

Positive Attitudes of Undergraduate Students toward Online Shopping

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Abstract

In recent years, computers and the Internet have become an important part of modern societies. These technologies have influenced almost all aspects of daily life; from education to communication, from entertainment to business. Along with the spread of the Internet use, the acceptance of online shopping has been growing, especially in the developed parts of the world. However, electronic commerce is still in its infancy in developing countries. In this study, the author explored positive attitudes of undergraduate students toward online shopping and examined the association between positive attitudes of undergraduate students toward online shopping and their demographics variables: gender, age and income. And attitudes of online shoppers and non-online shoppers toward online shopping were compared. Participants of this study were undergraduate business students in a public university in Turkey. A paper-based questionnaire was used containing five-point Likert type scale to explore students' attitudes toward online shopping. A total of 314 students voluntarily participated to the study. It is found that in general participants have positive attitudes toward online shopping. Online shoppers have more positive attitudes than non-online shoppers toward online shopping. Generally male students have more positive attitudes toward online shopping than female counterparts. There is a positive correlation between income level and positive attitude toward online shopping; as monthly family income increases, participants have more positive attitudes toward online shopping.

Keywords: Online shopping, undergraduate students, positive attitudes

1.INTRODUCTION

Electronic commerce has become a worldwide phenomenon (Mahmood, Bagchi & Ford, 2004). According to Nielsen's 2008 report, more than 85 percent of the world's online population has used the Internet to make a purchase (Nielsen, 2008). The volume of business-to-consumer (B2C) e-commerce transactions has continued to increase. According to the United States Census Bureau, the total volume of B2C e-commerce transactions in the United States was estimated to be 298 billion dollars in 2009 with an increase of 2.1 percent from 2008 (United States Census Bureau, 2010). As a developing country, in Turkey, Internet use and B2C e-commerce transactions have also increased. The Interbank Card Center (BKM) reported that, in Turkey, while domestic and international e-commerce transactions with domestic cards were total of 1.8 billion Turkish liras (TL) (The total number of transactions = 17,668,587) in 2005, it reached to 14.1 billion TL (The total number of transactions = 96,138,157) in 2010 (BKM, 2011), (1 TL is about 0.55 U.S. dollars, December 06, 2011).

Online shopping has become a popular way to purchase almost everything from electronics to books and CDs to tickets and clothing. However there are considerable numbers of people still hesitating to buy online because of various reasons, such as security and privacy. Security issues, online fraud, reduced opportunity for sensory shopping, the postponement of consumption or enjoyment of tangible products until physical delivery, poor design interface, privacy concerns, limited product selection, and lack of face-to-face interactions with salespeople are some of the challenges that are often cited in the literature as obstacles for B2C e-commerce (Tamimi, Sebastianelli and Rajan, 2004). Barriers to online shopping can be categorized such as functional and psychological barriers (Rudolph, Rosenbloom and Wagner, 2004), as the major barriers which create customer resistance to innovations do (Ram and Sheth, 1989). According to Ram and Sheth (1989), functional barriers are likely to arise if consumers perceive significant changes from adopting an innovation and psychological barriers arise when the innovation causes some conflict with customers' prior beliefs. Usage, value and risk barriers refer to functional barriers, whereas tradition and image barriers constitute psychological barriers (Ram and Sheth, 1989).

Demographics and lifestyle characteristics of customers play an important role in their buying habits (Mahmood, Bagchi & Ford, 2004). While gender differences exist in choosing to visit different types of website, possibly based on the different personality traits of males and females, these differences also exist in online shopping experiences (Yang, Lester and James, 2007). Garbarino and Strahilevitz (2004) found that females perceive a higher level of risk in online purchasing than do males. Jen-Hung and Yi-Chun (2010) studied gender differences in adolescents' online shopping motivations based on utilitarian and hedonic motivations surveying high school students in Taiwan and found that males hold significantly more positive attitudes toward online shopping on utilitarian motivations (for example, convenience, lack of sociality and cost saving) than the females whereas, females put more emphasis on hedonic motivations (for example, adventure, sociality, fashion and value) on Internet consumption. Hashim, Ghani and Said (2009) found that males tend to become more online shopper compared to females. And their study supports that while males tend to be convenience shoppers due to the high commitment on work and study, females tend to be recreational shoppers and would prefer to do their shopping using the conventional way (Hashim, Ghani & Said, 2009). Rodgers and Harris (2003) revealed that females were less emotionally satisfied with online shopping than males, most likely because females skeptical of online shopping and did not find it as convenient as males. In their study, males reported greater trust in online shopping and perceived the Internet as a more convenient shopping outlet than did females. Overall, males had more positive attitudes toward online shopping than females (Rodgers and Harris, 2003). Previous studies have reported that age also affects attitude toward online shopping. Hashim, Ghani and Said (2009) reported that there is significant difference on the attitude toward online shopping differentiated by age. Their study results revealed that those who are between 30 to 39 years old do more online shopping compared to those between 20 to 29 years old and those over 40 years old. Sulaiman, Ng, and Mohezar (2008) found that age is one of the affecting variables in e-ticketing adoption; e-ticketing is more popular among consumers, age between 26 to 35 years old than 18 to 26 years-old customers. Income levels affect the Internet users' online shopping propensity (Zukowski and Brown, 2007). Monsuwe, Dellaert and Ruyter (2004) reported that consumers with higher household income intend to shop more online than lower income consumers do. Teo (2006) found that online shopping adopters tend to have higher income level than non-adopters. Mahmood, Bagchi and Ford (2004) found that the factors of trust and economic conditions make a significant positive contribution to online shopping behavior.

While security and privacy issues continue to play an important role in affecting customers purchasing decisions online, understanding the attitudes of Internet users toward online shopping also important for understanding the dynamics of customers' behavior in online environment. In this study, the author explores the positive attitudes of undergraduate students toward online shopping and examines the association between positive attitudes of undergraduate students toward online shopping and their demographics variables: gender, age and income. Attitudes of online shoppers and non-online shoppers toward online shopping were also compared.

2.METHODOLOGY

2.1.Instrument

A paper based questionnaire was used in order to examine students' attitudes toward online shopping. Students' attitudes toward online shopping were assessed using eleven five-point Likert-scale questionnaire items (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) adapted from Yang, Lester and James (2007). The questionnaire also includes demographic questions.

2.2. Participants

Participants of this study were undergraduate business students in a public university in Turkey. Participants were selected according to convenient sampling. The participation was voluntary and anonymous. A total of 314 respondents completed the questionnaire, of which 311 were used for the purpose of this study. The sample included 194 female students (62.4%) and 117 male students (37.6%). The average age of the participants was 20.81 excluding missing values. Majority of the participants are experienced Internet users. More than 70 percent of the participants have been using the Internet for more than 3 years. While 55 percent of the participants use the Internet less than 9 hours weekly, 19.9 percent of the participants use it more than 24 hours weekly. 171 participant students (54.98%) stated that they have been shopped online at least once.

2.3. Data Analysis and Results

The respondent students generally have positive attitudes toward online shopping. Figure 1 shows the respondents' agreement with selected statements about online shopping. Concerning information, majority of the participants agree that Internet provides easy access to information about goods/services (78.8 percent) and Internet provides comprehensive information about goods/services (71.6 percent). Regarding purchasing goods online, 79.6 percent agree that they can order things from distant places and 78.6 percent agree that they can purchase goods at any time of the day. 68.4 percent agree that they can access to a great variety of products. But concerning price, 55.8 percent believe that they can get better price online. 53.7 percent believe that online shopping saves walking from store to store. And 53.7 percent agree that they can stay home and shop.



Figure 1: Respondents' agreement with statements about online shopping

Table 1 presents the results of t-test concerning participant students' attitudes toward online shopping regarding gender. According to the results of t-test, there were significant differences between males and females in their attitudes toward online shopping in six items. Generally male students have more positive attitudes toward online shopping than female students. Males agree that online shopping saves walking from store to store more than females do. Females do not agree that online shopping saves walking from store to store, it requires less effort and they can get better prices as much as males do. Male students agree that they can order things from distant places; they can purchase goods at any time of the day and they can choose from a greater variety of models of the product more than female students do.

	Gender	Mean	SD	Mean Diff.	t	p
1. It provides easy access to information	F	3.99	0.90	0.14	1.17	0.242
	M	3.85	1.08			
2. It provides comprehensive information	F	3.84	0.99	-0.01	-0.11	0.912
	M	3.85	1.06			
3. I can purchase goods and services faster	F	3.76	1.01	0.22	1.76	0.080
	M	3.53	1.12			
4. I can stay home and shop	F	3.25	1.18	-0.22	-1.61	0.108
	M	3.47	1.10			
5. It saves walking from store to store	F	3.21	1.23	-0.32	-2.28	0.023*
	M	3.53	1.17			
6. It requires less effort on my part	F	3.43	1.10	-0.33	-2.77	0.006**
	M	3.77	0.98			
7. I can get better prices	F	3.33	1.19	-0.30	-2.19	0.029*
	M	3.63	1.14			
8. I can order things from distant places	F	3.82	1.05	-0.26	-2.49	0.014*
	M	4.08	0.77			
9. I can purchase goods at any time of the day	F	3.82	1.06	-0.24	-2.21	0.028*
	M	4.06	0.82			
10. I can choose from a greater variety of models of the product	F	3.60	1.08	-0.26	-2.23	0.027*
	M	3.86	0.97			
11. I can gain access to after-sales services online	F	3.47	1.02	-0.19	-1.55	0.123
	M	3.66	1.04			

Table 1: Differences between gender groups in their attitudes toward online shopping

SD = Standard deviation, * indicates significant at the 0.05 level, ** indicates significant at the 0.01 level

	Online shopper	Mean	SD	Mean Diff.	t	p
1. It provides easy access to information	Yes	4.04	0.90	0.22	1.95	0.052
	No	3.82	1.05			
2. It provides comprehensive information	Yes	3.94	1.01	0.21	1.84	0.066
	No	3.73	1.02			
3. I can purchase goods and services faster	Yes	3.86	1.02	0.41	3.44	0.001**
	No	3.45	1.06			
4. I can stay home and shop	Yes	3.63	1.11	0.66	5.21	<0.001**
	No	2.97	1.11			
5. It saves walking from store to store	Yes	3.55	1.22	0.50	3.69	<0.001**
	No	3.05	1.16			
6. It requires less effort on my part	Yes	3.78	1.01	0.50	4.17	<0.001**
	No	3.28	1.07			
7. I can get better prices	Yes	3.78	1.11	0.75	5.84	<0.001**
	No	3.04	1.13			
8. I can order things from distant places	Yes	4.17	0.87	0.56	5.29	<0.001**
	No	3.61	0.99			
9. I can purchase goods at any time of the day	Yes	4.19	0.87	0.63	5.81	<0.001**
	No	3.57	1.00			
10. I can choose from a greater variety of models of the product	Yes	3.97	0.93	0.61	5.22	<0.001**
	No	3.36	1.09			
11. I can gain access to after-sales services online	Yes	3.80	0.93	0.58	5.06	<0.001**
	No	3.22	1.06			

Table 2: Differences between online shoppers and non-online shoppers in their attitudes toward online shopping

SD = Standard deviation, ** indicates significant at the 0.01 level

Table 2 presents the results of t-test concerning differences between online shoppers and non-online shoppers in their attitudes toward online shopping. T-test indicated that there is a significant difference between online shoppers and non-online shoppers. As expected, online shoppers have more positive attitudes toward online shopping than non-online shoppers. Regarding age and income, the results of the correlation analysis indicate that there is no significant correlation between age and students' attitude toward online shopping (see table 3). However, there is a significant positive correlation between monthly family income and seven attitude items related to online shopping. It reflects that income levels have a positive effect on students' attitudes on shopping online, as monthly family income increases, undergraduate students have more positive attitudes toward online shopping.

	Age	Income	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Age	1												
Income	-.06	1											
1	.00	.08	1										
2	-.03	.12*	.86**	1									
3	-.04	.04	.59**	.55**	1								
4	.07	.15**	.35**	.37**	.51**	1							
5	.08	.13*	.27**	.29**	.44**	.75**	1						
6	.04	.08	.27**	.33**	.31**	.60**	.69**	1					
7	.08	.16**	.27**	.27**	.40**	.65**	.64**	.65**	1				
8	.01	.12*	.39**	.38**	.43**	.56**	.60**	.67**	.65**	1			
9	.09	.15**	.34**	.34**	.38**	.62**	.58**	.60**	.63**	.82**	1		

10	.04	.12*	.32**	.29**	.34**	.50**	.48**	.52**	.57**	.62**	.70**	1	
11	-.03	.10	.26**	.27**	.34**	.49**	.50**	.56**	.51**	.62**	.62**	.60**	1

Table 3: Results of correlation analysis

3. CONCLUSIONS

This study, which is part of ongoing research, has investigated the positive attitudes of undergraduate students toward online shopping. The findings suggest that in general participant students have positive attitudes toward online shopping. It is found that online shoppers have more positive attitudes than non-online shoppers, as expected. In general male students have more positive attitudes toward online shopping than female students. There is a positive correlation between income level and positive attitude toward online shopping; as monthly family income increases, participants have more positive attitudes toward online shopping.

The findings of the present study should be viewed in the light of its limitations. First, the convenience sampling technique was used for the selection of the sample. Second, the survey was conducted among students in the Department of Business Administration in a public university in Turkey.

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