

Understanding M-Commerce Quality and Its Impacts on Impulsive Purchasing Behavior: Insights from Indonesia

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INTRODUCTION

It is interesting to note that m-commerce activities increase along side with the ever growing access to the internet via mobile devices. A shift of e-commerce market trends is inevitable, initially aided by traditional desktop computers into one accessed through mobile devices. New opportunities arise as mobile devices are used more exhaustively in online shopping activities. Through mobile devices, consumers are enabled to transmit and receive data at a much faster rate, enabling smooth transactions (Mahatanakoon et al., 2005). Mobile commerce, also known as m-commerce is defined as e-commerce transactions conducted through a mobile device, such as cellular phones, tablet computers, and personal digital assistants (PDA) through a wireless network (Wang & Liao, 2007).

For those in developing regions, mobile devices are seen as advantages towards online purchases. However, it must be understood that customers' intention towards a purchase does not solely depend on the availability of infrastructures, but often times is associated with other psychological factors. When faced with many products choices, customers habitually rely on impulsive attitudes to strengthen their purchase decisions (Wu & Ye, 2013). Such impulsive attitude may lead them to make impulsive purchases, one that is not planned and is spontaneous (Shen, 2005).

From the m-commerce vendors' perspective, increasing customers' impulsiveness is considered as a leading priority, for it can increase purchase activities, which in turn leads to the increase of sales (Kacen et al., 2012). Despite the increasing number of searching and browsing activities conducted through mobile devices, the number of purchases made is still relatively low. Customers have the tendencies to browse for products with no intention to purchase.

Bearing impulsive purchases in mind, m-commerce vendors should pay more attention in strategies that will trigger customers towards impulsive purchases (Roberts & Manolis, 2012). Park et al. (2012) suggests that the attractiveness of online stores may trigger customers to purchase spontaneously, so that online stores should take advantage of these behaviors to increase their sales. In addition, according to Floh and Madlberger (2013), shopping environment is deemed as an important aspect that may trigger impulsive desires in physical stores (brick and mortar stores). Thus, this research argues that the same cues may also be applied in the context of m-commerce to trigger impulsive purchase behaviors.

In developing an online shopping atmosphere that enables impulsive purchases, m-commerce vendors need to pay careful attention to the quality of their sites, as it has been proven to influence impulsive purchase intentions in traditional and online markets. A study by Wells et al. (2011) proves that high quality sites increase the desire to purchase impulsively. In addition, research conducted by Adelaar et al. (2003) shows that the characteristics of online trading sites cause positive emotional responses such as joy felt by customers leading to the desire to purchase on impulse. Therefore, this research argues that the quality of m-commerce sites needs to be well developed since it will play a major role in creating an impulsive online shopping environment.

Based on the above discussion, this research is intended in investigating the antecedents, more specifically those related to the quality of m-commerce sites, which affect customers' emotions, attitudes, and behaviors to purchase impulsively. The authors expect to contribute in extending current knowledge concerning m-commerce site quality factors in order to provide an experience that is more likely to trigger impulsive purchase decisions.

BACKGROUND

Impulsive Purchase Behavior

Impulsive purchases occur when customers feel a great desire to purchase a product without consideration of why and for what reason they are purchased (Verhagen & Dolen, 2011). Several studies have discussed the roles of store atmosphere as a trigger and stimulus affecting an individual's impulsive purchase behavior, for example the placement of goods in certain shelf locations (Patterson, 1963), exhibition of sold products (Peak and Peak, 1977), and price promotions (Blattberg et al., 1995). The results of these psychological researches indicate that automatic information processing is critical in impulsive purchase behavior, more specifically when a decision was formed intuitively and spontaneously without customer awareness (Custers & Aarts, 2010).

In addition to environmental aspects, customer purchase intention is often associated with psychological factors. When customers face many choices in purchasing products, they have to rely on specific impulses to determine their purchase decisions (Wu & Ye, 2013). This impulsive nature determines their purchase behavior (Shen, 2005). Impulsiveness can also be influenced by positive effect of the environment (Chih et al., 2012). Impulsiveness exhibited by customers are key elements in creating a desire to purchase (Wells et al., 2011). This desire generates impulsive purchases which are made without intent or prior planning. According to research conducted by Wu and Ye (2013), mobile customers emotions and behaviors affect the desire to purchase impulsively in m-commerce sites. Research conducted by Liu et al. (2013) proves that customers' impulsiveness can be exemplified by instant gratification and is considered as a significant motivator towards impulsive purchases.

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