

Online shopping in Oman – Its influence and opportunities

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Abstract: This research will aim to explore the impact of online shopping on green product purchase behavior in Oman. In this research we used a primary based data one which conducts a survey amongst 50 online shoppers in the Muscat region. The respondents were selected using convenience sampling and snowballing sampling techniques. The responses were analyzed using SPSS software. We found that most of the respondents were below 25 years of age, most were male, and most had an income level of 250 to 500 Rials. Most of the respondents had disagreed with the statements showing that there was a lack of informativeness, credibility and green attitudes amongst the Omani customers and online retailers. Green product awareness needs to be overall improved in Oman and retailers need to provide a range of products to motivate the consumers to 'Go green'.

Keywords: Online shopping, green product, informativeness, credibility and green attitudes

I. INTRODUCTION

Many recent studies have been conducted in the realm of internet buying behavior. These studies focused on confidence, commitment, and risk level in e-commerce throughout online purchase operations. These research initiatives have also developed models of shopping behavior based on aspects that are now impacting the entire online buying process (Svatosova, 2020).

Accelerated industrial growth and technology advances make person's lives more convenient, but they also offer several environmental issues, such as environmental pollution, global warming, and air pollution. These issues have a direct impact on the long-term viability of economic and social development, the environment, and civilization. It has also drawn everyone's attention to the natural (Zhuang, et al., 2021). Many customers recognize the interrelated nature and are aware that their shopping habits will have an influence on the natural systems. Consumers began to alter their lives and corporate practices, eventually increasing their purchase of green products (Kong, et al., 2014).

While a number of researches have been conducted in Oman pertaining to online shopping, factors influencing customer satisfaction on online shopping in Oman (Al-Jahwari, et al., 2018), consumer protection on online shopping (Belwal, et al., 2021) etc. there is a dearth in research pertaining to the impact of online shopping on green products purchasing in the Sultanate of Oman. Due to the importance of green consumerism and its rising importance due to lack of fuel, and

increase in pollution, such a topic will assist online retailers to gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace. Therefore, this research will aim to explore the impact of online shopping on green product purchase behavior in Oman.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The purchasing activities performed using the internet facility is called online shopping. The online shopping is getting more and more popular due to various reasons such as the COVID 19 situation where social distancing is a must, parking issues, expenses that will be incurred on fuel, the inconvenience of travelling to shopping malls and various other reasons. These reasons encourage people to opt for the online shopping. (Sunitha & Gnanadhas, 2014). At the same time, according to the Rezaie et al (2014), the online shopping exercise does not involve physical shopping malls and the orders will be delivered from the store itself and due to this reason considerable amount of manpower space and efforts can be saved (Rezaei, et al., 2014).

Green products are another latest development in the society where eco-friendlier products are advertised to promote the companies who sell green products that will push customers to purchase green products as these products not only eco-friendly but more suitable in the health of the people. Additionally, when companies escalate and put extra efforts to promote green products, the customers will look forward and show their keenness to go for green products (Haytko & Matulich, 2008). It has been noticed that the people has the rights to promote the green products to ensure that these products are recognized as eco-friendly and therefore can be identified in another words as green consumerism and this will also support in protecting green products world wide and in time to come the people will be more favourable to opt for this healthier environment as per Sachdeva et al. (2015).

Questionnaire

The questionnaire will be divided into two main sections. The first section will ask demographic information about the respondents based on the nominal scale. The second part will be based on statements on the variables mentioned in the conceptual framework namely, informativeness, green attitudes, credibility, and green products purchase behavior. The statements will be asked via the five-point Likert scale to ensure ease of answering for the respondents.

Analysis

The data was analyzed using the software known as SPSS version 25. It is an appropriate software that allows the researcher to check the reliability of the research instrument (using Cronbach’s Alpha), conduct descriptive statistics and portray results in tables, charts and graphs and will also check the relationship between each of the independent variable with the dependent variable.

III. FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

The data was analyzed using Google form. Below are the findings of the research.

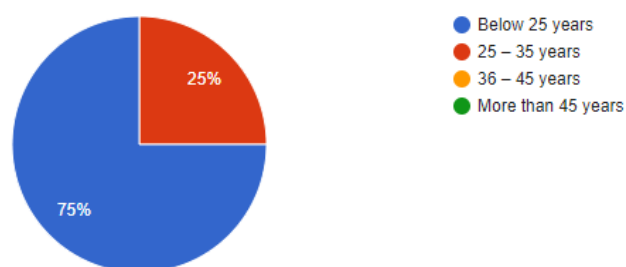


Figure 1: Age pie chart

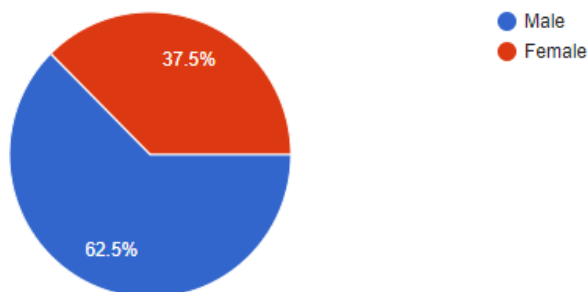


Figure 2: Gender statistics pie chart

When looking at figure 1, the greatest number of respondents were below 25 years of age at 75%. The next highest was those in the 25 to 35 at 25% a piece. When looking at figure 2 most were male at 62.5% and only 37.5% were female.

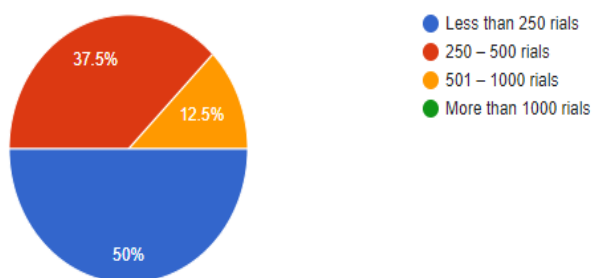


Figure3: Income level statistics

Conferring to figure 3, it was seen that most of the sample had an income level at Less than 250 rials at 50%. This was followed by those 250 – 500 rials at 37.5%. There were only 12.5% who received an income between 501 and 1000 rials and 0% who received more than 1000 rials.

IV. CONCLUSION

As identified, it was seen that most of the sample had disagreed with the statement, which shows that online shopping stores in Oman were not adequately informative about green products, there was an overall negative green attitude within the Omani society and they did not trust (credibility) any information provided by online shopping stores pertaining to green products. Therefore, green product purchasing was hindered as a result. Green product features, limited information, and a lack of customer trust in green products appeared as major obstacles to green product purchase. These findings agree with those of Smith and Paladino (2010) and Chan and Wong (2012).

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Oman based online retailers need to enhance knowledge on green products and provide more information to the consumers. Overall, more awareness and the various ways green products are useful for the environment and the consumer needs to be enhanced and the knowledge should be widely spread. At the same time, merchants must not carry only one or two green items as a formality. They must maintain a selection of green products on hand so that customers have a greater and larger range of options, so truly motivating Oman-based consumers to 'become green.' (Joshi & Rahman, 2015)

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Appendix A

Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

This survey is directed as part of an assignment conducted for Oman College of Management & Technology. Your replies are strictly utilized for the purpose of this assignment only. Your replies will be treated with anonymity and confidentiality, thus, please do not write your name, telephone number or any other details that might identify you.

Thank you for your efforts and time.

Part A (General information)

Please place a tick (✓) in one box for each of the questions 1, 2 and 3

1) Age

<input type="checkbox"/>	Below 25 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	25 – 35 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	36 – 45 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	More than 45 years

2) Gender

<input type="checkbox"/>	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female
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3) Income level

<input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 250 rials	<input type="checkbox"/>	250 – 500 rials
<input type="checkbox"/>	501 – 1000 rials	<input type="checkbox"/>	More than 1000 rials

Part B (Questions on the variables)

Please select one box as per the scale as shown below for each of the statements.

(1 – Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly Agree)

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Informativeness					
Online shopping websites provide important information about green products when I shop online.					
Online shopping in Oman provides a range of different green products to choose from with their descriptions					
Online shopping sites provide timely information about green products					
Green attitudes					
I am aware about green products due to online shopping					
Online shopping sites of Oman provides the best benchmarks of the environmental commitments.					
I would buy the green goods because I care about the environment.					
Credibility					
The material about green items offered on online shopping site adverts are believable.					
I feel that online shopping is the best platform for advertising green products.					
Green product companies who provide their goods via online shopping deliver on their promises					
Green purchase behavior					
The probability that I will purchase green products via online shopping is high					
Online shopping has motivated me to purchase green products					
I would buy green products via online shopping because it is cheaper than traditional shopping.					