

# **Israeli consumers' standpoint patterns towards internet shopping / Yifat Keidar**

## **Abstract**

The aim of this study was to understand the obstacles and the motives affecting the willingness to perform e-commerce transactions, among a specified segment within the Israeli population. The premise at the base of the study was that interpretation given by people to situations, relates on their cultural background. Therefore, culture, among other things, affects consumers' motivation.

The qualitative research method used in the study, derives from the constructivist paradigm. This research paradigm sees the world and reality as mediated by means of subjective perceptions, therefore it's not focused on causative explanations alone, but rather on the process of meaning making by people within the framework of a complete holistic cultural system.

The researcher thought it would be wrong to conduct a cultural study of the e-commerce phenomena by means of a series of binary oppositions, as customary in quantitative research. Two main reasons convinced the researcher that the constructivist paradigm most suited this study: First, information networks and associated technologies are not neutral artifacts but rather of political and social nature. Second, the Israeli consumers' behavior is characterized as inconsistent and ambiguous. This behavior reflects, among other things, in the incompatibility between the innovative behavior and the slow adoption of e-commerce.

The study subjects were formed into two main groups: potential consumers and Israeli electronic commerce professionals. The main study subjects included fifteen interviewees, ages 25-45, both male and female, constituting the group with the highest Internet usage scope and the largest shopping force in terms of earning index.

The data analysis process was carried out by categorizing the perspectives that were identified as consistently repeating in the findings. Each category represented a theme. The study observed that the interviewees indeed had common perspectives. These perspectives patterns contributed to understanding the meaning that Israeli consumers ascribed to online shopping, by revealing their obstacles and their motives. Some of the obstacles mentioned: a need for tangibility, a need for instant gratification and lack of confidence in the customer service and logistic system of the Israeli retailer. Some of the motives mentioned: imitating behaviors of acquaintances and colleagues, exposure to a broad range of products and the pleasure of searching, discovering and learning.

Most of the thematic categories formulated during this study are of identical value, as illustrated in the segmentation of the categories frequency in the findings. The researcher sees her contribution to understanding the Israeli consumers' perspectives, in two dominant categories expressing super themes. These super themes were formed as a result of an abstraction process, in which the researcher interpreted a variety of perceptions, behaviors and preferences as fulfilling the same need. One theme deals with the positive effect of feeling in control of the online

shopping process. The other theme deals with the negative effect of the learning curve in the process.

These two themes are, in fact, entwined; the more the consumers perceive the online shopping process as complex, the bigger the doubt that they will succeed to obtain a sense of control. These super themes distinguish between two consumer behavior patterns; subjects who adopt online shopping, and subjects who avoid it. The Internet provides a high standard, personalized information at minimum effort, information which enables effective decision-making and increased sense of control in the shopping process. According to the findings, it seems that those who adopt online shopping are the ones that understand its potential to provide a unique information experience, alternative to the experience known to them from physical environment. And in fact, freeing them altogether from the dependence on a mediating authority, which they mention as one of the most disturbing aspects in reality. Research literature partially supports this conclusion; The need for a sense of control in the online shopping process is well documented, but there is no conclusive definition to the unease the subjects feel from the need to “learn how to shop online” in a productive manner. The researcher thinks this topic deserves a following study.

## **System No.**

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