

Chapter II

Online Shopping Experience: A Conceptualization and Preliminary Results

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ABSTRACT

In this chapter, a model of online shopping experience is proposed to unify previous works of online consumer experience. Online shopping experience (OSE) is the interaction between shoppers and commercial web sites. It consists of physical, cognitive, and affective activities, and in-progress responses. Factors influencing shopping experience include individual characteristics of shoppers, characteristics of stores and commercial web sites, characteristics of products and shopping task, and other contextual factors. The outcomes of shopping experience have been studied in many ways. Based on this model, series of research questions can be asked to examine relationships between components of shopping experience and influencing factors, and between shopping experience and shopping outcomes. Preliminary results of a study are reported to illustrate the usefulness of the concept of online shopping experience.

INTRODUCTION

In modern society, it is obvious that the Internet has impacted the way we shop. This chapter focuses on consumer behavior in online retailing environments,

attempts to give a review of current research on online consumer behavior and suggests a research agenda for the future. It first proposes a model of the Online Shopping Experience (OSE), and then reports preliminary results of an empirical study using the concept of OSE. The model is different from other models in that it explicitly studies the cognitive and affective aspects of consumer behavior in online environments. The preliminary results support the applicability of the model in studying online consumer behavior. Further research will enhance our understanding of social and cognitive effects of Electronic Commerce on people, and yield fruitful findings to aid in the design of better online shopping environments, which has the capability to invoke better shopping experiences from both shoppers' and retailers' perspective.

There have been numerous studies in marketing and information systems that examined online shopping. This chapter takes a multi-disciplinary approach. A unified framework is proposed based on a review of past and current research on online consumer behavior. The framework is centered on the concept of Shopping Experience (SE), which is defined as the episodes of interaction between customers and commercial establishments. Applied to online environments, Online Shopping Experience (OSE) is the interaction between customers and commercial web sites. Similar to SE, the following attributes describe OSE: duration, breadth, depth, and intensity. We emphasize the dynamic and situated nature of *shopping*. Thus, OSE consists of a range of activities, including physical, cognitive, and affective activities, and in-progress responses. Also, OSE is situated among influential factors, such as characteristics of the store/site, the shopper, and the product or task involved. It produces outcomes as well. Once a shopping experience ends, the outcome becomes part of consumers' knowledge and past experience, which will impact the next shopping experience. Flow, an engrossing and enjoyable experience, is an optimal shopping experience. This conceptualization of Online Shopping Experience addresses the dynamic and situated nature of shopping by using both processes (activities) and states (in-process responses). The model incorporates and unifies major theories used by researchers to investigate online consumer behavior.

After presenting the concept of Online Shopping Experience, we lay out a research agenda to examine its nature and attributes, the factors influencing the experience, and the shopping outcomes. Since OSE is a newly defined concept, studies conducted so far are exploratory in nature, as an effort to verify the concept and to further refine its definition and structure. The chapter contributes to our existing knowledge by (1) mapping and relating scattered studies in different fields under a unified framework and (2) providing a starting point for further investigation efforts. Research in this stream is a unique effort to understanding online consumer behavior through a microscopic, exploratory approach, by looking into the internal states and processes during interactions between a shopper and web sites. Results from the studies will extend our knowledge of consumer behavior and human-computer interaction by including the Internet as a distinctive medium. The newly

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