

Consumer acceptance of apparel e-commerce–Ethiopia

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Abstract

In Ethiopia e-commerce for apparel products is growing by leaps and bounds among customers. It plays a significant role in the development and economic growth of country. Moreover, many companies are more active in focusing on online trade. It is very important to focus on the consumer acceptance towards e-commerce for apparel. According to famous researches consumer acceptance is one important ingredient for the companies to be successful and profitable. An investigation has been made to identify the key factors related to acceptance of e-commerce for apparel products in Ethiopia. An online survey has been used for this research to obtain the feedback from the customers all around Ethiopia; their feedback/response has been assessed using statistical analysis techniques. The results revealed that the inability to physically interact with an item, fear of risk security and privacy and lack of e-commerce infrastructure are the main barriers that prevent the consumers from online apparel product shopping. Acceptance levels are likely to be influenced by offering infrastructure like encouraging the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), improving the level of information on clothing sizes and fit on product web pages, trailing different checkout processes and different levels of information on product web pages, adding customer ratings and reviews to the website, offering free returns, providing virtual fitting, robotic mannequin which can adopt their precise, individual body shape and Substantial changes have been identified in this work to broaden the acceptance of e-commerce for apparel in Ethiopia.

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Keywords: E-commerce; Consumer acceptance; ICT; Robotic mannequin.

1. Introduction

Over the last years it has been notice an increase of e-commerce in Ethiopia. Consumers are more and more attracted by online shopping due to its convenience in terms of times, price flexibility and availability of varieties of product and product range on a single platform (Ferri, Grifoni, & Guzzo, 2008). The outlook for e-commerce depends on consumer acceptance of the use internet technologies. Consumer acceptance in

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terms of trust is considered to be important when using new technologies, including the web and e-commerce (Windham & Orton, 2000). Nowadays ways of doing things usually create uncertainty among consumers. Trust is generally an important factor which plays a crucial role in acceptance of online purchase. An often mentioned reason for consumers' not purchasing from online is the lack of trust (Petrovic, Ksela, Fallenbock, & Kittl, 2003). Thus, for consumer acceptance of online shopping, there is need of promoting trust and confidence on the use of e-commerce. Security, privacy issues and lack of e-commerce infrastructure are seen as main barriers to shopping online (Windham & Orton, 2000). The anonymity and lack of physical interactions distance are the potential risk in e-commerce (Cazier, Shao, & St. Louis, 2006). In the offline environment many elements of personal interaction are used, for example, gesture and body language, facial expression, are not applicable in an online environment (Grabner-Krauter & Kaluscha, 2003). Many consumers appreciate the real shopping experience of physically trying on and touching the items. So, in order to understand why consumers are not engage in e-commerce activities, it is vital to study the methods which improve consumer acceptance of apparel e-commerce (Cazier, Shao, & St. Louis, 2006).

E-commerce is an outcome of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) revolution in economic fields or the most suitable way of contribution to economic growth. A common definition of e-commerce is to provide trade processes through transaction of goods and services and data interchange, via computer networks such as the Internet (UNCTAD 2010, Tsai, Huang, & Lin, 2004). The contexts for e-commerce are both commercial (e.g., e-tailing and e-banking) and non-commercial (e.g., e-government and e-health). E-commerce offer the promise of increased convenience, lower transacting costs, increased consumer choices, price flexibility and greater accessibility by eliminating space and time constraints (De Ruyter, Wetzels, & Kleijnen, 2001).

Despite all the facts, uncertainty and fears of opportunism still characterize the online context, and varying degrees of consumer acceptance and engagement in the use of e-commerce have been observed (Harridge-March, 2006). This research study describes the factors important for development of e-commerce acceptance by individual consumers. The purpose of this research study is to determine appropriate measures for the acceptance apparel online purchasing by consumers.

This study provides government, e-retailers and website developers with a framework for which areas they need to focus upon when launching new online products, making their website user friendly, and improving the perceived usefulness of the technologies that allow consumers to access their products online and encouraging the use of information and communication technology.

2. Literature review

E-commerce involves business communication and transmission over networks and through computers, specifically the buying and selling of products and services, and the transaction of funds through digital communications. E-commerce is a way to do business in particular markets and for selected customers, which can increase sales volume, lower cost or provide more real-time information to customers (Hutt & Speh, 2004). The users do not even have to go outside the door. Many customers seek information online and make their purchase offline (Slevin, 2000).

Indirect and direct are the two types of e-commerce i.e. Indirect e-commerce is when a consumer orders a product online, pay through an invoice or by cash on delivery and received the product in a traditional way. Direct e-commerce is when the consumer orders, pays and also gets the digitalized product, such a games, music and services delivered online (SOU-Statens Offentliga Utredningar 1999). Other types of e-commerce, which are more known, are: B2C (Business-to-Consumer), B2B (Business-to-Business), C2C (Consumer-to-Consumer), B2G (Business-to-Government), C2B (Consumer-to-Business) and M-Commerce (mobile commerce) (WikiBooks, 2006). In this research we have chosen B2C e-commerce for the study of consumer acceptance (Hutt & Speh, 2004). Electronic commerce acceptance is broadly described as the consumer's engagement in buying and selling of goods and services and electronic exchange relationships with e-retailers. Hence, online transactions can be viewed as specimen of interactive marketing communications (Pavlou & Stewart, 2000). Consumer's acceptance is depends on trust of consumer on e-commerce, which is a defining factor of social interactions and economic in which uncertainty is present. Practically all interactions require a trust element, particularly those conducted in the uncertain environment of e-commerce (Ba & Pavlou, 2002). Trust has long been regarded as a catalyst in consumer-retailers relationships because it provides expectations of successful transactions (Schurr & Ozanne,

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