



WEB CONSUMER BEHAVIOR: THE EFFECT OF ENJOYMENT ON INNOVATIVENESS*

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Abstract

This research analyzes if the degree of entertainment, enjoyment and involvement with information from a website makes the adoption of innovative purchase behaviors easier. The proposition was that the first consumers in the web portals are consumer innovators, and such innovators will buy new products that are present on this new commerce platform. This study conducted an experiment followed by a questionnaire survey to verify this proposition. Domain specific innovativeness scales (DSI) are used to measure consumers' innovativeness for web commerce.

The results suggest that: (1) the degree of entertainment and involvement with the information provided by the website does not change the online shopper's behavior; (2) the degree of website enjoyment can increase innovative purchases behavior.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior, Innovativeness, Uses and Gratifications, World Wide Web

I. INTRODUCTION

The Internet is rapidly growing as an alternative shopping place for consumers. It represents a change of paradigm in doing business today [Palmer and Griffith, 1998; Chang, Jackson, and Grover, 2003; Lee, Lee, Kim and Stout, 2004], and it is being integrated into the actual business practice regularly [Grover and

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Pradipkumar, 1999]. In addition, the Web is seen as an emerging new information technology, with such capacity that it has encouraged individuals to change their methods of accessing information, and it has caused organizations to change their business strategy [Moon and Kim, 2001].

Without consumer Internet use, there would be no e-commerce because the Internet is the vehicle through which the majority of business-to-consumer e-commerce takes place [Eighmey and McCord, 1998; Novak, Hoffman and Yung, 2000].

There are several statistics and growth estimates for consumer e-commerce (AIMC, 2000). The World Wide Web has emerged not only as the most versatile medium of information, but also as a new market which transcends traditional geographical borders and sectors, and even though it is an emergent market, it shows high penetration rates in the USA and Canada. But it is in the UE that the net has the highest growth rate in regard to the number of users and the quantity of servers (Drèze and Zufryden, 1997). The exponential growth of members and users makes the Internet one of the most fundamental sources of information. Furthermore, companies invest much time and money in developing, deploying, and promoting these technologies [Burke, 2002].

In this context, there are several studies trying to evaluate the Internet with regard to access and patterns of use (Sterne, 1995; Hurley and Birkwood, 1997; Eighmey, 1997). There are also important studies whose aim is to establish user profiles as well as to understand why consumers and companies experiment with and, in fact, do use the Internet; others try to identify opportunities, attributes and benefits associated with the use of interactive programs and to develop methodologies in order to establish patterns of behavior for consumers and companies [Perrin, 1999; Trepte, Ranne and Becker, 2003].

It is suggested that in order to achieve success, the unique characteristics of the digital medium should be exploited through the creation of two dialogues - website and e-mail - that are used to collect marketing intelligence in order to better respond to customer needs by means of enhanced products and personalization of marketing communications.

The aim of this paper is to verify how the degree of entertainment, enjoyment and involvement with the information on each website is related to Domain Specific Innovativeness, (DSI) (Eighmey, 1997; Goldsmith and Hofacker, 1991).

II. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

The development of open, interactive and digital networks on the Internet made it a very relevant service for the introduction of the so-called "electronic economy". Its users are denominated "innovators or initial adopters" since they convey increasingly less inhibited behavior in their search for information [Easingwood, 1986].

As an innovative technology, the use of Internet for business may be influenced by the same variables that guide the diffusion of innovations, such as the characteristics of the individual, the characteristics of the innovating process, as well as the nature of the social system in which the individuals are inserted [Rogers, 1995; Athuahene-Gima, 1996; Cooper and Kleinschmidt, 1987].

The main indicator that an innovation has been adopted is its effective use in one's daily life. Moreover, while for the consumer NP/S (New Product/Service) constitutes an opportunity to better satisfy his/her needs (personal, social and environmental), for the organization they configure the degree of its competitiveness and profitability. Nevertheless, we must agree that the definition of "product/service innovation" or the "NP/S" is rather complex (Belleflamme, Houard, Ruysen and Michaux, 1986; Berry and Parasuraman, 1993; Choffray and Dorey, 1988).

According to Schiffman and Kanuk (1991, 611), the "diffusion rate depends on the necessary time for a NP/S to be adopted". In general, innovative consumers are defined as the first buyers of a NP/S on which they have searched for specific information in a variety of sources. They are not considered impulsive buyers, since the purchase of NP/S, in some situations, is the result of more complex deliberations. The role of consumer innovators in dissemination is important because they give revenue and feedback to enterprises launching new products.

In the present study, we adopted the market orientation approach as the one which best illustrates the relationship between NP/S diffusion and the innovation degree perceived and accepted by the consumer (Narver and Slater, 1990; Kohli & Jaworski, 1990; Serra & Vieira, 1994). Empirical studies show reductions in the time needed for the adoption of innovation (Gatignon and Robertson, 1991; Brentani, 1989; 1991; Brentani & Cooper, 1992; Bayus, Kim & Schocker, 2000).

Innovativeness is one of the few concepts in the behavioral sciences that has an immediate relevance to consumer behavior. Two conceptualizations of the construct of innovativeness within a product category can be found in the literature.

The construct was first proposed by Midgley and Dowling [1978], who considered it a consequence of the joint influence of two individual traits: Innate Innovativeness [II] and Interest in the Product Category [IPC].

Later, Goldsmith and Hofacker [1991] proposed this concept as an individual trait called Domain Specific Innovativeness, or DSI, and he measured it by means of a psychometric scale created for that purpose.

First perceived as a behavioral tendency [Rogers, 1995], innovativeness today is rather considered an individual trait [Midgley and Dowling, 1978]. However, this same trait has been the object of different conceptualizations.

Hirschmann [1980] defines "the inherent research of novelty" as a tendency to want to introduce the novelty into general life. Midgley and Dowling [1978] present "innate innovativeness" as a predisposition to adopt new products, thus circumscribing this concept to the domain of product consumption [Booz-Allen &

Hamilton, 1982]. Finally, Goldsmith and Hofacker [1991] propose measuring “the specific innovativeness to the domain”, in other words, limiting it to one category of products. There would be a graded structure of innovativeness, from the most general to the most specific.

Midgley and Dowling [1978] define the II as “the degree according to which an individual takes innovativeness decisions independently of the experience communicated by others”. Beyond this definition, they consider that II can influence the actualized innovativeness [innovative behavior] on three levels:

- (1) General actualized innovativeness is the purchase of a new product in disparate categories. This behavior is the direct expression of II;
- (2) Specific actualized innovativeness is a tendency to buy some new products within the same category . This behavior depends on two influences: that of the II, oriented towards the novelty and,
- (3) Interest in the product category [IPC], oriented toward the type of product; actualized innovativeness for a single product corresponds to the precocious purchase of a new product. It is influenced by various factors: the II, the IPC, the experience communicated by others, and the situation of purchase.

It is therefore important to note here that these authors approach the idea of a specific actualized innovativeness as focussed on a category of products. For them, this innovativeness is not a trait, but a behavioral tendency that depends on two individual features: the II and the IPC.

Goldsmith and Hofacker [1991] have a different approach. These authors define the DSI as “a tendency [for consumers] to inform themselves and to adopt innovations [new products] within a specific domain of interest”. For them, this construct “... play[s] on the conceptual plan as on the empiric plan, a mediating role in the relationship between the innate innovativeness and specific innovative behaviors”. Innovativeness, for Goldsmith & Hofacker [1991], is a personal predisposition of strong interest in and affinity towards technology use. The innovativeness constructs, DSI, examined in this study approach novelties from a marketing-oriented angle. Therefore, we predict the following (see Fig 1.):

- H1 – The greater the intensity of involvement with information provided by the website, the greater the willingness of the online shopper to adopt innovative purchase behaviors.

A question now posed by many marketing practitioners is: How successful is their website? A reactive rather than proactive approach to the use of the Internet for marketing often omits definition of criteria and processes for measuring website

success until after site launch (Chaffey, Mayer, Johnston & Ellis-Chadwick, 2000, p.35]) Recognizing the differences between the Internet and other media is important in achieving success in channel promotion and channel satisfaction (Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler, 2006).

Chaffey et al. (2000) provide practical guidelines for effective design of a website to match a consumer's orientation and so appeal to different stakeholders and customer segment. If traditional media are predominantly pushing media, the Internet should be used to encourage two-way communication; these may be extensions of the direct-response approach.

Hoffman and Novak (1997) believe that this change is significant enough to represent a new model for marketing or a new marketing paradigm. Net interactivity, although limited, allows search information and specific services for consumers, making it possible to provide personalized attention and opening up innumerable micromarketing possibilities for the company.

Several studies [Quéau, 1993; Burke, 1997; Eighmey, 1997; Hartmann & Zorrilla-Calvo, 1998; Burke, 2002] show that the pleasure induced by the atmosphere at the selling point is a determining factor in consumer purchase behavior; effective websites are those that present a productive intersection of information and entertainment (Eighmey, 1997; Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Hartmann & Zorrilla-Calvo, 1998).

In fact, the presentation incentives generate different emotional states in online shoppers, affecting their perception of the virtual selling point and of the offer, as well as their behavior in terms of approach or repulsion when faced with the buying intention.

Eighmey [1997] noted that television and web sites displayed similar advantages, and that there were great advantages for the Internet user because of interactive possibilities. According to him, Internet users were also attracted to information that is time period proportionate with the value of that information.

Our theoretical basis for examining customer motivations is uses and gratification, also known as needs and gratifications theory, which is a communicating research paradigm that determines motivations by focusing on what people do with mass media [Katz, 1959; Klapper, 1963].

Uses and gratifications is a research tradition eminently appropriate for Internet study because of Internet's media-like characteristics [Eighmey, 1997; Ruggiero, 2000; Luo, 2002; Johnson & Kaye, 2003; Trepte et al., 2003; Stafford, Stafford & Schkade, 2004; Sangwan, 2005].

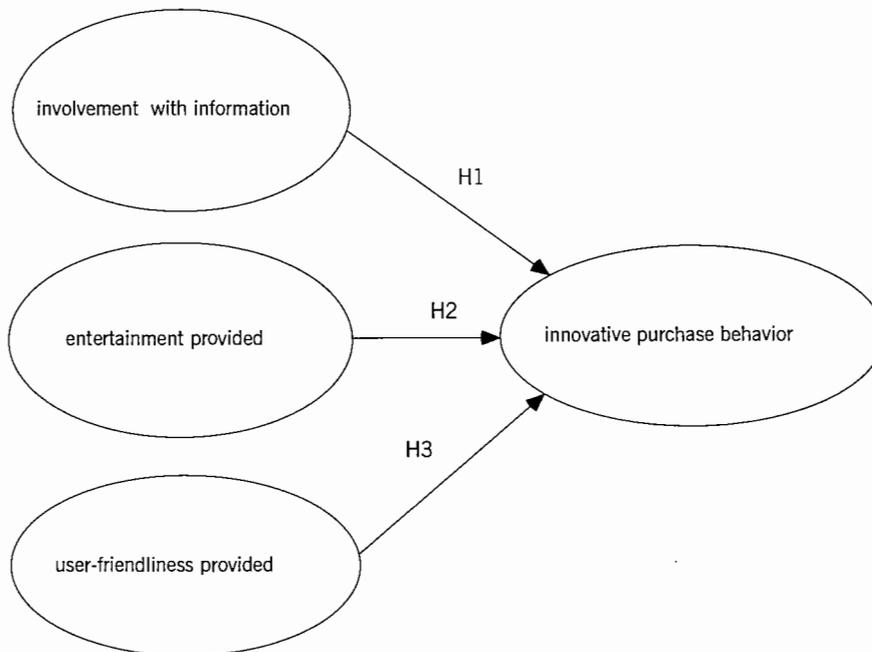
Research into consumer uses and gratifications in the Internet environment results in the development and trait validation of Internet-specific measures for the motivational dimensions that are identified. This will be important for Internet motivation research in future. Moreover, the success of the uses and gratification paradigm associated with a group of new technologies and supports allows the

supposition that when interacting with the media, the members of the audience become active explorers of gratification, and not passive receivers of the content of the media. Therefore, we predict the following (see Fig 1.):

- H2 – The greater the entertainment provided by the website, the greater the willingness of the online shopper to adopt innovative purchase behaviors;
- H3 – The greater the level of user-friendliness provided by the website, the greater the willingness of the online shopper to adopt innovative purchase behaviors;

FIGURE 1

Conceptual framework



III. METHODOLOGY

We use a naturally occurring purchase environment to test the above mentioned hypotheses. The web affinity was measured using the innovativeness scale adapted from Goldsmith and Hofacker [1991] (see Figure 2.). Predictive validity, which is the capacity to predict the purchase or ownership of the new product, is a particularly important validation criterion for a scale of innovativeness. Goldsmith and Hofacker (1991) therefore logically put forward the strong predictive validity of their scale.

DSI has been repeatedly validated for both products and services (Roehrich, 2004). Besides, measurement reliability and validity across the multiple scales used in this research must be empirically assessed to ensure valid comparisons [Eighmey, 1997].

Three steps were taken in this research to test the global quality of the three latent constructs of Eighmey [1997] and innovativeness scale of Goldsmith and Hofacker [1991].

First, we examined the reliability (internal consistency) of the measures using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Second, the scales were submitted to exploratory Principal Component Analysis. Third, AMOS 4.0 was used to perform a confirmatory factor analysis.

FIGURE 2

Scale to measure domain specific consumer innovativeness (Goldsmith and Hofacker, 1991)

1. In general, I am among the first in my circle of friends to buy a new product on the Web, when it appears.
2. If I heard that a new product was available on the Web, I would not be interested enough to buy it.
3. Compared to my friends, I own a lot of products from the Web.
4. In general, I am the first in my circle of friends to know the titles/brands of the latest products in the Web
5. I will not buy a new product on the Web if I haven't heard about/tried it yet
6. I do not like to buy a new product

IV. SURVEY DESIGN AND SAMPLING

High tech with high touch has come to consumer research. As one would expect, the consumer research needs of packaged goods companies have driven the acceptance and development of online qualitative and quantitative techniques.

In this exploratory study we used an electronic survey [Sproull, 1986; Sterne, 1995; Ellsworth and Ellsworth, 1996; Comley, 1997; Frost, 1998; Galan and Vernett, 2000; Vaast, 2003; Gueguen and Yami, 2004].

Vaast [2003] emphasizes the importance of the Internet's contribution to the treatment and analysis of data. He also examines the difference between the wealth and poverty of the means used in the questionnaire administration, concluding that the Internet will not have to be seen as a substitute but as a new and implicate technique of data survey.

Gueguen et al. [2004] identify the different aspects that the use of the Internet in management research can take, considering that it can occur in different states. Notably: the construction questionnaire, the administration questionnaire, the treatment of data, the diffusion of results and the diffusion of research.

This study made use of the Internet in the states of construction and administration questionnaire. In addition, the use of the e-mail was conjugated with an HTML form [Perrott, 1997]. This option eliminates the need for intermediate data treatment and mistakes that are usually made in traditional questionnaires [Frost, 1998].

After a pilot session with a sample of ten online shoppers, the final questionnaire was submitted to a non-probabilistic sample selected from an ensemble of professors and undergraduate students at Portuguese Universities, all of them users of the Internet, and who were invited to visit three previously selected websites (www.shoppingdirect.pt, www.globalshop.pt and www.pingodoce.pt). All of the 30 measurement scales are Likert-type with 7-point format, anchoring at "1"- strongly disagrees and "7"- strongly agree.

About 157 questionnaires were collected. The sample isn't representative, but constitutes an example of the comparable population and it is an important component of the target population. Furthermore, similar investigations in the domain use samples of the same magnitude [Eighmey, 1997; Eighmey and McCord, 1998; Moon and Kim, 2001; Luo, 2002; Trepte et al., 2003; Stafford et al., 2004; Sangwan, 2005].

V. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The overall fit of the 16-item of the original 19 was reasonably good (see Table 1).

TABLE 1

Measurement's Reliability & Validity

	entertainment	user-friendliness	innovative purchase behaviors
Component matrix	7 items: $\geq ,591$; $\leq ,871$	4 items: ,873	5 items: $\geq ,367$; $\leq ,904$
% Variance expl.	52 %	76 %	42 %
Cronbach Alpha	,83	,64	,70
KMO	,753	,500	,517
Bartlett's Test			
Appr. Chi-Sq	178,614	17,577	132,876
Df	21	1	15
Sig	,000	,000	,000
CFI = 0.982; stand. residuals ≤ 2 ; chi-square=129.592, 70 df			

Globally, the sample recognizes the first factor, "entertainment", partially recognizes the second, "user-friendliness", and does not recognize the third factor, "involvement with information" (see Table 1).

Specifically, aggregation of seven items into a single group that aims to capture the intensity of the entertainment associated with the websites in the test condensed about 52% of the total variance of the original variables.

The sample adequacy of this extraction is supported by the statistical significance *Bartlett's Test* of sphericity, as well as the high magnitude of the *KMO* test (see Table 1).

To get a single aggregate indicator for entertainment, the scale's items were exposed to a test of reliability (*Cronbach Alpha*), whose value $\alpha=0.83$ supports the consistency of the measure. Consequently, the scale was recoded in a sole measure regarding the level of entertainment perceived in each website.

The matrix of correlations of the factor user-friendliness allowed the retention of just two of the four original items that are grouped in a single component (variance explained =76%) with an exploratory reliability of $\alpha=0.64$ [Evrard, Pras and Roux, 2000]¹.

The poor reliability and validity of the factor "involvement with information" ($\alpha=0.29$), shows that the sample didn't recognize it as a construct. So, we used each original variable as measured by a single item relative to the obsolescence and undifferentiating character of the volume pertaining to the available information.

With the innovativeness construct [Goldsmith and Hofacker, 1991], we get a composite measure of five of the six original items ($V=42\%$; $\alpha=0.70$). In that sense, we recoded the new numeric continuous variable into three percentile groups of innovativeness: low, average and high.

Since the sample did not recognize the "involvement with the information" construct, H1 is only partially confirmed. The ANOVA results show that only the "information volume" has a positive impact on the adoption of innovative purchase behavior ($F(2)=16.018$, $p<0.05$) (see Table 2).

H2 deals with website entertainment and innovativeness behavior. The greater the entertainment provided by the website, the greater the willingness of the online shopper to adopt innovative purchase behaviors. The results do not support H2 – ($F(2) = 4.498$ $p>0.05$) (see Table 2). This can be explained by the sample profile; it is more information oriented.

H3 argues that the willingness to adopt innovative behaviors will be as high as the user-friendliness provided by the website. The one-way ANOVA results support this hypothesis ($F(2) = 20.629$, $p<0.05$) (see Table 2). *Scheffe* test

¹ Evrard et al (1993, 282) consider that for an exploratory study, the acceptable alpha measure stands between 0.60 and 0.80.

shows that the user-friendliness induces the adoption of innovative purchase behavior ($x = 1.98$ vs. $x = 3.47$, $p < 0.05$).

TABLE 2

ONE-WAY-ANOVA: Innovativeness (low; average; high)

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
entertainment	Between Groups	2,168	2	1,84	4,498	,109
	Within Groups	37,062	154	0,241		
	Total	39,231	156			
user-friendliness	Between Groups	20,258	2	10,129	20,629	,002
	Within Groups	75,610	154	0,491		
	Total	95,869	156			
obsolescence of information	Between Groups	2,845	2	1,423	5,761	142
	Within Groups	37,997	154	0,247		
	Total	40,842	156			
undifferentiation of information	Between Groups	,656	2	,328	0,378	,876
	Within Groups	133,590	154	0,867		
	Total	134,246	156			
information volume	Between Groups	17,363	2	8,682	16,018	,040
	Within Groups	83,453	154	0,542		
	Total	100,816	156			

Consequently, in spite of not observing any increment in situations of average and high innovativeness in function of the available information volume, this is decisive when the availability for innovative behaviors adoption is reduced ($x = 1.67$ vs. $x = 2.94$, $p < 0.05$).

VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The major aim of this study is to understand the innovative behavior of consumers in an Internet market. Innovative consumers represent a key market segment, playing an essential role in the success of a new product, which is something many academics and marketing practitioners are keen to identify and influence. Successful sales to innovative consumers may achieve market leadership and create effective barriers to entry that prevent other enterprises from entering the market easily, as well as legitimizing the novel product to other consumers [Goldsmith and Flynn, 1992].

Our findings generally support the hypothesized relationships. Basically, we found that while the degree of entertainment offered by the website does not

affect the adoption of innovative purchase behavior, the intensity associated with the user-friendliness of the website can facilitate the acquisition of innovative products/services, specifically by the online shoppers with a lower predisposition towards the adoption of innovative purchase behavior.

Moreover, the intensity of the involvement with the information available for the website does not seem to be decisive in the purchase decisions of the innovative services that were tested. Nevertheless, offering services of average and high innovativeness shows that the volume of the available information is decisive when the willingness to adopt innovative behaviors is reduced.

We also want to underline that these managerial indications are congruent with those obtained by Eighmey [1997], Hartmann and Zorrilla-Calvo [1998] and Trepte et al. [2003]. Consistent with their findings, our results show that website entertainment and enjoyment have a positive impact on the purchase decision. Website enjoyment also determines the user's attitude towards using the Web. These results may become an important consideration in the design of future www systems [Moon and Kim, 2001].

In effective terms, the results of the study suggest that the emotional side of perception, namely the pleasure derived from a visit to a given website, which is due to the attractiveness of its presentation and the entertainment that it offers, determines the emotional attractiveness felt by the visitors because it is related to the involvement process leading up to a purchase decision.

However, this study needs to be replicated with a larger and cross-cultural sample, which could explain some of the controversial results.

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Resumo

Este estudo analisa as condições em que o grau de entretenimento e prazer percebidos e o envolvimento com a informação de um website facilita a adopção de comportamentos de compra inovadores.

O pressuposto é que os consumidores pioneiros dos portais da web são inovadores mais disponíveis para adquirir os novos produtos dessas novas plataformas comerciais.

Para o efeito, este trabalho realizou um pré-teste que suportou a recolha de informação primária por questionário on-line. Escalas de inovatividade específica (DSI) foram utilizadas para medir a o grau de inovação que os consumidores manifestam face ao comércio electrónico.

Os resultados obtidos sugerem que: (1) o grau de entretenimento e envolvimento com a informação proporcionada pelo website não altera o comportamento do cibernauta; (2) o grau de prazer do website pode incrementar comportamentos de compra inovadores.

Palavras-chave: Comportamento do Consumidor, Inovatividade, Utilização e Recompensa, *World Wide Web*.

APENDICE 1.

Goldsmith and Hofacker [1991]: scale to measure domain specific consumer innovativeness

1. In general, I am among the first in my circle of friends to buy a new product on the Web, when it appears.
2. If I heard that a new product was available on the Web, I would not be interested enough to buy it.
3. Compared to my friends, I own a lot of products from the Web.
4. In general, I am the first in my circle of friends to know the titles/brands of the latest products in the Web
5. I will not buy a new product on the Web if I haven't heard about/tried it yet
6. I do not like to buy a new product

