Service Attributes Available on Mobile Website

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Background and Purpose of Study: US m-commerce sales growth has been significant over the past few years. Total sales of products and services made using mobile phones and tablets reached $41 billion in 2013, accounting for 16% of total e-commerce sales. A majority of e-commerce consumers are expected to make purchases via mobile devices by 2017. Although mobile purchases are growing, most consumers still prefer to make actual purchases in physical stores or through retail websites (eMarketer, 2013). Despite high interests and investments in mobile shopping, the adoption of mobile shopping services is still questionable (Yang, 2010). Based on the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (Venkatesh et al., 2003), Yang (2010) identified the three determinants of consumers' intentions to adopt mobile shopping services: utilitarian performance expectancy (technology services that facilitate mobile shopping, such as flexibility of use, consideration of time and place, personalization, and shopping effectiveness), hedonic performance expectancy (experiential and emotional aspects of services), and social influence (the effect of others' perceptions on consumers' intentions to adopt the mobile shopping services, emphasizing word-of-mouth (e.g., product reviews and recommendations) and social networking). While empirical research supports that the three determinants are critical to the adoption of mobile shopping, it is still unclear how the mobile sites meet consumers' expectations of utilitarian performance and hedonic performance and also facilitate social influences. Thus, the purpose of this study is to identify the extent to which current mobile retailers provide service attributes that are important to the adoption of mobile shopping.

Method: Two hundred fifty one m-commerce retailers were selected for the content analysis from Internet Retailer (2011). Three determinant dimensions of mobile sites were content-analyzed. Through a preliminary examination of these mobile sites, a coding guide of service attributes associated with each dimension was developed. Availability of mobile app, difference between mobile website and full website, link to alternative shopping sites, wish list, shopping cart, email service, account management, loading issues, and search engine were coded into "utilitarian performance", and music, flash intro, video presentation, 3-D rotation, and zoom function were coded as "hedonic performance". Also, functions that enable consumers to share their opinions, such as product review, product rating, social networking, 'email to friend' function, were coded into "social influence" dimension of mobile services. Most mobile service attributes were coded as unavailable and available. Adequate inter-coder reliability was achieved for coding all mobile sites.

Results: The results suggest that mobile retailers currently do a better job in meeting utilitarian performance expectancy than hedonic performance expectancy or social influence. About 68% of the mobile retailers provided a mobile app for shopping and about 73.4% of the retailers had different format between mobile sites and full sites. The majority of the mobile sites had a search engine (92.3%) and did not show loading issues (90.5%). Regarding personalization in the utilitarian performance, account management (85.3%) and shopping cart (94.5%) were available in most mobile sites. However the mobile retailers underperformed in two utilitarian performance aspects; only 37.1% of the mobile sites had a wish list function, and links to alternative shopping sites were not available in most mobile sites (16.7%).

In terms of the hedonic performance dimension, most mobile sites did not provide services that can make mobile shopping more enjoyable. For example, music and flash intro were available only in a few mobile sites (0.9% and 0.8%, respectively). In product pages, only a few mobile sites had 3-D rotation (1.6%), video presentation (6.4%), zoom function (13.1%), and alternative product images (29.6%).

Lastly, four attributes were coded into the "social influence" dimension. About 45.2% of the mobile sites provided consumers' product reviews and product rating. Also, 80.5% of the mobile sites had their social networking sites and 54% had an 'email to friend' function.

Conclusions and Discussions: The results showed that most retailers provided many technology services that facilitate mobile shopping as they do on the Internet. However, hedonic performance attributes were not available in most mobile sites. Considering the importance of online product presentation on the Internet as evidenced in both academic research and trade publications, mobile retailers need to develop more product presentation functions that facilitate consumers' experiential and emotional shopping experiences. Findings of this study also revealed that social influence attributes, such as social networking sites, were available in many mobile sites, and product reviews and ratings were available on half of the mobile sites. According to eMarketer (2013), 70% of college students make purchases through their mobile devices and 62% of the students use social networking as a top priority. Therefore, linkages among the mobile shopping sites, social networking sites, and product reviews may be critical in influencing mobile shopping behavior. In addition, most common mobile shopping activities include reading user reviews and recommendations of a product and viewing product images (eMarketer, 2013), indicating importance of product presentation and availability of product reviews on the mobile sites. Overall, findings of this study can benefits mobile retailers by providing them practical insights on service attributes available on mobile sites.

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