and objectives:

- Study how medium characteristics influence the attitudes of Saudi online consumers;
- Investigate the various factors affecting the adoption of online shopping in Saudi Arabia;
- Investigate how intermediary features and/or characteristics influence online consumers’ attitudes in Saudi Arabia.

DOI: 10.4018/IJOM.2017040104

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1.2. Literature Review

As the study aimed to examine the different factors affecting consumer attitudes towards online shopping in Saudi Arabia, a detailed review of the literature was conducted to generate the needed theoretical and conceptual bases for the research in hand.

1.2.1. Online Shopping

Taking the different advantages of web (World Wide Web - WWW), businesses started to create their web addresses and home pages. The availability of such feature enabled consumers to buy their desired products (goods and services) from any corner of the world as soon as they start having access to the Internet. Online shopping is not barred by time constraints any other impediments (Demangeot and Broderick, 2010). Such environment for shopping online facilitates consumers with a large number of alternative choices, available information, reliability and contrasting different products so that they do not require giving much effort for decision making (Raamat et al, 2008).

1.2.2. Attitude Towards Online Shopping

Effectiveness of a retail websites develops attitudes of consumers towards that. The issue of assessing attitudes towards a retail website (AST) has not been researched for so many times. Nevertheless, Kim et al. (2012) assumed that AST resembles attitudes toward adverts (AAD). They formed their assumption on the basis of previous studies relating to effectiveness of advertising which is assessed by AAD (Seock and Norton, 2007). Standing on their ground, Chen and Wells (1999) argued that AST refers to the tendency of the consumers to react either positively or negatively towards the contents of a retail website.

Donthu (2001) developed SITEQUAL, as a model to assess the quality of a website from consumers’ perspective. The SITEQUAL assesses the quality of a website from nine dimensions; aesthetic design, ease of use, competitive value, processing speed, security, clarity of ordering, product quality assurance, product uniqueness and corporate and brand equity. The extraction from the test result indicated that AST has a positive relationship with attitude toward the site loyalty and shopping likelihood. From the study of Goldenberg et al. (2012) it was clear that AST has direct influences on the intention to purchase and attitudes towards brand. Several studies have been conducted earlier to measure the effectiveness of a website and its ability to form attitude towards buying from that website and they have indicated several factors in this regard. In the study of Park and Kim (2003) the main concern was towards the relationship of buying behaviour of online consumer with different characteristics of online shopping. Findings of that study concluded that user interface quality, information quality and security assurance influence satisfaction of being informed and other benefits having direct impact on the commitment to purchase and real purchase from each and every consumer. Meanwhile, Shergill and Chen (2005) stated four key aspects that can directly influence consumers’ attitudes towards a website.

Those four aspects are web site design, its reliability, security, privacy and customer service. They have also looked over the reaction of four different types of online buyers (e.g. trial, occasional, frequent and regular online buyers) towards those four key aspects. The study conducted by Elliot and Speck (2005) took attention towards five factors such as ease of use, entertainment, product information, currency and trust that can have a significant impact on the attitude of consumers toward a retail website. Moreover, they examined the relationship of those website factors with two individual variables (online shopping experience and product involvement) and the way they influence on the attitude toward a retail website.

In summary and based on the above discussion, the studies conducted previously primarily emphasised on several attributes of the information system that influence attitude of online consumers. This paper will shade light on information system as well as on other variables such as consumer characteristics and intermediates which have been examined in this paper in detail.
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