

Chapter 36

Exploring the Role of E–Servicescape Dimensions on Customer Online Shopping: A Stimulus–Organism–Response Paradigm

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ABSTRACT

With limited empirical evidence and an incomplete understanding of e-servicescape environment, its effects on e-commerce websites still needs to be explored. Hence, the study understands and assesses the effects of e-servicescape environment on customer purchase behavior, considering the moderating role of gender. The stimulus-organism-response framework was adapted to formulate a conceptual model, in which the e-servicescape (stimulus) features were modelled as an antecedent of customer trust (organism) on website that directs customer behaviour of purchase intention (response). To conduct an analysis, a data sample of 304 responses was collected from those who have earlier used e-commerce websites using a structural equation modelling technique. Results of the study shows that e-servicescape dimensions are a strong predictor of trust that strongly impacts customer purchase intention. Results further reveal that in an online environment, the gender gap is depleting as it impacts all three dimensions of the e-servicescape on customer behavior which remains consistent for both groups.

1. INTRODUCTION

As e-commerce rises, the retail landscape has been revamped for customer and retailer. Customer is presented with superior shopping experience and tailored offers, whereas a retailer is given better opportunities to reach and interact with customers. Additionally, growth of e-commerce is found more

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rampant in budding markets as compared to developed countries due to increasing diffusion of information technology, varying customer lifestyle, and increasing customer internet experience (Narang & Trivedi, 2016). Studies demonstrate that e-commerce is growing at a fast pace because of unparalleled growth in number of online retailers and sales. As per statistics of 2018, total internet users in India accounted to 483 million (Statista, 2019). By 2019, this figure of internet users is anticipated to rise by 627 million (Kantar IMRB, 2019). Despite its untapped potential, India already stands as second largest online market worldwide, while China grasps at first position. Bearing this in mind, e-retailers attention has moved towards customers' adoption of online sales channel like e-commerce and further motivating their purchases online. In an experts discussion taken place in Third Annual E-commerce Money Africa Confex in 2017- retailers, academicians and other e-commerce stakeholders discussed on how designs of websites must be centered towards developing economies to offer gripping online experience to surge online purchase (Fastmoving, 2017).

To increase knowledge of possible explanations towards role of e-servicescape dimensions and their holistic effect on purchase intention, a study by (Wu, Quyen, & Rivas, 2017) stated that gender plays a crucial role of moderator in online purchase experience. Furthermore, prior research suggests the assessment of gender differences in online service environments towards their purchase behavior (Cambra-Fierro, Melero-Polo, & Javier Sese, 2016; Hammedi, Kandampully, Zhang, & Bouquiaux, 2015; Ruane & Wallace, 2013). Role of gender has been examined and nested with numerous viewpoints like website design and its usefulness (Cyr & Bonanni, 2005), risk in online shopping (Garbarino & Strahilevitz, 2004; Hong, 2015) and online shopping behavior (Pascual-Miguel, Agudo-Peregrina, & Chaparro-Peláez, 2015). In e-commerce studies context, effect of e-servicescape dimensions on gender difference are at an early stage (Verbraken, Goethals, Verbeke, & Baesens, 2014; Zhang, Lu, Gupta, & Zhao, 2014). Therefore, considering the lack of understanding with respect to moderating role of gender for servicescape environment, this study analyses the influence of different gender (male and female) on the relationship between key e-servicescape dimensions and website trust towards purchase intentions.

In spite of many calls for empirical studies in the field of e-commerce development for developing economies, exploration and investigation in this region remains scarce (Ahmed & Akhlaq, 2015; Kshetri, 2007). The existing models to assess technology adoption like Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000), UTAUT (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, 2003) etc. provides insights towards e-commerce acceptance in developing economies, but they offer restricted knowledge about formation of trust among customers by efficient website design and its final resultant i.e. purchase intentions (Yadav & Mahara, 2017). Therefore, current study puts forward a notion that the above discussed method (e-servicescape dimensions, trust, and purchase intentions) is all sequential in process and stimulus-organism-response (SOR) framework will help in better understanding of the relations. SOR framework is regarded as more inclusive in elucidation of cognitive and affective situations extracted from customers and their following behavior from interaction with online shopping environment or e-servicescape (Tran & Strutton, 2019; Buxbaum, 2016; Vieira, 2013). Yet, empirical evidence lacks on usage of SOR framework towards conception of trust through e-servicescape dimensions and following purchase intentions on e-commerce websites in developing economies. Subsequently, developing economies differ drastically from developed economies; this warrants review of concepts and customs applied on developing economies that conceptualized in developed economies (Sheth, 2011).

On the basis of aforementioned issues, the current study proposes various objectives and a model to advance purchase intentions from e-commerce websites in developing economies by exercising SOR framework. This study forwards various offerings to academicians, practitioners, government policy

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