THE ANTECEDENTS AND EFFECTS OF WEB SITE CONTENT LOCALIZATION

Gulfem Kutlu
Internet and Current Status

- Global and borderless
- Virtual marketplace
- Increased reach to customers
- Creation of new markets
- More in-depth information
Internet and Current Status

- In United States 93% of the companies have a website but only 41% of them provide different sites to different groups (Barwise and Farley 2005).
- 55% of the American web sites have no effort to adapt the needs of the foreign customer (Tixier 2005).
- Organizations offer standardized or global web pages because they find it hard to understand the foreign consumers or don’t have enough information or knowledge about them (Singh, Furrer and Ostinelli 2004).
The Model

Individual (Personal) Factors
- Gender, Internet Experience, Ethnocentrism

Level of Adaptation Factors
Content Adaptation (Fit)
- Language
- Color
- National symbols
- Photographs
Culture Adaptation (Fit)
- Hofstede
Competitive Adaptation (Fit)

Attitude towards the website

Revisit intention
Purchase Intention
Level of Adaptation Factors

Content Adaptation (fit)

Content adaptation (fit) of a web site is the level of adaptation of web site design elements according to different countries.

- Language
- Colors and National Symbols
- Photographs
Content Adaptation (fit)

-Language:

- 4 billion people speak a language other than English yet majority (69.39%) of all web sites is in English (Singh, Furrer and Ostinelli 2004).

- Customers stay on local web sites twice longer than they stay on the English global web sites (Singh, Furrer and Ostinelli 2004).

- Customers are three times more likely to make a purchase if the web site is in their native language (Singh et al. 2006).
Content Adaptation (fit)

- Colors and National Symbols:

- Color selections can significantly affect consumer’s perception negatively or positively depending on the situation. Example: Green in US vs. Asia.

- Using national colors on the web site can satisfy the nationalism feelings on the individuals.

- Use of national symbols can generate close to home, one of us feeling in the international customers.
-People in photographs:

Three alternatives is possible: use people from the organization’s country of origin or a local country national or even a neutral third party.

**Proposition 1**: The greater the content adaptation (fit), the more positive the attitude towards the website.
Culture Adaptation (fit)

Research has shown that web sites are also affected by cultural dimensions defined by Hofstede. Some examples are as follows:

- Chinese web sites showed high collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance and high context features but low masculinity (Singh, Xhao and Hu 2003).

- Japanese web sites showed high level of collectivism, power distance, masculinity and high context when compared to US web sites (Singh and Matsuo, 2004).

Proposition 2: The greater the cultural adaptation (fit), the more positive the attitude towards the web site.
Competitive adaptation (fit)

- Competitor orientation is needed to have a sustainable competitive advantage.
- As a result an organizational web site adaptation should also be evaluated on the basis of the practices that are applied by the local competitors.

Proposition 3: The greater the competitive adaptation (fit), the more positive the attitude towards the web site.
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Level of Adaptation Factors
- Content Adaptation (Fit)
  - Language
  - Color
  - National symbols
  - Photographs
- Culture Adaptation (Fit)
  - Hofstede
- Competitive Adaptation (Fit)

Attitude towards the website

Revisit intention
Purchase Intention
Effect of the attitude towards the web site

- Adaptation factors causes attitudes to be formed towards the web site, which in turn will affect the revisit intention towards the web site and the purchase intention for the company’s products.

Proposition 4: The more positive the attitude towards the web site, the higher the revisit intention of the web site.

Proposition 5: The more positive the attitude towards the web site, the higher the purchase intention for the company’s products.
The Model

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Culture Adaptation (Fit)
- Hofstede
Competitive Adaptation (Fit)

Attitude towards the website

Revisit intention
Purchase Intention
Gender, internet experience and ethnocentrism is defined as the factors that moderate both the effect of level of adaptation on attitude towards the web site as well as the effect of attitude towards the web site to revisit and purchase intention.
Moderators

- Gender
  - Females are more interested in using Internet for interpersonal communication such as chatting and emails, while males primarily use it for information search.
  - When evaluating web sites, males focused on the navigation and layout of the information. Females displayed a more comprehensive analysis of the web sites and their responses were more emotive. They also commented on the pictures and colors used (Maltby, Chudry and Wedande 2003).

*Proposition 6: The effect of the level of adaptation will be stronger for females than males*
Moderators

- Gender
  - While males think that web advertising is more enjoyable than magazine and newspaper advertising, females find it to be more annoying. Females feel that web advertising can be more offensive and/or deceptive (Wolin and Korgaonkar 2003).
  - In terms of purchase decisions males are more likely to make a purchase online, while females are more likely to visit online stores for information gathering and then purchase at a brick and mortar store (Wolin and Korgaonkar 2003).

Proposition 6a: Females are more likely to revisit an organizational web site than males.

Proposition 6b: Males are more likely to have purchase intentions in online setting than the females.
Moderators

- Internet Experience
  - Internet users would differ in terms of internet experience and internet proclivity.
    - Internet experience is the amount of time that the consumer has used the Internet.
    - Internet proclivity is the amount of hours per week that the consumer uses the Internet (Kuhlmeier and Knight 2005).

Proposition 7: The effect of the level of adaptation will be stronger for experienced Internet users than inexperienced ones.

Proposition 7a: Revisit intention will be stronger for experienced Internet users than inexperienced ones.

Proposition 7b: Purchase intention will be stronger for experienced Internet users than inexperienced ones.
Moderators

- Ethnocentrism
  - Ethnocentrism it the belief that one’s own race and culture is superior to those of other groups.
  - Symbols of the one’s own ethnic and cultural group generates pride and attachment, while symbols of other groups can generate the feeling of contempt.
  - Ethnocentric consumers can refuse to buy foreign goods as they believe that they hurt the domestic economy, cause loss of jobs etc.

**Proposition 8:** The effect of the level of adaptation will be stronger for ethnocentric customers than non-ethnocentric ones.

**Proposition 8a:** Revisit intention will be weaker for ethnocentric customers than non-ethnocentric ones.

**Proposition 8b:** Purchase intention will be weaker for ethnocentric customers than non-ethnocentric ones.
Measures

- Perceived content adaptation (fit) can be measured by Zhang, Kelling and Pavur’s (2000) perception scale which addresses the appropriateness and attractiveness of the content elements.
- Cultural adaptation (fit) can be measured by using Singh (2004) perceived cultural adaptation scale.
- Competitive adaptation (fit) can be determined by content analysis.
- Attitude towards the website can be measured by the AST scale developed by Chen and Wells (1999).
- Internet experience can be measured by Novak, Hoffman and Yung (2000) Internet skill scale.
- Ethnocentrism can be measured by CETSCALE developed by Shimp and Sharma (1987).
- Repurchase intention can be measured by the purchase intention scale developed by Limayem, Khalifa and Frini (2000).
Limitations

- This article fails to address the differences in terms of industry and the product of the company. Even if there may be differences between the nations not all industry and/or product would be affected by these differences the same way.

- The model is only based on the Internet “online” environment where as the real life “offline” environment has not taken into consideration. The real life “offline” experiences will especially come into play when determining the attitude towards the web site and the purchase intention for the products.
Final Remarks

- A model that aims to examine the effect of the level of adaptation on the international customer’s attitudes formed towards the web site, which in turn will affect the revisit intention towards the web site and the purchase intention for the company’s products is introduced.

- The effects of several moderators such as gender, level of internet experience and ethnocentrism has been taken into account while building the model.

- Questions?