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Aptitude Impact on Consumers Apparels Purchasing from Bricks-and-Mortar to Online Shopping during Endemic in Malaysia

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Abstract

This ongoing study is to determine the aptitude impact on consumers apparels purchasing from physical to online during endemic. The review of related literature and mapping with the data from survey was utilized. The outcome shared on how the Malaysian Generation Y and Generation Z consumers were preferred using the online rather than bricks-and-mortar. This study clearly defined that both generations was commonly adopted with the new method of online shopping. This issue was clearly supported based from the survey and supported by relevant studies, in order to strengthen the nature of the chosen and option of apparel purchase either online or brick-and-mortar.

Keywords: aptitude impact, consumer apparel purchasing, physical to online shopping, endemic

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1.0 Introduction

Shopping for clothes is a retail therapy among various generations, including Gen Y and Gen Z (Generation Y and Generation Z). The ability to choose, feel and spend within the financial plan provides personal's satisfaction for individuals. Specific aspects of consumer satisfaction matter depending on where the customer shop since it increases customer loyalty. The fashions that are being shown, whether they are on the runway or in stores, aim to meet consumer desire. However, the COVID-19 infectious disease pandemic that affected the entire world in 2020 had a significant impact on today's generations' shopping habits, which now involve both in-person and online purchasing. The circumstance has changed the buying habits of consumers in Malaysia, including members of Generation Y and Generation Z. They now live a lifestyle of online apparel shopping because the conventional way of buying has changed along with the rest of the world. This continuing study aims to ascertain how consumers' apparel purchases during an endemic will be impacted by their aptitude. Hence, this study was carried out to investigate the relationship between personal characteristics and the behavioural attitude of new generations in Malaysia toward revisiting their patronized clothing store in the endemic era. The following section will go into greater information about this investigation.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Shopping Behaviour Purchasing Power and Habits

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The numerous modifications brought about by COVID-19, notably in terms of consumer behaviour, have an impact on people's life. Consumers are obsessively buying items, both online and offline. In fact, some people have said that shopping can be therapeutic. But when it comes down to it, retail therapy is a misnomer (Health Essentials, 2021). On the other hand, COVID-19 has led to a major expansion in the buying habits of internet consumers. The increase in internet shoppers had a substantial impact on the earnings of numerous businesses. Malaysia appears to be the region's e-commerce leader. The fact that online shoppers increased by 47% between 2020 and 2021 is noteworthy. In fact, 88 % of Malaysia's overall population are now digital consumers, compared with the Southeast Asian (SEA) average of 78 %. Malaysia is also ahead of Indonesia, with 81 %, and Singapore, with 79 %. (Digital News Asia, 2021).

The circumstance has changed the purchasing habits of consumers in Malaysia, notably members of Generations Y and Z. Their conventional technique of buying clothing has been replaced with online shopping as a result of the global shift. (McKinsey & Company, 2021). With new consumer generations (Generation Y and Generation Z) actively engaging in the activities, the demand for eCommerce is increasing and evolving quickly. The popularity of online shopping among Malaysia's younger generations has not decreased as of 2022. People who belong to one of the age groups at the moment have similar interests, observations, social mores, and lifestyles, which influence their purchase behaviour and define them as consumers. According to a survey by Apparel Resources (2022), fashion buying is the most popular online activity in a year where retail sales increased by 20.9% in April 2022.

However, the rise of a new purchasing environment (online) among the younger generations has made ones wonder about the existence of the traditional method of shopping through bricks-and-mortar. When will it ever feel good to look at, handle, and observe the actual apparel from the same store that you frequently shop at? Are these tech-savvy consumers going to start making actual purchases instead of virtual ones? Do they still have the same purchasing power? A Property Hunter (2022) survey of Malaysians in general revealed that 52% of respondents thought traditional retail would eventually return to a normal state and 65% of them preferred to shop for clothing in-store as compared to online. Adyen Retail Report (2022) also revealed the outcome of a survey that after a prolonged period of limited access to bricks-and-mortar stores, consumers are willing to reaffirm their appreciation for shopping at bricks-and-mortar stores. The result described that 59% of customers enjoyed touching, feeling and trying products before buying while 61% of them would be more loyal to the brand if they could return online orders in-store. Therefore, this study was conducted to ascertain the relationship between personal characteristics and re-patronage behavioural of Malaysia's younger generations toward returning to a bricks-and-mortar store they had previously frequented during the endemic era.

2.1 Who are the Millennials: Definition and Related Issues

In Malaysia, e-commerce is set to grow in 2020 and will increase in the future. Millennials and Generation Y in Malaysia might not always agree on issues related to online shopping, but there is one area where they are completely in agreement: the direction that e-commerce will take in the nation. When asked whether they will spend more online in 2022, more than 2 in 3 (69%) of Generation Z and 3 in 4 (76%) Generation Y (Millennials) responded that indeed they would (Rejack, J, 2020).

When a comparison is made between generations, Generation Y (the Millennials) and Generation Z, in the years 2020 and 2021, purchasing online clothes appeared to be 1% higher among the Millennials (58%) than Gen Z (57%). The report from Vuleta (2022) also added that 76% of Millennials intended to buy online in the year 2020 compared to 69% of Generation Z. In the following year, a survey revealed a growing tendency in online purchasing among these generations, with 56% of them using social media sites for their shopping. The study also showed that 81% of Millennials and Generation Z used mobile apps to find products (Froehlich, 2022).

Millennials, also known as Generation Y or Gen Y, are a group of people who were born between the early 1980s and the late 1990s (Lohman, 2021). According to several researchers, Gen Y consumers are not responding to conventional marketing models. They think that Gen Y consumers' decision-making is more complex and that their behaviour is different (Lister, 2022). Their research indicates that social media is the best channel for marketing to the Gen Y consumer segment (Davidaviciene et al., 2019).

The Generation Z, often known as Gen Z, is the youngest generation, consisting of people born after 2001. (Iberdrola, 2020). They were affected by the global financial crisis, the economic recession, and other adverse tendencies that caused them to lose their youth (Andrew, 2021). Gen Zers are restrained, aware, and responsible, though. They are used to using high-tech and multimedia tools because they have never lived without the internet. They like imaginative play and are willing to undertake missions. They exhibit the lowest levels of brand and employer loyalty. Gen Z is characterized by three fundamental traits: gamified achievement, quick satisfaction, and open-minded societal values (Giray, 2022).

Individuals who fall into one of the current age groups share common interests, observations, norms, and lifestyles, which have an impact on their purchasing decisions and characterize them as consumers. Studying the distinctive traits of various age groups provides a strong foundation for entrepreneurs aiming to construct successful communication strategies and methods for brand development (Naumovska, 2017). By conducting this research, it is hoped that the needs and behavioural attitudes of the generations could be studied to interrelate the attitude between generations further. The detail for this study will elaborate more through the next segment.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Overview

More than 400 respondents from the generations (Generation Y and Generation Z) were given questionnaires for this qualitative research study, however only 209 of them answered the questions. The survey reached respondents who had recently graduated, were in their first year of employment, and belonged to middle-income groups. The survey was penetrated to respondents that experienced online buying, middle-income groups, just completed graduation and were students in the profession. A set of questionnaires was formed to understand

whether pleasure and effective qualities will influence them to look forward to purchasing apparel in a new dimension of shopping. Emphasis falls into these sorts of factors, price, convenience and health aspects.

3.2 Delimitation

Additionally, this study had some restrictions. First off, because Generation Y and Generation Z are a young and underrepresented group in society, the study's generalizability is constrained. Second, rather than using a convenient sampling approach, data from random sampling can produce alternative findings that explain customer purchasing behaviour. Thirdly, information has been gathered during the pandemic outbreak in Malaysia's Klang Valley, which may differ at normal times and in other countries.

This study clearly defined that both generations was commonly adopted with the new method of online shopping. The detail for this study will elaborate more through the next segment.

4.0 Analysis, discussion and findings

The results of the analysis based on the questionnaire were described in this discussion. In this section, the questionnaire from 209 respondents was used to get the results. Statistical Package for The Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 23 For Windows, was used to examine the data.

The results of this study support that perceived enjoyment and utilitarian attributes (price, convenience, and health aspects) positively affect online buying attitudes along with the relationship between personal characteristics and their re-patronage behaviour. Generations Y and Z have a favourable attitude toward this platform because they believe the features and activities of online purchases to be extremely simple and uncomplicated.

Table 1: Relationship between personal characteristics and re patronage behavioural intention

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Less Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Standard Deviation
I believe in "touch and feel" the apparel before purchase process happen.	1 (0.5%)	9 (4.3%)	38 (18.2%)	63 (30.1%)	98 (46.9%)	4.186	0.913
I love to purchase apparel in a shopping mall, where emotions are irreplaceable in the digital world.	2 (1%)	9 (4.3%)	46 (22%)	75 (35.9%)	77 (36.8%)	4.033	0.921
My choices of apparel are currently being improved either through online or offline purchase.	1 (0.5%)	2 (1%)	54 (25.8%)	86 (41.1%)	66 (31.6%)	4.023	0.811
I will browse related website and do window shopping before I purchase any apparel.	4 (1.9%)	17 (8.1%)	43 (20.6%)	73 (34.9%)	72 (34.4%)	3.918	1.022
The choices of apparel either through online or offline must suit with the apparel values, brand, and comfort.	0 (0%)	3 (1.4%)	32 (15.3%)	81 (38.8%)	93 (44.5%)	4.263	0.767
I still believe apparel shopping is a rewarding and relaxing activity, either through online or offline	1 (0.5%)	3 (1.4%)	30 (14.4%)	74 (35.4%)	101 (48.3%)	4.296	0.801
Overall						41.2	0.596

Table 1 represents the classification of the relationship between personal characteristics and re-patronage behavioural intention. As shown in the table, a substantial majority of the respondents strongly agree that "I still believe apparel shopping is a rewarding and relaxing activity, either online or offline" (48.3%). This was followed by "I believe in "touch and feel" the apparel before the purchase process happens" (46.9%) and "The choices of apparel either online or offline must suit with the apparel values, brand, and comfort" (44.5%). Besides that, respondents also choose to agree that "My choices of apparel are currently being improved either through online or offline purchase" (41.1%). As seen in Table 1, the respondents reacted to the relationship between personal characteristics and re-patronage behavioural intention. Next, the highest mean showed the respondents agree about "I still believe apparel shopping is a rewarding and relaxing activity, either online or offline" (with a mean of 4.296, SD=0.801). Meanwhile, the lowest mean showed the respondent less agree about "My choices of apparel are currently being improved either through online or offline purchase" (with a mean of 3.918, SD=1.022). The overall mean relationship between personal characteristics and re-patronage behavioural intention is 41.2, and the standard deviation is 0.596. Generally, these show that the respondents agree about the relationship between personal characteristics and re-patronage behavioural intention.

The classification of the association between personal characteristics and re-patronage behavioural intention is based on the results of the survey. The Generation Y (Millennials) and Generation Z are using social platforms to buy more frequently because they find the features and processes of online purchases to be very simple and easy, which results in a favourable attitude toward this platform. A large majority of the respondents (48.3%) has strongly agreed that apparel shopping is a rewarding and relaxing activity, either online or offline. Some Generation Y and Generation Z like to do online shopping because it allows them to look for information about the product or service available in different websites or different brands. There are (46.9%) of Generation Y and Generation Z who believed in "touch and feel" the apparel before they made their apparel purchase. Some shoppers prefer to buy for apparel in bricks-and-mortar store rather than online due to the desire for touching and feeling, and they also prefer to conduct traditional research as opposed to online research. Despite these obstacles, technology advancements have altered how consumers consume goods and services, look for information, and buy, leading to an increase in online purchases and the likelihood of online purchasing.

The respondents' choices of apparel either online or offline must suit the apparel values, brand and comfort (44.5%). The findings indicated that among Generation Y and Generation Z consumers in Malaysia, the need for activity, impulsivity, shopping confidence, susceptibility to interpersonal influence, utilitarian and hedonic shopping orientations are significant predictors of clothing interest, and price consciousness moderated the relationship between their clothing interests and purchase intention. As a result, consumers can compare features or price ranges to make the best decision. Online shoppers will have the opportunity to browse other consumer reviews of the products before making a choice. Consumer reviews cannot be found when buying in a brick-and-mortar store traditionally. This is one of the online shopping benefits to consumers. The respondents also choose to agree about their choices of apparel are currently being improved either through online or offline purchases (41.1%).

In general, these show that the respondents agree about the relationship between personal characteristics and re-patronage behavioural intention. The outcome also shared on how the Malaysian Generation Y and Generation Z consumers were preferred using the online rather than bricks-and-mortar.

5.0 Conclusion

This issue was clearly supported based from the survey and supported by relevant studies, in order to strengthen the nature of the chosen and option of apparel purchase either online or brick-and-mortar. It has been demonstrated that individuals value price and convenience more than a wider number of options. The emergence of online retailing has become the means for consumer satisfaction derived from the closing of stationary retail stores during the pandemic.

Despite the fact that Malaysia's overall online shopping figures are on the rise, a few obstacles still stand in the way of online shopping, particularly for members of Generations Y and Z. In general, the online shopping strategy necessitates prospective buyers to assess their available options for products, in contrast to the traditional technique of purchasing, when consumers explore their possibilities through personal interaction. This could be done without any actual physical contact or reference by using visual photos and reviews from websites on the internet. Some shoppers think that "touch and feel" and bricks-and-mortar stores are crucial for experiencing the products (Skrovan, 2017). In the realm of digital media, emotion is irreplaceable.

As a result, the rapid expansion of e-retailing could be a reflection of the undeniable benefits of online purchasing over traditional brick-and-mortar shopping, as well as the ways in which technical tools and modes of operation improve consumers' daily lives. The choice of the best method to buy apparel, however, is ultimately made by the consumers themselves. The opportunity to check on fit, texture, or colour is possible due to the recent arrival of digital technology as well as changes in clothes retails and trends. Unquestionably, people who currently buy in brick-and-mortar stores will also do so in the future when facial recognition technology improves the experience as they enter and sends photographs through Internet of Things (IoT) devices. In hope, their experience becomes part of the future vision in consumers' retail shopping.

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