


Chapter 84

The Implications of Unethical and Illegal Behavior in the World of E-Commerce

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ABSTRACT

The main focus of this chapter is to identify the behaviors of the consumers and sellers of e-commerce in Bahrain. It also seeks to understand the ethical and legal issues faced by the users of e-commerce and the various reasons for such behavior. The perception of the consumers regarding online retailers discussed through appropriate measures and research data. The chapter clearly explains the historical development of e-commerce in Bahrain and the processes and procedures of setting up an online business in the country. The common legal and ethical issues faced by the consumers discussed in detail and supported by different models to understand user behavior. The research onion method used to gather quantitative and qualitative data. The primary data collected through questionnaires and interviews whereas the secondary data collected through literature. The data analysis shows the results of the mixed method supported by different graphs and models. The different recommendations provided to solve the most prevalent problems confronted by the buyers and the sellers of e-commerce.

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INTRODUCTION

In this modern world of Globalization, the world is changing at a rapid speed and so is the technology around us. The factors affecting our daily life, along with the lives of the upcoming generation cannot be overseen. The modern advancement and developments have narrowed the space between human beings and machines (Al-Alawi, 2014). As has been stated by Cabell (2001), "around two years ago, the total amount of knowledge on e-Commerce could be collected in a small bucket of bits. But two years from now, we might float in a sea of information on digital technology alone". This is because technology keeps changing over time and it is hard to keep pace with the continuously changing digital environment. On one hand, human beings are using technology and compromising on their privacy and on the other hand, technology is satisfying the needs of the people. But we cannot overlook the fact that human beings are unpredictable, and it is not easy to control them. Due to this fact, there is a rise in the cybercrimes and a large number of people are misusing the technology to intentionally or unintentionally harm the other users around them. Despite the fact that there are many regulations and laws that protect the individuals, there has been a drastic increase in these crimes (Al-Alawi & Abdelgadir, 2006; Al-Alawi, 2014). These crimes are not just limited to using social media and internet, but they have also left a negative impact on the e-Commerce activities around us. The world of e-Commerce is so vast that it is almost impossible to measure the extent of this impact. In the modern world, e-Commerce has gained a widespread popularity and is one of the most useful platforms for businesses as well as individuals.

The emergence of e-Commerce has made the traditional business practices expand and reduced the limitations involved in the way people used to do business. For example, the appearance and forms of businesses have changed compared to the traditional systems and these changes are the basis of decisions in all economies. With the development of virtual systems in the markets and stores, it is possible for the consumers to shop at their convenience anytime and anywhere in the world without leaving their homes. They can choose and order products or services from a wide variety of virtual shops and pay on the spot. At the same time businesses can market their products and services through advertisements (Nanehkaran, 2013).

One of the most important characteristics of the Internet is its ever-changing and fluid characteristic. Web pages vanish in seconds and users pass through the electronic highway at a relatively fast speed. The ever-changing technology is also bringing along a vast number of unethical practices and actions and this issue has been widely discussed ever since the emergence of digital technology (Cabell, 2001).

On one hand, we can reasonably conclude that e-commerce has a large number of benefits which include faster buying and selling around the clock all over the world, low costs of operations and better quality of services, easy start-up and marketing, simple and fast business services and improved customer services. But on the other hand, we cannot overlook the threats posed by availing these benefits which include privacy and security issues, fraud, illegal access, initial costs of setting up web applications and websites, User resistance, technical software and hardware issues, unsolicited emails, false advertising, product warranty, cybersquatting and cyber security.

Statement of the Problem

The expanding growth of internet and e-Commerce activities have given rise to a number of legal and ethical issues being questioned. Most of the people want to get their tasks done as quickly as possible without much hassles and e-Commerce has provided them with a great medium where they can save

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