

TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING INTENTION TO PURCHASE ONLINE MUSIC DOWNLOADS: A SOUTH AFRICAN SURVEY

Mounia Bounagui, University of the Free State, South Africa
Jacques Nel, University of the Free State, South Africa

ABSTRACT

The worldwide diffusion of broadband networks and the invention of the Motion Picture Experts Group Layer 3 (better known as MP3), along with the diffusion of peer-to-peer (P2P) software, enabled effortless music file-sharing between Internet users. To manage the file-sharing phenomenon from a marketing perspective, some researchers have developed conceptual models to predict the legal online purchasing of music downloads. There is a need for research on consumer acceptance models for purchasing online music downloads in developing countries; such research has previously only been done in developed countries. Therefore, the research question involves which factors influence the intention of Internet users in developing countries to purchase online music downloads. The primary objective of this research is to identify factors influencing the intentions of undergraduate Internet users at a mid-size South African university to purchase online music downloads. To identify factors that influence the intentions of the target population, the Technology Acceptance Model was extended with cost, trust, risk, enjoyment and self-efficacy beliefs.

A non-probability purposive sample design was selected. Seven hundred and fifteen (715) students completed questionnaires, representing 4,5 percent of the undergraduate students at the university in 2007. Three hundred and forty one (341) male and 374 female students participated in the survey. Eighty four comma six (84,6) percent of the respondents were in the age group 18 – 21 years. The factor structure of the items was tested for reliability and validity. From the analysis seven factors emerged: behavioural intention (BI), perceived cost (PC), perceived ease of use (PEOU), perceived risk (PR), perceived usefulness (PU), perceived trust (PT) and perceived self-efficacy (PSE). The measurement model was tested with LISREL 8.51.

The analysis using demographic and behavioural variables pointed out that males download more songs per month than females. The number of songs downloaded by undergraduate students from different ethnic groups differs significantly, while there is no significant difference between age groups and the number of songs downloaded. Fifty one (51) percent of undergraduate students only download 1-2 songs per visit, followed by a group (25 percent of the respondents) that download between 3-5 songs per visit. Furthermore, 83 percent of the students do not have a credit card. PU and PT are the external variables exerting the strongest direct significant influence on BI. PEOU, PC and PSE have a weak direct significant influence on behavioural intention; PEOU also has a significant influence on PU. PR has a mediated significant influence on BI through PT.

The research underlines the importance of both the PU of online music retail websites from which music can be purchased and downloaded and the PT in the music retailers. Online music retailers need to emphasise the characteristics of the service which will make it easier and quicker to purchase and download music. Retailers should ensure that the process of searching, purchasing and downloading music is easy for the customers, as beliefs regarding the ease of use could enhance or detract from the perceived usefulness of the service. To improve trust beliefs online music retailers should prominently display their privacy policy and measures (infrastructures and processes that are in place) to secure the transaction of information, and must communicate this in an understandable way. For a marketing strategy *per se* the research suggests that: firstly, online music retailers should target male undergraduate students for the reason that they download more songs on average per month; secondly, bundle packages should be compiled for no more than 5 songs as the majority of respondents participating in the survey do not download more than 5 songs per visit; and thirdly, the music retailers should implement alternative payment methods other than credit cards to make it possible for the majority of students who do not have their own credit card to buy online music downloads.

The research validates the use of the TAM in understanding technology acceptance and consumer behaviour in the research context. The findings of the research provide useful information for consideration in the marketing strategies of national and international online music retailers.

References Available on Request.