Chapter 2
Domestic vs. International E–Shopping:
An Empirical Perceptions Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary commerce is completely different as regards features some years ago. Nowadays, a considerable number of individuals and firms take advantage of the information and communication technologies and conduct transactions online. In particular, the mobile industry along with the broad use of social networks and improvements in the internet bandwidth worldwide has created a completely different business environment. Consequently, the technology incited many consumers to cross-border e-shopping, allowing access to a wider variety of products and services, and in numerous circumstances, access to cheaper goods. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the perceptions internet users have towards e-shops focusing on Greece. More precisely, it aims to find out whether there are contingent differences on customers' perceptions regarding domestic vs. international e-shops, since a gradually augmented number of people have been expressing their preference on non-domestic e-stores for their purchases. Additionally, the chapter intends to shed light on the difficulty in understanding vital aspects of e-consumer behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

Online shopping is a fact. In reality, a large number of consumers do prefer to shop online than visiting a traditional brick-and-mortal store[1]. This 'phenomenon' is greatly based on Internet's wide utilization and bandwidth improvements, along with the continuous advancement of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Furthermore, the mobile technology industry and social networking have also played a vital role, enticing even more individuals to e-purchases. The digital buyer penetration percentage is expected to reach 65.2% at the end of 2021 compared to 60.2% in 2017 (Statista, 2017). Thus, Internet users are will be purchasing online. Additionally, not only does the number of adopters grow, but also the

volume of their purchases is proportionally increased (Monsuwe et al., 2004). According to E-Commerce Europe (2015) and E-Commerce Foundation (2017), European e-commerce sales were expected to reach €477 billion in 2015, €530 billion in 2016 and €602 billion in 2017.

In Greece, business-to-customer (B2C) online shopping has been emerged quite late compared to developed countries worldwide. Based on the latest national survey, 31% of Greek Internet users have conducted online transactions and spent 4.5 – 5 billion euros annually, however, about 20% of them made their first purchase in 2017 (Eltrun, 2017)! These results are also confirmed by Eurostat, which mentioned that 32% of Greek internet users shop online (Eurostat, 2017). Thus, despite the continuous and noteworthy annual growth -25% in 2015, 29% in 2016 and 32% in 2017-, Greek B2C e-commerce is far away from the 57% of the European-28 average (E-Commerce Europe, 2015; Eltrun, 2017; Eurostat, 2017).

Online shopping can significantly help both customers and enterprises involved. Extended literature review has revealed a considerable number of benefits to both entities. For example, consumers state that convenience, lower prices, time saving, improved customer service and ease of shopping comparison are some vital reasons that positively impact them to purchase online (Ahmad et al., 2010; E-Commerce Europe, 2015; Eltrun, 2015, 2017). On the other hand, firms mention that e-purchases help them reduce administrative costs and extend their business activities well beyond their brick-and-mortal stores.

One key characteristic of online shopping is its limitless feature. Every potential customer can hypothetically buy from any enterprise worldwide and every enterprise can attract customers beyond its geographic boundaries; from any location in the world. Therefore, online shopping gives access to a global market that expands well beyond the geographically limited borders of brick-and-mortal stores (Ahmad et al., 2010) and has greatly stimulated the process of cross-border e-shopping. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate Internet users' e-shops perceptions focused on Greek reality. Specifically, it aims to examine potential differences on their perceptions regarding domestic versus international e-shops, as a growing number of individuals choose non-domestic online stores to buy from. Characteristically, recent studies revealed that Greek e-shoppers prefer to purchase abroad (Eltrun, 2014, 2015); 60% and 65% of them bought from Greek e-stores in 2013 and 2014 in correspondence, whereas the 80%-90% of European adopters prefer to purchase from national e-stores (Eltrun, 2014, 2015). Hence, this study intends to shed light on shed light vital aspects of e-shopping behaviour and interpret this situation.

The rest of the chapter is organized as follows. The literature review in consumers' online buying behavior and the factors that encourage or hinder online shopping are presented in the next section, which is then followed by study's the methodology and results. The last section concludes the chapter by reflecting on the implications of the study, its limitations and future research directions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Online shopping catholic acceptance has forced many researchers to investigate e-consumer behavior. Hence, numerous studies have been taken place in e-commerce area from diverse perspectives trying to gain an improved insight of e-consumer behavior (Dennis et al., 2004). According to Dennis et al. (2009), there are two basic research streams that approach it. The first investigates technical specifications of an e-store; including interface, design and navigation (e.g. Hasan, 2016; Zhang & Von Dran, 2002), payment (e.g. Liao & Cheung, 2002; Yang et al., 2015), information (e.g. Mallagrada et al., 2016; McKinney et al., 2002), intention to use (e.g. Chakraborty et al., 2016; Chen & Hitt, 2002) and

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