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IMPACT OF INFORMATIVENESS GRATIFICATION TOWARD CONSUMER EMOTIONS IN ONLINE PURCHASE

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Abstract

In Malaysia, the concept of online purchase and e-commerce directed the current researchers to assume that online shopping may be conceptualised by combining a few behavioural activities linked to the consumers' action to make a purchase via the Internet. The activities include buying and customising goods and services, seeking recommendations, collecting information, comparing products with several sellers, or browsing for fun. The main objective of the current research is to discover and understand more on development of behavioural perspective as well as the intention of the consumers to perform the online purchase based on the informativeness gratification formation. It hopes that the current study will add the depth on this research standpoint as well as provided a better understanding among the operator of online businesses on how to attract and capture the attention of online shoppers. Even though many of us knows and recognized the proficiencies of the internet as one of the best marketing tools available for the organizations, but as at today, we still uncertain into what extent the internet will motivate the existing and targeted customers to use the platform to perform their shopping activities. Limited number of previous researches have focussed on the electronic shopper behaviour in more web-specific circumstances. The results revealed the importance of facilitating informativeness gratification of consumers' emotion towards online purchase by constructing a shopping environment with favourable conditions. This finding implies that informativeness gratification displays a strong influence on online consumer in Malaysia.

Keywords: Consumer emotions, informativeness gratification, online purchase.

1. Introduction

The advancement of Internet in Malaysia provides huge potential due to the lower costs of delivery for products and services, as well as the extended geographical borders to assemble sellers and buyers in the virtual marketplace. The Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) is an agency under the wing of the Ministry of information Culture, Arts and Communications which was founded in the year 1998. The agency's responsibilities include the promotion and regulation of the congregating industries of online services, telecommunications, and broadcasting. The main objectives of the agency are to control the industries, to develop Malaysia as one of the important regional hub for information technology (IT), to monitor the construction and maintenance of infrastructure related to such industries, and to make sure of the availability and affordability of Internet services to the public.

The introduction of the Internet has initiated more advanced business models and transactions in the global economy. The current worldwide communication and retailing are highly influenced by the Internet, a key technology of the 21st century (Kim & Lennon, 2013). Due to its rapid development, the Internet has given birth to online retailing, a shift from the traditional bricks-and-mortar trade. Consequently, online purchasing is promoted extensively by online retailers. In efforts to increase online shopping efficiency, a range of opportunities for consumers such as product choice, availability, and convenience are provided by online retailers, without any limitations of time and space (Chang & Wang, 2011). Therefore, rather than engaging in a bricks-and-mortar retail only, each company provides a Website in which they can connect with customers, becoming the most interactive and straightforward medium of contact between consumers and retailers (Afef et al., 2010).

Many existing studies such as Zarantonello and Schmitt (2010) concentrate on the fact that consumers respond to shopping, and other studies (Chen et al., 2010) highlight the online shopping experience with further forms of behavioural responses (e.g. brand loyalty, intention to visit a store). However, there are limited number of previous researches conducted by researchers focusing on the influences of the uses and gratifications composition and the limitation is not only from perspective of Malaysian consumers' online shopping behaviour but also generally in the world (Azam, 2015; Hanjun, 2013). There are some conceptualization studies, but empirical studies are very limited especially in Malaysian context. Moreover, some existing studies more focus on identifying the rationales for Internet practice whilst others come up with the establishment of structural models based on the experiences of the Internet users in online shopping behaviour.

In consequences, many practitioners like online traders and online retailers as well as the online entrepreneurs are desire for more empirical context-specific understandings with respects to the electronic commerce atmosphere (Ellison, 2010). Thus, the uses and gratifications theory (UGT) is an established channel that have been used by many researchers as a theory for them to understand more on the motivations of customer on the media usage. It has been utilized to circumstances varying from radio, cable TV, conventional TV, billboards, flyers and most recent times, the Internet. Uses and gratifications theory is an accepted standard for identifying the usage of the Internet as it emphasises active media use and covers both mass and interpersonal communication (Morris & Ogan, 1996).

It has been noted that the Internet functions as a powerful medium of telecommunications. It holds powerful tools to attract the target consumers and can persuade as well as sustain the attention of site visitors

to the websites (Rosenkrans, 2009). Furthermore, the UGT provides a theoretical foundation to investigate the consumer involvement correlated to the online website. In this sense, using the extended UGT for this study will identify the significant online websites and how they fuel the experiences of online consumers' shopping. This study aims to shed light on mediating roles of consumer emotion concerning the informativeness gratification antecedents and online purchase.

Researchers consider the mediating role of consumer emotion to be an interesting topic. Davis et al. (2013) highlighted shoppers' action as the vital component in figuring out consumer behaviour. However, there is still limited research clarifying the consumer emotion as a mediator between informativeness gratification and purchase in online (Kim & Lennon, 2013). In consumer emotions, the consumers' behavioural responses within the environment are also affect the consumer emotions, attention-getting, related to a specifiable behiour and more encompassing.

1.1. Literature review

The growth of e-commerce as one of the important distribution channels nowadays has altered the competitive dynamics of the industry. The Internet has spawned new distribution channels, and e-commerce adoption has the potential to reduce dissemination expenditure by distributing products and service precisely to the end consumer through new technologies of online purchase Goh et al. (2013). A lot of e-commerce nowadays, particularly online shopping is offering better accessibility to their products using new marketing techniques which are mediated electronically. Through the development of e-commerce websites on the Internet, the traditional brick and mortar stores have been upgraded. Online sellers with such understanding are at an advantage as the knowledge would facilitate in the development of targeted and effective online operations.

Furthermore, experts from the online industry opined that product presentation improves consumer experience during their time on the Web. The piqued curiosity regarding the products and the beneficial information provided on lifestyle cause these consumers to prolong their visit and spend higher amount of money on the website (Leung, 2007). Apart from the sensory pleasure offered by a product, websites could provide information on lifestyle through the application of symbolic elements like background setting, and entertainment via interactive elements including allowing the users to combine their favourite products (Fiore et al., 2005; Kang, 2012).

Besides that, the presentation of product features in a website selling must include simple graphics, clear product information, option to enlarge image via zoom out and zoom in, and extra views such as the back and front views (Fiore & Jin, 2003). Enlargement of image which could be provided through the zoom function offers detailed information and plays a fundamental role in the consumers' decision-making process to make a purchase. Informativeness gratification is a key element affecting media usage under the uses and gratification theory (Haq, 2009; Haridakis & Hanson, 2009). As stated by Chen and Wells (1999), the informativeness construct may be defined as the extent to which users find that the media presents helpful and resourceful information. Haq (2009) highlighted that the quality and arrangement of the information on the website directly influence the perceptions of the customers on the company and its products and services.

Furthermore, the literature review outlined number of most prominent factors for uses and gratification related to social networking (LaRose & Eastin, 2004; Park et al., 2009). A previous research

revealed that information gratification is the key uses and gratification factor for the Internet. These factors serve as the basis of the key areas for similar studies in the literature. According to George et al. (2013) depicted that search for information and its sharing with peers on website is a major gratification associated with the social network website. Plus, the activity was found to reduce the users' level of stress and enhance their mood management. In addition, gratifications experienced by searching for information on the social media platforms supposedly improve the emotion of the users.

Besides that, many researchers proved that the search for and sharing of information with other people of similar interests on the social networking website is a key gratification for users (Lee & Ma, 2012; Leung, 2007). Despite the various findings on gratifications associated with the usage of social networking sites, the implications of such gratifications on the emotional states of individuals are yet to be explored. For current study researcher, researcher postulated that informativeness gratification will has a relationship with consumer emotion in the context of online purchase. Thus, the study has hypothesis as following:

H1 – There will be a positive relationship between informativeness gratifications (IG) and consumer emotions (CE) in Online Purchase.

2. Problem Statement

With the increasing number of online shopping sites offering a medley of choice to shop from, marketers, entrepreneurs and web developers of these sites will race to get into the heart of the targeted customers. This segment nowadays is very for them to ensure the survival of their organizations. Number of consumers that actively involved in online shopping is not small. Therefore, as online shopping makes up of huge portion, it is very important for the organizations to keep track and follow the trends of their consumers. To understand the motive of the consumers in using the Internet platform to shop is crucial and becomes a great relevance due to its fundamental necessity to attract the consumers to support and purchase online market offerings (Afef et al., 2010).

Previous study has revealed that Internet can provide a wide coverage of information collection prior to the customers to make their purchases (Zhang et al., 2010). This is true because the electronic base data collection can easily determine the Internet surfers' locations, IP address and other related information from their online activities. As suggested by Than and Grandon (2002), the appearance of the website is very important for the online store. The gratification of their websites and features will always play an important role to encourage the consumers to purchase online. Therefore, Ha and Stoel (2012) stated that informativeness gratification had a significant relationship on online shopping outcome and consider this variable as one of the most important factors in online shopping orientation. However, research conducted in this area of study is limited especially empirical studies conducted in Malaysia (Azam, 2015). Therefore, the current study will provide a foundation for the researchers to further excavating on the issue.

3. Research Questions

The earlier discussion has raised and important issue to be studied. In this research, a question of "does information gratification has an influence on the consumers' emotions in online purchase behaviour among Malaysian consumers?"

4. Purpose of the Study

The current research tries to understand more on the issue of informativeness gratification on the consumers emotion. As mentioned by the previous researchers, the information gratification have an impact on the emotions of the online users because it is very important for the websites to provide an information that is deemed to be enough in the perspective of the users because insufficient information can create a frustration among them and consequently they will abandon the website. Therefore, it is important for us to understand further how the consumers shape their behaviour and how does the gratification can develop their intention to purchase in online shopping standpoint. This study is expected to add the depth of the current literature and also provided an important information to the marketers and service providers of e-commerce in formulating their strategy to attract and serve the customer to be part of their business activities and promotions.

5. Research Methods

This research principally using a primary data. The data is new and first-hand information that is collected purposely for specific research project. There are many methods can be use by the researcher to assemble the primary data such as questionnaires, interviews, focus group, experiments and other method as well. The primary data can be very costly and required a lot of time to be collected and always tend to be distorted to the likelihood of individual or group of researchers' preferences. Nevertheless, if we compare between primary data and secondary data, it is considered as the primary data have a better validity than the secondary data due to the fact that it have not been modified or manipulated by other people as it is collected for the purpose of that research. Therefore, the current research performed using the primary data by adapting or adopting the questions developed by previous researchers. However, some of the items or questions used were modified in order to conform to the current research perspective.

Another important aspect in research methodology is to identify the target population. The population describes as the whole group of individuals or persons that is directly related to the issues and scopes of that research project where the researchers want to examine and study. In this research perspective, the main aim of the current survey is targeting the online shoppers. Therefore, the target population of this study is the individuals who is actively utilized the online platform to perform their buying activities and that person must have the ability to self-control their decision to purchase online without any force by other parties. The unit of analysis for this research is consumers who have power over their choice to make their purchases online. The target respondents are the online consumers because the issue in this research is to understand more on the effect of informativeness gratification on the emotions of the consumers. So that they must be those who are having an experience of surfing the online purchases and actively involved in surfing the net to perform their shopping activities. A part of the population was

selected to represent the whole population as it is a normal procedure used by the researchers to understand certain phenomena and the attitudes of this part of population will be used to represent the shopping behaviour of overall population (Handy et al., 2005). Furthermore, online consumers are also selected in the current study as they deem to be appropriate, suitable, and accurate representatives of the entire population which doing the act of purchasing online products.

This is supported by Metani (2009) who claims that the reason that internet users have been chosen for this research is mostly because of they are generally able to employ online shopping. From the data published by the internetworldstats.com in 2012, the number of populations in Malaysia is 29,179,952 million people excluded the foreigners who are also quite a significant number of them. However, they are left out from the number of populations because the current research focus is the Malaysian only not the people who live in Malaysia. From that 29.2 million peoples, there are approximately 60.7% of them are Internet users. In numbers, the users of Internet in Malaysia are 17.7 million peoples. However, there is no clear indicator of how many of the Internet users have ever perform the online purchase before.

After identifying the population, current study determines the sampling attribute. Sample is a great interest in research because of several compelling reasons for sampling, including: (1) great accuracy of result (2) greater speed of data collection (3) lower cost. All the research conducted must identify the appropriate number of sample size because the size of the samples will have a direct effect on the correctness and numerical reliability for further analysis. From the previous research, it has been implied that the sample size should depend on the number of the variables used in that study and the type of technique use in their statistical analysis. It has been argued that if sample size is too large, the accuracy of the results may be affected. Additionally, it is quite difficult to the researchers to perform the data collection activities as it will require longer time for the researcher to complete the data collection. It will also consume higher cost for the data collection process to be done. Therefore, identifying the suitable number of respondents is important to any kind of research project.

In data collection technique, the process is in various stages including from the questionnaire development, identification the potential respondents, collecting back questionnaire and analysing the data. The respondents were Malaysian online shoppers who had purchased utilizing online shopping. Online questionnaires were performed for the purpose of data collections to the Facebook group members and ensure that the group members follow the study's rule; (i) that this questionnaire is pertain to Malaysian citizens only and (ii) these group members must be active online shoppers which people who have experience in purchase thru online at least once.

For the classification of sampling technique, it is divided into two categories i.e., non-probability and probability sampling technique. The current study applied the purposive sampling technique to choose the target respondents to collect the data. The purposive sampling techniques also known as judgmental sampling or purposeful sampling in the category of non-probability sampling (Etikan et al., 2016). One of the reasons to use the non-probability sampling is because it is quite impossible to the researchers to identify the number of consumers or internet users who ever performed the online purchase before. So that, the researchers use the judgmental approach to identify who are they. Another essential justification for choosing the judgmental sampling is the method will permit the researchers to conduct the research project with a limited budget, time and workforce. This will make the current research less time consuming and

less expensive as well, as it requires little effort to identify the right persons to be studied. Additionally, it is a kind of exploratory study in nature, so it makes a logical explanation of using judgmental technique. Moreover, with the judgmental technique, it will facilitate the researchers to eradicate a target persons and respondents who does not match the requirement. Finally, in the current research, the researchers attempted to make the sample representative good enough, subject to their estimation and consideration.

An email was directed to the prospective respondents who were interested in participating. Furthermore, throughout the data collection process, the role of the researcher was to make sure the respondents were attentively with the main of purpose survey. The explanation on the importance of conducting the research and possible benefits to the respondents was given frequently by the researcher. The steps shown below were performed and employed to collect the related data using online questionnaire:

i)   The potential active Facebook groups amounting to greater than 1000 members. This is open group and the administrator where members of the group. The select of the Facebook group is based on the active buyer and seller and have members more than 1000. The number of members in the group can be find at the group profile.

ii)   The researcher was contacted individually and requested them of their interest and willingness to play a part in the research.

iii) The person who are responded to the email and verified their readiness to participate in the data collection were then emailed the questionnaire together with the instructions regarding the study.

iv)   The researcher was constantly and gently reminded to the target respondents through the email that this study was only meant for the online consumers exclusively and appreciated them by mentioning that their participation in the study was very much welcomed.

Only after all the requirements and criterion matched by the target respondents as well as getting an agreement from them that they are willing to contribute to the study, an online questionnaire then emailed to them through personal email/message to answer and asked them to complete the questionnaire. Besides that, the researchers' contact number and email address are mentioned in the cover letter of questionnaire. This information was included to provide a platform for the target respondents if they have any further explanations and clarification on the research. It will surely increase the commitment of the respondents as they will believe that the study is genuine and not for the purpose of manipulating the information provided by them. After getting the valid email addressed from them, the total 8714 questionnaires were distributed. From that number, only 615 questionnaires were emailed back to the researchers. Nevertheless, only 465 returned questionnaires were deemed complete and can be used for the next stage in the data analysis and discussion. It is not an easy task to get the respond from the target respondents. So that, after a careful consideration on the returned questionnaires, 30 answers have to abandoned because the information and answers provided by them is either inconsistent or insufficient.

6.   Findings

In the first part of the questionnaire, the respondents are required to fill up their demographic profile. There are several demographic questions were asked inclusive of their age, ethnic group, gender, occupation, education level, monthly income, marital status as well as the geographical location of the

respondents. These demographics information was then analysed using frequency and percentage. Frequency is a simple analysis conducted in order to tabulate the answers given by the respondents in terms of the frequency of their demographic profile. It is valuable in looking for the number of respondents in the categorical manner i.e., which respondents falls under which category or group of people.

In terms of gender, the results show that majority of the respondents were female (58.5%, n = 272) and 41.5% (n = 193) were male respondents. It was almost equally divided between male and female respondents. It demonstrated a reasonable number of respondents in gender category between male and female was acquired. For the age group, most of the respondents categorized as young with more than 975 of the respondents are below 30 years old. To be more exact, approximately 47% were in the age group of 19 to 25, 31.4% below 18 years old and 18.7% between 26 to 30 years old. Lastly, 2.6% of the respondents were in the 31 to 35 years old category. This is quite logic because the internet matters actively used by the generation Y and Z especially in terms of online shopping activities. They are more open to the technological adaptation and exposed to the system since they are very young at age. In the perspective of ethnic group, 82.4% of the respondents are Malays, followed by Chinese respondents with approximately 9% and lastly for the Indian respondents, it is 8.6% while another group no has respondent.

For education level, most of the respondents received at least a diploma or a degree level in their study. About 68% of the respondents were a diploma holder and 21.7% of the respondents were a degree holder. The result of the current study shows that this group of people are familiar with the technology and the computer where they have been playing with the gadget since the early age. It is quite beneficial for the marketers and e-commerce operators to put more effort in targeting this higher educated group because they are more exposed to the internet and actively use it in their daily life. There is a likelihood that this group of people are using computers and internet to perform their work-related activities. For their break times, they normally use it for a personal usage such as looking for their personal belonging to be purchase online. Next, the group with their educational level of UPSR/PMR/SPM category with 6.9%, followed by master's degree holder of 3.4% and none of the respondents hold a PhD in their educational background.

Respondent also were asked about their occupation. Regarding the occupations, students and self-employed were the largest group of respondents. There were about 46% of the respondents are students and 21.9% of the respondents were self-employed. This might be related to the time they allocated to surf the internet. Maybe students and self-employed group have more time to surf the internet in their daily life so that they among the group that is actively used the internet to make their purchase. Private sector employee's category was about 17.8%, followed by unemployed with 10.5% and 3.7% from the government employees. Retired and other group respectively no have respondent. This category also quite related to the age group. As the age group of the respondents are young, that is the main reason why there was no retiree answering the questionnaire.

For the marital status, most of the respondents were single with more than 53% of them are still not married, followed by the married group comprising of 44.5%, 2.2% of the respondents were separated/divorced. Lastly, no have respondent to widowed and other group. In terms of the respondents' monthly personal income, majority of them are having the income of less than RM2000 per month. Rationally, most of them were students, that is why their monthly income is quite low. They were followed by those earning RM2001 to RM3000 (26.7%). There were 23% of the respondent were RM3001 to

RM4000 group. Followed by RM4001 to RM5000 group 6.2%. Lastly, less percentage of respondent were earning household in RM5001 to RM6000 group which consisting 9%. Zero respondents earning more than RM6001 group. Generally, the results show that majority of the respondents (about 90% of them) received a monthly income of less than RM4000 per month. The final categorical of respondents' profile is the region. A total of 73.3% of respondents were from southern region of Peninsular Malaysia, followed by central region with 16.3%. The quantity of respondents from northern region was a little more than east coast region where it was 5.6% and 4.7%, respectively.

The analysis then moves forward to understand more on the validity of the construct. For us to investigate the convergent validity of the construct, the average variance extracted value need to be examined. As suggested by Hair et al. (2009), for the researchers to measure the establishment of the convergent validity for the constructs and variables used in their study, they need to examine the AVE values. This criterion is described as the grand mean value of the squared loadings of the indicators associated with the construct (i.e., the sum of the squared loadings divided by the number of indicators). Hence, the AVE is parallel to the communality of the variable. Utilizing the identical rationality as that applied among the different values of the items used, if the AVE value of 0.50 or greater suggests that on average the variable and items describes more than half of the variation of its indicators. On the contrary, if the variance shows the value of lower than 0.5, it suggests that there are more error endures in the elements than the variance described by the variables. The convergent validity is established via the level used by various items to determine that similar concepts are congruent. As stated by Hair et al, (2009), the utilization of AVE, factor loading, and composite reliability (CR) is recommended to evaluate the convergent validity among the item measures. Furthermore, Chin et al. (2003) suggested 0.6 as the cut off value for loading, thus, this value was employed in the present study.

From the results extracted in the current study, all AVE values recorded were above the recommended value of 0.5 or more. Therefore, all items in current study were accepted and the AVE of constructs is 0.552 and composite reliability (CR) 0.925. As presented in Table 01, the findings of the measurement model proved that all of the items were credible measures of their corresponding construct.

Table 01. Measurement model result

Variable	Items	Loading	AVE	CR
Info. Gratification	IG1	0.673	0.552	0.925
	IG2	0.816		
	IG3	0.790		
	IG4	0.770		
	IG5	0.665		
	IG6	0.797		
	IG7	0.771		
	IG8	0.675		
	IG9	0.705		
	IG10	0.751		

Note: AVE= Average Variance Extracted, CR= Composite Reliability

After the convergent validity was confirmed, the next step is to identify the significant effect of consumer emotion in the relationship between informativeness gratification and online purchase behaviour

among the respondents. Table 02 show the mediating effect of consumer emotion on informativeness gratification and online purchase was positive influence on consumer emotion.

Table 02. Summary of path coefficients and hypotheses testing for indirect path (Mediating Effect)

Hypothesis	Indirect Path	Std. Error	t-value	Decision
H1	IG > CE > OP	0.021	4.599	Supported

This finding indicates that informativeness gratification displays strong influence on consumer emotion in Malaysia. Evidently, consumers demonstrated significant feelings and emotions regarding their interest to shop in online website with details of information of product (design, colour, size, etc.). According to a study by George et al. (2013), the major gratification of this particular social network is related to users' search for information and its sharing through the online platform. Additionally, it facilitates the management of users' emotion. Gratification associated with the search for information may elevate the positive component of emotion for users of the relevant social media platforms.

Furthermore, the present results matched the findings of Myrick (2017) which highlighted the significance of analysing discrete emotional reactions to online information in the effort to forecast the behavioural and attitudinal outcomes better. Internet users who experience positive feelings after searching for information online may be encouraged to pursue the learning of other methods to build resources in the future. This might also boost their spirit to connect and communicate with other people through information sharing. Hence, the results from the search of information on the online platforms tend to ignite manifold emotions for the users.

7. Conclusion

The significance of the research is highlighted through its contribution to the research area on Internet uses and gratification on online purchase among consumer in Malaysia. The current focus in developing countries including Malaysia is on scenario with specific context like online purchase. Particularly, the connection among informativeness gratification, consumer emotion in terms of online shopping was studied. In addition, the information details influence their emotions and making them feels confident and trust to the website thus enhance their desire to purchase. Therefore, the results of the current study have added the richness of the research conducted in the Malaysian perspective on the positive influence of informativeness towards customer emotion.

The result of the current study shows cognitive attitude of the consumers are playing a positive role in the connection among information gratification and online purchase. There are few reasons behind these findings. Firstly, the finding indicate that the information such as the details of the product, product features include simple images and product information, complete views of the products, image enlargement and so on significantly contribute to positive influence on cognitive attitude and a key factor in facilitating product purchase decision by offering more detailed information.

Secondly, accurate information in shopping web can improves consumer to shopping more effectiveness (i.e., measurement and size of apparel, colour and price). This study reveals that consumers with positive cognitive attitudes on shopping web may raise the intention to purchase the product. They

may feel that the web is full of information and consequently, consumers' decision to purchase online showed by their emotion regarding online shopping and their value-added information in their webpage.

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