Comparing Mobile and Internet Adoption Factors of Loyalty and Satisfaction with Online Shopping Consumers

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ABSTRACT

This research looks at the adoption of Internet and mobile applications comparing the factors that influence loyalty and satisfaction. It is the intent of this exploratory study to examine factors of adoption that are common in both Japan and the United States. After a comprehensive review of the literature, we derived a research model for and tested related hypotheses with data collected from consumers in both Japan and the United States. The authors used online shopping as the common application between Internet and mobile technologies. They found that the original technology acceptance model factors to be less important in explaining the overall variance of satisfaction, especially with mobile applications, than expected. This research takes an important first step in understanding the adoption of online shopping by differentiating mobile and Internet factors. Inertia was found to be critical in explaining satisfaction only with mobile applications. This factor is important for online retailers who count on repeat sales as a major part of their revenue. Loyalty is key to online retailers identifying the factors that will enhance the satisfaction of the online consumer. This study provides managers with a framework for online shopping which areas they need to focus upon when launching new online products, such as shaping and/or changing their consumers’ attitude toward using the Internet, making their Website easier to use, and enhancing the perceived usefulness of the technologies that allow consumers to access their products online.

Keywords: Consumer Loyalty, E-Satisfaction, Japan, Mobile Applications, Online Shopping, United States

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INTRODUCTION

Mobile technologies have grown tremendously in the past ten years. In the United States in 1999 there were 36.7 users per 100 people (Akiyoshi & Ono, 2008). In 2005, there were 94,745,000 mobile phone subscribers in Japan and 201,650,000 mobile phone subscribers in the United States, while in 2009 Japan’s mobile phone subscribers grew to 107,490,000 subscribers and the United States grew to 285,610,580 million subscribers, a growth rate of 13.5% in Japan and 41.8% in the United States. Interesting enough, most cell phone subscribers are more likely to have a higher education, a higher income, have a full time job and are usually married with children (Akiyoshi & Ono, 2008). In Japan in 1999 there were 21.4 users per 100 people, where in 2005 there were 62.1 users per 100 people, a growth rate of 190% over five years. In 2009, the diffusion rate of mobile phone among people in individual base was 78.4% in Japan (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication, 2010). In Japan, mobile phone use has grown from 1995 to 2000 skyrocketed from around 5% to 90% of the population and this can be attributed to the introduction of “i-mode” by Japan’s largest mobile service provider NTT DoCoMo which allows mobile devices to access the Internet (Akiyoshi & Ono, 2008). Early adopters of the Internet tended “to be predominantly male, young, affluent, and well-educated,” but the introduction of DoCoMo’s “i-mode” brought Internet technologies to the “so-called marginalized groups consisting of women, the elderly, the less educated, and the poor” (Akiyoshi & Ono, 2008). Mobile technology use differs greatly between the United States and Japan but the drivers behind the phenomenal growth of mobile technologies, and specifically mobile phones, can be attributed to common themes. Those themes are affordability, accessibility, compatibility, effort or ease of use, experience, perceived playfulness, perceived usefulness, service quality, safety concerns, social influences and technical support. While each of these categories offers different motivations, they seem to show up in multiple studies examining the Internet and mobile technology research. Interesting enough is that mobile Internet in the United States has followed Japan at a considerable distance. In addition to the common drivers of Internet and mobile applications, there are several applications that specifically drive the success of mobile applications including, among other items, mobile web surfing, mobile learning, gaming and entertainment, mobile banking or mobile reservations, not to mention making a phone call or texting (Wang, Wu, & Wang, 2009)

Internet use in Japan has had a much more varied history than in most western nations. Many of the basic assumptions in early computers and Internet designs that made them so accessible in places like America actually inhibited adoption in the Asian markets. The QWERTY keyboard especially was an easy transition for Americans as it leveraged on their experience with the typewriters that were common throughout the country. Asian countries, including Japan, lacked this background though since no suitable type writer analog was ever adopted for the complex written languages of the region (Akiyoshi & Ono, 2008). This meant that the keyboard interface, while it was modified to accept the Japanese language, was not an intuitive interface. The dominant language of the Internet was English at the time of initial creation, although it has incorporated most all language alphabets at this point. These factors combined to cause the penetration of Internet use in Japan to be extremely low when compared to other modern nations at the time. At the time of the introduction of mobile devices Japanese Internet users were only 219 per 1000, with America having 367 per 1000 at the same point in time (Akiyoshi & Ono, 2008). Mobile technology met a much different reception when introduced in Japan. Where the QWERTY keyboard was foreign and unintuitive, mobile devices had systems designed to work with the Japanese language (Lindmark, Bohlin, & Andersson, 2004). The new mobile interfaces were not necessarily easier to use, but it was not harder to use either for users that had not
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