



TAPMI

**T. A. PAI MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE
MANIPAL - 576104**

Research Seminar

“Returns to Search in Online Ordered and Unordered
Environments: The Effect of Personality and Situational Variables”

Speaker

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3.00 p.m. Sept 21, 2009, Classroom No. F2, TAPMI New Campus

All are invited

Abstract

Web personalization tools enhance the limited information processing capacity of humans and aid in making a better choice (Alba et al. 1997; Diehl et al. 2003). Web personalization generally refers to the process of adapting web content to meet the specific needs of users and to maximize business opportunities (Korper and Ellis 2001). These intelligent tools do the screening of alternatives according to consumers' preferences and create an ordered environment listing alternatives in the descending order of utility. In the absence of these tools, the alternatives are listed in random order of utility.

Extant literature has identified ability and motivation as the important dimensions from the psychology framework affecting information search behaviour (e.g. Beatty and Smith 1987; Schmidt and Spreng 1996). Subjective knowledge, need for cognition (personality variables) and involvement (a situational variable) affect ability and motivation to gather and process information for decision-making. Hence in the present study, we incorporate subjective knowledge, involvement and need for cognition and investigate their effects on returns to search in ordered and unordered environments.

We found that returns to search is different in ordered and unordered environments. Results showed that in ordered environments, low search lead to better decision quality, where as in unordered environments medium search lead to optimum decision quality compared to low and high search (inverted U-shape). In ordered environments, SK has a U-shaped influence on the decision quality indicating that decision quality will be least for those with medium SK. In unordered environments, the effect is inverted U-shape on decision quality, indicating optimum decision quality for medium SK consumers. Involvement and NFC had positive influence on decision quality in unordered environments, negative influence on decision quality in ordered environments. On subjective assessment of returns to search, the hypotheses for decision confidence were supported, while for decision satisfaction hypotheses were partially supported.

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