Young Users of the Internet & e-shops:
Views and Demands

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Abstract

Today the most important challenge on the Internet is ''e-commerce'', i.e. pursuing business activities in the ''electronic market''. The increasing Internet use, mainly by the younger population groups, reflects changes in their consumer preferences as well as their demands from electronics shops. Research and recording of knowledge, views, attitudes, and behavior patterns of young people (between 18 and 25 years of age, students of economic sciences who are users of the Internet), concerning the electronic market and the form of electronic shops that would satisfy their needs are very important and they shall provide sound information about the form and operation such enterprises should adopt. The specific goals of this research are to examine the relationship between the sample under study and electronic commerce, their attitude and behavior vis-à-vis e-shops, the reasons they visit the e-market and the kind of products they choose to buy through the Internet. Furthermore, it is necessary to record factors influencing young consumers while they are making their choices, their views and desires concerning services provided, their preferences of pay and delivery modalities and the parameters that might render their electronic shopping more enjoyable. Therefore, data and information about the sample will lead to suggestions and proposals in regard to the satisfaction of young consumers from electronic commerce.

Key-words: e-shop, young consumers, consumption aspects

1. Introduction

Driven by the challenge to expand and capture a larger share of the customer market, some companies invest in more bricks in order to enlarge their geographical and market coverage. Others have considered a more revolutionary approach to deliver their services and products via a new medium: the Internet.

The Internet is now being considered as a strategic weapon and will revolutionize the way business enterprises operate, deliver, and compete against one another.

Main scope is to discover and analyze the basis of knowledge, behavioral attitude and personal opinion directed towards the usage of e-shops that ultimately satisfy individual needs among young users. Moreover, purposes of option choice, differentiation of products and services and factors of satisfaction among the average user will be recorded. In the advanced nations, during the 1990s e-commerce firms scaled up their front-end technology infrastructure in a rush to increase market share and garner first mover advantages (Sawhney, & Zabin, 2001).

Talented merchants in developing nations could develop business-to-consumer (B2C) and business-to-business (B2B) websites which where, after all, inexpensive to develop (Agarwal, et. al., 2001; Varianini & Vaturi 2000)

2. "E – Marketing"
Basic Elements & Characteristics.

Marketing is a business function that locates user demands of liable customers and additionally seeks customer's gratification as a mean of business definition. Furthermore, it specifies target groups, services and products and supply interactively imperative data.

The emerging of the Internet pinpoints a new era in marketing.

Forsythe et al. (2003), define Internet Marketing as the process of building and maintaining customer relationships through online activities to facilitate the exchange of ideas, products, and services that satisfy the goals of both buyers and sellers.

As far as marketing structure in the e-commerce is concerned, Interactive and Online marketing are the evolution basis on e-marketing strategies. Stimulates brand names to become familiar worldwide, causes extravagant fame for a cost of a penny and build's up strong mature relationships. In other words, one to one interactive communication prototype. (Marshall & LaMotte, 1992; Kotler, 1994)

A major percentage of today's on line share belongs to Personal Computers and their consumables, industrial victuals and software needs. Consumer customization is steadily increasing in amount along the Internet World, while travel tickets, cd's and variable transactions occur in repentance every second passed. Virtually everything is available across the World Wide Web (DePallo, 2000).

Businesses have the chance, upon consumer request, to level down expense of cost, price, increase real time communication and delivery and maximize consumer satisfaction.

In addition, pricing is directed in real time, which affects positively liable customers (Vlachopoulou, 2003).

3. E-Costumer

Today's customers are more and more demanding, less attached to certain brands and much less patient of a product failure in scale of personal indulgence. Behavioural targeting must be acknowledged as an emerging online strategy.

Most important tendencies according to behavioral and attitude ideology conform to customization of products and services, empowerment of liable customers and a most demanding spare time (Dabholkar, 1996).

Most cardinal proclivities due to the way of recent lifestyle and traits of behavior are, among others, the need for customization which is the more well informed consumers are, the more demanding is personalization for technology portraits (Yates et al., 1999). On line users categorize their views and demands. This causes immediate feedback for the e-shop to create an individual site for everyone. Moreover, tendencies show that customers seek for objective related information for each product or service. Information overload must be distinctively avoided in order to prevent the consumer to pass to heuristic rules with the result of losing maximized decisions (Liao & Cheung, 2002). Reality is that instant access of receiving data and the ease of access in Internet provokes empowerment in behavior and reduces stress to a minimum level. Additionally, free time is necessary and quite hard to find nowadays where city life becomes cruel day by day. Last but not least, familiarization with e-traits and internet use surpass individual's limits (Siomkos & Tsiamis, 2004)

7Cs Framework
It mainly refers to a semantic tool that has fostered among e-business in order to accumulate those factors that ameliorate the total e-usage experience.

Relevant and Useful content, customization and personalization, convenience of recovering data, online communities, interactive communication, customer and after sales support and connectivity – ease of "downloading" are among the fundamentals of Internet expansion. (Siomkos & Tsiamis, 2004)

Greek Electronic User
On a standard daily basis, individual usage of Internet in Greece is occurring from both male and female, aged between 18 and 44 years old, has a 1000€ average salary and is a well educated person, above middle class, most of them are private employees, scientists or freelancers.
Reasons that most influence e-usage are economizing in time, availability all around the clock, immediate delivery and prerequisites for best possible products and services available on the net.

4. Youth attitude and views, aged 18-25, relatively to e-shops.

The target group that this paper is basically focused on and well interested in, is the young community, all of them economic oriented students of University departments in Greece. The sample was collected from Thessaloniki which considers being a pilot town due to the fact that its population comes from many areas of Greece. The sample that was used is a convenient sample. Interesting operational results are indicated so as to be taken into consideration and should be considered for further discussion.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Internet cafe	12	12,0	25,0	25,0
	Bibliotheca A.T.E.I.TH	18	18,0	37,5	62,5
	Demotic Bibliotheca	2	2,0	4,2	66,7
	Bibliotheca other high institution	1	1,0	2,1	68,8
	Friendly Related House	15	15,0	31,3	100,0
	Total	48	48,0	100,0	
Missing	System	52	52,0		
	Total	100	100,0		

Table 1. First choice of access in Internet from those that have no internet connection in their apartment.

This table specifically demonstrates from those surveyed that have no Internet connection at their apartment, a 37.5% percentage choose as an alternative access to the Internet the bibliotheca of A.T.E.I. Thessaloniki, 31.3% a friendly related house, 25% access from Internet Cafes around while only 4.2% choose to have immediate access from demotic bibliotheca and just a 2.1% another high institution bibliotheca.

These figures come to the conclusion of the importance of high quality internet connection, friendly environment and illustrate the trustworthy online communities A.T.E.I of Thessaloniki can possibly offer at large.

Moreover, according to customer preferences as where they spend more of their Internet time, are amusement and entertainment sites (32%), sites that provide information data (28.9%), e-mail (26,2%), chatting area channels (38.5%), e-shops (46.3%) and e-banking (63.2%). Important figure is that among those that have visited an e-shop became tempted to buy a product or a service on line.

According to customer liable views, ranking between the reasons that affect positively the choice of an e-shop and its products and services are primarily the price on sale (31%), the information provided based on a certain product (27%) and the reliability and stability of a certain e-shop (22%)

Many students find that internet connection is at an affordable level of cost. This may occur because of ignorance. Competition is out of control, meaning other advanced European countries such as French, Italy, Sweden, United Kingdom where internet flourish at a brisk pace. According to literature, penetration percentage in Greece reaches only 24% percent when 48% is a reality in the countries above. Most students in Greece (31 out of 50) use a PSTN type connection where an ADSL is a minimum standard in other European countries.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Research Market Only	12	12,0	35,3	35,3
	Market Research & Possible Buy	22	22,0	64,7	100,0
	Total	34	34,0	100,0	
Missing	System	66	66,0		
	Total	100	100,0		

Table 2. Reason that students visit an e-shop

Positive figures come from the table above, meaning that the mood of visiting an e-shop is a probable buy. This statement ameliorates the role of an e-shop which must find the right paths to distinguish itself from their competitors that offer online similar, or even the same, products or services.

Another important figure that is prone to discussion is how advanced or not is the e-market versus the traditional market. Young people tend to regard "pricing" as one of the most critical factors. One of the same, if not more, importance come the advantage of comparing both prices and products among many brands and e-shops. Moreover, ease of access, ability of instant advising and 24 hours a day availability of use and buy, complement results of survey.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Lack of Interest	23	23,0	34,8	34,8
	Fear of Personal Data Mistreatment	5	5,0	7,6	42,4
	Lack of Confidence	7	7,0	10,6	53,0
	Negligence	4	4,0	6,1	59,1
	It wasn't necessary	27	27,0	40,9	100,0
	Total	66	66,0	100,0	
Missing	System	34	34,0		
Total		100	100,0		

Table 3. Reasons that most students haven't visited an e-shop.

In the table above we come to notice that from those surveyed, 40.9% admit that they haven't visited an e-shop because it wasn't necessary and traditional market would satisfy their needs. Moreover, 34.8% find e-shopping not quite interesting. A 10.6% percent admit that lack of confidence deter them from visiting an online shop. Quite interesting is the fact that only 7.6% are afraid of personal data abuse, contrary to the statement that safety criteria are becoming more and more demanding in order to ensure stable and trustworthy exchange conditions. Negligence comes last with a 6.1% percent.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	16	16,0	48,5	48,5
	No	17	17,0	51,5	100,0
	Total	33	33,0	100,0	
Missing	System	67	67,0		
Total		100	100,0		

Table 4. Possible buy of a product or a service from an e-shop

In the table above, the majority of the questioners, answered that they would possibly reject a product or a service advertised through an e-shop while on the other hand, a 48,5% percent would not hesitate to buy on line. Products that questioners find most interesting are mobile phones, laptops, computer software, car audio, compact digital camera's, books and cd's.

Many undergraduate students support the fact that electronic market has become impersonal and creates feelings of insecurity and anxiety while, at first sight, a small percentage (13%) definitely agree that volatility in safety standards impede the progress of e-shops. All things considered, there is still a high sense of hesitation among users where must be revealed.
Safety is an intense and most depending stable factor which repeats again by adding a high 44% percentage reply with a disagree. Internet and furthermore e-market has a long way to

cover before it would be fully desired. In order to expand and acquire a larger share of everyday transactions, improvement and upgrade in safety rules becomes an instant necessity.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Design	8	8,0	8,0	8,0
	Availability	16	16,0	16,0	24,0
	Safety & Reliability	20	20,0	20,0	44,0
	Full data provided	8	8,0	8,0	52,0
	Language	2	2,0	2,0	54,0
	Fame	14	14,0	14,0	68,0
	Ability to adapt	1	1,0	1,0	69,0
	Price	31	31,0	31,0	100,0
	Total	100	100,0	100,0	

Table 5. Reasons that influence liable costumers from choosing an e-shop from its competitors

This table particularly shows that price and safety matters come first to notice when choice of an electronic shop is concerned. Most liable costumers regard that the ability to compare and choose the best price available on the net, while being insured that personal safety is guaranteed, provides them with an optimistic feeling to operate a possible buy from a certain e- shop. Online rivalry is becoming fiercer so fame definitely enhances the status of an e-shop as well as availability and design of the web site, which makes it friendlier to the common user.

As far as satisfaction is concerned, most of our questioners suggested that ability to test a product or a service and if not satisfied, refund must be adhered (73%). Safety – trustworthy matters comes second to being a customer gratified (59%). Third in ranking is the variety of products and data provided (56%) and last but with a high sense of importance is privacy personal matters.

4. Conclusions

To sum up, usage of internet and e-shops between young age users has made a vast improvement over the years but there is a lot to come before they become fully desired. In addition, "e-commerce" is a well promising business activity that promotes so intensely the electronic market in order to expand and enlarge its share all around the world. Without any sign of doubt, safety matters will be the "Achilles heel" contrary to the optimistic, from another perspective, "e-business" future. On the other hand, many of the liable internet users acknowledge that electronic market is steadily gaining respect on the grounds of the "old fashioned" traditional market. According to recent results, bibliotheca of A.T.E.I of

Thessaloniki is widely recognized as being an online environment of young communities and an exchange field of innovative ideas. As far as satisfaction is concerned, many questioners replied that the ability to test a product or a service and if not satisfied, a refund must be adhered. Standards such as 24 hours availability, ease of access, comparing results, prices and data exchange are ingredients of an e-shop success. Youth generation comprises the cornerstone rock for a bright future in e-commerce and more specifically in e-shopping.

Safety is a critical issue in violation of personalizing internet, so users id's, passwords, firewall protection, antivirus software, stability of networks, are highly suggested. The potentiation of e-commerce will definitely improve our enjoyment and provide with much more spare time. Besides, it's all a matter of time.

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