Journal of Air Transport Management 32 (2013) 58–64

Contents lists available at SciVerse ScienceDirect

Journal of Air Transport Management

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jairtraman

Online drivers of consumer purchase of website airline tickets

Tomás Escobar-Rodríguez [a], Elena Carvajal-Trujillo [b,*]

[a] Department of Accounting and Information Systems, University of Huelva, Plaza de la Merced, 21002 Huelva, Spain
[b] Department of Business Administration and Marketing, University of Huelva, Plaza de la Merced, 21002 Huelva, Spain

Keywords:
Airline marketing
Online consumer behavior
Behavioral intentions
Airline e-commerce
Airline tickets

A B S T R A C T

This study aims to examine the different drivers of online airline ticket purchasing behavior and to validate a new conceptual framework (Venkatesh et al., 2012) in this context. Based on the Extended Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT2), this paper includes seven explanatory variables: performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, hedonic motivation, price saving, and habit. Data from 1360 usable questionnaires, collected in Spain, were tested against the research model. Our findings indicate that the main predictors of online purchase intention are, in order of relevance, habit, price saving, performance expectancy, and facilitating conditions. However, there is no significant impact of effort expectancy on the online purchase intention, social influence from referents; and hedonic motivation to use the website. On the other hand, the results highlight that the main predictors of use behavior are, in order of importance, online purchase intention, habit, and facilitating conditions.

1. Introduction

The Internet is ideal for the tourism industry due to the characteristics of its products (McCole, 2002) which are: 1) intangible, 2) their production and consumption are inseparable 3) perishable and 4) seasonal.

Among the products consumers would rather book online instead of at their local travel agent are airline tickets, accommodation as well as other tourism products and services (Morrison et al., 2001). The advantages that these online purchases bring are convenience, price reductions and product diversity (Forgas et al., 2012).

The use of IT permits the tourism and hospitality industry to obtain competitive advantages, offering lower distribution costs, greater tourist satisfaction, marketing efficacy and greater competitiveness (Tsai et al., 2005).

In the context of tourism, this study adapts a new model, UTAUT2, to the formulation of online purchase intentions and online purchase (Venkatesh et al., 2012). UTAUT2 presents some advantages over UTAUT in consumer purchase of online airline tickets. In addition, this paper adapts the price value construct because online purchase does not only entail zero cost for the user but also a series of benefits. In addition, the direct influence of the adaptation of the price value construct on the use of websites when buying airline tickets is incorporated. This study aims to analyze the different drivers of online airline ticket purchasing behavior and to validate a new conceptual framework, the UTAUT2 (Venkatesh et al., 2012), in this context.

2. Theoretical background

The analysis of the intention to use has traditionally been carried out via UTAUT (San Martín and Herrero, 2012), TAM (Bigné et al., 2010; Herrero and San Martín, 2012) and TPB (Ruiz-Mafe et al., 2013), which are models designed for use in an organizational context (i.e., to understand the factors which influence employee IT acceptance and/or use) but not necessarily in a consumer context (i.e., to specifically explain IT acceptance and/or use), as is the case with UTAUT2.

UTAUT2 is an extension of UTAUT in a "consumer use context" (Venkatesh et al., 2012). What is more, UTAUT2 incorporates additional constructs related to the consumer such as hedonic motivation, price value and habit. As a result, it can be said that its main contribution is its adaptation to consumer IT acceptance.

UTAUT2 redefines UTAUT constructs from the point of view of the consumer instead of from the organization employee (Venkatesh et al., 2012). UTAUT2 also integrates new constructs and new relations to explain consumer IT acceptance and use (Venkatesh et al., 2012). UTAUT2 considers seven constructs; four

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +34 959217821; fax: +34 959217839.
E-mail addresses: tescobar@uhu.es (T. Escobar-Rodríguez), carvajal.trujillo@dem.uhu.es (E. Carvajal-Trujillo).

0969-6997/$ – see front matter © 2013 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jairtraman.2013.06.018

from UTAUT (performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence and facilitating conditions) plus three new constructs: hedonic motivation, price value, and habit. UTAUT2 adapts the definitions of the seven constructs to consumer technology acceptance (Venkatesh et al., 2012; Table 1).

The incorporation of the hedonic or intrinsic motivation construct complements UTAUT which only considers the extrinsic motivation or utilitarian value through the performance expectancy construct (Venkatesh et al., 2012). The performance expectancy construct has proved to be the strongest predictor of use intention (Venkatesh et al., 2003). It is precisely in the consumer context that hedonic motivation has been demonstrated to be a relevant predictor of technology acceptance and use (Brown and Venkatesh, 2005; Childers et al., 2001). The second construct incorporated in UTAUT2, price value, endeavors to consider the differences between the monetary cost of technology use in the organizational context where UTAUT was configured, and the consumer context. In this study; the online airline ticket purchasing does not entail a cost for the consumer but could result in saving money or obtaining the best product for a given price (Babin et al., 1994; Ryan and Rao, 2008). Thus, the proposed model includes price saving and perceived benefits instead of the price value construct. Finally, the habit construct has been used in several papers as a predictor of technology use.

The habit has been introduced as predictor of technology actual use in the literature (Davis and Venkatesh, 2004; Kim and Malhotra, 2005; Kim et al., 2005; Limayem et al., 2007; Venkatesh et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2013). Limayem et al. (2007) indicated that future research should continue analyzing the influence of habit in technology actual usage. UTAUT2 integrates the habit construct to explain consumer technology acceptance and use (Venkatesh et al., 2012). Then, several papers showed habit is a relevant factor influencing technology use and Venkatesh et al. (2012) incorporated habit into UTAUT2 in order to explain consumer technology use. UTAUT2 operationalizes habit according to Limayem et al. (2007), that is to say, as a self-reported perception. According to Limayem et al. (2007)'s approximation, which operationalize habit following a perception-based approach, it has been demonstrated that habit has a direct effect on technology use and furthermore a more moderate effect on intention, since intention to use technology is of less importance as habit increases (Limayem et al., 2007).

Bearing in mind the relations and constructs of UTAUT2 and the reviewed literature, we propose the following hypothesis with respect to online purchase intention and online purchase:

H1. The performance expectancy in the use of airline company e-commerce websites positively affects online purchase intention.
H2. The effort expectancy in the use of airline company e-commerce websites positively affects online purchase intention.
H3. The social influence regarding the use of airline company e-commerce websites positively affects online purchase intention.
H4. The facilitating conditions perceived in the use of airline company e-commerce websites positively affect online purchase intention.
H5. The hedonic motivation perceived in the use of airline company e-commerce websites positively affects online purchase intention.
H6. The habit regarding the use of airline company e-commerce websites positively affects online purchase intention.
H7. The facilitating conditions perceived in the use of airline company e-commerce websites positively affect online purchase use.
H8. The habit regarding the use of airline company e-commerce websites positively affects online purchase use.
H9. The online purchase intention en airline company e-commerce websites positively affects online purchase use.
H10. Price saving and perceived benefits in the use of airline company e-commerce websites positively affect online purchase intention.
H11. Price saving and perceived benefits in the use of airline company e-commerce websites positively affect online purchase use.

3. Methodology

3.1. Measurements

We adapt a preliminary list of measurement items from e-commerce, IT acceptance and tourism literature: original UTAUT, extended UTAUT (UTAUT2), online shopping, e-commerce, other studies and associated theories (Venkatesh et al., 2003; Wu and Wang, 2005; Jensen, 2012; San Martín and Herrero, 2012; Venkatesh et al., 2012; Wen, 2012). 28 items were generated through this procedure. Table 4 provides a detailed summary of items measured through multi-item scales for the measurement of the constructs in which responses from the participants were measured by a seven-point Likert scale. This seven point scale anchored from 1 (="strongly disagree") to 7 (="strongly agree").

Table 1
Definition of constructs in UTAUT and UTAUT2.

Core constructs	UTAUT definitions	UTAUT2 definitions
Performance expectancy	"The degree to which an individual believes that using the system will help him or her to attain gains in job performance"	"The degree to which using a technology will provide benefits to consumers in performing certain activities"
Effort expectancy	"The degree of ease associated with the use of the system"	"The degree of ease associated with consumers' use of technology"
Social influence	"The degree to which an individual perceives that important others believes he or she should use the new system"	"The consumers perceive that important others (e.g., family and friends) believe they should use a particular technology"
Facilitating conditions	"The degree to which an individual believes that an organizational and technical infrastructure exists to support use of the system"	"Consumers' perceptions of the resources and support available to perform a behavior (e.g., Brown and Venkatesh, 2005; Venkatesh et al., 2003)"
Hedonic motivation	Not considered	"The fun or pleasure derived from using a technology"
Price value	Not considered	"Consumers'cognitive tradeoff between the perceived benefits of the applications and the monetary cost for using them" (Dodds et al., 1991)
Habit	Not considered	"The extent to which people tend to perform behaviors automatically because of learning" (Limayem et al., 2007)