Chapter 1

1. Introduction

Generally speaking the trend of e-commerce has been increased rapidly in the recent years with the development of internet and due to the easy accessibility of internet usage. Easy access to internet has driven consumers to shop online in fact according to the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) communication policy (2001), online shopping is third most popular activity on the internet after email using and web browsing. Globally more than 627 million people have done online shopping so far, World's biggest online shoppers include Germans and British. Books, airline tickets/reservations, clothing/shoes videos/games and other electronic products are the most popular items purchased on the internet. (ACNielsen Report on Global Consumer Attitudes towards Online Shopping, 2007).

Through electronic marketing and internet communication business firms are coordinating different marketing activities such as market research, product development, inform customers about product features, promotion, customer services, customer feedback and so on. Online shopping is used as a medium for communication and electronic commerce, it is to increase or improve in value, quality and attractiveness of delivering customer benefits and better satisfaction, that is why online shopping is more convenience and day by day increasing its popularity.

Not only benefits but also risk is associated with online shopping. Generally speaking internet users avert online shopping because of credit-card fraud, lack

of privacy, non-delivery risk, lack of guarantee of quality of goods and services. Concerned authorities are devising policies to minimize the risk involved in e-business.

On the other hand E- commerce has been grown very fast because of many advantages associated with buying on internet because of lower transaction and search cost as compared to other types of shopping. Through online shopping consumers can buy faster, more alternatives and can order product and services with comparative lowest price. (Cuneyt and Gautam 2004). Therefore Marketers have carefully analysed factors influencing costumers to shop online and spend billions of dollars to facilitate all the demographics of online shoppers.

Consumers shopping online refers to their psychological state in terms of making purchases over the Internet. Online buying behaviour process refers to the products purchased online. The process of online buying behaviour consists of five steps and it is similar to traditional shopping behaviour . For instance, consumer recognize the need for buying some product (book), they refers to the internet to buy online and start to search for the information and look for all the alternatives and finally make a purchase which best fits to their needs. Before making final purchase consumers are bombarded by several factors which limits or influence consumers for the final decision.

The main theme of the study is to know the factors that influence consumer's attitudes and behaviours towards online shopping. Researchers will also focus on how consumers form such attitudes with the help of models and who are truly the online shoppers.

My problem area is factors that influence consumers to shop online and those factors will help marketers to formulate their strategies towards online marketing respectively. As my area of research will be on Guinea and specifically on Conakry so my research thesis will not only be helpful for the marketers in general but specifically will be helpful for the marketers in Guinea. Researchers will precede this work with primary data which will help them in covering the subject area in more diversified way.

1.1 Problem definition

"An increasing number and variety of firms and organizations are exploiting and creating business opportunities on the Internet. Above mention statistics indicate the rapid growth in the field of virtual shopping. With this emerging field of shopping the interest of marketers is also increasing in studying what actually motivates consumers to shop online. Fierce competitions among online sellers have forced them to gain the competitive edge in the field of virtual shopping.

In order to gain competitive edge in the market, marketers need to know the consumer behaviour in the field of online shopping. So it is important to analyse and identify the factors which influence consumers to shop online in order to capture the demands of consumers.

Other than the factors which influence consumers to shop online, online shopper's demography in terms of Age, gender, income and education is equally important to define their strategies accordingly.

As online shopping is a new medium so the consumer behaviour in the field of online shopping is also pretty diverse in nature compare to traditional consumer

behaviour, so it is equally important for one to identify what factors influence consumers to shop online. In order to reach towards purchase decision, it consists of several factors which influence consumers to shop online. These factors are important for retailers to compete in the market and to make their product more compatible.

1.2 Purpose and research questions

The prime purpose of the research is to identify and analyse the factors influencing Guinea consumers to shop online. Besides the factors influencing another purpose of the study is to analyse who are online shoppers in terms of demography. The findings of this research will not only help Guinea marketers to formulate their marketing strategies for online shoppers but will also increase the knowledge and research in field of online shopping.

i) What factors influence consumers to shop online?

ii) Who are online shoppers in terms of demography?

One of my research objectives is to work on factors that influence consumers to shop online, i have decided to study four factors such as **Convenience, Time Saving, Website Design/Features and Security**. While it is important to investigate the motivation behind consumer purchasing but it is equally important to find how the consumers form attitudes and behaviours towards online buying because consumer attitude towards purchasing online is a conspicuous factor affecting actual buying behaviour. When marketers get to know the factors affecting online Guinea buyer's behaviour then it create huge

opportunity for the marketers to develop the marketing strategies accordingly and turn the potential customers into actual one and retain the exiting buyers. However, consumers' willingness to purchase online could be affected by one's individual needs and these needs can be" Need for Cognition" and" Need to Evaluate." All the needs are strongly affected by different Situational factors i.e. can be cognitive involvement (indicates one's personal relevance with the Internet as a medium of shopping. More cognitively involved persons usually believe that the Internet can also raise their shopping efficiency) and affective involvement (affective involvement include affective factors, such as hedonic and symbolic expectations, can also influence the personal relevance of a shopping medium.) (Zaichkowsky, 1994).

1.3 Conceptual Framework

This section reviews the previous studies done in the area of online shopping following consumers attitude towards online shopping and highlighting the two main research questions as

 1- Factors influencing consumers to shop online

2- Who are online shoppers in terms of demography?

As this chapter provides basis of conceptual framework that is used by the writers to discuss and analyse the whole area of interest. This chapter includes previous literature on consumer's attitudes towards online shopping, and theories and models used to discuss the problem analytically and this chapter also explains the reasons behind the choice of theories. Analysing the empirical data and to reach towards conclusions is a challenging task for researchers.

In fourth chapter which is data analysis and discussion writers have critically analyse the data, by using tools, graphs and charts. In this chapter writers have answered the research questions after analysing the empirical data collected through questionnaires. This chapter serves as the key to whole research. In last chapter presents the conclusion and the applicability of this research in the field of factors influencing Guinea costumers to shop online. Fifth chapter will include the conclusion.

The research model shown in Figure 1 is constructed by the writers on the basis of number of researches done in the area of consumer attitudes towards online shopping specifically and broadly on online shopping behaviour. The diagram shown in figure 1 depicts the factors influencing consumer to shop online.

IDV

| Convenience |

DV

| Time Saving |

| Website Design/Featur |

Factors influencing Guinea customers to shop online
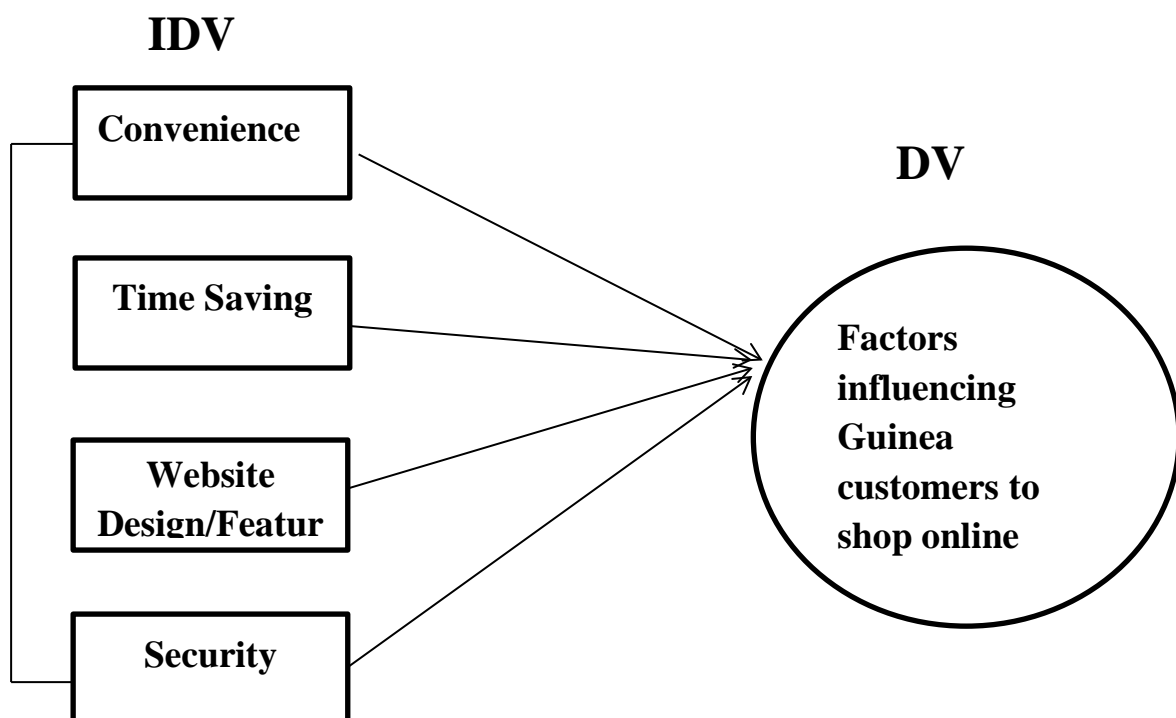
| Security |

Figure.1   A Schematic diagram of research model.

Source: Developed by the writers for the purpose of study.

The above model shows a relationship between dependent variable (DV) and independent variables (IDV). Consumer attitudes towards online shopping are perceived as dependent variable whereas convenience, time saving, website design/features and security are the independent variables that influence the consumers to shop online. The research model developed by the writers will serve as a basis for this research and it will help in analysing and interpreting the empirical results.

1.4 Research outline

Introduction
Research Design
Data Analysis and Discussion
Conclusion
I have divided the dissertation in five chapters. First chapter includes the introduction of the research which gives the overview regarding consumers attitudes towards online shopping, following future prospects in online shopping in Africa countries, problem definition, research purpose and research questions. This chapter highlights the purpose and overview of the study.

Research design helps reader to understand what strategies are used to collect the data.

Second chapter which is research design describes the research design and data collection method that is being used by the writers. It includes sampling, sampling design, questionnaire design and last but not least validity and reliability of this research. Theoretical framework gives to a reader a clear picture as to what theories and models used by the researchers to support their study. Third chapter covers the methodology of my research, collection of data, how many correspondents do I need for sampling design, and questionnaire design about all the factors and finally data analysis. Fourth part will be about input and output of the research which include comparative analysis, correlation analysis of four factors and additional comment or recommendation from respondents if any. Last part is conclusion and recommendation.

1.5 Limitations

Almost every study has some limitations and so as in my study. One of the limitations in this study is time limit. At the same time cost is also another limitation in my study. But later on considering time and budget i changed my mind, so i have made survey about online shoppers in Guinea specially the study is conducted in Kofi Anan University students, university cafeteria, and university library in Guinea. Another limitation in my study is the convenience sampling; due to unavailability of data on students of Kofi Anan University i could not draw random sampling. And most of my respondents are students of Kofi Anan University so generalization is also limited but this study provides a base for further extension in the field of online shopping in general in Guinea and specifically in Conakry. Lastly the sample size is also not so much high as only sample of 100 online shoppers is taken.