



Factors Influencing Online Shopping In South Africa: The Role of Demographic Factors

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Abstract

The growth of the online shopping market in South Africa has been widely publicised, and has led to many online retail brands being established. More and more people in this country are shopping online. Traditional retailers have also expanded their offering to including online shopping, due to public demand and an opportunity to expand their reach. To attract growing consumer segments to online shopping, online retailers must understand why consumers shop online, as well as the different demographic factors which play a role. A survey was conducted among shoppers at two shopping centres: in Johannesburg and in Pretoria. Of the 210 completed questionnaires, only 207 were usable. Convenience sampling was adopted to intercept customers at the two shopping centres. To achieve the objectives of this study, various statistical analyses were conducted, including descriptive statistics, factor analysis, a t-test and the ANOVA test. The majority of respondents reported that they shop online. Twelve factors were identified during factors analysis, with four having a greater influence on online shopping, namely usefulness, trust, convenience and ease of use. The study also found that online shopping factors differ across demographics such gender and income groups, but not across age and level of education.

Keywords: Online shopping, Factors, Demographics, South Africa, Online retailers

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The increased adoption of the internet as a shopping and purchasing platform is appealing for marketing practitioners and researchers alike, and its rapid development raises interesting questions for academic research (Teo & Yu, 2005). As Lian and Lin (2008) state, the evolution of the internet has expanded the popularisation of online shopping. The internet, as a 'retail outlet' for online shopping, has developed from its initial use by only a few, into a market with significant potential (Jongeun, 2004). Jusoh and Ling (2012) define online shopping as an activity a consumer undertakes, in making a service or product purchase over the internet. Ahuja (2003) defines online shopping as "gathering information passively via exposure to advertising; shopping, which includes both browsing and deliberate information search, and the selection and buying of specific goods, services, and information". The nature of online shopping is such that a consumer does not have a chance to touch or try out a product, but nonetheless it permits the consumer to view a wide variety of goods and make instant price comparisons, which are unparalleled in real time or physical spaces (Kellerman, 2014).

The easy access to social media platforms such as internet banking, which have increased public demand for the majority of business matters to be conducted online (Dlodlo, 2014). It is important to identify which factors influence consumers to shop online. According to Li and Zhang (2012), the decision-making process involved in online shopping includes information seeking, a comparison between alternatives, and the making of a choice, the result of which has a bearing in that it directly influences the consumer's purchasing behaviour. Online consumers are always on the look-out for new and attractive products, at the best price (given their budget), which means that for them, surfing the internet is the best way to save both time and money (Bashir, 2013).

South Africa has a strong yet growing group of online retailers, including Takealot, Zando, One shop, Amazon, Bidorbuy, Groupon, eBay and Yuppiechef (Effective Measure and iab, 2014; Prinsloo, 2013). The year 2020, saw an increase in the number of online retailers with the launch of everyday online retailer and others. This implies that SA Consumers are increasingly changing their attitudes towards online shopping. However a study by Luo, Ba and Zhang (2012) found that some online consumers are not satisfied with their shopping experiences, which requires that factors influencing attitude towards online shopping be investigated.

According to Jongeun (2004) and Heijden et al (2001) online retailers can increase online sales by gaining a full understanding of which consumers buy online, what and why they buy, before deciding how those consumers who do not shop online, can be tempted to do so. Since consumers browse online and search for information about a product begins on the retailer's website ((SACSC, 2016), it is therefore important that marketers provide information that consumers can use during the online decision-making process.

According to Prinsloo (2013), insufficient formal research has been conducted in South Africa to allow a proper evaluation of how online shopping and the factors influencing it will affect shopping centres in the future. There is a paucity of research on the local market, despite work by iab.South Africa (2014), uAfrica.com (2014) MasterCard (2014), Glenda (2014), Prinsloo (2013), McClatchey, Cattell and Michell (2007), and Beneke and Scheffer (2010) which is why this study investigate factors influencing consumer shopping behaviour as well as the impact of demographics factors in online shopping.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Factors influencing online shopping

Several factors determine whether or not consumers shop online. Several studies into the motives for online shopping have reported varying results, but the most commonly mentioned factors are convenience, ease of use and usefulness (Makhitha, Van Scheers & Mogoashoa, 2019). Ease of use was also identified by Khare, Khare and Singh (2012) and Vijayasarathy (2004). The importance of trust and security factors, as well as privacy, was also reported (Hodzic & Opazo, 2007; Ranganathan & Ganapathy, 2002).

Factors	Authors	Description
Convenience	Makhitha et al, 2019; Rundansky-Kloppers, 2016; Jen-Hung & Yi-Chun, 2010; Childers et al., 2001	Convenience refers to consumers saving time and effort (which includes physical and mental effort)
Ease of use	Makhitha et al, 2019; Rundansky-Kloppers, 2016; Shih, 2004;	A user believes in the existence of a positive use-performance relationship, while the perceived ease of use refers to the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system will be free of effort
Role shopping	Evans, Jamal and Foxall, 2009	Role shopping is when consumers obtain pleasure from shopping for family, friends or others
Usefulness	Makhitha et al., 2019	A behavioural decision theory in which people use (or do not use) technology, based on their belief that this technology will improve/upgrade their performance
Social shopping	Zeeman, 2013	Social shopping is for consumers who look for opportunities to interact and socialise with family and friends who share similar interests
Security, privacy, trust, risk	Mahlaka, 2016; Pant, 2014; Khare et al., 2012; Ha & Stoel, 2009; Lian & Lin, 2008; Hasslinger, Hodzic & Opazo, 2007; Vijayasarathy, 2004	Security is defined as the extent to which consumers believe that making online purchases is secure. They are concerned about the ease with which their personal information, browsing and shopping habits can be captured online, and the possibility of information being misused
Value shopping	Zeeman, 2013	These consumers connect emotionally and enjoy negotiating a discount
Website	Matikiti, Mpingsanjira & Roberts-Lombard, 2018; Karimi, 2013; Alam Bakar, Ismail & Ahsan, 2008	The websites of online retailers are the interaction point for consumers looking to shop online
Normative beliefs	Khare et al., 2012; Escalas & Bettman, 2003; Vijayasarathy, 2004	Social groups tend to influence consumer and product purchase behaviour.
Information	Bhatnagar & Ghose, 2004	Information quality
Gratification	Kotze, North, Stols & Venter, 2012; Arnold & Reynold, 2003	These consumers shop for the purpose of stress relief, relaxation, to improve their mood, or simply to treat themselves

Table 1: Factors influencing online shopping

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Although online shopping in South Africa (SA) has been on the rise as noted by (KPMG, 2017), there large majority of SA consumers are still to adopt online shopping ((Kempen & Kasambala, Toerien, 2015). The e-commerce in SA accounted for only 1.6%, or \$1.2 billion, of retail sales in 2019 and was expected to increased due to the demand for online sales durin the covid'q9 pandemic lockdown (Reuters, 2020). The Covid'19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of online shopping with more and more consumers adopting online shopping (Mybroadband, 2020). Since the Covid'19 pandemic, more consumer have shown interest (ITWeb, 2020) to shop on line and the online shopping adoption increased by 40% during the lockdown period (Globenewswire, 2020). It is unknown if this behaviour will remain consistent or possibly increase in future. Although there are existing studies in online shopping in SA, there is still a need to determine the factors influencing online shopping in the country since SA is a developing country with

majority of its people living in poverty. Due to income disparity and the fact that there is low literacy rate in SA, there was a need to also investigate the influence of demographics on online shopping adoption.

Various factors influence consumer behaviour when shopping online, including, amongst others, convenience, consumer risk/trust, price, shopping experience, accessibility, selection, ongoing research, product category involvement, positive sociality and surprise, price comparison, how attractive the website looks and the availability of information (Lin, 2003; Uzun & Poturak, 2014; Wolfinbarger & Gilly, 2001; Zhou et al., 2007). Understanding which factors influence consumer behaviour when shopping online will enable online retailers to enhance online shoppers' satisfaction, while attracting and retaining existing customers. Therefore, the purpose of this research study is to determine the utilitarian factors influencing online shopping in SA as well as to determine the impact of demographics in online shopping adoption in SA.

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The impact of demographics factors towards online shopping was investigated by Makhitha, Van Scheers and Mogashoa (2019) and found that gender and education level had no influence on online shopping behaviour, while age and experience in shopping online did have an influence. Makhitha and Ngobeni (2021) also reported that gender has no influence on consumer attitude towards online shopping. The young adult consumers were found to be more familiar with the internet and are more likely to shop online by Xu and Paulines (2005) which implies that online shopping adoption differ across age group of consumers. This is because young consumers are e technologically savvy Millennial generation (Begg (2017). Other studies such as Makhitha and Ngobeni (2021) and Khare, Khare and Singh (2012) found significant differences among different age groups and their respective attitudes towards online shopping while Kim (2004:60) found that consumers in different age groups possess similar attitudes towards online shopping. The education level and income was reported in various studies as having impact (Rudansky-Kloppers,2016) while other had reported no such impact (Kanchan & Kumar, 2015; Richa, 2012).

The following hypothesis was formulated, given the discrepancies in the aforementioned findings:

H1: Demographics factor (gender, age, education level and income) influence online shopping behavior in South Africa.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Study design

To achieve the objectives of the study on which this article is based, a survey research method was deemed appropriate. A survey requires a respondent to choose a response from those provided, and allows the researcher to compare the respondents' responses. It was appropriate for this research to determine which factors consumers use when shopping online, and to determine the influence of demographic factors on consumers who shop online.

Sample population and sample design

The sample population for the study was shoppers who visited two malls: Cresta mall in Johannesburg and Sunny park mall in Sunnyside, Pretoria. The sampling frame for the research comprised retail consumers between the age of 18 and 65 who have access to the internet, and have either shopped online or intend to shop online. Over 200 shoppers were targeted for the study, and 207 of them fully completed the questionnaire. The respondents were made aware that participating in the study was voluntary and that no compensation would be offered for completing the questionnaire. Convenience sampling was used and fieldworkers helped to hand out questionnaires in the two malls..

Questionnaire construction

Existing studies were used and questionnaire items were adapted from these studies. Specifically, studies studies by Arnold & Reynolds, 2003; Cardoso & Pinto, 2010; Cowart & Goldsmith, 2007; Engelbrecht, 2015; Fong, 2013; Jamal, Davies, Churdy & Al-Marri, 2006; Jusoh & Ling, 2012; Katawetawaraks & Wang, 2011; Kim, 2006; Li and Zang, 2002; Mandilas, Karasavvoglu, Nikolaidis & Tsourgiannis, 2013; Nikaje, 2013; Ozen & Kodaz, 2012; Yang & Lester, 2004; Zeeman, 2013) were used for the design of the questionnaire. In addition, there were various demographics included in the questionnaire. The questionnaire items measuring utilitarian factors influencing online shopping included consisted of 34 statements adapted from existing studies. The respondents were asked to rate each of the supermarket attributes on a Likert scale from 1–5, with 1 measuring “highly disagree” and 5 “highly agree”.

Data collection and analysis

Data were collected by fieldworkers who intercepted shoppers at the two malls from March to April 2019. Shoppers who visited the two malls during this period were intercepted by field workers and asked to participate in the study.

The data were analysed with the aid of The IBM SPSS for Windows, version 25 was used to analyse the data. To achieve the objectives of this study, various statistical analyses were, including descriptive analyses, such as mean and standard deviation, factor analysis and ANOVA.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Descriptive statistics

As shown in Table 2, more females (60.4%, n=125) than males (39.6%, n=82) participated in the study. Almost one third of the respondents were aged 18–21 (31.6%, n=65), while almost two-thirds were aged 18–25 (60.2%, n=124). Respondents older than 45 are not well represented in the sample. Fewer than 10 per cent (9.2%, n=19) of the respondents had not completed Grade 12, while more than a third (34.3%, n=71) has Grade 12 and more than half (56.6%, n=117) had a tertiary qualification. The majority of respondents (70.9%, n=146) had a monthly income of less than R10 000.00.

Demographics		N	Percentage
Gender	Male	82	39.6
	Female	125	60.4
	Total	207	100
Age	18–21	65	31.4
	22–25	59	28.5
	26–30	40	19.3
	31–35	27	13
	36–45	13	6.3
	46–54	1	0.5
	55–60	1	0.5
	Total	206	99.5
Education	Did not complete Grade 12	19	9.2
	Completed Grade 12	71	34.3
	Undergraduate certificate or diploma	61	29.5
	Bachelor's degree	43	20.8
	Honours degree	12	5.8
	Master's degree	1	0.5
	Total	207	100
Income (per month)	R0–R9 999.99	146	70.5
	R10 000–R19 999.99	44	21.3
	R20 000–R29 999.99	9	4.3
	R30 000+	7	3.4
	Total	206	99.5

Table 2: Demographics of the study population

All respondents (100%, n=207) had access to the internet. More than 90 per cent (93.7%, n=194) used their cell phones to access the internet, with the next popular method being connecting from a home computer (45.9%, n=95). More than 70 per cent (72.8%, n=150) used the internet for communication and visiting social websites, etc. The next popular reason for accessing the internet was to find information (57.3%, n=118), followed by doing research or homework and studying (48.1%, n=99).

The majority of respondents (83.1%, n=172) possessed a credit/debit card and bought clothing and accessories online (61.1%, n=118). The next most popular type of purchase was books (32.6%, n=63), followed by electronic goods (30.6%, n=59). Almost 60 per cent (58.5%, n=121) of respondents did not buy electronic products online. Of those who did, almost one third (32.5%, n=40) indicated that they might buy electronic goods online in the next 12 months, and more than 40 per cent (43.2 n=38) do so once a year, with 36.8% (n=75) visiting the sites of one to three online stores, before making a purchase.

The most popular online site from which to purchase electronic goods was Takealot (70.4%, n=119), followed by Makro (38.5%, n=65).

Factor analysis

The data included in the factor analysis were analysed, and revealed a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.836, which is well above the recommended minimum value of 0.6 (Field & Miles 2010; Kaiser, 1970, 1974), and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Bartlett, 1954) reached statistical significance, $p < .001$. The KMO index of 0.836 meant that items in the measurement were acceptable for factor analysis: the KMO measures how much the items in a scale have in common, therefore a value closer to 1 shows that the variables have communalities. The p-value of Bartlett's

test, which was below 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), is significant, indicating that the correlation structure was significantly strong enough to perform a factor analysis on the items.

Of the 56 items investigated, the communalities were deemed appropriate, as they had a minimum of 0.487 and a maximum of 0.779. All the 56 items resulted in a 12-factor solution, explaining 68.181% of the variance. Table 3 shows the 12 factors.

	Factor 1: Risk	Factor 2: Information	Factor 3: Convenience	Factor 4: Usefulness	Factor 5: Ease of use	Factor 6: Trust	Factor 7: Website
There is a risk of the product not being the same as advertised	0.904						
Online shopping is risky because I cannot examine the product	0.811						
The product description might be incorrect	0.784						
When shopping online, there is a risk of the product malfunctioning when delivered	0.779						
I might not receive the exact specified quality of a product that I purchased	0.779						
There is a risk of me not being happy with my purchase once it arrives	0.751						
I fear my product may get damaged during the delivery process	0.599						
Information is available for me to make the purchase decision when doing online shopping		0.783					
Online companies inform me of the date and time when I am going to receive my order		0.751					
I can compare information about the product online		0.74					
I receive prompt and accurate e-mail confirmation about my transaction		0.67					
Product reviews influence my online purchases		0.596					
I can easily locate required information, products and services		0.549					
I find the information on the websites to be trustworthy		0.539					
The design of shopping websites has a good look and feel		0.534					
Online stores deliver an efficient service			0.805				
Shopping sites provide delivery options			0.732				
I do not have to wait to be served			0.665				
The whole online purchase process is better than having to go to the store			0.634				
It is easy to find my way around shopping sites			0.624				
Online shopping service efficiency is expected due to the options of delivery (e.g. free delivery, faster delivery, tracking delivery and timed delivery slots)			0.583				
Policies related to product purchases and returns are stated on the online websites			0.529				
I can save the effort of going to the store			0.428				
Online store websites/apps enable me to complete my shopping quickly				0.849			
Online store websites/apps enhance my effectiveness while shopping				0.795			
Using the internet to shop improves the quality of my shopping				0.774			
Using the internet to shop makes it easier for me to do my shopping				0.626			
Overall, the online store websites/apps are easy to use					0.776		
My interaction with online store websites/apps has been clear and understandable (user-friendly)					0.737		
Learning to use online store websites/apps was easy for me					0.701		
I worry that my personal information may be misused if I shop online						0.845	
I need to feel secure with using the website before I will use it for online shopping						0.59	
When products/services fail, online companies resolve it without me having to spend a considerable amount of time, money and/or energy							0.866
When I use the websites, there is very little time between my actions and online companies' responses							0.715
Cronbach's alpha	0.882	0.871	0.85	0.884	0.845	0.438	0.516
Eigenvalue	13.62	5.402	3.763	1.787	1.554	1.221	1.148
Mean	2.166	2.158	2.103	2.043	2.128	2.055	2.579
SD	0.828	0.746	0.696	0.803	0.859	0.891	0.886

Table 3: Factor analysis

Factor 1, named Risk, had seven items loading. A reliability analysis conducted on this factor achieved a strong Cronbach's alpha of 0.882, with a mean score of 2.1663, standard deviation of 0.82884 and a 13.618 eigenvalue. The mean score for the factor Risk was found to be the 5th-most important factor. A study by Islam, and Daud (2014) shows that risk is a significant concern for shoppers, especially in terms of the security of online payment, which discourages shoppers from shopping online. Constantine's (2004) study confirmed that online consumers are concerned about the risks involved in purchasing online, while Juniwati (2014) notes that perceived risk has a negative effect on attitudes towards online shopping. Adnan (2014) points out that online shoppers consider different risk factors before transferring any monetary value to an online seller, with Laudon and Traver (2009) confirming that security is a major concern which prevents consumers from shopping online.

Factor 2, the variable of Information, loaded eight items. The availability of information on a website was found to be very influential in affecting a consumer's choice to purchase online from a specific site (Menon & Kahn, 2002). A reliability analysis achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.871, which is above the generally expected minimum of 0.7, with a mean score of 2.1588, a standard deviation of 0.74690, and a 5.402 eigenvalue. On this factor, the consumer's buying intention is influenced by internal factors such as perception, intuition, information processing, and attitude, and by external factors such as the social environment, peer influence, and social media (Babin & Harris, 2014). According to Yu, Zhang and Liu (2018), consumers who hold utilitarian shopping motives perceive shopping as a task, hence they tend to be rational, to pursue the objective characteristics of products, and aim to achieve a specific goal.

The third factor, Convenience, scored a Cronbach's alpha of 0.850, with a mean score of 2.1033, a standard deviation of 0.69628, and a 3.763 eigenvalue, when a reliability analysis was conducted. The mean score of Convenience was shown to be the third-most impactful as regards online shopping, after the factors of trust (M=2.055) and usefulness (M=2.043). Consumers are able to shop from any part of the globe and at any time, making product comparisons on details such as manufacturing date, expiry date, maximum retail price (MRP), quantity, batch number, place of manufacture, etc. (Gautam, 2018). Online shopping saves consumers time and effort: there is no travel time to get to the retail store, searching for parking or walking around in the store (Hofacker, 2001). According to Ling, Zhilin and Minjoon (2013), online retailers present full product descriptions to targeted customers, which feature textual details, computer graphics, videos or YouTube links.

Factor 4, Usefulness, loaded four items. The reliability analysis obtained a Cronbach's alpha of 0.884, with a mean score of 2.0435, a standard deviation of .80384, and a 1.787 eigenvalue. Usefulness had the greatest impact on online shopping of all the factors, with a mean score of 2.043. Davis et al. (1989) explain that usefulness is the degree to which an individual believes using a particular technology can enhance their job performance in an organisational context. User attitude is an important factor which affects the intention to use web technologies (Matikiti, Mpinganjira & Roberts-Lombard, 2018). Juniwati (2014) notes that if individuals perceive it to be easy (accessing sites, learning which procedures to follow, comparing products and prices, finding the desired product), their attitudes towards online shopping will be more positive.

Ease of use, Factor 5, achieved a similar Cronbach's alpha of 0.884, a mean score of 2.0435, a standard deviation of 0.80384, and a 1.787 eigenvalue. According to Davis (1993), a consumer can become more productive by using ease of use enhancements, which will lead him/her to become more productive overall. Liu et al. (2010) found that the easier it is to use a technology, the greater the expected benefits derived from that technology. Juniwati (2014) found that ease of use has a positive and significant influence on consumer's attitude toward online shopping: the respondents perceived online shopping websites as easy to access, the process as easy to comprehend, and they could easily compare the products and prices of different retailers, and easily found products.

Factor 6, Trust, included two items: 'Worry that my personal information may be misused if I shop online' and 'I need to feel secure with using the website before I use it for online shopping'. This is the second-most impactful factor, with a mean score of 2.055, which means consumers are highly influenced by trust when shopping online. A reliability analysis achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.438, which is below the generally expected minimum of 0.7, a mean score of 2.0556, a standard deviation of 0.89120, and a 1.148 eigenvalue. The high mean score suggests that trust plays a significant role in online shopping, since the respondents rated it higher in terms of mean score than all the other factors.

The reliability analysis of Website (Factor 7) achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.516, a mean score of 2.5797, a standard deviation of 0.88662, and a 1.048 eigenvalue. Demangeot and Broderick (2007) point out that online store websites are graded by consumers as to whether they make sense. Korgaonkar, Silverblatt and Girard (2006) found that online consumers' purchasing behaviours differ, depending on the store's website features, attributes and degree of interaction. Menon and Kahn (2002) found that stimulation and pleasure, as attributes of the website, heighten consumers' inclination to purchase online.

Demographics and online shopping

The t-test found that gender had a significant effect on whether the study respondents found online shopping easy to use ($t(205) = -2.152, p < .05$), trust online shopping ($t(205) = -2.017, p < .05$) and on how they perceive the online shopping website ($t(205) = -2.775, p < .01$).

The t-test also found that gender had a significant effect on how the respondents rated on the Normative factor ($t(205) = -3.490, p < .01$) and the Value factor ($t(205) = -2.328, p < .05$). Males ($M = 2.655, n = 82$) tended to have a more normative experience when doing online shopping than females ($M = 3.129, n = 125$). Males ($M = 1.972, n = 82$) also tended to find online shopping websites easier to use than females ($M = 2.232, n = 125$).

Males ($M = 1.902, n = 82$) tended to trust online shopping more than females ($M = 2.156, n = 125$), and tended to evaluate online shopping websites more favourably ($M = 2.372, n = 82$) than females ($M = 2.716, n = 125$). The above findings contradict those of Makhitha and Khumalo (2019) and Gunaseelan and Chitra (2014), who found that gender had no influence on the shopping behaviour of consumers.

The ANOVA test found no significant differences among the age groups across all factors. The findings in this study differ from those of Makhitha et al. (2019), who reported that consumer age influenced online shopping, as did other existing studies (Begg, 2017; Rudansky-Kloppers, 2016).

The ANOVA test found no significant differences among the education groups across all factors, confirming the findings by Richa (2012). This adds to a study by Kanchan and Kumar (2015), who established that education level exerted an influence on online shopping frequency.

Contrary to existing studies by Richa (2012) and Kacha and Kumar (2015), the ANOVA test conducted in this study found that monthly income had a significant effect on certain factors ($F(2) = 4.581, p < .05$). This result is corroborated by both the robust tests of equality of means. On average, the R0–R9 999.99 income group ($M = 2.82, SD = 0.95$) was significantly more inclined to adhere to the perceived normal standards regarding online shopping than the R10 000–R19 000.99 income group ($M = 3.30, SD = 0.96$).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the study show that local consumers shop online and are influenced by various factors. Of the factors identified through factor analysis, five had the most significant influence on online shopping, namely Usefulness ($M = 2.043$), Trust ($M = 2.055$), Convenience ($M = 2.101$), Ease of use ($M = 2.128$) and Information ($M = 2.158$). Online retailers should consider these factors when designing online marketing strategies; they should not only ensure that online shopping on their site is convenient and easy to use, but also that it is trustworthy and that consumers can access the necessary information when making purchasing decisions.

Strengthening a site's security will increase the level of consumers' online participation. Trust and security are often cited as reasons why consumers do not shop online (see Kanade, 2018; Makhitha et al., 2019; Sarigiannidis & Kesidou, 2009). Strengthening security features will ensure that the fear of online shopping risk is reduced.

Normative and social factors were found to have the least influence, which implies that online shoppers are not influenced by social connections such as family and friends. They are also not concerned about the approval of their family and friends as to whether or not they shop online. Marketers can, however, still use family and friends to influence each other when it comes to shopping online. For example, online retailers could encourage their online consumers to speak favorably (positive word of mouth) about shopping online.

The current study found that gender influenced online shopping, as males were found to have more trust when shopping online and also found websites easier to navigate than females. Online marketers could therefore focus on building trust when targeting females, and ensuring that websites are user friendly for female consumers.

Since the study found no significant difference across age and education level, online marketers can use similar marketing strategies when targeting consumers of different age groups and education levels. They should emphasize those factors which are most important to consumers across the board, regardless of their age and level of education.

Online shoppers from different income groups were found to emphasize different online factors. Significant differences were found among income groups as regards normative influences. In particular, marketers should emphasize normative factors when targeting low-income groups.

CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

This study found that usefulness, trust, convenience and ease of use were influential in respect of South Africans' online shopping behavior, while normative influences and social factors were found to be less influential. Significant differences were reported between male and female consumers, and between consumers of different income groups. No significant differences were, however, found among consumers of different age groups and levels of education.

The limitations of the study are that only two shopping centers in Gauteng were targeted. Future studies might target consumers across the country, to determine whether online shoppers' buying behaviour differs from one province to the next. Further studies might also investigate the online shopping behaviour of black consumers, comparing those in townships and rural areas to people in urban areas. Studies might also test the applicability of traditional consumer behaviour models to the online shopping environment.

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