Role of Trust in Converting Intention into Actual Purchase in an E-Marketing Stimuli (eM-stimuli) Induced Environment

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Abstract

This paper empirically investigates the role of trust in converting an intention to purchase, formed due to the impetus of eM-stimuli, into an actual purchase. It is among few studies on actual purchase in context of E-Marketing. An ex post facto experiment design is used with 300 participants and SEM in AMOS 21 was used for data analysis. Findings suggest a strong chance that an intention formed to purchase due to the effect of eM-stimuli will convert into an actual purchase. Institutional trust plays a very important background role in converting intention into an actual purchase in eM-stimuli induced environments. Managers should ensure trusting cues when creating eM-stimuli fostering institutional trust. Study was limited to convenience services and student population. Future research may further explore the variables and processes that are involved in converting intention into purchase in eM-stimuli induced environments, as well as on optimal eM-stimuli characteristics for different product and service categories.

Keywords: E-Marketing, Trust, Institutional Trust, Consumer Decision-Making Theories, E-Marketing-stimuli

Introduction

Interactive technologies and devices are real game changers in the way we organize ourselves and approach life (McCarthy & Wright, 2004). This technological deluge is taking the human touch out of our lives and submersing us in a virtual environment. Trust is a sociological reality that is embedded in individual psyches and the institutional fabric of society (Lewis & Weigert, 1985). Interactive technologies have depleted the element of human interaction, especially in purchasing experience. In one to one interaction, many verbal and non-verbal cues develop, enhance and gauge 'trust' which is also sometimes labeled as 'interpersonal cues' (Bacharach & Gambetta, 1997; Goffman, 1959). From the consumer's side, there is an increased lack of trust in online transactions due to absence of a face-to-face relationship (Radin, Calkins & Predmore, 2007). From an organization's view, the time of interaction has reduced and consumer access to shopping space and time has increased, as shops are available 24/7. There is no physical interaction in new media environments making it very difficult to gain attention of the potential buyer. Forming trust and generating a purchase is even further away.

An organization tries to induce trust as the first step towards loyalty. A loyal customer is a bigger asset in the electronic environment as compared to the physical environment, as his/her ability to create and disseminate word of mouth is exponential, through social networking sites. So creating and maintaining trust is a major issue for customers and organizations alike. More research is required in understanding the behaviors and attitudes of online shoppers (Taylor & Strutton, 2010). According to

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Bilgihan (2016), research models on online shopping behaviour may use intention to purchase as a target variable; as well as use experimental research design while investigating online shopping behavior. A study by Gudigantala, Bicen and Eom (2016) investigates the link between intention and actual purchase using conversion rates. A gap exists in direct empirical measurement of the link between intention to purchase and actual purchase in the E-marketing context.

This study researches these gaps by analyzing whether trust affects the graduation of intention to transact into an actual transaction in an Electronic Marketing stimuli (eM-Stimuli) triggered environment. A distinct environment is created in psychological space when a customer receives stimuli through new media in the context of E-Marketing. From an E-Commerce view, a transaction can be a broad term, which may include situation ranging from a query to generating a purchase to post purchase communication.   From a marketing perspective, the most important transaction is a purchase. Therefore, studying a purchase is quite important even in the context of a transaction. An antecedent to this issue is to determine whether an intention to perform a transaction leads to an actual transaction in an eM-stimuli triggered environment. Another issue attached is to determine which dimension of trust has the most significant effect in this context.

From the Marketing area, focus is on the purchasing decision process. From Information Systems, the sub-area of Electronic Commerce (E-Commerce) leads to understand the role of new media that is the internet and mobile networks, in electronic purchasing. Concatenated between Marketing and E-Commerce, is online purchasing behavior. Recent studies on these issues have quite diverse orientations. An interesting manifestation of E-Commerce is 'Social Commerce'. Huang and Benyoucef (2012) are of the view that social commerce is the latest evolution of E-Commerce and Web 2.0 capabilities. Turban, Strauss and Lai (2016) present an overview of supporting concepts and theories of consumer behavior that are applicable on Social Commerce, upholding the direct link between intention and purchase. Habibi, Hamilton, Valos and Callaghan (2015) explore a new direction in the use of social media and B2B marketing, presenting 'E-Marketing Orientation' as a new construct. According to Hajli (2015), three main social platforms that are available online are forums and communities, ratings and reviews and referrals and recommendations. These Web 2.0 platforms provide sociability to individuals and form the core social commerce construct. Social commerce constructs in-turn influence trust and purchase intention as well.

Introspection suggests that these three platforms are the main areas of activity for E-Marketing. Most studies in these areas are focused towards analyzing emerging phenomena. In theoretical terms, most work is based on forming the intention to transact detailing the effects of antecedents in online environments. This study aims at theory deepening as suggested by Dholakia (2005) to explain the dynamics that trust induces in converting intention to purchase into an actual purchase.

Theorizing

The core theoretical foundation of consumer behavior, carried in this study as well, is the S-O-R paradigm developed by Hebb (1966). A stimulus acts on an organism

generating a response. Most of the theories and models formed to explain consumer behaviour are based on the S-O-R paradigm. These theories and models seem only to consider one to one interaction or stimuli coming from traditional media like newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, banner ads, handouts and direct selling. New media on the other hand is interactive. Thus, some re-evaluation is required in stimuli coming though new media in the E-marketing context. All theories and models of consumer behavior propose a link between intention and behavior. An intention forms after a perception created due to the effect of stimuli encountered by an individual. Once intention forms then it has to materialize in the form of an action, which in our context will be a purchase or actual purchase. On the contrary, there are few works empirically confirming the link, especially in E-Marketing literature. From an E-Marketing perspective, an online purchase is not necessarily the only mode of transaction. An individual triggered through an E-Marketing stimulus can also purchase through any traditional avenue of purchasing.

Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Development

There are three main elements in the conceptual framework namely an intention to transact or intention to purchase, actual transaction or actual purchase and trust based on its different dimensions.

Intention to Transact and Actual Transaction

The connection from intention to behavior is based on the premise, that keeping in view the available and accessed information; individuals endeavor to make rational decisions. An individual's actual behavior is an immediate consequence of that individual's intention to exhibit (or not exhibit) a behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Drawing on TAM (Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1989), TRA (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), and TPB (Ajzen, 1991), a considerable number of studies in E-Commerce establish that a consumer's actual E-Commerce transactions are significantly predictable by their intentions to undertake transactions online (Pavlou & Fygenson, 2006). According to Zwass (1998), intention to transact is construed as the consumer's intention to take part in an exchange relationship on-line with a Web retailer, like performing a business transaction, maintaining business relationships through communication or sharing business information, maintaining business relationships, and conducting business transactions. Therefore, *'an intention to perform a business transaction'* may be considered equivalent to *'an intention to conduct a purchase'* or *'intention to purchase'* in marketing parlance. Intention to transact and on-line transaction behavior are the key constructs that capture consumer acceptance of e-commerce (Pavlou, 2003).
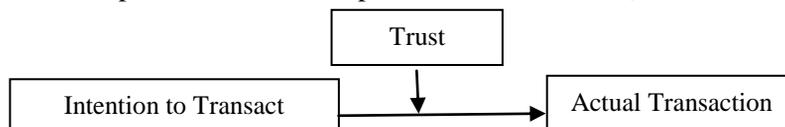

Figure 1: *Conceptual Framework*

The 'actual transaction' from the realm of E-Commerce is applicable to an 'actual purchase' in the marketing realm. A situation in which the buyer and seller

exchange benefits is known as an actual transaction or purchase. As this study is in the E-Marketing frame, so we will not remain limited to an online transaction. Any transaction induced by any eM-Stimuli, is an actual transaction. In the physical world, this means going to a marketplace and observing the process, which makes it difficult to quantify. Based on the above conceptualization the following hypothesis is framed:

H_1: *Intention to perform a transaction leads to an actual transaction in an eM-Stimuli triggered environment.*

Trust as a moderator

Many Sociologists distinguish between trust vested in any type of societal structure/institution and face-to-face trust and (Barber, 1983; Good, 1988). Although in economic terms, Trust is the fluid that maintains an economic structure epitomized by money or currency that circulates in an economic structure. However, trust in such abstract systems is devoid of an emotional element (Dasgupta, 1988; Good, 1988).

Trust in an online environment particularly for a website is constructed by, perceived honesty, benevolence and competence. As there is no physical interaction between the transacting entities (Flavián & Guinaliu, 2006), therefore all the elements of non-verbal communication and feel elements drop out of the purchasing experience. Therefore, trust is difficult to develop in such environments. Trust is talked about as an antecedent to forming perception. This may not necessarily be the case in an eM-stimuli induced environment.

Although most of the literature on E-Commerce discusses an antecedent role of trust; in an eM-stimuli triggered environment, trust formation can also happen as a moderator that fastens the path to an actual transaction. This is so because the period from the stage of action of eM-stimulus to perception and then intention is very small. In new media environments, it is now down to seconds to gain attention. In such environments, forming trust can effect forming an intention and graduating an intention into an actual purchase.. In view of this line of thought, a hypothesis can be:

H_2: *Trust moderates the graduation of intention to transact to an actual transaction in an eM-stimuli triggered environment*

In the business-to-business, sales context a study by Comer, Plank, Reid and Pullins (1999) posits trust as composed of three components. These are sales person trust, company trust and product/service trust. There are three dimensions of trust based on the entities involved in a transactional setting, which are dispositional trust, institutional trust and interpersonal trust.

Dispositional Trust

The first type is 'disposition to trust' which is specific to the trustor. This is also known as 'dispositional trust' which is a characteristic of personality that develops over an individual's lifetime (Tan & Sutherland, 2004). McKnight, Choudhry and Kacmar (2002) project dispositional trust as the degree to which an individual exhibits a propensity of willingness to depend on other individuals or institutions across a wide gamut of persons and situations. This construes as one's inclination to trust other individuals in the society. This carries a sense of reinforcement after every situation encountered by the trustor. In E-Marketing, each electronic message will reinforce the

disposition to trust in a positive or a negative manner. According to Lee and Turban (2001), consumer's trust propensity or dispositional trust in this case moderates the effect of merchant trust on internet shopping.

Institutional Trust

The second dimension of trust defined by McKnight and Chervany (2002) is 'institutional trust'. This construct, emanates from Sociology, and is seen as, trust in the situation and structures. The stated conceptualization takes the position that individuals can depend on other individuals for the reason that roles, situations and more importantly structures that grant guarantees that things will go well (Baier, 1986). According to Tan and Sutherland (2004), institutional trust is socially constructed. From E-Commerce point of view, this dimension covers the internet as the institution in question (Tan & Sutherland, 2004). From the E-Marketing perspective, this concept must include the internet as well as telecommunication networks as the framework carrying the eM-stimuli. Furthermore, the company whose marketing communication portends through the eM-stimuli must also be a part of the 'institution' in the concept of institutional trust. According to Lee & Turban (2001), merchant integrity is a major determinant of consumer trust in internet shopping.

Interpersonal Trust

The third type of trust discussed by McKnight and Chervany (2002) is 'interpersonal trust'. This dimension hones in on trust shaped in another particular entity (Tan & Sutherland, 2004). The stated dimension is common in the areas of Sociology, Psychology and Economics. This type addresses specific individual/institution that forms the trustee in a transaction. In the context of E-Commerce, this is the trust deposed by the consumer in the electronic vendor (Tan & Sutherland, 2004). In the context of E-Marketing, this will mean the trust displayed by the individual consumer, who receives the eM-stimulus, as the *message* conveyed by the organization. Different dimensions of trust as presented earlier can also be looked at, as having varying effects on the process of enhancing intention to transact into an actual transaction. As these emanate from different realms of studies that represent different contexts and situations. Each dimension of trust is hypothesized to have a moderating role on its own in the process as well.

H_{2a}: *Interpersonal trust moderates the graduation of an intention to transact to an actual transaction in an eM-stimuli triggered environment*

H_{2b}: *Institutional trust moderates the graduation of an intention to transact to an actual transaction in an eM-stimuli triggered environment*

H_{2c}: *Dispositional trust moderates the graduation of an intention to transact to an actual transaction in an eM-stimuli triggered environment*

Methodology

Sample Selection

Experiments have limitations in terms of time and space. Creating controlled conditions is the key challenge of an experiment. Considering these constraints, the study was conducted in IT labs of educational institutions. Ads of student specific inexpensive service packages of telecom service providers were selected as eM-stimuli. About 300 participants were selected from students on a voluntary basis. To generate a better

population representation in the sample, the experiment was done in a university and two colleges. In the given environment, the largest proportions of tech savvy individuals exist in the age groups that are pursuing higher levels of education.

Research Design

The research design of the study was simulated experiment using an ex post facto design based on positivist philosophy. Figure 2 depicts the flow of experiment.
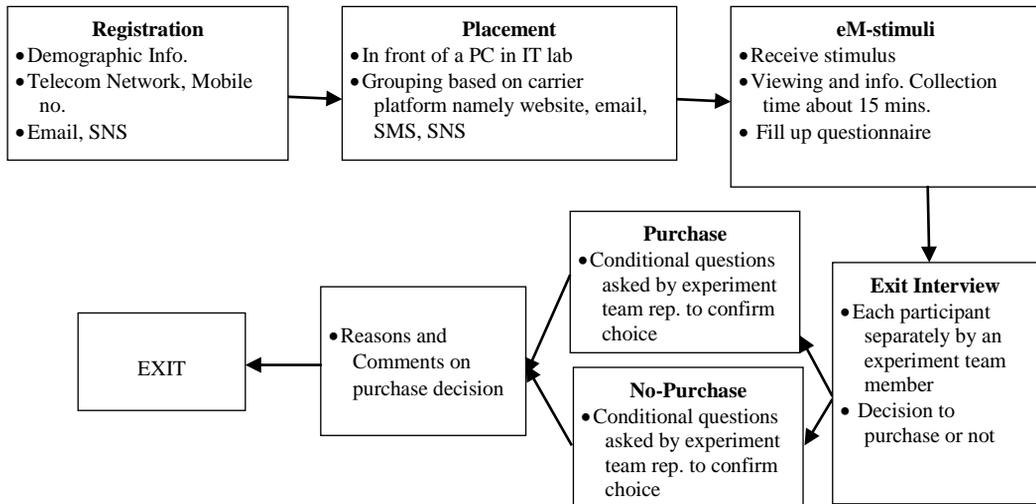

Figure 2: *Experiment Flow*

Research Instrument

For the different types of Trust, a scale is adapted by the researcher using the definitions of institutional trust, disposition to trust and interpersonal trust presented by McKnight and Chervany (2002). Some items for each type of trust are also adapted from the instruments used by Kim, Ferrin and Rao (2008), Walczuch and Lundgren (2004), Koufaris and Hampton-Sosa (2004) and Jarvenpaa, Tractinsky, N. and Vitale. (2000). The construct of intention to transact or purchase intention is also adapted from the study of Kim *et al*. (2008). All the items are measured through a 7-point likert scale. Actual purchase is recorded as an ordinal variable. An affirmative purchase decision is given the value 1, a negative reply is given a value 0. While a response that changed after intervention is treated as .5. Using ex post facto design, the initial response on purchase is treated as the control group, while the final response after intervention from the feedback step is treated as the experimental group.

Data Analysis and Results

Structural equation modeling (SEM) in AMOS 21 was used to analyze data and test hypotheses. Following the procedure suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), the measurement model was first estimated followed by the structural model.

Reliability and Validity

To test reliability of a construct a comprehensive gauge is composite reliability (CR). The value of CR above .7 is considered as having best internal consistency for a

construct (Hair et al., 2010). As interpersonal trust has low CR value, so it was dropped from further analysis.

Table 1: *Reliability and Validity of Constructs*

	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV
Dispositional Trust	.743	.492	.284	.056
Institutional Trust	.807	.521	.434	.093
Interpersonal Trust	.524	.219	.102	.016
Intention to transact	.726	.404	-	-

An acceptable way of measuring convergent validity is Average Variance Extracted (AVE). For measuring discriminant validity, the measures used are Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Maximum Shared Variance (MSV) as well as Average Shared Variance (ASV). According to Hair *et al*. (2010), a good value of discriminant validity is obtained if the MSV and ASV values are less than AVE value.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

After checking data for normality, for further ensuring the integrity of the constructs, a confirmatory factor analysis is carried out. Initially the Common Method Bias (CMB) is calculated using the Harman's single factor test. The value comes out to be 29%, which is lower than the threshold limit of 50% (Podsakoff *et al*., 2003).

Intention to Transact

The first construct examined is intention to transact or intention to purchase. The CFA model for intention to transact is presented in table 2.

Table 2: *CFA of Intention to Transact – Factor loading*

Item	R-value*	R^{2*}	
ITT1	.851	.730	
ITT2	.644	.412	
ITT3	.412	.173	
ITT4	.571	.334	
Model Fit Stat	Value	Model Fit Stat	Value
CMIN/DF	.182	RFI	.996
RMSEA	.000	IFI	1.006
SRMR	.009	TLI	1.008
NFI	.999	CFI	1.000

Significance values at .05 level

Institutional Trust

The CFA model for Institutional Trust is presented above in table 3. All the R and R² values are statistically significant at .05 level of probability. All of these fit values indicate that the construct of institutional trust has an acceptable model fit.

Table 3: *CFA of Institutional Trust*

Item	R-value*	$R^{2\wedge}$
IT1	.631	.344
IT2	.735	.542
IT3	.867	.730
IT4	.451	.220
IT6	.397	.143

Model Fit Stat	Value	Model Fit Stat	Value
CMIN/DF	3.825	RFI	.917
RMSEA	.098	IFI	.975
SRMR	.049	TLI	.938
NFI	.967	CFI	.975

*Significance values at .05 level

Dispositional Trust

The third construct examined is dispositional trust. The CFA model for Dispositional Trust is presented above in table 4. All the R and R^2 values show strong factor loading.

Table 4: *CFA of Dispositional Trust*

Item	R-value*	R^{2*}
DT1	.581	.342
DT2	.750	.561
DT3	.725	.523

Model Fit Stat	Value	Model Fit Stat	Value
CMIN/DF	1.004	RFI	.985
RMSEA	.004	IFI	1.000
SRMR	.020	TLI	1.000
NFI	.995	CFI	1.000

*Significance values at 0.05 level

Structural Model

The Structural Model presents the effect on intention to transact or intention to purchase on an Actual Transaction or actual purchase. The beta value and R^2 values have highly significant t-value at the .001 level of testing.

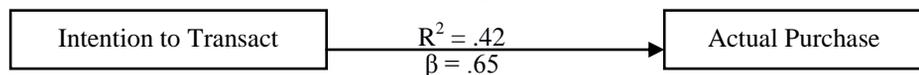| Intention to Transact	$R^2 = .42$ $\beta = .65$ →	Actual Purchase

Figure 3: *Regression of intention to Transact on Actual Transaction*

The Chi-square value is 2.966 (p>.05). To improve upon model fit ITT4 was dropped. The CMIN/DF value is .748, values of baseline model comparison indicators like NFI, RFI, TLI and CFI are above .9. The RMSEA value is .000 and SRMR is .014. Intention to transact was also regressed on the variable initial purchase. Initial Purchase was the initial decision of the respondents before presentation of conditions in the exit interview. This group is treated as the control group in the ex post facto design. Figure 4 indicates the results.
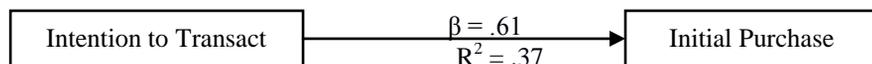
Intention to Transact	$\beta = .61$ $R^2 = .37$ →	Initial Purchase

Figure 4: *Regression of intention to Transact and Initial Purchase*

The Beta and R² values have significant t-values at p< .001. In order to improve model fit ITT3 was dropped. The CMIN/DF is .849. All baseline model comparisons, like NFI, RFI, TLI and CFI are above .9. The RMSEA value is .000 and SRMR value.0152. This means that in the control group and the experimental group, intention to transact will lead to an actual purchase. Based on these results we fail to reject H_1.

Hypothesis (H_{2b}) explores the effect of institutional trust on converting an intention to an actual purchase in an eM-stimuli induced environment.
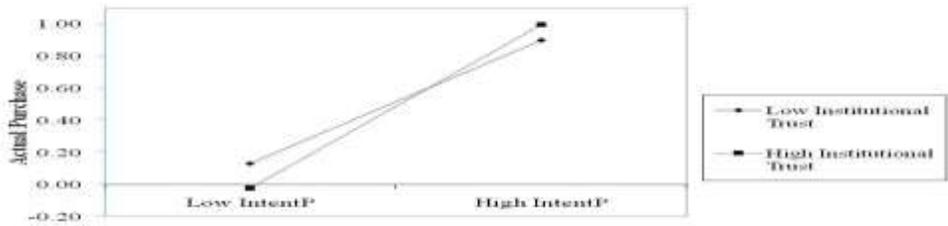

Fig. 5: *Moderation Analysis using Hayes and Mathes Method for Actual Purchase*

Results in figure 5 indicate a positive relationship between intention to transact and actual purchase. When intention is low, the chance of generating a purchase is lower, while at high levels of intention the chances of generating a purchase are higher. When institutional trust is high, slope of the line representing the relationship between intention and trust becomes quite steep. This suggests that there is a statistically significant effect of institutional trust in moderating the main effect of translating intention to purchase into an actual purchase in eM-stimuli induced purchase environment.
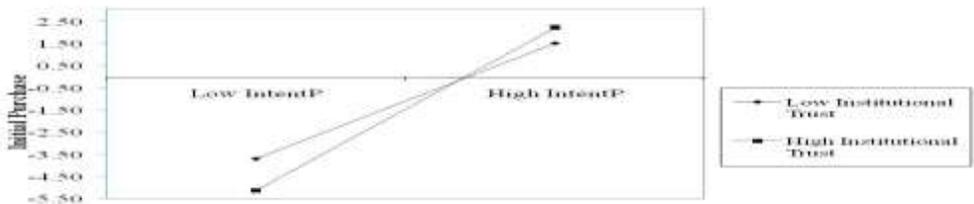

Fig 6: *Moderation Analysis using Hayes and Mathes Method for Initial Purchase*

As depicted in figure 6, similar results are obtained for initial purchase representing control group as compared to experimental group.   Based on this analysis we would fail to reject the alternate hypothesis (H_{2b}), meaning that there is a statistically significant moderating effect of institutional trust on the relationship between intention to transact and an actual purchase.

Hypothesis (H_{2c}) was developed to explore the effect of dispositional trust on the chances of converting an intention to an actual purchase in an eM-stimuli induced environment.

Table 5: *Moderation of Dispositional Trust for Actual Purchase*

	β	SE	T	P
Constant	.604	.019	31.115	.000
Intention_P	.150	.014	10.653	.000
Disp_T	-.019	.021	-.942	.351
Interact	.008	.013	.674	.501

Based on the Hayes and Matthes (2009) method, the values given in Table 5 intention to transact has a significant direct relationship with actual purchase, which remains significant despite of the moderation effect of dispositional trust as a variable. Dispositional trust has an insignificant p-value ($p < .5$). The interaction terms has an insignificant t-value. Further, intention to transact was also regressed on initial purchase with dispositional trust as the moderator (table 6). Intention to transact has a beta value of 1.04 which has a Wald value of 56.163 ($p<0.05$). Dispositional trust has a beta value of -.218 ($P<.05$).

Table 6: *Moderation of Dispositional Trust for Initial Purchase*

	b	SE	Z	P	Exp(B)	Wald
Constant	-.517	.149	-3.465	.000	.596	12.008
Intention_P	1.040	.139	7.494	.000	2.831	56.163
Disp_T	-.218	.151	-1.437	.151	.804	2.064
Interact	.050	.122	.411	.681	1.052	0.170

The interaction term has an insignificant beta value. Based on this analysis we would fail to reject the null hypothesis for H$_{2c}$.

Overall trust is a derived concept in this study based on its three dimensions (results summarized in Table 7).

Table 7: *Trust as a Moderator*

Hypothesis	Description	Accepted
H2a	Moderation of Interpersonal Trust	NA
H2b	Moderation of Institutional Trust	Yes
H2c	Moderation of Dispositional Trust	No

Interpersonal trust, which is a function of the trust created by the stimulus itself, is overshadowed by the strong effects of institutional trust. In contrast, institutional trust had a strong effect. Hypothesis testing for moderation effect of institutional trust clearly indicates a significant effect. Dispositional trust did not represent a significant impact on the relationship between intention to transact and actual transaction. Considering all these results and the fact that institutional trust is the dominating dimension of trust in the given context, researchers deduce that overall trust will have a significant derived effect on the graduation of intention to transact into an actual purchase. In this case, we will fail to reject the alternative hypothesis (H$_2$), suggesting a moderating effect of trust on the main relationship. This is in line with Wee, Ariff, Zakuan, Tajudin, Ismail, and Ishak (2014) and Leong, Jaafar, and Ainin (2018).

Discussion

Intention to transact has a strong effect on actual purchase in both cases indicated by initial purchase and actual purchase there is a strong effect of intention to transact. If intention to purchase is formed then there is a strong chance that it will convert into a purchase in an eM-stimuli induced environment.

These results are applicable for items categorized as convenience goods or services. Although the test is done for convenience goods or rather services for students, the implications are applicable for any particular market situation, where a good or service is categorized in convenience category and its promotion is coming in the form of an eM-stimulus. Furthermore, if the potential or repeat customer has formed intention to transact then there is a strong chance that it will lead to an actual purchase. In case if there are certain conditions presented to the potential or actual customer either embedded in that piece of promotion or through some other means, then the chance that an actual transaction can occur becomes even higher. A significant amount of variation in the actual purchase is not explainable through intention to transact. This suggests that, there are some other factors, which account for creating/influencing an actual purchase in an eM-stimuli induced purchase environment. In the opinion of this researcher, there may exist some factors, which are different from conventional or physical situations, and unique to electronic environments at the point of purchase.

According to conventional models, trust is considered as part of 'subjective norms', which has an effect in the decision process before forming intention. Under the aegis of E-Commerce, the issue of trust is much more prevalent (ontologically) due to the nature of online purchasing environment. Therefore, researchers in E-Commerce have considered it as an element that may effect after formation of intention, between formation of intention and adoption (actual purchase) and even in continuance (post purchase). It is clear from analysis that trust slightly enhances the chances of converting intention to transact into an actual transaction. Most of that effect is attributable to the effect of institutional trust.

The effect of institutional trust on the relation between intention to transact and actual transaction is quite significant. Firstly, the relationship between intention to transact and actual transaction becomes stronger in the presence of institutional trust. If the company has a trust-based perception cherished by the consumer in his/her mind, then the chances of a transaction become higher. In fact, institutional trust drives the whole notion of trust, in an eM-stimuli induced environment. In a situation where the institution does not have a trusting image then there can be some distortions created in converting intention into actual transaction. In case of improving the situation after exposure to a stimulus, improving institutional trust can have a positive effect in converting intention into an actual transaction. Institutions having a more trusting image will be able to generate a higher chance of converting intention into an actual transaction in an eM-stimulus induced environment.

Results suggest no effect of dispositional trust in translating intention to an actual transaction in eM-stimuli induced purchase environment. This may be attributed to the trust forming processes happening in the antecedent stages, to intention formation by the consumer. Therefore, initial disposition does not have an effect at this stage. Interestingly both dispositional and institutional trusts are negative to start with. This is the case in the direct as well as interaction-based relationship of trust. In the control group, initial trust in both its dimensions showed a negative tendency. This can be attributed to the fact that individuals in the given societal context are skeptical rather than trusting in the

beginning. It can also be the case, that the institutions in the study have created so much clutter through 'in-your-face' promotions that people are experiencing fatigue in trusting messages coming from those institutions.

Furthermore, this effect indicates that people generally are averse to transact online or may be skeptical of messages coming through new media. On the contrary, when some incentives are given as part of the experiment, then all dimensions of trust become positive. This means that trusting cues need to be imparted or some follow-up of messaging is required as part of marketing communications strategy, particularly in the context of E-Marketing.

Practical Implications

An important implication relates to institutional trust. A trust worthy company sending a message from its authentic account/id/number through SMS has a much higher chance of translating intention into an actual purchase. This is true, more so for convenience goods/services where the decision-making is quick with very few complications. Marketing managers should work on creating a trustworthy image of the company by adding trusting cues (Bauman, 2015; Beldad, De Jong, Steehouder, 2010; Riegelsberger & Sasse, 2001; Wang, Emurian, 2005) to the message and present a direct image, which relates to the company in question. In such a case, the chances of translating intention into actual purchase become very strong. In case of deciding on reinforcing a message managers must think about the type of trust that effects the consumer more in the given situation. In general, marketing managers must work on creating a trustworthy image of the institution (organization). This is to be in the physical as well as the electronic environments. In terms of promotional messages, transmitted as eM-stimuli, managers must put as much trusting cues as possible to create better chances of generating a purchase.

Limitations of the study included time and budget constraints; it was also limited to convenience services and student population, which is one segment of the whole population. Overall findings of this study have generic implications to other types of services as well as markets. Future studies can look at the effect of trust on an actual purchase in the context of different market segments and product categories. Most interesting direction would be to research the effect of different eM-stimuli across platforms and finding, optimum message characteristics, choice of media and platforms for specific product and service categories.

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