

Factors Influencing the Adoption of Online Retail Shopping amongst the Internet Users in Buffalo City South Africa

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Article History</p> <p>Received: February 23, 2021</p> <p>Accepted: May 03, 2021</p> <hr/> <p>Keywords</p> <p>Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, internet users, online retail shopping</p> <p>DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.4734074</p>	<p><i>With the proliferation of Internet and ever increasing popularity of e-commerce, method of retail shopping is gradually shifting towards online stores all over the world. People feel uncomfortable with going to crowded markets and is time consuming. Online shopping is booming because it saves time, travel fee, flexible times and more. Online shopping is a mechanism by which consumers buy products and services electronically. However, regardless of the many benefits of online shopping, its acceptance in certain parts of the world remains low. Hence, this study explored the critical factors influencing adoption of online shopping among citizens of Buffalo City, Eastern Cape, South Africa. This study was located in a positivist paradigm using quantitative approach. Data was collected from 102 adults who are regular internet users through the use of a structured questionnaire which was designed using Google forms. The collected data was analysed using statistical package for the social sciences. This study found that though citizens had access to the Internet via multiple sources, majority of them still prefer shopping through traditional method. Lack of awareness, fears of identity and security theft and preference to have physical look and feel were found to be the major factors affecting the adoption of online shopping among citizens of this region. The study recommends that awareness campaign be made in the area to help sensitize citizens of the availability and importance of online shopping.</i></p>

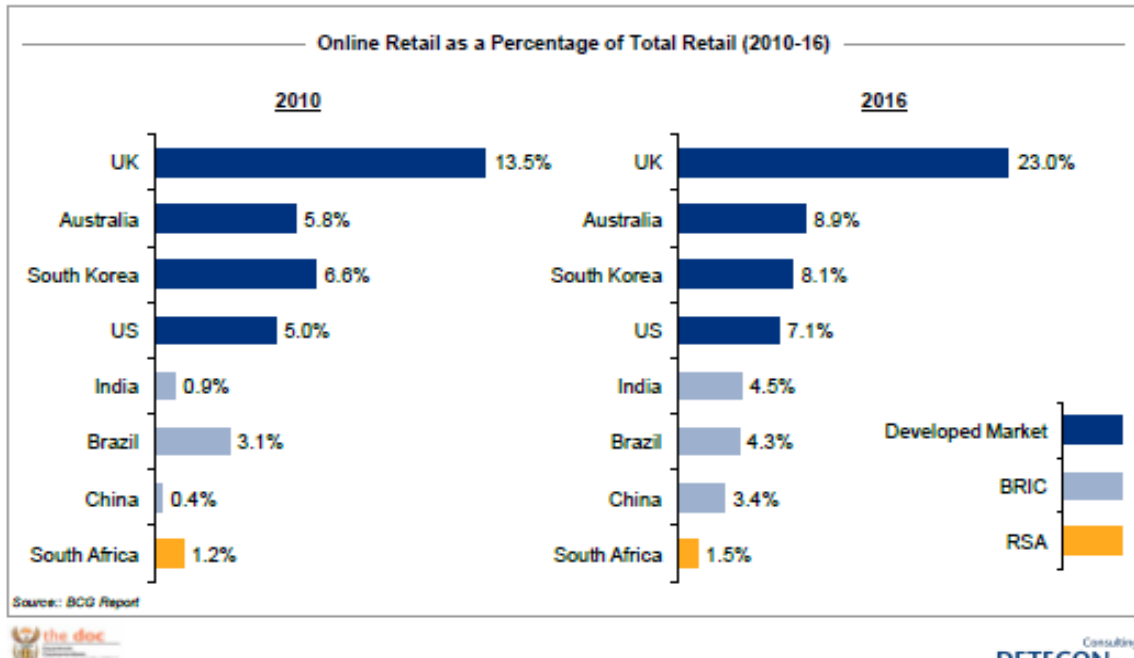
Introduction

Businesses choose to invest in information systems (IS) for a number of reasons such as; pressure to cut costs, pressure to bring more without increasing costs and simply to improve the quality of services or products in order to stay in the market (Legris, Ingham, & Collerette, 2001). Therefore this enables the cross-border electronic commerce to benefit the consumers and stores by limiting transactional costs, increase product at a great deal of variety and lower market price through market competition (Han & Kim, 2019). This brings into question the idea behind the adoption of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to benefit consumers and businesses in emerging technologies. The data presented in Malaysia show that the level of ICT acceptance is low and slow, mainly because they find that ICT adoption is difficult (Hashim, 2007). Understanding how small and medium enterprises (SME) owners experience and adopt ICT fill the awareness gap in the ICT adoption model by making availability insight on the link between ICT illiteracy and adoption (Hashim, 2007). Research suggests that electronic commerce shows great signs of future success for organisations to meet challenges of an ever-changing environment (Kapurubandara & Lawson, 2006). Meanwhile, electronic commerce also known as e-commerce is growing around the world. E-commerce comprise of online business transactions related to buying and selling of goods and services (Smith, 2008). E-commerce contains retail trade between business-to-business (B2B) and business to consumer (B2C) exchange. Electronic commerce is now important for businesses to take part in the world's marketplace. It was estimated that Cape Town e-commerce in South Africa has a massive growth and was expected to have grown to about R10bn during 2017 (Smith, 2018). The huge growth of the internet technology and the related services has greatly change the function of information technology (IT) in business processes (Khaled, 2016). The availability of internet has allowed SMEs to compete effectively and efficiently in the domestic and international markets (Kapurubandara & Lawson, 2006). Kapurubandara & Lawson (2006) further state that e-commerce and internet technologies can benefit an organisation that the businesses and growing countries have the ability to achieve a huge and sustainable growth and social development by building an economy through an ICT. At the same time online shopping via (mobile) electronic commerce carried on growing all around the globe, retailers come across issues such as great extents of rate, online shopping card abandonment and browsing products online then after shop offline (Dacko, 2019). Hence, the reason for this study which explores the factors influencing the adoption of online retail shopping amongst the internet users at Buffalo city.

highlighted that, the growth of online shopping has forced retailers to adopt a more cautious view in terms of physical store expansion that is likely to lead to more vacant space in malls. Even though online shopping in South Africa is seen as rapidly growing when compared to traditional shopping, however, it has low growth when compared to other many other countries.

Figure 2 shows the level of acceptance of online retail shopping by the online shoppers of South Africa. South Africa is behind the online retail development of the developed markets and projected to indicate the slower increased growth than its peer BRICS (Goga et al., 2019).

Figure 2: Online Retail as a Percentage of Total Retail (2010-16)



Source Goga et al., (2019)

According to the findings of a study conducted by Goga, Paelo, & Nyamwena (2019), the growth of e-commerce in South Africa is reported to have been hindered in past years by the high prices and poor quality of internet services and the reliability and cost in pricing of delivery mechanisms. While e-commerce in RSA has grown rapidly as the internet speeds, mobile penetration and the ability to shop over mobile devices has moved from lower position to higher one, it is still in its infancy (Goga et al., 2019).

E-commerce in South Africa has increase exponentially over the last decade, it moves across the range of products from the recently made food to consumer electronic and clothing (Goga et al., 2019). The authors further highlighted that while there seems to be rapid increase in the range and the number of websites used for online retail shopping, many of these are very small in terms of e-commerce traffic.

The Awareness and Preference for Online Shopping

The consumer's choice of purchase is also changing as people nowadays prefer to shop online rather than offline for eyewear products (Khanna & Bhatia, 2018). A study by Khanna and Bhatia (2018) examined the factors like awareness, willingness, average monthly spend on eyewear and preference among others. The eyewear industry is rapidly growing, consumer are very particular about their products (Khanna & Bhatia, 2018).

There are limited studies that focus on online brand awareness and been carried out for specific sectors (Rana, Bhat, & Rani, 2019). They further state that brand awareness assists in reducing the perceived risks with decisions amongst consumers. Since no one is able to physically examine the products online, the customers utilise other yardstick like brand name and stored images that will highlight the value of the online purchase.

The useful awareness and ease of utilisation awareness play an active role and they help customers realise the potential benefits they get when they decide to utilise online shopping services (Do et al., 2019). The authors further highlighted that the risk of awareness is the biggest barrier to the intention of customers when choosing online to replace traditional shopping. Their study adopted Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) because of the factors related to security, usefulness and ease of use, which are the main factors influencing customers' online shopping decision (Do et al., 2019).

Trust plays a great significant role in any buy-sell transaction, but it gets crucial when the transaction occurs through the internet (Singh & Matsui, 2017). Singh and Matsui (2017) further state that all the inherent risks

linked to the use of internet such as online fraud, data privacy, security issues and so on become a great concern. Consumers trust is usually a necessary element in the virtual environment and lays the foundation in e-commerce (Wong et al., 2019). Hence, it is a right conclusion that a trusted interaction is highly important as it creates the underlying requisite between users and providers.

Privacy and Security concerns for online retail shoppers

Privacy concern is a growing issue amongst the electronic shoppers as the internet users need to feel that their privacy is been protected at all times when doing an online payment. In a study conducted by unctad (2018), it was stated that security and privacy are the most crucial elements that are discouraging consumers from purchasing goods and services online. Suffice to state that security and trust are the key determinants that can potentially reduce consumers' perceived risk in e-commerce (Won et al., 2019).

In a study conducted, which examined electronic payment, it was highlighted that online payment is getting used more often and for this customers use various modes of payment like Debit card, Credit card, electronic wallet, electronic banking and more. The only question that is always in mind of every person or customer is about the security of data shared by the online purchaser payments (Saxena, Vyas, Kumar, & Gupta, 2019).

Despite being an important part of nowadays living, technology carries various forms of common threats such as spam, cookies and clickstream to online customers (Wong, Tan, Inkgo, & Yiong, 2019). Pulling from different cases, it was concluded that the lack of security and fear of hackers is becoming a main influence on the customer attitudes towards online shopping (Yong-Man, 2002). The cyber security specialists also have their point of view that as the growing online purchase utilisation, there is an increase misuse of payment network and stealing of customer information (Saxena et al., 2019).

One of the most used type of payment form in online shopping are credit cards, debit cards and PayPal. Saxena et al., (2019) further state that there are various payment methods, like bank transfers, electronic wallets, good cards or bit coin notecase (which is known as the preferred crypto currency), the electronic payment methods may well be classified into two areas, credit card payment systems and money payment system.

In South Africa, there are a wide range of e-commerce payment methods, such as credit and debit cards (eg Visa and MasterCard), Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT), Instant EFT (through systems like iPay and Pay fast), proprietary payment systems (like Paypal), loyalty points (like eBuck and Discovery Miles), counter payments (eg. sCode, Pay@).

Online Shopping for Customers and Stores: Benefits and Challenges

The internet that was earlier thought of as a tool for further improving quality of information has become an important place of business nowadays (Dahiya, 2012). Perceived benefits are an acceptance that something exists about the positive outcomes associated to a behaviour in response to a real or perceived threat (Khan et al., 2015).

Consumers can benefit through comparing prices at different number of online purchase store at the same time that they cannot do in a physical store (Khan et al., 2015). Nowadays, online consumers have more control and bargaining power than consumer of physical stores because internet brings more interacts between customers and products or service providers as well as massive availability of information about products and services (Khan et al., 2015). Online shopping brings many advantages into place to the customers (Dahiya, 2012). Dahiya further state that customers can now shop from any place and need not physically visit the shops or outlets for the shopping. The customers get a choice to shop any day of the year on any time of the day, as this helps in customer time and energy saving (Dahiya, 2012).

Due to the rapid growth of quality of online shopping, electronic payment systems turn to be a necessity for online customers as it makes the payment convenient and makes it easier for the customers to manage their expenses.

The various types of security measures are required for information, confidentiality, integrity and system availability (Saxena et al., 2019). However, in spite of all measures put in place to promote online retail shopping, the attitude of people towards it remains unpleasant. Hence, the reason for this study which investigates the factors influencing the adoption of online retail shopping amongst internet users, using Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality (BCMM) as case study. In order to achieve the aim of the study, the following research questions are identified: What are the most used retail shopping methods amongst the citizens of BCMM? What are the perceptions of consumers in BCMM about online retail shopping? What are the critical factors that influence the BCMM residents' acceptance of online retail shopping method?

Method

Quantitative method was employed for the study. This was to enable the collection of large data and generalization of findings. Leedy and Ormrod (2015) hold the view that the use of quantitative data in a study allows for collection of large data and generalization of results. Data was collected from 102 adult users of internet through the use of a structured questionnaire which was designed using Google forms. The respondents were randomly selected, informed about the study and on their acceptance to take part were given the link to the Google form to complete the questionnaire. The collected data was analysed using statistical package for social science. The questionnaire was structured into three sections. Section one was targeted at retrieving specific demographic information of respondents, while section two was on whether respondents are able to use the internet. The third section focused on respondents' abilities to use online retail shopping method, their preferred methods of shopping, their perception behind online retail shopping methods and their level of adoption and the reason behind the preferred choices.

Table 1: Respondents' Demographic Details

Respondents demographic profile where: n = 102, frequency = f and n = total number of respondents			
Item	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage
Gender	Male	52	51%
	Female	50	49%
	Total (n)	102	100%
Home language	English	16	16%
	Afrikaans	17	17%
	Zulu	8	8%
	Sotho	2	2%
	Xhosa	59	58%
	Tsonga	0	0%
	Venda	0	0%
	Total (n)	102	100%
Race	White	12	12%
	Black	71	70%
	Coloured	17	17%
	Indian	0	0%
	African	2	1%
	Total (n)	102	100%
Age	< 20 Year	1	1%
	21 – 29	40	39%
	30 – 39	35	34%
	40 – 49	14	14%

	50 upward	12	12%
	Total (n)	102	100%
Monthly income range	<R2 000,00	8	8%
	R2 000,00 – R3 999,00	9	9%
	R4 000,00 – R9 999,00	18	17%
	R10 000,00 upward	63	62%
	Other	4	4%
	Total (n)	102	100%

Table 1 shows that 51% of the respondents were male while 49% were female. It further shows that 58% of the respondents are Xhosa, followed by 17% Afrikaans, 16% English, 8% Zulu and 2% Sotho speaking people. This however, did not provide a correct demographic representation of the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality residents. It was not the intention of the study to realise a representation sample of all BCMM home language citizens. Consequently, this demographic gave no indication of which home language speakers had means to shop online. Table 1 also shows the distribution of the race of respondents: 70% black South Africans, 12% Whites, 17% Coloured and 2% Africans with no Indian or other participant category. Regarding the age distribution of the respondents, 1% are 20 years and below, 73% are between 20 and 39, while 12% are 50 and above. The analysed demographic data further shows the monthly income of the respondents as shown in table 1.

Results and Discussion

The results are presented using the identified research questions guiding the study.

Research question one: What are the most used retail shopping methods amongst the citizens of BCMM?

This section examines different shopping methods used by the citizens and works on finding out the reasons behind the choice of use. The questions in discussion looked at whether the respondents have shopped online or not and if they had, then a follow-up question was put in place to get the reasons. This is done to get a clear view on whether the respondent can or cannot use the online retail shopping method. The focus is to identify the pros and cons of the particular selected choice of purchase.

Mode of Internet access

The researchers allowed more than one response from each respondent and focused at where they mostly accessed the internet. The finding is as presented in table 2. The finding shows that 90% of the respondents mostly accessed their internet at home, 85% mostly accessed the internet at their work place, 22% used internet café as their access points, while 28% use the libraries. These findings show that many respondents have internet access from multiple locations.

Table 2: Internet Access Locations

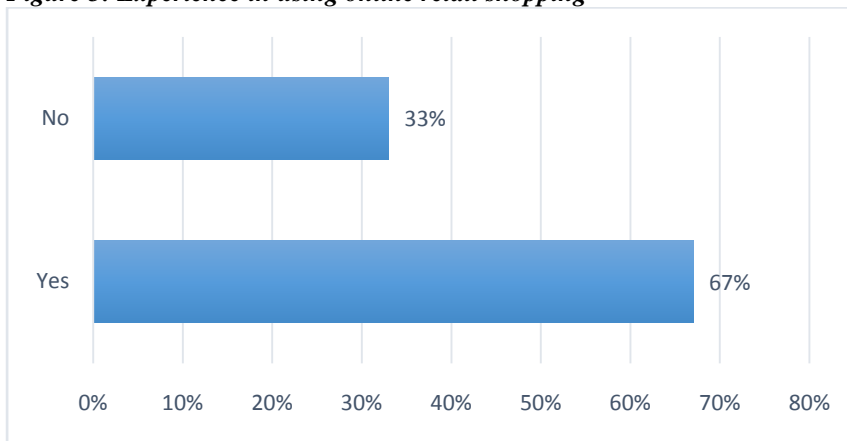
Internet Access point	Number of respondents (n = 102)
Home	90%
Library	28%
Work place	85%
Internet Café	22%

The findings from table 2 corroborates one of the submissions of Pew Research Center (2016) which shows that it is common for internet users to have internet access from multiple locations and sources. This implies that people can access the internet from any part of the world, using different gadgets.

Experience in using online retail shopping

In this category, the study analysis looks at the information about the respondents who at least used online retail shopping. It does not look at whether the particular respondent continued to utilise the service but looks at the experience of online retail shopping method. Figure 3 shows that 67% of the respondents have shopped online at least once. While 33% of the respondents are those who never used online retail shopping before.

Figure 3: Experience in using online retail shopping



This finding shows that many of the respondents have used online retail shopping at one point or the other. This finding however, contrasts the work of Goga et al., (2019) who hold the view that there is slow rate of growth in online shopping in South Africa compared to other developed countries across the globe.

Preferred retail shopping method

Figure 4 shows the favoured retail shopping method from the respondents. While 65% of the respondents agreed that they preferred visiting physical outlets for their retail shopping, 25% preferred using online retail shopping and 10% preferred both methods. This finding corroborates the work of Khanna and Bhatia (2018) who hold the view that people prefer to visit physical outlets to shop for various reasons such as being able to physically inspect the item, possibly try it on before deciding whether to buy or not.

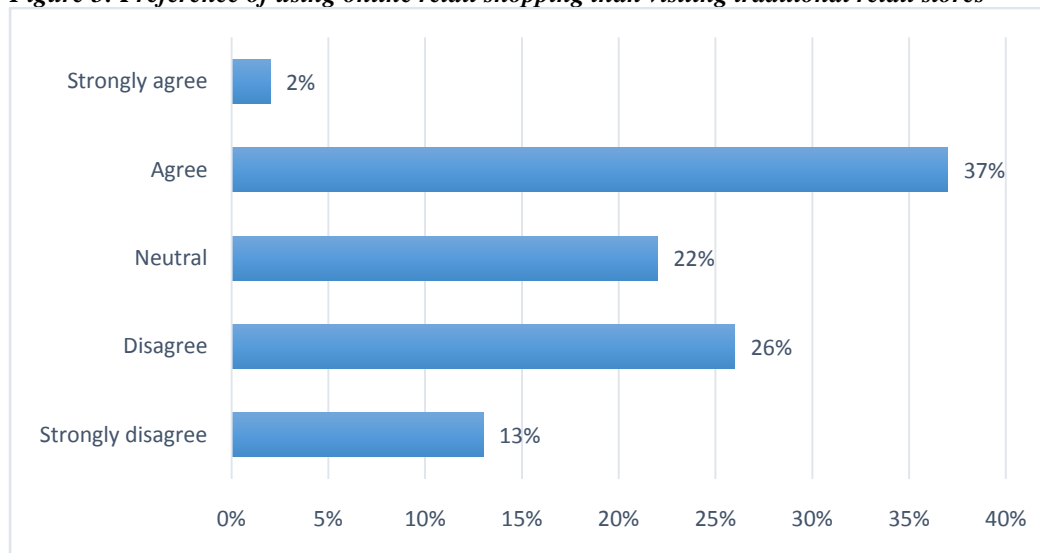
Figure 4: Preferred Retail Shopping Methods



Preference of using online retail shopping than visiting traditional retail stores

Based on the result presented in figure 5, 39% of the respondents agreed that they still preferred using online retail shopping over visiting physical outlets, 39% disagreed, while 22% were neutral. This shows a mixed feeling of respondents with regards to preference in using online retail shopping compared to visiting traditional retail stores. This finding agrees with the works of Goga et al., (2019) and Khanna and Bhatia (2018) who state that people have more preference in visiting physical stores when shopping.

Figure 5: Preference of using online retail shopping than visiting traditional retail stores



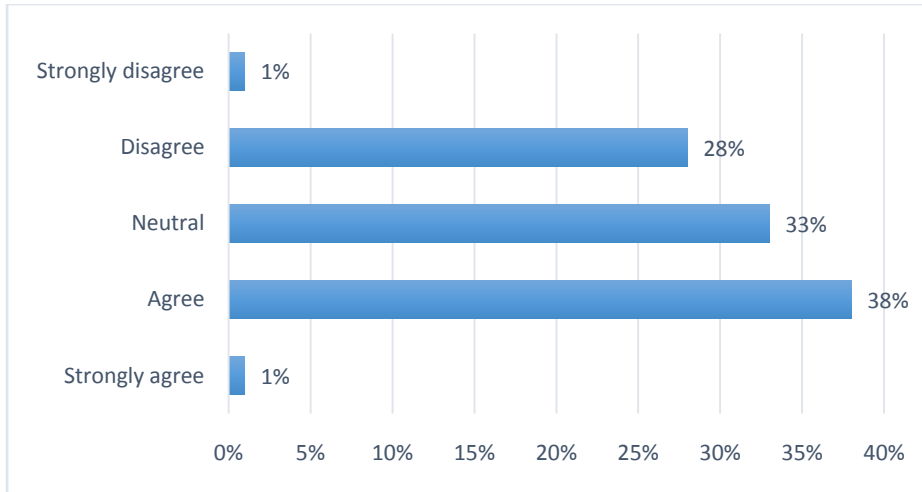
Research Question two: What are the perceptions of consumers in BCMM about online retail shopping?

In this section, the researchers examined the views and opinions, usability of online retail shopping method, the inter-activity of online retail shopping websites, trustworthiness of online retail shopping websites and experience regarding the customer service on online retail shopping websites. This is discussed to find the perceptions about online retail shopping from the citizens of BCMM.

Likelihood of continuously doing online shopping repurchase

The researchers looked at the extent to which the respondents agreed or disagreed with how the statements above described their overall satisfaction with the online retail purchase that they have once completed and still prefer utilising it over visiting purchase stores. The result presented in Figure 6 shows that while 39% of the respondents are willing to go back to the last online retail shop that they used, 28% are not at all going back to the same online shop, whereas 33% could not make a decision whether they will go back to the same online shopping site. The presented data shows a mixed feeling of respondents. However, more respondents (39%) still tilt towards going back to use online shopping outlets. This finding contrast the work of Khanna and Bhatia (2018) who opine that online shopping outlets would be less-preferred than the physical method.

Figure 6: Continuous use of online shopping and repurchase



The usability of Online Shopping methods.

Consumers experienced a number of different elements when using online retail shopping. The number of statements describing different experiences regarding the utilisation of an online shop appears. The following question required the respondents to read each statement carefully and indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree with how the given statement describes what is generally experienced. It looks at the usability of electronic commerce websites and its influence on continued online retail repurchase intention.

Figure 7: Assumptions that online retail shopping is easy to use

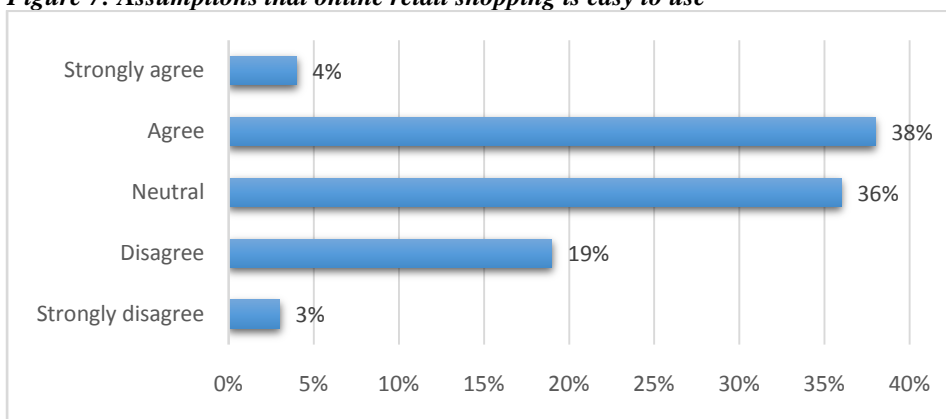
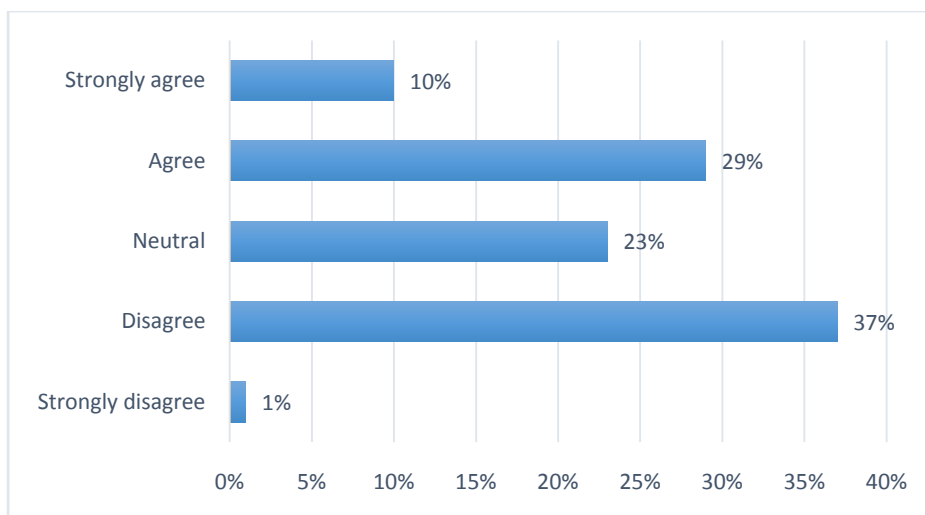


Figure 7 shows that while 42% of the respondents consider online retail shopping process easy to use, 22% consider it difficult and 36% are neutral. This finding agrees with the work of Khanna and Bhatia (2018) who hold the view that many people choose not to explore online shopping due to the preconceived notion that it is difficult to use.

Respondent confidence in the usability of online retail shopping websites

Figure 8 shows that 38% of the respondents did not feel confident about the utilisation of online websites, 39% agreed that they felt confident, while 23% were neutral. This result shows that respondents are relatively less confident in their usability of online retail shopping websites. This could be owing to the view of Khanna and Bhatia (2018) that people have confidence in buying using physical stores.

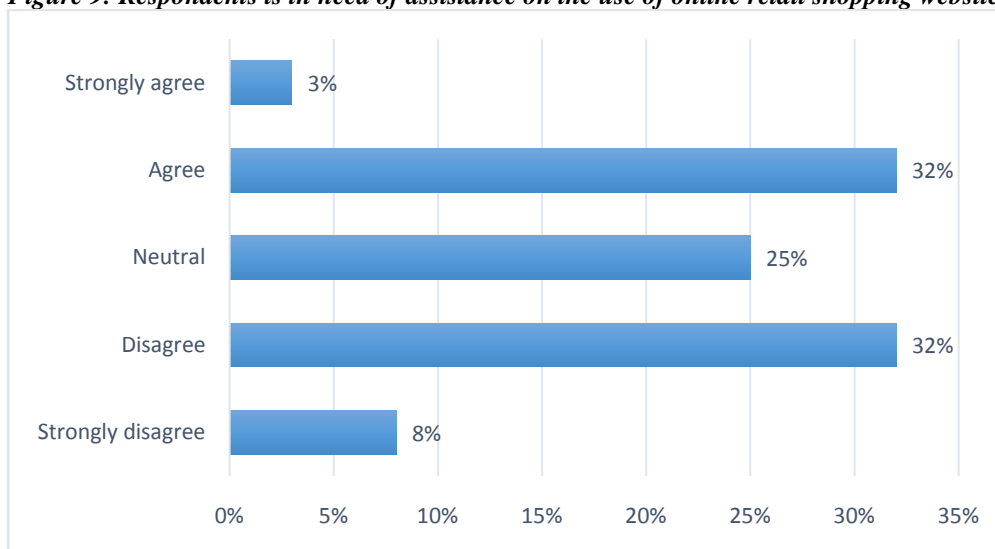
Figure 8: Confidence in the usability of online retail shopping websites



Respondent in need of assistance on the use of online retail shopping websites

The aim of this section is to find out the views of the respondents on their utilisation of online websites. Figure 9 shows that while 35% of the respondents feel they would need assistance to engage with online retail shopping websites, 40% believed that they can use the service without assistance, and 25% are neutral. This finding shows that more people believe in their abilities to use online service for shopping. This contrast the work of Goga et al., (2019) that people prefer to avoid the use of online services for shopping for different reasons.

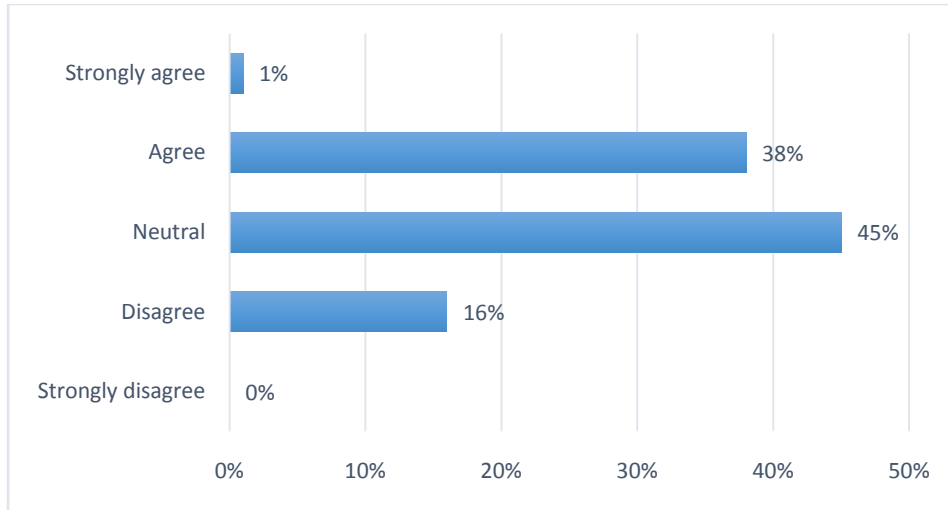
Figure 9: Respondents is in need of assistance on the use of online retail shopping websites



Respondent is satisfied about the hyperlinks for online retail shopping

Hyperlink is defined as the reference to webpage or websites, which the user can follow by clicking or tapping. The aim of this question was to check the respondents' satisfaction level of the primary method (hyperlink) used to navigate between pages and websites. Based on the results presented in figure 10, 38% of the respondents agreed that they were satisfied with website links (hyperlinks) for online retail shopping, while 45% were neutral and could not decide. 16% of the respondents were not satisfied with the hyperlinks, due to the fear of exposing their devices and bank account to hackers.

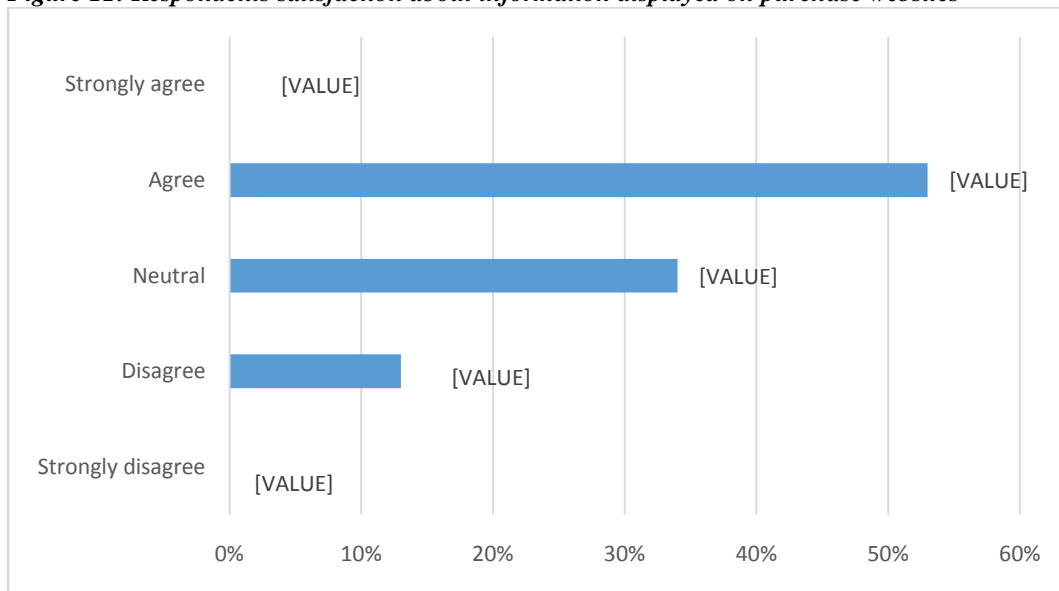
Figure 10: Using the hyperlinks for online retail shopping websites



General satisfaction about information provided by online retail shops.

This section aims to find out how satisfy the respondent is with the information displayed on the online purchase websites. Figure 11 shows that 53% of the respondents felt happy with the information displayed on the online retail websites, 13% disagreed while 34% were neutral. Although the majority of the respondents felt happy, however, more work (such as enhanced user friendly interface, using simple terminologies and more pictorial representation where possible) still needs to be done, in order to improve the customers’ satisfaction in online retail shopping.

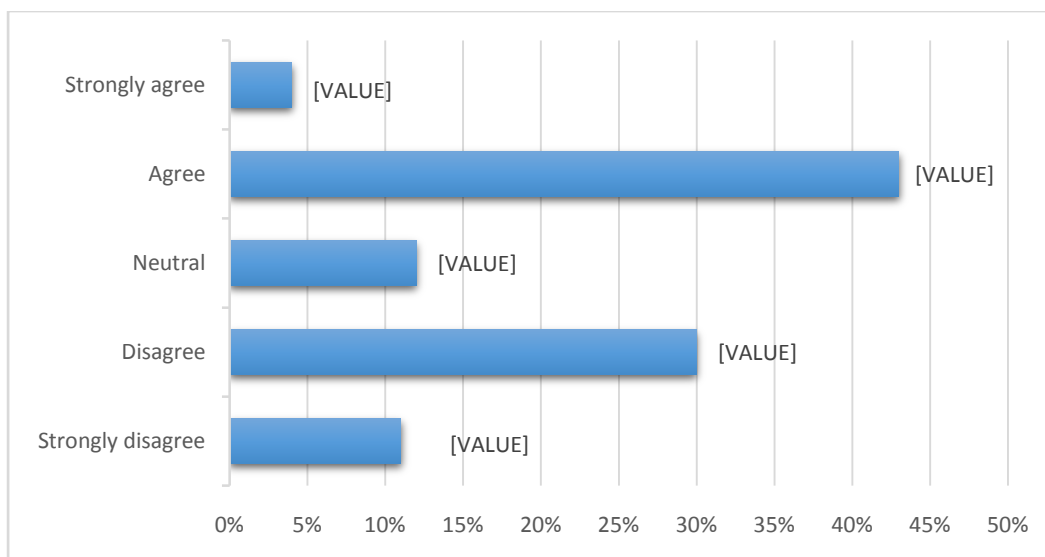
Figure 11: Respondents satisfaction about information displayed on purchase websites



Respondents feel that their personal privacy is being respected and protected on online shopping websites

Security is one of the major concerns regarding the use of online shopping, especially the protection of personal privacy and information while transacting online. Here, we examine how the respondent felt about their personal privacy while doing shopping online. It can be observed from Figure 12 that, 47% of the respondents were not at all concerned about their personal privacy on the online services as they believed that adequate security measures are in place for online shopping processes. However, 41% disagreed and did not think that their personal privacy was being respected online, while 12% were neutral. Meanwhile, a review of the work of Saxena et al., (2019) shows that different security measures are required for security information, confidentiality, integrity and availability.

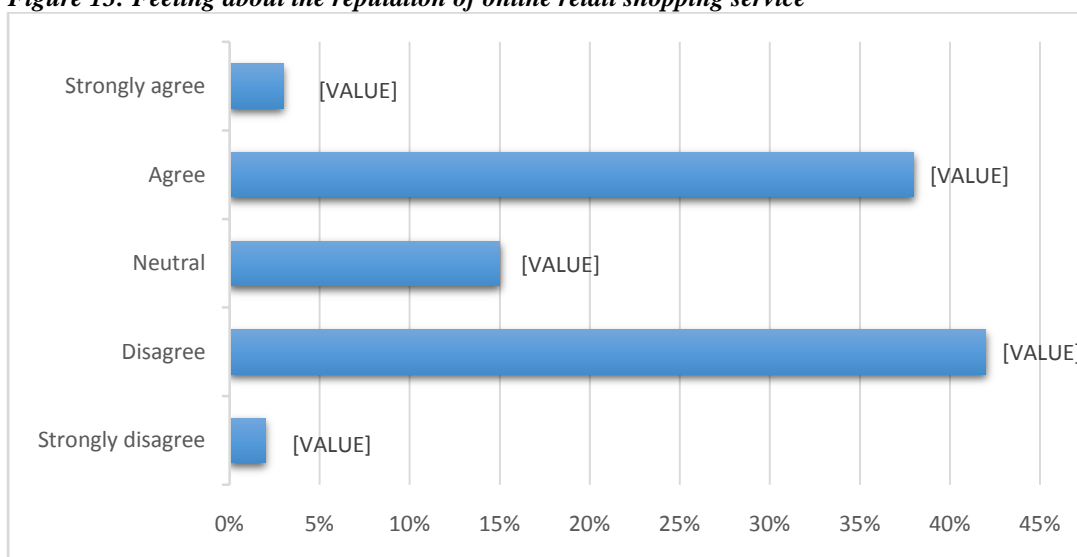
Figure 12: Personal privacy is being respected and protected on online shopping websites



Respondent is comfortable with reputation of online retail shopping

The issue of trust regarding the reputation of online retail shopping service and its influence on repurchase intension was presented in this sub-section. Figure 13 shows that 41% of the respondents felt comfortable with the reputation of online retail shops in general, 44% disagreed, while 15% of the respondents were neutral. This finding suggests that one reason why people may avoid online retail shopping could be due to the reputation and trust issues. The work of Saxena et al., (2019) shows that various security measures a taken to enhance online retail shopping, however, this could be futile if the reputation of the online retail shop is questionable.

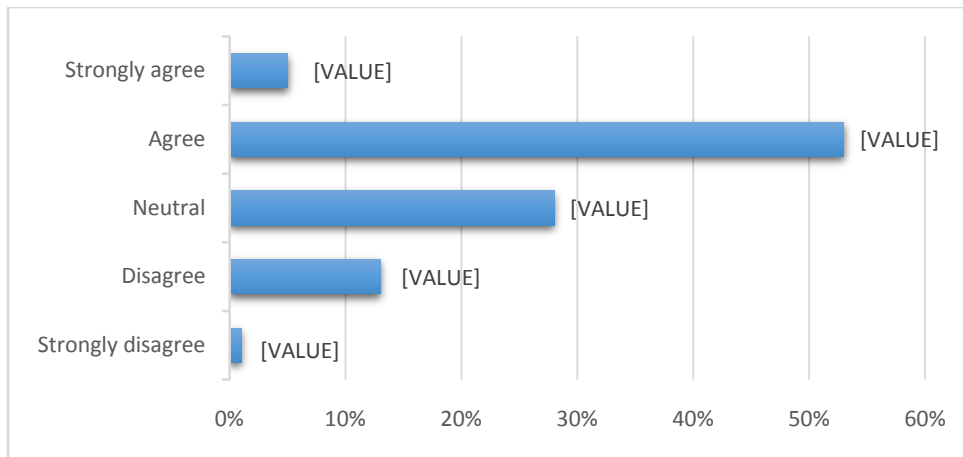
Figure 13: Feeling about the reputation of online retail shopping service



Uncertain that the retailer would keep its promises and obligations

In this sub-section, the study tries to find out how uncertain were the respondents about the online retailer keeping their promises and sticking to their obligations. The findings depicted in Figure 14 shows that 58% of the respondents agreed that they were uncertain that the online retailer would keep its obligations and promises, 28% were neutral, while 14% disagreed. This implies that majority of the respondents were uncertain of online retailer keeping their promises. Meanwhile, a review of the work of Vasić, Kilibarda and Kaurin (2019) shows that uncertainty is one of the factors that affects customers' decision about the use of online retail shops.

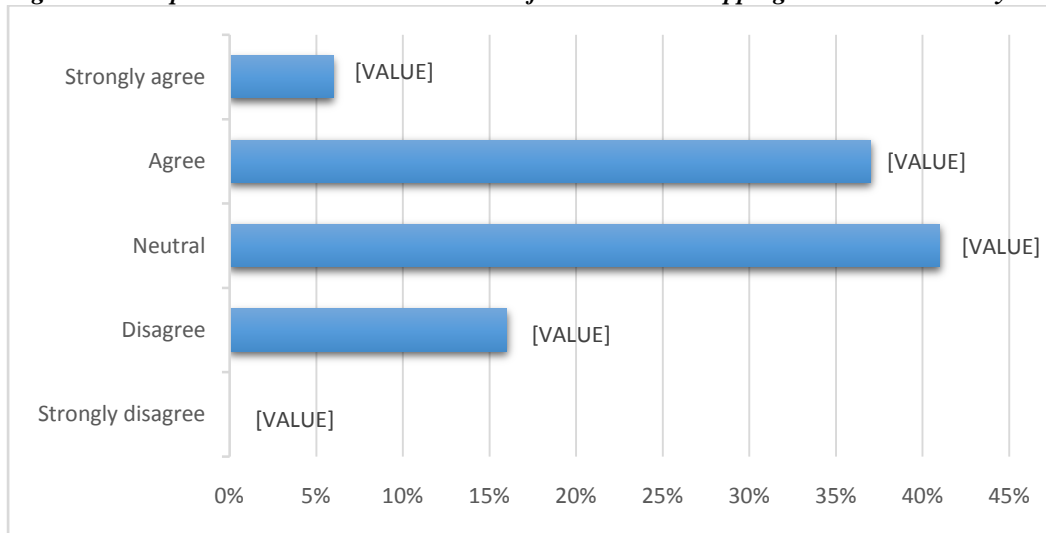
Figure 14: Uncertain that the retailer would keep its promises and obligations



Availability of reviews for products on online web sites.

One of the factors that a new or potential online shopping customer consider in making a decision whether to buy something online or not is the review or comments made by previous users of the website. The perceptions of respondent with regard to the perceived beliefs that the reviews by other customers regarding their buying experience were readily available is depicted in Figure 15. The figure shows that 43% of the respondents agreed that the reviews on the buying experience are readily available on the websites, 41% of the respondents are neutral, while 22% disagreed.

Figure 15: Respondents believe that the views of online retail shopping websites are readily created



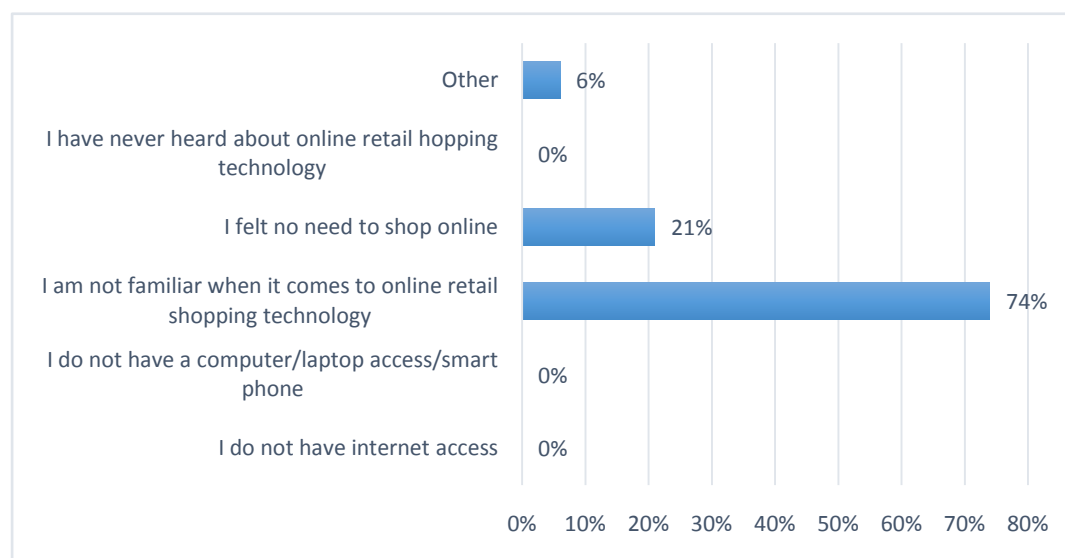
Research question three: What are the critical factors that influence the BCMM residents’ acceptance of online retail shopping method?

The aim of this question is to find out the crucial factors that influence the BCMM residents’ acceptance of online retail shopping and what could be done to improve their participation in online shopping. In order to answer this question, a number of respondents answers to questions are presented below.

Respondents reasons for not participating on online retail shopping

Here, the study tries to understand the critical factors that influences the acceptance of online retail shopping technology. Figure 16 shows that 74% of the respondents agreed that they are not very familiar with online retail shopping. The inadequate awareness about online shopping constitutes one of the reasons why they do not practice such. Meanwhile, 21% felt no need to do so, and 6% state that other reasons make them not to participate in online retail shopping.

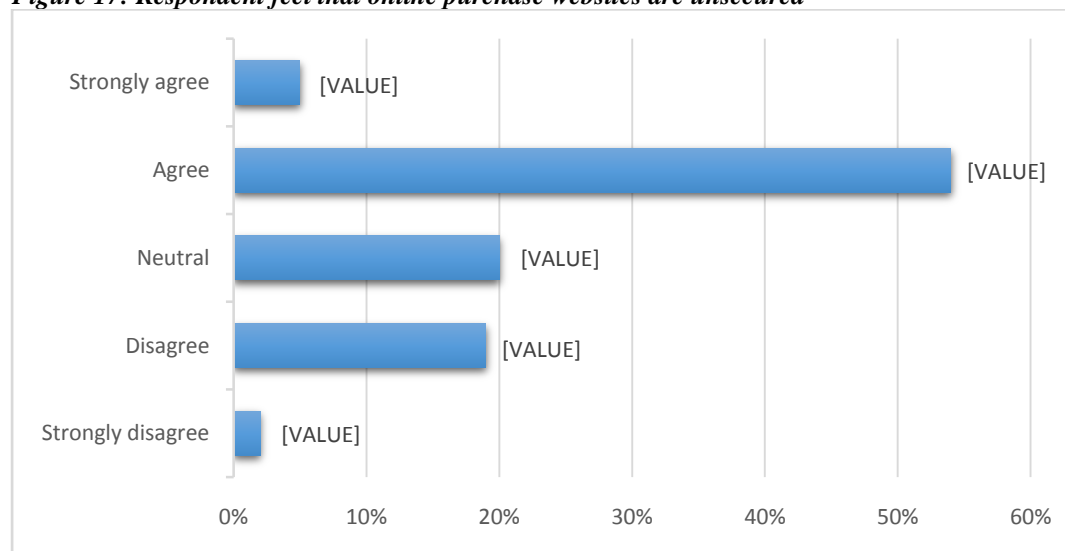
Figure 16: Respondents reasons for not participating in online retail shopping



Respondent feel that online purchase websites are unsecured

Figure 17 indicates the perceived view on how secured the online websites are believed to be. Security has always been believed to be an important concern when using internet. Therefore, the researchers find it fair and important to explore the phenomena. The analysed data show that 59% of the respondents agreed that the online shopping websites are not secured, 20% are neutral, while 21% disagreed. This is one of the major factor that affects the extent to which online retail shopping would be explored, as stated in Saxena et al., (2019) that security is pivot in online shopping.

Figure 17: Respondent feel that online purchase websites are unsecured

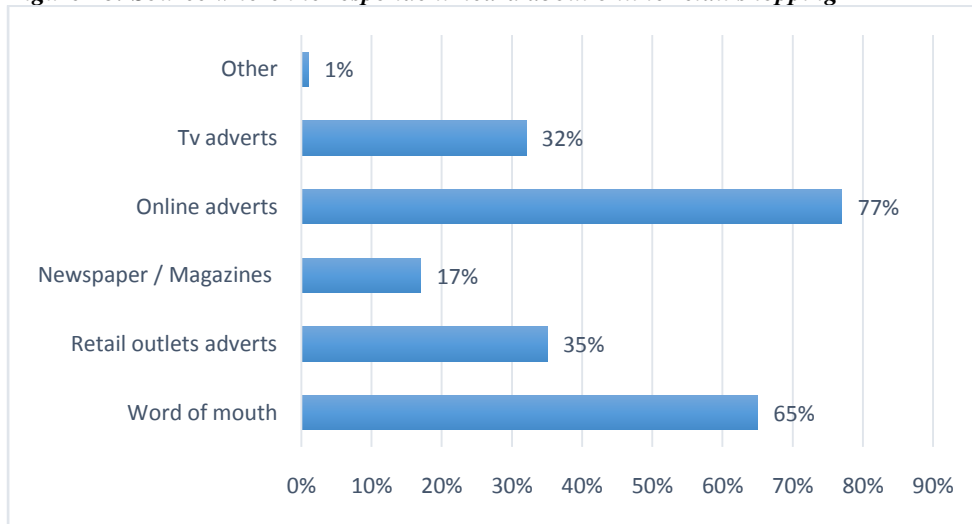


Sources where the respondent heard about online retail shopping

One of the ways by which the online shopping can be promoted among the citizens and users of the internet is awareness. Hence, the researchers tried to find out different ways through which the respondents have heard about online shopping before. This would help to improve the awareness using the means that majority are more familiar with. The respondents were allowed to select more than one source and the responses are depicted in Figure 18. Figure 18 shows that 77% of the respondents learned about online retail shopping from online

adverts, 65% word of mouth, 35% from retail outlets adverts, 32% from TVs, 17% from magazines and 1% from other unspecified sources.

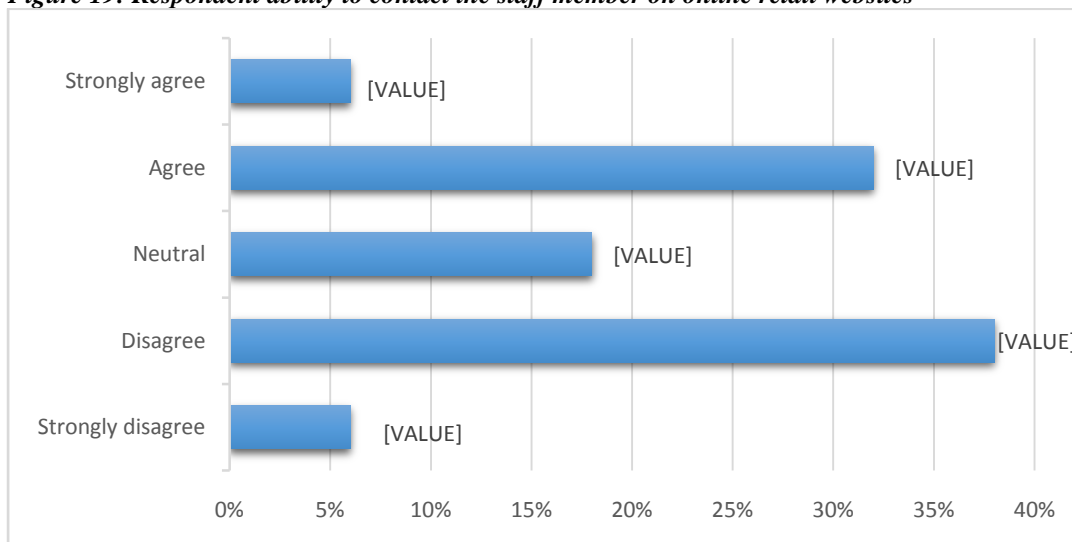
Figure 18: Source where the respondent heard about online retail shopping



Able to contact staff member on online retail websites

Here, the researchers tried to explore the respondents experience regarding their interactivity with the e-commerce website when retail purchase is made and how it influences their continued repurchase decision. Ability to get timely response when contacting the staff member or helpdesk of the online purchase website is very important, as many things (such as losing money or selection of wrong product number) could go wrong on the side of the users. All respondents were able to give answer on how they felt about being in-contact with the online retail shopping staff member or helpdesk. Figure 19 shows that while 38% agreed that they were able to contact staff members on online retail websites, 44% disagreed, and 18% were neutral. Based on this result, the online retail shops would need to improve on their online customer service relation, so as to encourage more people to do their shopping online.

Figure 19: Respondent ability to contact the staff member on online retail websites



Conclusion

Established on the survey conducted amongst the citizens of Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, the findings show that although the citizens are aware of the online retail shopping method, they are still reluctant to use online retail shopping. This is driven by their concerns and perceptions about privacy on online retail

shopping websites, secondly the respondents who never shopped online replied that they were not familiar with the online retail shopping technology which meant there was a lack in awareness. Thirdly, the uncertainty that the online retailer would keep its promises and obligations. The above mentioned is the list of the top three critical factors identified from the data collected.

Recommendations

Sequel to the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- Online retail firms in South Africa can, in the first place boost the perception of their websites' trustworthiness through security certificates and secure payment facilities. The perception can be further enhanced by simply ensuring that the secure nature of the websites is clear and consistently communicated with the consumers on sites.
- It is recommended that retail firms reach out more to Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality residents in their online retail shopping awareness campaigns. The majority of people out there lack such knowledge and will always find it difficult to adopt something they know little about.
- Before the credit card information is released, the buyer must take adequate time to research the website. If this is the customer's first purchase, then it is only wise to contact the retail market. Many trustworthy retailers will be given a toll-free phone number for customer service. If the site only had an email address and no phone number, then the purchaser should start an email or instant message chat with the people running the site before they buy anything online.

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