A Conceptual Framework to Understanding Online Consumer Buying Behavior

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ABSTRACT

Online shopping is becoming a well-accepted way to purchase a variety of products and services. For online shoppers, an online interactive hypertext environment enables them to search and control information; alteration in the traditional mass media environment in which the sender of messages largely controls what will be seen and heard as well as shift of control in favor of the receiver for customization of information, and quick comparative analysis among competing products/services. The attempt has been made by the researcher to include conceptual framework of online consumer buying behavior by including various aspects of literature review viz., attitude, orientation and motivation towards online shopping. An attempt would be made in this paper to put forward results and findings based on critical review of available literature in form of earlier research studies relating to trends, growth, developments and future potentials of e-commerce and evolving behavioral patterns of online shopping activities considering its diffusion and issues especially concerning to gender, security etc. with its implications on e-marketplaces, society and businesses in near future. Finally, this study discovered a significantly impact of Consumer online buying behavior and Important managerial implications and recommendations are also presented.

Keywords: Buying Behaviour, Internet Users, Online Consumers, Online Shopping, Online Store, Shopping Orientation

Online shopping is becoming a well-accepted way to purchase variety of products and services viz., computer products; automobiles; travel products; investment products; clothing; flowers; books; music; and homes. It has grown positively because of reasons viz., technological advances; changed perceptions of the corporate world; convenient and customized offering by companies; availability of better navigation software as well as search engines; increase in the quality and quantity of the available information on the Internet, and above all changing lifestyles of Internet users searching for pleasant and exciting experience. The online presence of well-known companies and brands too are responsible for generating greater interest among Internet users towards online shopping. Its key benefits to marketers include viz., lower cost of doing business; an opportunity to smaller entrepreneur for doing business and

DOI: 10.4018/ijom.2013010104
that of also competition with bigger organizations as well as easier availability of information about products and services at relatively lower prices (Hoffman, Novak, & Chaterjee, 1995). For online shoppers, an online interactive hypertext environment enables them to search and control information; alteration in the traditional mass media environment in which the sender of messages largely controls what will be seen and heard as well as shift of control in favour of the receiver for customization of information, and quick comparative analysis among competing products/services.

An attempt has been made by the researchers to collect various kinds of information and data from the available books; research journals; business newspapers; and reports published by various State and the Central Government of India as well as by Agencies.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS ONLINE SHOPPING

Despite an increasing number of online shoppers and offering of wide range of products on Internet, one finds paucity of research work undertaken with a focus on demographic variables especially gender as well as the attitudes; perceptions and profiling of online shoppers worldwide and especially in India.

An attempt has been made by the researcher to throw light on attitudes of online shoppers reflected through their online shopping activities as follows.

Anne (2007) focused on the appearance of new kinds of risk and new risk-relievers in electronic buying situations. A qualitative study was conducted in order to identify risk dimensions and risk relievers. The links between risk and risk-relievers were taken into account. A quantitative survey was conducted to measure perceived risk level and risk-reliever utility, and to present a cluster analysis of consumer risk reduction behaviour based on risk-reliever utility scores. Author identified different type of risks such as the risks of Security; Confidentiality and Credibility which were perceived as the strongest risks. The results of the study suggested that online retailers should build web sites that are not only useful, secure, and respect privacy, but it should be trustworthy to reduce risk associated with buying of product or service. Higher Perceptions of privacy and security were found as highly associated with a promise of safeguards for personal information (Anne-Sophie Cases, 2007).

Shwu (2003), examined relationships between Internet users’ concerns and perceptions of online shopping. The attitude of Internet users toward online shopping was measured using the relationship between the attitudes and its attitude and influence factors showed that Fishbin Model could effectively measure consumer characteristics. Author analyzed the factors affecting the online consumer’s behavior and examined how e-marketers can influence the outcome of the virtual interaction and buying process by focusing their marketing efforts on elements shaping the customer’s virtual experience (Shwu, 2003).

Chanaka (2004) studied on a Value-Attitude-Behaviour Model to investigate the role of personal values in online shopping consumer behaviour. Structural Equation Modelling identified that personal values such as self-direction, enjoyment, and self-achievement were significantly related to positive attitudes towards online shopping. Individual attitudes toward online shopping were direct predictor of buying behaviour, and mediated the relationship between personal values and behaviour of online shoppers. This hierarchical relationship among personal values, attitudes and behaviour need to exploited by e-tailors to position e-shops that provides a persuasive means to e-shoppers to better satisfy needs of online shoppers (Jayawardhena, 2004).

Glenn.J. Browne and others (2004) undertook study to develop insight into problems concerning online shopping by assessing online shoppers’ beliefs and preferences from physical stores. Internet business problems included the need to structure internal and external business processes to serve customers appropriately for online shopping. Marketers need to provide
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