

Abstract

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Title of Research: Culture, Trust and Security – An Empirical Study of Consumer Attitudes towards E-Commerce in Chinese Societies

E-commerce is becoming increasingly attractive to businesses. Compared to the US and Europe, E-commerce remains in an embryonic state in China. E-commerce in China is forecast to grow more than two-fold during the next two years, according to government estimates. China has been rapidly building up its IT and telecommunications infrastructure for e-commerce applications. The potential of e-commerce to bring new markets to Chinese companies, improve market information and transparency of pricing, and enhance distribution of goods and services is widely acknowledged.

E-commerce has become a hot topic of discussion and investigation among business and marketing researchers. However, most of literature is dominated by empirical studies in the developed countries of European and US. Less attention has been given to the developing countries in the Far East, especially in China. The literature has generally proposed that the culture and trust issue are likely to be important factors affecting the development of e-commerce. This study aims to study this proposition in the context of Chinese culture with a view to filling a gap in the e-commerce literature.

To achieve the objectives of this study, questionnaire survey will be the main research method for quantitative approach and it had been widely used in social science and business research. An online questionnaire was published on the online survey website and distributed to several online stores web site, newsgroups, and online forums. The study also proposes a conceptual framework of factors affecting Internet users' purchase intention in Great China Region, including online trust, security issues, cultural influence, and perception of risk. Using actual data, researchers can empirically test relationships among the factors within this framework and identify possible future research areas for each factor.

The quantitative questionnaire survey was conducted and results indicated that online trust and security issues will impact significantly on the customer behaviour and encouraging other Internet users to use e-commerce in G.C.R.. Interestingly, even though the perception of risk is high, consumers may decide to take part in e-commerce. The study reveals that Internet users tend to make a proactive effort to adopt e-commerce and similar results were obtained across three regions.