

PERCEPTUAL FLUENCY & SHOPPING ORIENTATION TOWARDS ONLINE GRATIFICATION – IT EMPLOYEES COIMBATORE CITY.

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Abstract : The research paper is focused on the preferential influence of perceptual fluency and online shopping orientation towards online gratification, online shopping intention. The nature of the association between the variables leading to online gratification and online shopping intention. Accordingly, this present study would throwaway light on these tremendously classical but less researched variables. The research design used in this research, positivism approach is adopted by the researcher to explore the accuracies of the observation by empirical evidence through the hypothetico-deductive method. The research instrument used in this research in order to collect the primary data is a standardized questionnaire. The adopted standardized scales are partially modified by the researcher. The sampling technique Stratified Random Sampling Technique was used in this research.

Keywords: Perceptual fluency, Online Shopping Orientation, Online Gratification, online shopping intention, Rating & Reviews, e-Purchase Habit.

INTRODUCTION:

In the recent past of e-commerce era the fundamental problem of online merchandisers was how to convert visitors into buyers¹. In order to ascertain profitable repeat business, e-tailers not only need to appeal new customers but also to retain them². In order to ascertain profitable repeat business, e-tailers not only need to appeal new customers but also to retain them³. Prior researches establish that increase in customer online shopping gratification leads to higher degree of purchase intention⁴. Researchers have also witnessed the fact that it is decisive to key out the substantial factors that affect customers' intention towards online shopping⁵.

In an online shopping ambiance, customers enumerate heavily on the perceptual fluency or they are circumscribed to visual and auditory cues⁶. In spite of having some auditory information in many webpages, the primary centripetal experience on the web, especially in a shopping context, is still the audiovisual experience⁷. Online shoppers circuitously go through products on webpages, banking on the selective information furnished by e-tailers⁸. Despite investing a large fraction in new presentation tools, like: zoom function and panning function, online shoppers are often not rendered with the most basic services such as good website readability⁹ and revealed that e-tailers do not gratify consumers' basic needs such as comfortable navigation, high-quality product images, and decipherable visual information, while concentrating on appending innovative tools to webpages.

With the growing maturity of the e-Commerce literature, this research extends early definitional research and develops a research model with a focus on more detailed ontological analyses of the relationships among the constructs underlying the e-shopping phenomenon. However, the preferential influence of perceptual fluency and online shopping orientation towards online gratification, online shopping intention, and e-purchase habit are ascertained to be for the most part pretermitted.

Operational Definitions of the study

Perceptual Fluency

Perceptual fluency, especially known as the processing fluency theory of aesthetic pleasure, is the ease of processing stimuli based on manipulations to perceptual quality. Processing fluency is the comfort with which information is litigated.

Online Shopping Orientation

The general predisposition toward the acts of online shopping. This predisposition may be established in different forms such as information search, alternative evaluation, and product selection.

Online Gratification

State of being gratified or satisfied with the electronic commerce.

Online Shopping Intention:

Behavioural intention towards online shopping based on how it would accomplish the shopping needs. It is an intention to purchase a particular product or service in the future through online.

e-Purchase Habit

Consumer electronic buying behaviour is the sum total of a consumer's overall experience regarding the electronic commerce when purchasing a product or service.

Objective of the study

1. To examine the role of Perceptual Fluency on Online Shopping Orientation.
2. To determine the impact of Perceptual Fluency and Online Shopping Orientation towards Online Gratification.
3. To investigate the role of Online Gratification towards Online Shopping Intention and e-Purchase Habit.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

In spite of several research implications, certain limitations are worth-addressing that could have controlled the findings of this study. First, the respondents of this research comprised of IT professionals

working only for the selected company in Coimbatore. Hence, the generalization of the research findings may be limited. As this research focuses the IT professionals employed in Coimbatore, it may be that a more eminent research across other IT organizations in other geographic regions would have disclosed much generalizable results. Since the present research results are based on self-report data, a possibility of common method discrepancy exists. The responses might not be completely accurate due to the personal bias which might have prevailed during the primary data collection process. Ultimately, this research results enumerate on the responses furnished by the primary respondents, which are proportionally relational. All these research limitations should be considered ahead of carrying on future research.

THEORETICAL BACK GROUND OF THE STUDY

Online shopping orientation

Online shopping orientation is defined as the general predisposition toward the acts of online shopping, which may be manifested in dissimilar forms such as information lookup, alternative evaluation, and product option (Al-Swidi, Behjati, and Shahzad, 2012; Babin, Darden, and Griffin, 1994; Brown, Pope, and Voges, 2003; Kim, 2009; Yao and Li, 2009). The concept of online shopping orientation is conceived as a specific portion of modus vivendi operationalized by a range of behaviors, interests and opinion affirmations that are applicable to the acts of online shopping (Bailey and Pearson, 1983;) Delafrooz, Paim, and Khatibi (2011) argued that consumers with hedonic and utilitarian orientation can handle and interact with websites differently ascribable to the different personalities and motivations. Investigators have encountered that consumers' goals such as goal-oriented (utilitarian) and experiential-oriented (hedonic), influence their online shopping orientations (Babin,Darden and Griffin,1994;Ha and Stoel 2004; Kim and Shim, 2002; Schlosser, 2003).

○ Utilitarian Orientation

Utilitarian oriented consumers are inclined to exhibit goal-oriented online shopping behaviors and would shop online established on an intellectual requirement associated with a particular destination (Kim and Shim, 2002). Wolfenbarger and Gilly (2001) explicated that the shoppers with utilitarian orientation, rather than a harboring experience, tend to adopt efficient, rational, and deliberate online shopping approach.

○ Hedonic Orientation

In particular, hedonic shopping orientation is considered as a fun activity, a form of escape and, thus, yielding an enjoyment feeling calling more for leisure than shopping per se (Babin, Darden, and

Griffen, 1994; Childers, Carr, Peck, and Carson, 2001; Davis, Lang, and Diego, 2013; Falk and Campbell, 1997; Franz, 2014).

PERCEPTUAL FLUENCY

Perceptual Fluency is the ease of processing of the surface features of a stimulus. Mental processing of the synoptical stimulus dissents as a function of the speed or effort that individuals experience (Im, Lennon, and Stoel, 2010; Jacoby, 1983).

Bovik (2005) determined the following contributors of visual information towards perceptual fluency (Bovik, Chen, Goldgof, and Huang 2002):

- Sharpness
- Noise Level
- Contrast Level

Online Gratification

With regard to online shopping, instant online gratification is heightening the ante for the customers across the board (Barrett, 1997; Griffiths, 2001; Kaufmann, 2012). E-commerce leaders like Amazon and Flipkart have become the benchmark for ramming this component of the online gratification agenda, with its no scuffle return policies, user friendly app, money back guarantees, and prompt access to customer service (Sievers, 2016).

- There are the different gratification like entertainment gratification , In formativeness Gratification, Web Irritation,etc.,

Online shopping intention

During the initial days of online shopping era, first time online shoppers were not prosperous habituating the internet for buying goods as they were not certain with their competency to shop for products over the internet (Bobbitt and Dabholkar, 2001; Eastin and LaRose, 2000; Hahn and Kim, 2009). Previous research studies have witnessed the role of flowing attributes towards the customers' online shopping intention (Dabhade and Kwon, 2008; Jiang, Yang, and Jun, 2013; Laudon and Traver, 2013; Park, 2003; Wang and Sie, 2012):

- Shopping Convenience
- Product Range
- Ease of Shopping

e-Purchase Habit

The online shopping habit effects on online shopping intention are two-fold: mediated through rating and reviews; and controlled by the relationship between online shopping orientation and perceptual fluency towards online gratification (Close, 2012; Gao, 2005; Hunter and Tan, 2004; Molenaar, 2010; Sinha, 2000). Triandis (1971; 1980)

In the context of online shopping, shoppers with online shopping habits would turn to the online behavioural response instead of a physical outlet mechanically without further thoughtfulness when they experience shopping needs, which automatically allow habitual behaviours to be performed easily and quickly (Bhattacharjee, 2001; Bhattacharjee and Sanford, 2009; Triandis, 1971; Quinn & Wood, 2005).

Hypothesis of the study

H₁: Perceptual Fluency will significantly influence Online Shopping Orientation.

H₂: Perceptual Fluency and Online Shopping Orientation will significantly influence Online Gratification.

H₃: Online Gratification will significantly influence Online Shopping Intention

H₄: Online Gratification will significantly influence e- purchase habit.

DATA ANALYSYS AND INTERPRETATION

Demographic Variables & General Internet Usage

The observation of demographic variables and general internet usage of the respondents is established in this following subsection. The demographic variables ascertained in this study are gender, age, marital status, number of children, living status, area of residence, educational qualification, area of employment, and annual income. The general internet usages observed in this study are time spent, computer & internet experience, and online shopping frequency constitute the demographic variables and general internet usage of the respondents.

TABLE :1

Demographic Variables & General Internet Usage of the respondents

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percent
<i>Demographic Variables</i>			
1. Gender	Male	217	45.8
	Female	257	54.2
	Total	474	100.0
2. Age	24 years or under	208	43.9
	25 – 30 years	139	29.3
	31 – 40 years	55	11.6
	41 – 50 years	40	8.4

	51 years or above	32	6.8
	Total	474	100.0
3. Marital Status	Single	237	50.0
	Married	189	39.9
	Others	48	10.1
	Total	474	100.0
4. Number of Children	Not Applicable	237	50.0
	No Child	81	17.1
	1 Child	94	19.8
	2 or More Children	62	13.1
	Total	474	100.0
5. Living Status	Staying Alone	186	39.2
	Nuclear Family	204	43.1
	Joint Family	84	17.7
	Total	474	100.0
6. Area of Residence	Urban	292	61.6
	Semi-Urban	87	18.4
	Rural	95	20.0
	Total	474	100.0
7. Educational Qualification	Diploma or less	34	7.1
	Bachelor's degree	219	46.2
	Master's degree	188	39.7
	Others	33	7.0
	Total	474	100.0
Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percent
8. Area of Employment	Developer	91	19.2
	Tester	156	32.9
	Tech Support	194	40.9
	Others	33	7.0
	Total	474	100.0
9. Annual Income	Rs. 3.0 Lakhs or less	192	40.5
	Rs. 3.1 to 6.0 Lakhs	185	39.1
	Rs. 6.1 to 9.0 Lakhs	67	14.1
	Rs. 9.1 Lakhs or above	30	6.3
	Total	474	100.0
General Internet Usage			
10. Time Spent	< 5 Hours	22	4.6
	5 to 10 Hours	22	4.6
	11 to 15 Hours	28	5.9
	16 to 20 Hours	197	41.6
	> 20 Hours	205	43.3
	Total	474	100.0
11. Computer & Internet Experience	< 1 Year	27	5.7
	1 to 3 years	49	10.3
	4 to 6 years	66	13.9
	7 to 10 Years	189	39.9

	> 10 Years	143	30.2
	Total	474	100.0
12. Online Shopping Frequency	Biweekly or more	142	30.0
	Weekly	205	43.2
	Fortnightly	55	11.6
	Monthly	40	8.4
	Occasionally	32	6.8
	Total	474	100.0

Source: Primary Data

It is established from Table 5.1 that majority of the respondents are found to be female at 54.2%. The age group of the respondents shows that most of the respondents are aged 24 years or under at 43.9%, which is followed by 29.3% aged between 25 – 30 years. The marital status of the respondents establishes that 50.0% of the respondents are single, which is followed by 39.9% of the respondents who are married. It is also found that 19.8% of the respondents have 1 child. Among the living status of the respondents, 43.1% of the respondents are in a nuclear family setting.

The area of residence of the respondents manifests that majority of the respondents are from urban region at 61.6% followed by rural region at 20.0%. The educational background of the respondents evidences that the majority of the respondents hold a Bachelor's degree at 46.2% followed by Master's degree at 39.7%. Regarding the area of employment, it is found that majority of the respondents are engaged in providing tech support at 40.9%, which is followed by testers at 32.9%.

The annual income level of the respondents was found to be high at 40.5% with annual income level of Rs. 3.0 Lakhs or less, which is followed by annual income level between Rs. 3.1 to 6.0 Lakhs at 39.1%.

Among the General Internet Usage of the respondents, it is found that 43.3% of the respondents spend more than 20 hours in a week towards online shopping, which is followed by 16 to 20 hours at 41.6%. Likewise, the total years of Computer & Internet Experience among the respondents is 7 to 10 Years for 39.9% and more than 10 Years for 30.2% of them. Eventually, considering the online shopping frequency, majority of the respondents do online shopping once in a week at 43.2%, which is followed by biweekly or more at 30.0%.

Perceptual Fluency

The sub-scales of Perceptual Fluency are:

- Sharpness
- Noise Level
- Contrast Level

Assumption and Reliability Tests for Perceptual Fluency Sub-Scales

- The sample adequacy of Perceptual Fluency sub-scales is evaluated using KMO and Bartlett's tests. The factor model can be regarded as adequate enough when the KMO score is more than 0.5 and the Bartlett's test score is less than 0.05 (Pishghadam, Noghani, and Zabihi, 2011; Sreejesh, Mohapatra, and Anusree, 2014). The KMO score is found to be at 0.740 and Bartlett's score is 0.00 for Perceptual Fluency sub-scales. Hence the Perceptual Fluency factor model is satisfactorily fit for further analysis.
- The normality of the Perceptual Fluency items is tested using Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. The results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests for Perceptual Fluency items are ascertained to be greater than 0.05 at 5% level of significance, which demonstrate to be normally distributed (Reimann, 2008; Salkind and Rasmussen, 2007; Thadewald and Buning, 2004). Disclosing the normality of the data, parametric tools are reckoned to be appropriate for the Perceptual Fluency sub-scales.
- The internal consistency of Perceptual Fluency sub-scales is tested using Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient. In general, the reliability score of over 0.7 is conceived to be satisfactory in social science researches (Ketchen and Bergh, 2004; Leech, Barrett, and Morgan, 2008; Liu, Wu, and Zumbo, 2009; Marshall and Haertel, 1975; Pett, Lackey, and Sullivan, 2003). The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient score of Perceptual Fluency is found at 0.767, which is an acceptable degree of internal consistency.

Table: 2

Mean, Standard Deviation and Reliability Values for Perceptual Fluency Sub-Scales

Construct	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
<i>Perceptual Fluency</i>				
Sharpness	SH1	4.3186	0.78691	0.868
	SH2	4.3080	0.79245	
	SH3	4.2131	0.71746	
Noise Level	NL1	4.2658	0.89455	0.710
	NL2	4.1329	0.94077	
	NL3	4.0738	1.00990	
Contrast Level	CL1	4.0802	1.05148	0.866

	CL2	4.1350	0.94159	
	CL3	4.1688	0.97592	

Source: Primary Data

Establishes the mean, standard deviation, and Cronbach's Alpha scores of the items measuring Perceptual Fluency. The sub-scales: Sharpness – SH1 (M=4.3186), Noise Level – NL1 (M=4.2658), and Contrast Level – CL3 (M=4.1688) exhibited high mean values; comparatively low mean values are observed for Sharpness SH3 (M=4.2131), Noise Level – NL3 (M=4.0738), and Contrast Level – CL1 (M=4.0802). The magnitudes of deviation are found to be high for Sharpness – SH2 (SD=0.79245), Noise Level – NL3 (SD=1.00990), and Contrast Level – CL1 (SD=1.05148).

FINDINGS

Therefore it is derived that there is a significant relationship between Perceptual Fluency and Online Shopping Orientation towards Online Gratification. It is also brought out that Utilitarian Orientation, Sharpness, Contrast Level, and Hedonic Orientation sub-scales bestow Online Gratification significantly.

CONCLUSION

Scholars in different domains, including e-tailing, have emphasized the urging need for a better apprehension of e-purchase habit and its principal antecedents, in particular online shopping intention and online gratification. With regard to excogitating the referents of online shopping intention and e-purchase habit among the IT professionals, this research anomaly conduces surmountable discernments from online gratification by considering rating & reviews as mediating factor. Accordingly, the findings of this study revealed the virtuous significance of perceptual fluency and online shopping orientation towards online gratification. This research bestows to the originating body of research on online shopping intention mediated by rating & reviews of other customers. By distinguishing the contemporary practices that determine the antecedents of e-purchase habit, the determinations of this research contribute to the existing literature. The insignificance of Online Gratification towards Online Shopping Intention and e-Purchase Habit evidence the fact that mere Online Gratification does not bestow Online Shopping Intention or e-Purchase Habit. In this investigation, the corroborating impact of two attributes, perceptual fluency and online shopping orientation, further lends to the notion that online gratification is a multidimensional firmament.

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