

Motives and Outcomes of Consumer Intentions to Buy Wearable Sports Technology Products

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Aim

Wearable sports technology products (WSTPs) have been broadly implemented in the fields of sports, healthcare and personal communications, and are often associated with new, innovative or novelty products. A number of studies has related WSTPs to several models, such as the theory of reasoned action, the technology acceptance model and the unified theory of acceptance and the use of technology. While such research is evidently associated with technology, few studies have examined the marketing strategy employed in the WSTP-market. From this perspective, the study sets out to identify determinants of the hypothesized model between motive, cognition, purchase intention and actual purchase behaviour. In turn, the aim of this study is to investigate how motives influence consumers' decision-making at the pre-purchase stage in the WSTP-market, as well as explore the outcomes.

Background

Although the recent growth in WSTPs has been significant in the context of the Internet of Things, the market's total sales of such products is reasonably small (Hsiao & Chen, 2018), which indicates that more research is needed on potential consumers' intentions. These products have been broadly applied in the fields of sports, healthcare and personal communications, and are often associated with newness, innovation and even novelty (Jeong, Kim, Park & Choi, 2017). A number of studies has focused on WSTPs with reference to several models associated with technology (Choi & Kim, 2016; Gao & Lai, 2015; Nasir & Yurder, 2015), yet few have examined the role of the marketing strategy as the external stimulus in this market. From this perspective, the current study classifies the determinants of the hypothesized model between motive, cognition, purchase intention and actual purchase behaviour.

Drawing on the literature, the study starts by investigating the context of the WSTP-market. Consumer behaviour and the relationship between cognition and decision-making are subsequently explored, along with a critical assessment of relevant models, after which the determinants of motives in the literature are detailed. Informed by the literature review, the nature of methodology and science in marketing is discussed. By acknowledging recommendations emanating from the relevant scientific arguments, a statement of methodology for the study is provided.

Methodology

This integrates a range of research philosophies and strategies, which is reflected in the data collection and analysis methods applied. Next, the initial collection and analysis of data from a small sample of 15 semi-structured interviews (12 consumers and three marketers) are examined. These results are then used as the basis for the development of a hypothesized model, whose assessment follows a pilot test amongst 16 respondents. Following changes to the online survey instrument, a questionnaire was despatched to a sample population of 301 and the data analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM).

Results and Findings

The responses are analysed by using SEM, together with SmartPLS software, to statistically identify specific determinants. Eight hypotheses are proposed, which are eventually validated. Between the determinants of purchase intention in the hypothesized model, the results indicate that hypotheses concerning health issues, in which word of mouth (WOM) leads to the purchase of a WSTP, is found to have the most statistical significance of the path coefficients (t value=9.003) in influencing the decision-making, followed by the advertising determinant (t value=7.23). The results also show that the hypothesized path relationship between purchase intention and actual purchase behaviour is statistically significant (t value=40.518). The hypothesized model exhibited good descriptive power in terms of purchase intention, cognition and actual purchase behaviour in the framework of the WSTP-market.

Conclusion

This study uncovers the determinants of purchase intention towards buying WSTPs. The proposed hypotheses increase our understanding of the determinants of health issues, IT innovations, WOM and advertising and how they inform consumers' cognition and purchase intention, leading to the actual purchase of a WSTP. The results demonstrate that the interplay between health issues, IT innovations and WOM shape cognition, while purchase intention positively stimulates actual buying behaviour. In light of the findings, the study concludes by examining issues and implications for academics, practitioners and researchers.

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