

Chapter 13

The Role of Consumer Impulsivity and Self-Efficacy on User Manual Behavior

Mustafa Bilgehan Kutlu

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6081-5154>
Sivas Cumhuriyet University, Turkey

ABSTRACT

User manuals are one of the neglected topics in the marketing field. This study aims to investigate the roles of consumer impulsivity and self-efficacy on user manual behavior. In order to reach the research objectives, a cross-sectional research design is adopted. A judgmental sample (n=1160) of Turkish customers is surveyed online. The study's findings provide evidence that consumer impulsivity might negatively influence user manual behavior. On the other hand, user manual self-efficacy is positively associated with user manual behavior. Consumer general self-efficacy is shown to have no direct influence on user manual behavior. User manual self-efficacy fully mediates the relationship between general self-efficacy and user manual behavior. Results of the study also indicate that females tend to consult user manuals more than males. This study also provides general consumer perception regarding user manuals and the importance of user manual features for customer satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Learning continues throughout the life of individuals. Schools, universities, courses are formal institutions that provide students with the education they need. For individuals in work life, learning continues from different sources. New workers

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receive on-the-job training from the foreman in a factory. Companies regularly implement in-service training programs for their employees such as occupational safety, quality assurance and customer satisfaction. Without the guidance of teachers or professors, individuals can perform self-education (or autodidacticism) activities. By using internet, individuals can single-handedly learn how to use a computer software (such as Microsoft Powerpoint) without the need for a formal institution (Selwyn et al., 2006). Similarly, by reading cookbooks an individual might learn how to cook individual dishes. By watching Youtube videos, an individual can even play guitar.

Individuals as consumers have to go through short episodes of self-education process in new consumption situations. Consumers experience a vast array of products for which they have general usage knowledge, in their daily lives. Automobiles, electronic goods, household appliances, cosmetics, cleaning products, medicines, and furniture are products that almost every consumer has to use. The brands in these product categories may differ in terms of use and operation. Therefore, consumers may need more detailed information about the products. In order to inform the consumers about their products and the issues they should consider during their use, the businesses provide supplementary user manuals.

User manuals have been in the history of humanity since ancient times. The earliest forms of manuals were antique recipes used for cosmetic, horse care, cookery, and agriculture-related purposes (Martelli, 2018). It can be said that the proliferation of standard products targeting consumers after The Industrial Revolution and introduced legislation in the markets led to the widespread use of user manuals.

User manual can be defined as *a generic term for any document that explains how to use, maintain and handle a product from its delivery to its disposal, and in addition gives any technical information that a user is likely to need during the life of the product* (Pham et al., 2002, p. 433). User manuals can be named differently (such as user guide, owner's guide, or installation manual) according to their product class. Today, user manuals can be provided in various forms, such as leaflets, booklets, handbooks, CDs, and USB flash disks. Besides, user manuals have been published on company websites due to the proliferation of internet access, low cost to companies, and less environmental harm. Consumers can access the user manuals by having their mobile phones read the QR code supplied with the product. Manufacturers often provide user manuals freely. Sometimes, such as during a software learning process, consumers might even prefer commercial manuals to free official ones (De Jong and Karreman, 2017).

User manuals often provide information about safety, maintenance, installation, assembly, warranty, aftersales services, and technical specifications of products. Types of the necessary information for manuals are defined in standards published

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