

Exploring Online Satisfaction from the Perspective of Young Male Buyers of Apparel Products

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Introduction

The present research has **the purpose** to investigate the factors influencing online satisfaction of male buyers who purchase apparel products from a specific website.

The objectives of this research are:

- (1) To measure the satisfaction of male buyers, comparing with the satisfaction of women buyers, regarding the experience of apparel products acquisition;
- (2) To identify the important factors influencing male buyers' online satisfaction;
- (3) To identify the direct impact of factors influencing satisfaction on male buyers' online loyalty.

Methodology

As a research methodology, we conducted a quantitative survey based on a questionnaire.

The questionnaire was designed in a previous research (Bobalca, 2015) in which we identified the factors affecting customers online satisfaction, for apparel products that are bought from a specific website. These factors are: *Price, Information, Interaction, Site design* and *Products quality*.

The scales for measuring *Customer satisfaction* and *Customer loyalty* were developed in a previous research (Bobalca, 2015) and were rated on a seven point Likert scale, from 1 (Totally Disagree) to 7 (Totally Agree).

Research sample

The sample consists in students who usually purchase apparel products from a preferred website, for least two years. The investigated sample is represented by 170 women and 160 men who bought apparel products at least two times in the last six months. They are students at the University of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, from the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Iasi, Romania.

Research results

Objective 1. Measuring the satisfaction of male buyers, comparing with the satisfaction of women buyers, regarding the experience of apparel products acquisition;

Table no. 1 - The level of satisfaction and loyalty. Comparative perspective

Factor	Mean value for men	Mean value for women
Price	5.63	5.58
Information	5.88	6.27
Interaction	5.12	5.05
Website design	5.50	5.68
Quality of products	5.89	5.75
General satisfaction	5.94	5.94
Online loyalty	5.74	5.69

Men are more satisfied on the prices, the interaction with the sales representative and the quality of the products, while women appreciate more the quick access to information and the website design. The general level of satisfaction is the same, both for men and women buyers of apparel products. As Table 1 indicates, men tend to perceive themselves as being more loyal, comparing to women.

Objective 2. Identify the important factors influencing male buyers' online satisfaction;

Price, Interaction and *Quality of products* are significant important factors for predicting men 'satisfaction on buying experience of purchasing apparel products.

The relation between the dependent and independent variables from the model is described with the regression equation:

$$\text{Online satisfaction} = (-0.436) + 0.175X(\text{Price}) + 0.279X(\text{Interaction}) + 0.399X(\text{Quality of products}) \quad (1)$$

According to the regression equation (1), a change with one unit on the perception of a website prices will lead to a change with 0.175 units on male customers' satisfaction. Also, changing male buyers' perceptions on interaction quality with one unit generates a change with 0.279 units on male customers' satisfaction. A change with one unit on the perception of products quality will lead to a change with 0.399 units on male customers' satisfaction.

Objective 3. Identify the direct impact of factors influencing satisfaction on buyers' online loyalty;

Price and *Website design* are significant important factors for predicting men 'loyalty to a specific website, when they purchase apparel products.

The relation between the dependent and independent variables from the model is described with the following regression equation:

$$\text{Online loyalty} = 0.951 + 0.274X(\text{Price}) + 0.329X(\text{Website design}) \quad (2)$$

According to the regression equation (2), a change with one unit on the perception of a website prices will lead to a change with 0.274 units on male customers' loyalty. Also, changing male buyers' perceptions on website design with one unit generates a change with 0.329 units on male customers' loyalty.

Conclusions

Comparing to women, men are more satisfied on the prices, the interaction with the sales representative and the quality of the products from their favourite websites. These are important reasons for men when they choose a specific website to buy from.

Investigating the significant differences between man and women regarding the factors affecting online satisfaction, we conclude that men are less satisfied by the information describing the products and the indications on delivery, payment and ordering.

Even if their level of general online satisfaction is the same, men tend to perceive themselves as being more loyal, comparing with women.

The most important factors that predict male buyers' satisfaction on purchasing apparel products are products quality, interaction and prices.

Price and *Website design* are significant important factors for predicting men 'loyalty to a specific website.

Research implications

The research presents an original approach on online purchasing experience, focusing on men buyers. Usually, the research on this topic doesn't compare men and women perspectives or doesn't focus on a single category to investigate the relation between the level of satisfaction and buyers' gender.

Managerial implications

The results of the research are useful for the managers of websites that sell apparel products. They should pay more attention on information presented on the sites, describing the products or the steps for ordering, payment and delivery.

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