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How Inaccessible Retailer Websites Affect Blind and Low-Vision Consumers: Their Perceptions and Responses

Alex Cohen

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Alex H. Cohen, Ph.D.

Online Accessibility – The Problem

- A website is designed to be accessible or inaccessible
- There are specific flaws creating issues with navigation
  - These issues are categorized:
    - Type A – Very Difficult/Impossible
    - Type AA – Very Difficult/Difficult
    - Type AAA – Difficult/Less Important Areas
- Universal Design

Online Accessibility – Who Is Impacted?

- One out of five consumers has disability affecting major activities
- Half impacted by website accessibility – 30 Million
- Stems for inability to use a mouse or compatibility issues with screen-reading software program

Blind & Low Vision

- Propels most advocacy

- Files most lawsuits

- Large and growing population

Social Identity Theory

- Used to explain prejudice

- Focuses on in-group vs. out-group

- Establishes a discriminatory event

Disconfirmed Expectations

- Cognitive Dissonance
- Assimilation Contrast Theory
- Contrast Theory

Attribution Theory

- Used to assess blame after failure

- Kelly's Co-Variation
    - Distinctiveness
    - Consensus
    - Consistency

Consumer Normalcy

- Participation – I am here

- Competence and control – I am in control

- Distinction – I am me

- Equality – I am an equal

Welcome

- Physical marketplace
- Personnel
- Other patrons
- Product selection
- Disconfirmed when negative interaction occurs

Hypotheses

- H1: NWOM/Social Media Sharing
- H2: Avoidance of Other Sales Channels
- H3: Complaint Behaviors – Direct/3rd Party
- H4: Effect Mediated by Anger Toward the Retailer
- H5: Consequences Stronger in High Effort Conditions
- H6: Feelings of Discrimination Lead to Higher Levels of Consequences

Methodology

- Recruited 520 blind participants from NFB, AFB, ACB
- 380 completed responses within subject's design
- Scenario-based

Results

- H1: NWOM – supported

- H2: Avoidance – supported

- H3: Complaint Behaviors – not-supported/supported

- H4: Anger – supported

- H5: Effort – not supported

- H6: Discrimination – supported

Limitations & Future Research

- Ardent blind participants

- Other disabled populations

- Scenario-approach?

- Social media e-commerce investigations needed

- Other variables to be explored

Conclusion

- Digital inclusion is a widespread problem
- Affects a large and growing population
- Solutions are readily available
- Add accessibility to more curricula to increase awareness and attention