


Chapter 7

The Online Shopping Boom, Knowledge Creation, and Consumer Behavior in the Digital Economy

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the impact of consumer preferences, transportation costs, and epidemic-COVID-19 on the growth of online shopping in China. Primary data was collected via questionnaires from 50 undergraduate students at Wenzhou-Kean

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University and analysed using descriptive, correlation, and regression methods. The findings support the significant influence of consumer preferences (H1) and COVID-19 (H3) on online shopping growth, while the impact of transportation costs (H2) is rejected. The results highlight the pivotal role of consumer behavior and pandemic-related factors in driving online shopping trends, offering insights for individuals, businesses, and policymakers to adapt to this evolving landscape.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the post-pandemic era, many people have found that the economic structure, social behavior, and social psychology have undergone historic changes in the past few years. Among them, the change in consumer behavior, especially the explosive growth of online shopping, has become a relatively intuitive and typical example. Many factors constitute the online shopping boom, among which the development and optimization of the Internet and globalization are regarded as important factors leading to the growth of online shopping by mainstream scholars. (Akhlaq & Ahmed, 2014). However, these two considerations alone are not enough to capture the essence of the popularity of online shopping. Given the rapid rise of online shopping and intensifying market competition, it is necessary to analyse the impact of consumers' subjective choice (consumer preferences), the objective advantages of online shopping (transportation costs), and historical events (COVID-19 epidemic) on the online shopping boom. Although past studies have shown that subjective factors, objective factors, and historical events are the reasons for the rise or fall of an industry (Tzeng & Henderson, 1999), the three subdivisions mentioned in this study cannot determine the direction and path of their impact on the growth of online shopping. In the current economic climate, it is essential to understand the reasons for the explosive growth of online shopping, especially for consumers and some physical stores. First, understand the formation of consumer preferences and their driving force on consumer behavior. Consumer preferences are seen by the organisation as having an indirect but profound impact on the growth of online shopping. Secondly, the article studies how objective factors such as transportation costs affect consumers' shopping choices and stores' operating strategies, resulting in leading to changes in the development of online shopping. Finally, the research examines how historical events, especially global spread events like COVID-19, have profoundly affected the development of online shopping. The above three factors fully explain the far-reaching impact of social development and historical changes on the online shopping industry. This discussion led to the development of research questions and their subsequent research objectives.

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