Analyzing Consumer Nature for Online Purchasing for Increasing Sales

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Abstract-- **The consumer has changed from being a passive consumer to one that is more aware and up to date, which is a very noticeable difference in modern consumer behaviour. The internet has been crucial in enabling customers to become tech-savvy and stay up with the times. It is imperative to delve deeper and become familiar with a few indicators that might either accurately predict or mislead online consumer behaviour. The disparity could be the result of unimportant problems like demographic bias, a lack of observational data, or the internet's quick rate of change. This essay's goal is to investigate the various issues that could affect how consumers behave when shopping online. The study concludes that a more thorough method of sculpture.**

Keywords-- **Human-Computer Interaction, Electronic Commerce, Consumer Behavior, Online Shopping, Online Retail**

I. INTRODUCTION

Something as small as the colour scheme of a product's packaging affects a great deal when it comes to a product's influence on the consumer brain, in addition to the advertisement. Every hue has a different emotional impact on people, so a product's packaging should reflect the nature and function of the product appropriately in terms of colour.

—Abhijit Naskar

A customer may use shopping as fun, a chore, retail therapy, a way to accomplish a goal, or any of these things. Additionally, the consumer might be trying to express their individuality (Szmigin, 2003), or it might just be considered an addiction. In any case, it is obvious that shopping is a routine behaviour that is influenced by the continual function it plays in consumers' lives and consciousness. Consumers frequently struggle with deciding what products and services they want and how they want to get them. This train of thought nearly runs every day. The variety of channels through which consumers can express themselves accounts for this themselves – high streets, flea markets, malls, airports, catalogues, shopping TV channels,magazines, even the placement of vending machines in schools and institutions put is in apositionto takedecisions and act uponaccordingly.

Internet is at the top of the list of media outlets that have influenced consumer behaviour. Consumers had a pretty traditional approach to shopping before the internet swept into our lives, and even its influence on consumer behaviour was little. (Grewal and others, 2004) With the advent of the internet, people have switched from pulling a shopping cart to placing orders online for their purchases. In essence, the internet has altered consumers' perspectives to the point where buying experiences are now within their comfort zones. Even authors like Feather (2002) agree that the internet has unquestionably altered how people shop.

E-commerce began as a novelty in the 1990s, but it wasn't included in that category in 2004, when it only represented approximately 6% of UK retail expenditures, just slightly more than traditional catalogue merchants (Pesola, 2004). Some of the ideas advanced to explain current levels of online buying include those relating to trust difficulties, Internet adoption rates, degrees of tangibility and fulfilment, etc. Regardless of the numerous purchasing platforms or theories, the fundamental question is: How can we genuinely comprehend the actions of online shoppers?

The purpose of this study is to investigate and evaluate how research has been done on the subject of online customer behaviour and whether it has been able to determine whether the knowledge needed to build behavioural models has contributed to e-full commerce's potential as a marketable channel.

II. THE "POSTMODERN" ONLINE CONSUMER

A number of consumers would be drawn to settings that may facilitate different parts of product selection and purchase, according to various academics. More than thirty years ago, McNeal (1973) acknowledged that shopping may be excessive in many circumstances. He also foresaw that consumers would eventually turn to alternative channels "to avoid some of this unpleasantness."

When e-Commerce began to reach consumers in the 1990's, some saw the allurement as the"…endless search for convenience" (Grewaletal., 2004).

Some ofthe researchers alsosuggestedthatthetypical onlineconsumerleda"wiredlifestyle"andwas "timestarved", but then again, Convenience was crucial in the end result. If that were the case, it would make sense to regard online consumer behaviour as being nearly comparable to that of terrestrial customers, with the internet serving only as a platform for carrying out the actual purchase transaction, which is akin to catalogue shopping.

However, The Financial Times (Pesola, 2004) claimed that at the current rate of growth, 37%year-on-year, online shopping willbe 10% of the totalUK retail marketby 2005.Ascatalogue shopping has never been more than 5% of the UK retail market (Pesola, 2004), thisstronglysuggeststhatfortheconsumer,theattractionsofe-Commerce could produce something more than aconvenience-driven disparity of the catalogue experience.

The transition from an inert subject to the so-called "postmodern" customer is one of the most noticeable and recurrent changes in consumer behaviour, however. The postmodern consumer is now viewed as the epitome of creativity and innovation, as well as the one who engages in interaction and experiences. Instead of having their buying experience forced upon them, postmodern consumers choose to shape it (Szmigin 2003; McCarthy and Wright, 2004). Because of the advent of the internet, consumers have evolved from passive to postmodern, thus it is important to look at how they behave when shopping online.

III. How Is The Online Consumer Different From The Terrestrial One?

Although there is disagreement about the exact type or degree of these distinctions, researchers have come to the conclusion that online buying differs in some way from its terrestrial counterpart. We need to be cautious when drawing a precise correlation between online and offline customer behaviour before we get too far into this discussion. This is because the methodology is predicated on the question of whether an online consumer behaves similarly to their counterparts offline. According to a recent study on the likelihood of consumers abandoning online purchases, these decisions "represent potentially considerable lost revenue for e-retailers" (Cho, 2004). This loss of sales may be caused by the increased likelihood that an online customer may cancel a purchase, not just due to risk perception or attitudes toward online buying, but also because they initially didn't want to finish the deal. An online shopper has the freedom to leave an online shopping cart, unlike their counterparts who are observed leaving a shopping cart in the middle of a busy supermarket with relative ease and secrecy.

Shopping cart. What does this really say about the consumer? This gives us clarity that onlineconsumersareverydifferentfromterrestrialcounterparts andtheirmindsetvariesincredibly.

Let us under stand this further:

Adoption of Technology

Consumer behaviour online is influenced by the use of technology and the Internet in general. Eastin (2002) demonstrated that Internet proficiency was the best indicator of customer adoption of online commerce. Perceived financial advantages, prior use of telephone shopping, and perceived convenience are included after that. However, this raises the question of whether the skill level will be able to foretell consumer behaviour once such technology is in use. According to O'Cass and Fenech (2003), perceived usefulness and price sensitivity are the driving forces behind online purchases. Over time, the environment of the customer, which is in turn influenced by online reviews and vendor/product information, shapes the online purchasing scenario.

Accessibility and Decision Support

According to the methodology used by academics like Keen et al. (2004) and Miles et al. (2000), e-Commerce serves as a facilitator of many stages of traditional consumer behaviour with decision making as a key component. According to this idea, the only distinctions between consumers who shop offline and online are those motivated by convenience and time savings.

However, convenience has evolved into a hygiene element, according to Srinivasan et al. (2002), and cannot be considered a significant factor in determining a customer's loyalty to an online provider. Online shoppers take this factor for granted, and it is only apparent when it is missing.

The convenience of internet buying encourages the online shopper to rely on it. Making judgments regarding a commodity is made simpler by the clear description of the features and characteristics, as well as by customer testimonials. Because of this, consumers are better able to trust their judgement, which is something that traditional or conventional retail environments cannot offer.

Dynamics of the market

When making purchases online, customers need to be aware of the information they are looking for. When there is a change in market dynamics, the ability of the online consumer to obtain information may have a significant impact on behaviour.

According to conventional EOI (Economics of Information) theory, when consumers are ill-informed about their options, their perceptions of price dispersion or information variation lead them to engage in search behaviour throughout the decision-making process. In addition, consumers' willingness to look for information, how much they value it compared to how much it costs, and their prior knowledge and experience all play a role in the decision-making process.

Online consumers have more options to evaluate than their terrestrial counterparts due to factors including more information availability and lower search prices, which increase the amount of searching done. According to Biswas (2004), this behaviour may eventually result in less price variation among sellers that previously relied on knowledge asymmetries to maintain differential pricing. This has caused internet shoppers to become less price concerned and more brand loyal, and as a result, they are more than willing to pay more for greater levels of service, personalised products, recognisable brands, etc. For this phenomenon to exist in the market and their continuous dominance of the space, Amazon serves as the ideal.

Loyalty and Trust

The amenities and opportunities necessary for e-Commerce promote the idea that in the online context, customer loyalty can take multiple forms (Srinivasan et al., 2002). In a terrestrial store, it is not possible to personalise the products and services that are displayed to the customer or the actual transactional environment. When competitors are only a click away and brand loyalty acts as a protection against risk perceptions, the importance of customer loyalty changes (Gupta et al, 2004).

The issue of trust is questioned. Trust certainly plays a vital role as there is expectation basedon past performance (Shneiderman, 2000), a strategy for reducing uncertainty is in play (Egger, 2003), awillingnesstorelyonanexchangingpartner(Leeetal.,2000),or a perception of reliability (Fogg, 2003), it is clear that trust plays a role in online consumerbehavior.

The aforementioned advice is crucial for online shoppers because, as Adcock et al. (2001) and Solomon et al. (2002) noted, factors like the trust of terrestrial shoppers are but a small part of the many other elements that influence customer behaviour. Studies on internet trust employ historical data from consumer opinion surveys conducted in 2000 or earlier, therefore they cannot account for changes in beliefs and behaviour that have occurred since then.

Products as against the Services

In a classical market, goods are often physical when being purchased, are of somewhat uniform quality, can be stored and inventoried, and flow from manufacture to sale to consumption. Services, on the other hand, are intangible. They cannot be stored or inventoried, and their quality can vary substantially. A service is typically produced simultaneously and consumed after the transaction, therefore issues with location, timing, or vendor resources could result in dissatisfied customers. When it comes to both items and services at the moment of purchase, the online consumer is more or less in the dark compared to the traditional market. In other words, both the services and the products are immaterial. Servicesproduct quality may vary due to shipping and handling processes, and while services cannotbe stored online. Although consumers can buy and consume services online and feel immediate fulfilment from doing so, thoughts of savouring the goods may be delayed owing to shipping.

According to Liu and Wei's findings from 2003, consumers who switched from a traditional purchasing experience to e-Commerce were subsequently more concerned about product risk than service risk.

Site Design

Some comparisons between traditional and online design aspects are quite simple, such as the comparison between the appearance of a store window and the appearance of a website's home page (Lohse and Spiller, 1999). The way a business is laid up compared to how a site is laid out may differ significantly. For instance, in traditional design, Grid layout is arrangedinarectangularpatternofdisplaysandlongaisleswhic hisconsideredmoreeffectivefor repetitive planned purchases and this is the layout most commonly used in supermarkets aswell. There is much more to learn about the relationship between shop design and online behaviour, thus in-depth research is needed to determine what design features influence online consumer behaviour.

Empowerment, Persuasion and Entertainment

Online shopping is all about empowering consumers because it allows them to shop anonymously at any time from almost anywhere in the world. This is made possible by the availability of real-time competitor and product information, which only serves to increase the consumer's sense of power and freedom. Customers are empowered by the reciprocity and interaction required on the web.

Features like Amazon's personalised welcome screens and custom recommendation lists can give customers a "strong feeling of discovery," even for those with more mainstream tastes (Nielsen, 2003).

But the fundamental query is: Does online shopping really provide the consumer more power? According to Shih (1998), the idea of creating a broad range (Bricolage) allows users to change elements like links and bookmarks to control the direction and flow of information. According to Shih, bricolage is not only an effective method for learning and remembering product knowledge, but it also enables customers to take away only the information they want and ignore extraneous or unimportant details. In order to do their weekly shopping, a consumer in a supermarket will likely traverse through the majority of the aisles, exposing them to a variety of goods that may not have initially crossed their minds or even been aware they existed. Consequently, the buyer may decideThey will be less likely to make impulsive purchases as a result of this exposure, which is impossible to achieve online, but it may ultimately limit rather than broaden their buying options. They might be exposed to new goods or services that they might find interesting or entertaining. As a result, rather than gaining power, the online customer is more likely to lose it.

To many consumers, shopping is often not merely a task but also a form of entertainmentand/orsocialinteraction(Chenetal.,2002).Itisno tillogicaltospeculatethat consumers may also have similar expectations of onlineshopping, as internet is also as our ceforentertainment and interaction (Shanget al., 2004).

A likely origin of entertainment in online shopping is that of "flow" – the psychological statereached during an activity of high concentration, a sense of misinterpretation of time and afeeling that one is using the excellent balance of skills and challenges. Smith and Sivakumar(2004)arguedthatflow,whichproducesdelayedfeel ingsofpleasureandis generallylinked

With taskssuchassports, games andhobbies, canalsobe experiencedusingthe Internet.

IV.   DISCUSSION

Modeling consumer behaviour is essential for understanding the process by which a consumer decides what to buy, where to buy it, when to buy it, how to buy it, from whom, and maybe most importantly, why (Walters, 1976).

Simple sequential models are often used to introduce the concept of consumer behavior. Thework of Adcock, Halborg and Ross (2001) is representative of this approach, using a 7-stagemodel of:

1. NeedRecognition
2. ChoiceofInvolvement Level
3. IdentificationofAlternatives
4. EvaluationofAlternatives
5. Decision
6. Action
7. Post-Purchaseresolution

The stages of consumer behaviour may be well-illustrated by these straightforward models, but the process flow or the influence of external factors on behaviour may not be adequately explained. Researchers like Walters, McNeal, and Markin (1973) and others have utilised more convincing models to give a more in-depth perspective of consumer behaviour. These models include need-triggering events and environmental elements that are also important in influencing consumers at any point of the process. In addition to what has already been said, post-purchase resolutions offer insight into potential future consumer choices.

Regardless of the theories that are presented and employed, it is evident that consumer behaviour is not static nor binary but rather complicated. We must compare these models to the online consumer in order to comprehend the function they play in the overall behaviour of online consumers. The online consumer may be prompted to action far before the customer accesses an e-Commerce site, hence it would be foolish to take existing consumer behaviour models for granted or to assume that the online consumer is precisely like their terrestrial counterpart.

To evaluate consumer behaviour models for online consumers, solid data is needed. But it becomes clear that there are three issues with how the data has already been gathered and evaluated.

First and foremost, it is important to take into account how quickly technology is developing because this has had a significant impact on how quickly online commerce is going through the adoption cycles of introduction, growth, and eventually maturity. Because opinions and subsequent behaviour may have changed after 2000, it is suggested that research based on consumer sentiments from that year cannot be used to predict online consumer behaviour in 2005.

For instance, according to the BBC, online auctions through eBay, which were seen as a relatively fringe activity before to 2000, are now the most widely used type of consumer-based e-Commerce. Therefore, it may be concluded that consumer expectations for trust in e-commerce have changed recently.

Demographics must be taken into account while analysing online consumers in the same way that they are in the terrestrial environment in order to obtain a thorough analysis. According to Wood's (2002) research on views toward e-commerce, different age groups had varying expectations for the future of online buying. While "boomlets" (those born between 1977 and 1997) recognised advantages in product personalization, Baby boomers (those born between 1946 and 1965) initially approached online purchasing from a convenience viewpoint.

The third, and possibly most significant, is the propensity to gauge attitudes and intentions but not actual purchase behaviour, according to Limayem et al. (2000). Researchers requested participants to answer questions about their attitudes, intentions, and prior experiences with online buying. They also asked them to make fictitious purchases in fake online stores and browse real online stores but refrain from making a purchase. Because of this, there was a dearth of information on how online shoppers behave while they are actually browsing, choosing, and making purchases in the "real" world. This actual data provides an knowledge of customer behaviour, Miller et al. (1998) observed that participants in marketing focus groups frequently provided comments and responses that were not based on in-person observations of consumers' purchasing behaviours. By asserting that ethnographic and observational research can be used to explain consumer behaviour, Underhill (2000) displayed his understanding of the value of real-world data. This type of research opens the door to new understandings of terrestrial consumer reactions in areas like store design and layout, often illuminating and occasionally displacing findings from quantitative studies. The same approach that can be used to collect data on the ground should also be applied to the online world.

V.   SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHERRE SEARCH

This review shows there is an absence of an extensive and far-reaching data of the onlineconsumer, one that can recognize both behaviorof an online consumer and user.It alsowould help in knowing how these two behaviors are shaped by each other. Several areas ofresearch are recommended to bridge this gap. The following are required for understandingthescenario –

- Current surveydatais needed
- Observationalresearchofdemographicallyrepresentatives amplesofonlineconsumersconductingactual shoppingand purchasing.
- Parallelsbetweenonlineandterrestrialbehaviorshouldbeex aminedthroughcomparing phenomena such as movements of consumers through e- Commerce sites withterrestrialtraffic patterns.
- From this research relevant and comprehensive models of online consumer behaviorcanbebuilt andused to constructframeworks for e-Commercesitedesign.

VI.   CONCLUSIONS

Research into online consumers requires a backdrop of comprehensive behavioural models inordertoaccurately assessany individualaspectsthatmay influencebehaviorasintheterrestrialworld. Thereis inadequacyof such models are–

Combined with theageof thesupportingdata, Potentialdemographicbiases and Lack of information on actual consumer behavior.

These pointers may have led to a disintegrated view of online consumer behavior potentiallyoutofstepwithtoday'sconsumer.Onlineconsumerb ehaviouralmodelsneedtobedevelopedwhichshouldbeunderpi nnedby"realworld"research,foruniformedunderstandingof theenabled and empowered postmodern consumer.

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