UNDERSTANDING ONLINE GROUP PURCHASE DECISION MAKING: A MEANS-END CHAIN APPROACH

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Abstract

Given the enormous growth and significant impacts of group buying on Internet business marketplaces, this study aims to understand consumer decision making process in an online group buying context from a Means-end Chain (MEC) theory perspective. The laddering interview technique was used to interview 58 online group buying users and to capture their reasons behind the online shopping behaviour, with grounded theory used to determine categories. The study found 35 factors in relation to consumer decision making process, which were classified into attributes, consequences, and values. The hierarchical relationships among 35 factors were developed, in which consumer decision making paths were identified. This study has the potential to make significant contributions to both IS research and e-business regarding consumer online group buying decision making process by identifying not only the major consequences/benefits consumers emphasising, but also the concrete attributes which directly correspond with these benefits as well as the goals/values consumers aim to achieve.

Keywords: Online group buying, Means-end chain (MEC), Laddering, Hierarchical value map (HVM)

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