

Key Factors that Influence Post Pandemic Online Purchase Intention of Generation Y and Z in Malaysia

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Abstract: *As the Movement Control Order (MCO) was imposed in Malaysia in March 2020, many small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have engaged in online platforms to sustain their business. However, there have been significant changes in consumer trends and spending patterns accompanied by rapid digital adoption since MCO. Consumers' shopping habits have changed as a result of MCO, and they maintained this habit even after MCO. Therefore, this research examined the key factors that influence post-pandemic online purchase intention in Malaysia, which include influencer marketing, live streaming commerce, loyalty programs, and online shopping experience. The theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) model was used to explain consumer behaviour. 30 sets of surveys were used to carry out the pilot test. Purposive sampling was used to collect 384 sets of data from 5 states with the most e-commerce users in Malaysia which included Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Johor, Pulau Pinang, and Perak. Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the variables. Pearson Correlation Analysis was used to measure how 2 sets of data were related. Multiple Regression Analysis was used to describe relationships between variables. The result showed that loyalty programs and online shopping experience have a significant relationship with online purchase intention while influencer marketing and live-streaming commerce have no significant relationship with online purchase intention. The online shopping experience has the strongest influence on online purchase intention. In this regard, this study will provide profound insights to online purchase intention of generation Y and Z in Malaysia.*

Keywords: online purchase intention, influencer marketing, live streaming commerce, loyalty program, online shopping experience

1. Introduction

In 2020, many small and medium enterprises (SMEs) were forced to go into online business to survive during the enforcement of the Movement Control Order (MCO). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, about 33.3% of SMEs could only maintain cash flow through March, and 37.8% could only do so through April (Theedgemarkets.com, 2020). As individuals got used to the new normal of working from home and shopping online, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) were among the most notable victims of the COVID-19 epidemic. This temporarily reduced demand and business volume for the business sector. As people adjusted to the new standards, businesses were considering shrinking wherever possible as a result of online initiatives and decreased business volume (Mustaffa Halabi et al., 2022). However, online shopping has continuously boosted the economy in Malaysia. Since the online business

kept growing in Malaysia, the entrepreneurs had to create strategies to attract and retain consumers to sustain in the market.

In addition, consumers prefer to shop online as compared to brick-and-mortar shops as online shopping provides more choices, is easy to compare, and has no geographic restraints. Many online businesses often provide discounts and promotions to attract more online customers. As MCO was implemented on the 18th of March 2020 in Malaysia, non-essential business and travel activities were ordered to suspend their businesses. Many physical SMEs were forced to close down their businesses as they could not survive when MCO extended.

2. Literature Review

Online Purchase Intention

Online purchase intention is defined as the extent to which a consumer is willing to purchase a product through an online platform (Pena-Garcia et al., 2020). This research describes the key factors that influence the post-pandemic online purchase intention of Generation Y and Z resulting from the pandemic in Malaysia. In the research by Ali et al. (2022), consumers' actual online purchases have been used as the dependent variable to study the online purchase intention of Generation Y in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Another research by Naseri et al. (2021) used online purchase intention as the dependent variable to study consumer attitudes towards online purchases.

Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing is a popular category of marketing. Influencer marketing involves celebrities or influencers who consider themselves famous online but not famous offline. De Veirman et al. (2019) defined an influencer as the person who has the power to influence the buying decisions of others due to his or her authority, knowledge, position, or connection with the followers. Influencers are not like celebrities, they can be anyone, whoever with a large number of followers on social media. They are the people who engage in social posting frequently on topics within their expertise like posting the best photos, and entertaining videos and running the most informative online discussions. Rahman et al. (2022) explained that customer engagement with the brand will increase with marketing from social media influencers, especially targeting the niche market. In new product promotion, influencer marketing has higher effectiveness compared to traditional marketing which covers three criteria, brand attitude, advertisement attitude, and purchase intention (Wu et al., 2021).

Relationship between Influencer Marketing and Online Purchase Intention

Based on the findings of previous research, influencer marketing does not significantly generate the online purchase intention of Generation Y and Z in Malaysia. Nonetheless, Khodabandeh and Lindh (2020), and Saima and Khan (2020) indicated that influencer marketing produced a significant influence on the purchase intention of the consumers. However, there is an article by Jarrar et al. (2020) that mentioned that influencer marketing is less effective compared to social media-sponsored advertising.

Thus, hypothesis 1 is formed.

H1: There is no relationship between influencer marketing and online purchase intention.

Live Streaming Commerce

As the pandemic of COVID-19 hit Malaysia in 2020, consumers in Malaysia started to shop online during the lockdown. Live streaming commerce in Taobao, Instagram, Facebook,

Shopee, and Amazon became a common sight and provided consumers with an entertaining shopping experience. To boost the number of viewers, influencers were invited to increase the consumer base and sales through live streaming (Agustian, Hidayat, Zen, Sekarini & Malik, 2023). Furthermore, Fu (2021) suggested that through live streaming, consumers' awareness and trust in the brand will improve.

Relationship between Live Streaming Commerce and Online Purchase Intention

The findings of previous research indicate that live-streaming commerce does not significantly influence the online purchase intention of Generation Y and Z in Malaysia. However, Min et al. (2019), Ong et al. (2021), and Chai and Wohn (2019) indicated that live-streaming commerce produced a significant influence on the purchase intention of consumers.

Thus, hypothesis 2 is formed.

H2: There is no relationship between live-streaming commerce and online purchase intention.

Loyalty Program

Customer loyalty is a continuous relationship between a brand and the customers, or the willingness of customers to engage with the brand and repeatedly buy from the same brand instead of the other brands. Abu-Alhaija et al. (2018) thought that it is important to understand customer loyalty and marketing researchers constantly created loyalty models to understand the development of customer loyalty. It is considered an intangible asset for companies. A loyalty program is a reward for customers who repurchase the products or services with the same brand and it is one of the most effective strategies to increase revenue and trigger customer loyalty. Furthermore, a good loyalty program maintains the existing customers (Khairawati, 2019). During the COVID-19 pandemic, consumers were sensitive to the price of products and services to reduce their expenditures. Loyal customers were willing to spend more money on the brand they trust compared to new customers.

Relationship between Loyalty Programs and Online Purchase Intention

Based on the findings of past research, the loyalty program has significantly influenced the online purchase intention of Generation Y and Z in Malaysia. This is further supported by Chin and Dastane (2021), Waari et al. (2018), and Lakshman and Faiz (2021) that loyalty programs have an impact on purchase intention. Moreover, a loyalty program provides incentives to customers. Hence, existing customers are more likely to repurchase with the same brand. This is because special discounts will be given only to loyal customers. In most of the loyalty programs, higher-tier customers will enjoy better benefits. This attracts customers to purchase more to attain the higher-tier status.

Thus, hypothesis 3 is formed.

H3: There is a relationship between loyalty programs and online purchase intention.

Online Shopping Experience

The online shopping experience involves interactions and feelings of the customers during the purchase within a brand through an online platform. It refers to customers' experience during their online shopping. It is easy to bring negative experiences while purchasing online as consumers tend to perceive higher risks to shopping online compared to physical shopping (Ariffin et al., 2018). On the other hand, online shopping brings the benefit of convenience. Consumers can shop a broad variety of brands around the world at the same time at anytime and anywhere to find the perfect products that fit them (Gielens & Steenkamp, 2019). As online shopping becomes convenient, many online retailers provide an attractive online shopping

experience. An increasing number of consumers are choosing to continue purchasing from online platforms instead of going physical shopping (Gielens & Steenkamp, 2019).

Relationship between Online Shopping Experience and Online Purchase Intention

Based on the findings of previous research, online purchase experience significantly influences the online purchase intention of Generation Y and Z in Malaysia. This is consistent with the results of previous research by Ariffin et al. (2018), Aziz and Wahid (2018), and Athapaththu and Kulathunga (2018) that focused on the effect of online shopping experience on purchase intention. As there is a risk in purchasing online, sellers have to ensure the product quality and consider the possible risks during the transportation of products. This is to maximize the satisfaction of customers in purchasing online. Timely customer service is an additional point to increase the online shopping experience. When the product presentation and description on the website are insufficient, customers will reach out to customer service. Quick response and positive interaction between customer service and customers increase the purchase intention of customers.

Hence, hypothesis 4 is formed.

H4: There is a relationship between online shopping experience and online purchase intention.

3. Theoretical Framework

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) was proposed by Fishbein and Icek Ajzen (1975). This theory defines consumer purchase behaviour and is designed using the basic assumption that consumers behave consciously and study all available information. There are two elements in the TRA model, which include the attitude towards behaviour and the subjective norm. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) was derived from the TRA. The actual attitude can be recognized through the TPB that results in the physical actions that are being carried out. TPB will have a more accurate understanding of the consumer’s behaviour with the addition of Perceived Behavioural Control that studies if the consumer believes that they have control over the action that they want to perform. Ulker-Demirel and Ciftci (2020) used the TPB model to study consumer’s behaviour and intention in the tourism, leisure, and hospitality management context. Besides, the theory is used in health care studies as well.

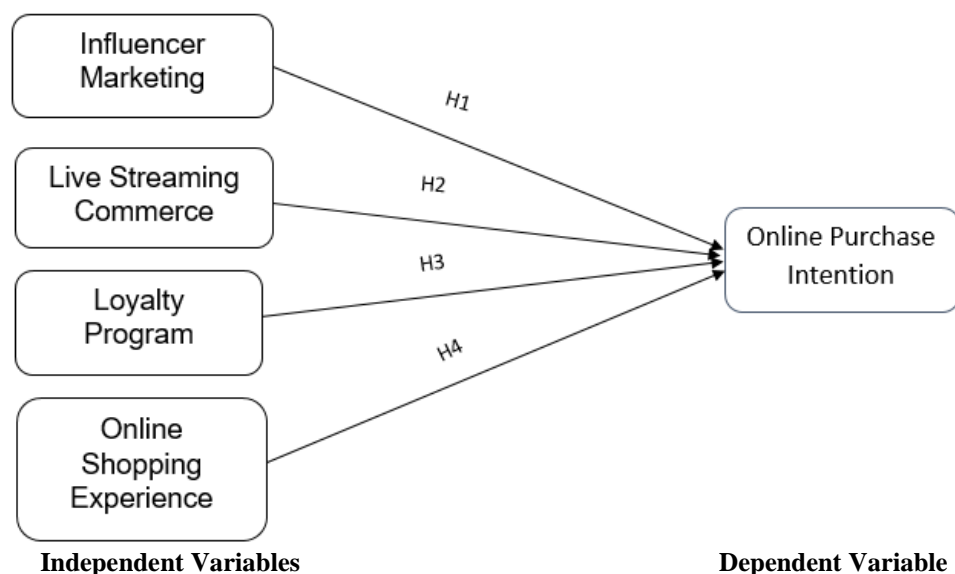


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework shown in Figure 1 above explains the concept of this research. The dependent variable of this study is online purchase intention, while the four independent variables are influencer marketing, live-streaming commerce, loyalty program, and online shopping experience.

4. Methods

Data will be gathered from a sample of Malaysian Generation Y and Z consumers who performed online shopping using a quantitative research design. As it studies the issue intending to identify which and to what extent variables are related, the study design would be hypothesis-testing research and cross-sectional (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). The survey questionnaire will be used to collect information on respondents' intentions to perform online shopping. E-commerce users in five (5) states which included Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Johor, Pulau Pinang and Perak in Malaysia form a sample size of 384 Generation Y and Z consumers (refer to Table 1).

Table 1: Number of E-Commerce Users by State in Malaysia

State in Malaysia	Number of E-Commerce Users
Selangor	2,220,000
Kuala Lumpur	648,000
Johor	984,000
Pulau Pinang	736,000
Perak	712,000
Total	5,300,000

Source: Selangor Journal (2019)

This research will use purposive sampling. Purposive sampling falls under non-probability sampling. There were researches done previously on purchase intention by using non-probability sampling method (Hussein, 2016; Arifani & Haryanto, 2018). In this research, the online survey questionnaire will be distributed to researcher's peers and family who fulfil the requirements. The respondents will help to distribute the online survey's link to their peers through their network like social media. As suggested by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), sample of 384 will be sufficient for population of 1,000,000 or more. In consideration of possible void response, non-completion and non-response error, 400 sets of survey questionnaires will be distributed. Equal number of questionnaire sets will be distributed among 5 states in Malaysia.

Table 2: The Origin of Construct in the Research

Types of Variables	Variable	Source	No. of Items Adapted and Adopted
Dependent Variable	Online Purchase Intention	1. Ventre & Kolbe (2020)	2
		2. Athapaththu & Kulathunga (2018)	3
Independent Variable 1	Influencer Marketing	1. Bogner, et al. (2019)	3
		2. Bruns (2018)	2
Independent Variable 2	Live Streaming Commerce	1. Song & Liu (2021)	3
		2. Chen et al. (2020)	2
Independent Variable 3	Loyalty Program	1. Omar et al. (2013)	4
		2. Pimpao et al. (2018)	1
Independent Variable 4	Online Shopping Experience	1. Liu et al. (2019)	3
		2. Barari et al. (2020)	2

Table 2 shows the items constructed for the survey questionnaire. This questionnaire consists of 3 sections which are Section A (7 questions) for demographic data, Section B (20 questions) for independent variables, and Section C (5 questions) for dependent variables. The questions in the questionnaire are adapted and adopted from Ventre and Kolbe (2020), Athapaththu and Kulathunga (2018), Bognar, et al. (2019), Bruns (2018), Chen et al. (2020), Omar et al. (2013), Pimpao et al. (2018), Liu et al. (2019), and Barari et al. (2020). Likert scale is used in Section B and Section C. Each variable in Sections B and C comprises five questions, and responders will be asked to rate each topic on a Likert scale (1-5). Strongly disagree to strongly agree to make up the scale. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used in this research to conduct validity and reliability tests. In addition, Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha was used to assess the data's dependability.

5. Results

Scale Measurement

Table 3: Reliability Test

Reliability Test Variables	Constructs	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Value (Pilot Test)	Cronbach's Alpha Value (Actual Test)
IV1	Influencer Marketing	5	0.899	0.720
IV2	Live Streaming Commerce	5	0.858	0.805
IV3	Loyalty Program	5	0.873	0.777
IV4	Online Shopping Experience	5	0.926	0.909
DV	Online Purchase Intention	5	0.932	0.929

Table 3 shows the comparison of the reliability test results between the pilot and the actual test. For pilot test, 30 sets of questionnaires were tested. Online Purchase Intention has the highest Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.932; followed by Online Shopping Experience, 0.926; Influencer Marketing, 0.899; Loyalty Program, 0.873; and Live Streaming Commerce, 0.858. For actual test, 384 sets of questionnaires are tested. Online Purchase Intention has the highest Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.929; followed by Online Shopping Experience, 0.909; Live Streaming Commerce, 0.805; Loyalty Program, 0.777; and Influencer Marketing, 0.720.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.697 ^a	.486	.481	.46203

a. Predictors: (Constant), Influencer Marketing, Live Streaming Commerce, Loyalty Program, Online Shopping Experience

6. Conclusion

This research aims to obtain a better understanding of the key factors that influence the post-pandemic online purchase intention of Generation Y and Z in Malaysia. As the COVID-19 pandemic started in March 2020, consumers were forced to stay at home. They started to shop online during the lockdown. As they found the benefits of purchasing online, they chose to continue this behaviour even after the lockdown was lifted. There were four variables in this study which included influencer marketing, live streaming commerce, loyalty program, and online shopping experience. Based on the findings, loyalty programs, and online shopping experience had a significant relationship with the online purchase intention. However, influencer marketing and live-streaming commerce do not have a significant relationship with online purchase intention. Throughout the study, the latest trends followed by the consumers

are examined. Researchers can use this study as a reference for their future studies and can understand on the attitude of online purchase intention of generation Y and Z in Malaysia.

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