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ONLINE SHOPPING: WHAT MAKE CONSUMER'S PREFER TO IT?

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INTRODUCTION

Electronic Commerce has experienced a rapid growth in the last few decades and the advancement of Internet provides a prospect for online shopping and changed the way consumers buy goods and services (Anitha, 2017). With the ever-growing impact of the internet on the lifestyles of consumers, the internet has been becoming both a tool and a segment of cyberculture (Macek, 2004), and a more significant marketing medium.

The Internet has transformed the lifestyle of the people across the world due to which a rapid change in the lives of people seems remarkable. This situation has increased the trend of online shopping and thus changed the traditional way to shop where people used to physically visit the store, have the feel of the product, negotiating the prices and thus the final purchases happen. Online shopping has altogether changed this form of shopping by allowing the customers an easier and riskier form to picky and pay for their products (Nazir and Haq, 2018). Research done by IBISWorld (2012) indicates that the e-commerce and online auctions industry has experienced exceptionally rapid growth since the beginning of the decade, outperforming most retail sectors due to the fact that internet use becomes more commonplace and consumers are more comfortable with making purchases online. Also, internet payment systems have made buying online more easy and secure. (Jayawardhena, 2004).

Some study found that consumer's shopping preferences are strongly influenced by demographic factors such as age, income, marital status, number of family members and gender. In addition, the presence of online store applications on smartphones can make the experience of using the internet to access online shopping easier. Ease of use is the basis in choosing to shop online (Richa, 2012). With this concern, marketing professionals and academics are still searching for the factors that influence consumer preference for shopping on the Internet.

FACTORS INFLUENCE CONSUMER PREFERENCE

Convenience

Most of the studies on shopping orientation has repeatedly shown that the major reason for online shopping is convenience and time efficiency. Convenience ensures saving the time, and the physical and the mental energy spent on shopping because the convenience-oriented shoppers usually asses the time and effort required for the shopping process, from the time it takes them to get to the store, to how long the lines usually are and how long it takes to finish the buying process. The ability to shop online without leaving the home and to have the products and/or services delivered to the door is one of the great interests to many online shoppers (Beck and Lynch, 2001). Empirical research shows that convenient of the internet is one of the impacts on consumers' willingness to buy online (Wang, Zhang, and Nguyen, 2005). Online shopping is available for customers around the clock comparing to traditional store as it is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Furthermore, Zhou, Dai, and Zhang (2007) identified that the internet provides solutions for the requirements that convenience shoppers have which is fast access to information for a

significant number of stores, search engines and price comparison opportunities, no checkout lines, no need to even leave the house and no closing hours. Thus, consumers with more positive convenience and information attitudes towards online shopping had higher online searching and purchasing behavior. Korgaonkar, Petrescu, and Becerra (2014) conclude that consumers who are convenience oriented have a positive outlook towards online purchase intention

Variety-seeking orientation

In the context of shopping orientations, variety-seeking represent consumer's willingness to try new products, take chances and buy diverse products, instead of sticking with a single preferred product or brand. Variety of choice offered by the internet environment is wider than the one offered by regular shops and can be attractive to consumer at a lower cost (Huang and Yang, 2010). This factor makes variety-seeking consumer get satisfaction in buying and trying different things because the internet offers them fast access to a variety of goods.

Furthermore, online shopping also allows customers to choose products based on their own needs and preferences. Through the internet, they can get multiple sources of information that are useful and can help them to make decision whereby they can compare product offerings, learn more about product features, customer preferences and pricing. Huang *et al* (2010) identified that choice offered by the internet environment is wider than the one offered by regular shop and can be attractive to consumers. Online shoppers always want to seek information within few clicks and reach to the most relevant information according to their requirements such as competitive brands, best price offers, product specification and consumer word-of-mouth (Gao, 2012).

Price Consciousness

Price consciousness is the degree to which a consumer focuses exclusively on paying low prices. This type of consumers is more likely to purchase online when they can find a lower price for product/service (Koyuncu and Bhattacharya, 2004). Comparing prices and intention to saving money by purchasing discounted item through online are an important factor that motivate consumers to prefer online shopping. This might be the cause of the presumption that in general, it is cheaper to purchase of product online because of lower cost regarding the staff and physical store.

Furthermore, this market segment is also known to be more knowledgeable and "thrifty" in their spending patterns. Therefore, price-conscious consumers are more likely to purchase online when e-shopping sites offer a lower price or financial benefits (Koyuncu *et al*, 2004). These online savings in the form of an online deal is likely to generate some type of purchase satisfaction resulting in the likelihood of repeat purchase behavior and possibly over time, the compulsive buying of e-deals (Dholakia, 2011). This is why some researchers consider that economic consumers, who are price oriented, are more likely to buy online (Zhou, Dai, and Zhang, 2007).

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, most of previous studies found that consumers prefer online shopping because of convenience, variety-seeking orientation, and price consciousness. In this era online shopping is a viable preference to consumers as the internet has become an essential tool for communication and business worldwide. As a marketer, they need to realize that information technology nowadays enhanced the consumers towards online shopping whereby it can provide all types of good available in the virtual world and customer can access these shops anytime without stepping out of their home.

To cope with this situation, company need to make sure the marketing strategies that they develop must be in line with this current trend. By providing the detailed information about the price and features of products in their online channel it can attract more customer to explore,

analyses and compare the similar products and services with other outlet and can help them to make their purchase decisions. Company also need to prepare themselves to move in traditional markets as well as expanding into the online market by setting target consumers and market segments accordingly so that the products offered are more targeted and are able to increase the sales.

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