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Online Travel Shopping Intention

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Abstract

Technology has advanced through the years and Internet usage has been on the rise as well. The use of Internet among people has led to online shopping where people can purchase and shop through the Internet. Online shopping enables consumers to buy things online without going to conventional stores. These days, online shopping has become a trend that gives benefits to both the consumers and also the suppliers in hospitality and travel industry. This conceptual study adopted the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and indicates convenience, product and price, website design and shopping styles as the factors that influence the online travel shopping intention among the consumers. Apart from that, theoretical and practical perspectives are also included for future research advancement.

INTRODUCTION

Hospitality transportation and lodging industry has been depending on travel mediators (Amaro & Duarte, 2015). Previously, people went a long way just to purchase flight tickets. They had to drive to the airport or travel agencies and waited in line for hours to get a ticket. As time goes by, technology has helped in improving the service procedures. Thus, the growth of technology innovations has led to the changing in preferences whereby people prefer to settle everything right from the tips of their fingers and this includes online travel shopping. As mentioned by Monsuwé, Dellaert and Ruyter (2004), online shopping can be defined as the utilization of online store by buyers on the transactional stage of buying and logistics. Hence, online travel shopping can be defined as the act of buying travel products such as flight tickets, cruise, hotel rooms and holiday packages through online websites and website aggregators (Amaro & Duarte, 2015). As technology evolves, online travel shopping makes it convenient for travel suppliers as they find it easier to market their product directly to the customers as well as sparing the cash for the promotional cost incurred. According to Kim and Kim (2004), booking procedure through the Internet can give advantages to both service providers and customers because information will be provided and the cost can also be reduced. This has caused competition between the traditional method of shopping and the Internet (Card, Chen, & Cole, 2003). Previous studies showed that there were various factors that influenced consumers' online shopping intention. However, there were limited studies which discussed about the linkages between consumers' shopping styles and online travel shopping.

Thus, the objective of this study is to highlight the factors that influence people to choose online travel shopping rather than the conventional ways by introducing shopping styles as a new variable. The shopping styles of consumers affect the way they make decisions and purchase online travel products. In the next section, this paper will discuss about the relationship of each variable with the intention of online travel shopping, followed by the conceptual framework and proposition prior to the suggestions for future research by proposing a linkage between shopping styles and online travel shopping.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

TAM was developed and expanded from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) in order to explain how people accept technology (Rigopoulos, 2007; Venkatesh, 2000;). It also shows how people behave to the technology based on the use of technology (Koufaris, 2002). The model also showed the perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use that are led by external variables will then lead to behavioural intention to use and the actual usage of technology (Venkatesh, 2000). This study proposes the product and price, website design and shopping styles as the external variables and these external variables will lead to perceived usefulness and perceived convenience. The perceived usefulness and perceived convenience will influence the online travel shopping intention afterwards.

Online travel shopping intention

There have been numerous studies made on factors that influence online purchase intention. In the travel context, the factors of purchasing travel products online are quite similar to the non-travel products as it utilizes online-based medium. According to the TRA, intentions can be defined as the outcome of attitudes towards the result of behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975 as cited in Amaro & Duarte, 2015). Monsuwé et al. (2004) stated that, an individual's attitude to use technology is determined by the behavioural intention to use it, which is based on the TAM, and it is greatly influenced by online shopping features in both functional and utilitarian aspects (Childers, Carr, Peck & Carson, 2001). Most of the previous studies adapted the TAM to understand consumers' acceptance of technology. In accordance to TAM, researchers have identified several external factors that influence online travel shopping namely product and price, website design and shopping styles.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH PROPOSITION

Figure 1 illustrates the proposed relationship between product and price, website design and shopping styles with perceived usefulness and perceived convenience that influence the online travel shopping intention.

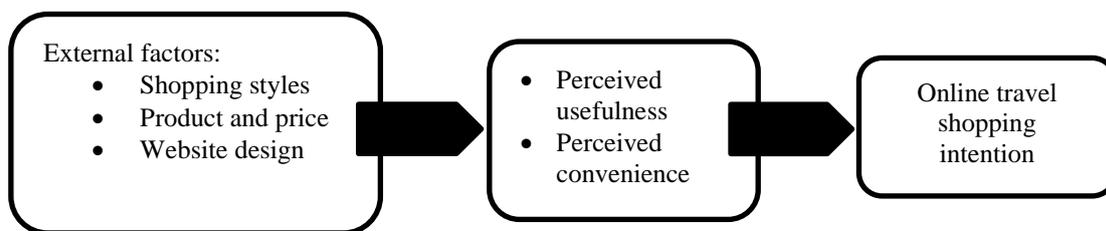


Fig. 1.
Conceptual Framework

Shopping Styles

Everyone has different styles of shopping. It was led by the consumers' behaviour as well as their reasons to shop. According to Tai (2005), the styles of shopping are important as they influence the way consumers behave which is important in marketing. Lehto, Chen and Silkes (2013) believed that there are two categories of tourist shopping which include the ones that go on a trip for shopping and the ones that go shopping as a tourists' activity. These are related to the influence of shopping styles on online travel shopping. The shopping styles can also affect how consumers make decision based on the Consumer Style Inventory (CSI) (Park, Yu, & Zhou, 2010). Letho et al. (2013) discussed eight shopping personalities that are perfectionism, brand consciousness, novelty, hedonistic shopping consciousness, price consciousness, impulsiveness, choice of brand and information as well as brand loyalty orientation that influence how customer choose to shop. Apart from that, a recent study by Azmi, Buliah and Ismail (2016) on international tourist shopping styles in Kuala Lumpur mentioned that tourist preferences over the shopping product were influenced by their shopping personalities or

shopping styles. Thus, the shopping styles can relate to the way people do online travel shopping. These characteristics will also help them to make decisions whether to buy or not to buy the travel products online. Papatla (2011) believed that online retailers have to know how the products can benefit consumers so that they can interpret their styles to match the benefits. Shopping styles can also be influenced by the family life cycle (Hawks & Ackerman, 1990). It can be influenced by how the family accepts the travel brand or website as well as relation of their incomes to relate with the kind of airlines they choose to travel, the types of hotels that they choose to stay at and also the places that they will visit. Hence, based on the discussion, shopping styles enormously relate to the characteristics of the consumers as well as their behaviours toward travel products and how it can influence their online travel shopping intention. In view of that, this study proposes the following proposition:

Proposition 1: Shopping styles has significant influence on online travel shopping intention.

Product and Price

Product can be defined as anything that can be proffered to meet customer needs mentally and physically (Athiyaman, 2002). In a comprehensive view, travel product is categorized according to its complexity, which is either high or low (Beldona, Morrison, & O'Leary, 2005). Due to the feature, it is required for the travel products to be thoroughly assessed to acquire the best purchase. The tendency to buy travel products online such as airline tickets, hotel rooms and car rentals is greatly influenced by the ability of the online stores to provide better comparative shopping than conventional stores (Card et al., 2003). Potential customers need a large capacity of information to compare the products and make decisions, thus the development of the internet leads to the rapid information conveyance at a minimum cost (Lin, 2010), as the time and cost to travel are practically unneeded (Chiang & Dholakia, 2003). Apart from complexity, the risk level and the involvement between seller and buyer interactivity feature lead consumers to feel more comfortable in buying travel products online (Card et al., 2003; Monsuwé et al., 2004). Weber and Roehl's study in 1999 (as cited by Kim & Kim, 2004) found that those who purchased travel products online were mostly those who received better income than those who did not. Thus, this will relate to the price influence on the travel products. Price can be considered as monetary offering (Dodds & Dodds, 2013). However, in the recent study, the growth of online shopping has given impact especially on price where the price of purchasing online travel products is lower and there are more discounts that help in saving the time of the consumers (Amaro & Duarte, 2015). According to Wen (2009), customers tend to recognize companies or organizations that promote lower prices. It can be concluded that price can also influence how people perceive products and the intention of the consumers to purchase the travel products. In view of that, this study proposes the following proposition:

Proposition 2: Product and price has significant influence on online travel shopping intention.

Website design

Although there is no comprehensive acquiescence on the denotation of website design quality, it can somewhat be referred to the efficiency of system quality, information quality and service quality of a travel website design (Abdullah, Jayaraman & Kamal, 2016b; Wen, 2009). According to Ahn, Ryu and Han (2007), system quality can be denoted as engineering-based performance features such as practicality and the interval between command given by the user and the system result, while information quality is made up from both engineering and operational features such as rating data format, absoluteness and promptness. As this study is made in regards to online travel shopping, the service quality is implied to e-service quality. E-service quality can be defined as the comprehensive assessment made by customers on the quality of the delivery in online marketplace (Lee & Lin, 2005). In conjunction with those three elements, website design quality is vital in online retailing as it will trigger a sense of satisfaction among the website visitors thus driving towards purchase intentions (Bai, Law, & Wen, 2008) in relation to the information-seeking behaviour which can be referred as the act of seeking information on purpose to satisfy needs through online or offline information search (Cazier, Medlin, & Durfee, 2009). In view of that, this study proposes the following proposition:

Proposition 3: Website design has significant influence on online travel shopping intention.

Perceived usefulness

Perceived usefulness is a term used to describe the extent for an individual's assumption that their job performance can be increased by utilizing a particular system (Van Der Heijden, Verhagen, & Creemers, 2003). According to Ramayah and Ignatius (2005), the establishment of perceived usefulness as the variable can be used to support other studies related to any technology applications. Several researchers proposes that there is an existence of positive relationship between perceived usefulness and the intention to shop online (Abdullah, Jayaraman, Shariff, Bahari & Md Nor, 2016a; Childers et al., 2001). Thus, from the perspective of online travel

shopping, external variables such as the availability of product and price, website design and shopping styles are antecedent to perceived usefulness thus, leading to the intention to shop travel products online.

Perceived convenience

Chiang and Dholakia's study in 2003 found that people are influenced to shop online primarily due to convenience. From the service sector point of view, convenience can be defined as a discernment made based on the perceptions over the experience obtained while using the service in terms of level of effort and time required as well as control on the management (Farquhar & Rowley, 2009). In this study, the term perceived convenience is similar to the term perceived ease of use as constructed in the TAM. Meanwhile, in the utilitarian perspective, people are keen to purchase products effectively and in timely fashion with the lowest vexation as possible. The feature of technology-based retail channels that allows consumers to have an extent of flexibility and interactivity more than the conventional retail channels has led to the creation of positive attitude towards the act of purchasing online. This is due to its availability within 24 hours of time and the information can be retrieved from anywhere (Childers et al., 2001).

DISCUSSION

Research implications

This paper proposes to enhance the body of knowledge by introducing shopping styles as the new variable. The actual framework of TAM mentioned that the behavioural intention to use the technology was led by perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. In a similar disposition, shopping styles can influence behavioural intention, though this relationship has been minimally highlighted. From the theoretical point of view, this framework contributes to a dense factor of online travel shopping intention and practically, it can be beneficial to service providers to determine consumers' purchasing behaviours.

Future research direction

In this study, it has been suggested that online travel shopping intention can be influenced by perceived usefulness, perceived convenience, product and price, website design as well as shopping styles. Shopping style is the new variable proposed in this study. Thus, it is recommended that the factor of shopping styles in influencing online travel shopping should be one of the main factors in the future study.

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