

Attitude towards Online Shopping Activities in Malaysia Public University

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine the level of attitude towards online shopping activities among undergraduate and postgraduate students in Malaysian public university. By applying a quantitative survey approach, a total of 800 questionnaires were distributed to the students by handing them out, subsequently 662 questionnaires were usable for analysis. Systematic sampling technique was applied in this research and the measurement instruments are adapted from several resources that high in internal consistency. The final response rate was 83% and data was then analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0. By referring to the mean score, this research recommended the overall score for attitude was of moderate level. Future study was suggested to include also other variables and different sample frame could be inserted for further investigation. Finally, the current study could provide an informative idea to the country, business as well as the consumers for the potential to perform online shopping.

Keywords: Attitude; online shopping; public university; Malaysia

1. Introduction

In this globalization era, e-commerce has potential growth in recent year and thus many successful retailers are seeking for global penetration and expansion especially through e-commerce. It was due to e-commerce is the easier and faster ways to expand business in the low cost manner. It also provides opportunities for global retailers to build their brands and learn about the consumers in other countries before expanding their business or investing a company or store in particular countries.

In order to promote Internet usage, government has setup 1Malaysia Internet Centre, mini community broadband Centre, 1Malaysia Community Broadband Library and 1Malaysia Wireless Village both in the West and East Malaysia (Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, 2013). From this evidence, it showed that the government's aims to increase the use of internet among the citizens to improve the literacy rates while indirectly boost the online shopping activities in Malaysia. Malaysia itself has achieved rapid development in the adoption of broadband services within a short time period with the household broadband penetration rate of 11 percent in 2006 to 31.7 percent in 2009 surpassing the target of 50 percent penetration rate set in 2010 (MCMC, 2012). The increment in the broadband usage among the Malaysia citizen to some extent could exaggerate online shopping sales. Malaysia ranked top 30th of the 2013 Global Retail E-Commerce Index among other countries with the online market attractiveness score of 36.8 point of the overall online market size, consumer behavior, growth potential and infrastructure (Hana, Mike & Parvaneh 2013). This satisfactory index could be due to the government efforts to promote e-commerce among Malaysia citizens.

However, Wong (2014) found that there are 87 percent of the online stores are operated by one to five full timers while the remaining 13 percent of the online store are operated by six to thirty full timers. Furthermore, there are 68 percent of the online retailers earned less than RM10000 a month while only 18 percent of the online retailers made profits more than RM50000 a month. It showed that most of the online stores in Malaysia are relative small setup and lack in profit earning. Yet, from this evidence, Malaysia citizens are moving towards adopting internet shopping as one of the shopping channel to substitute the traditional shopping in some way while craving for some gratification through

online shopping. A survey conducted by Soasta (2013) indicated that two-third of the parents are going to purchase their children's back to school supplier from computer, Smartphone and tablet rather than to endure stress from shopping in physical store. These findings showed that Malaysia has potential growth in e-commerce and therefore it is important to understand the online shopping trends and new technology challenges.

Thus, this study is to explore if the consumers are willing to embrace online shopping as their shopping channels which have been proven as fast, convenient, and trendsetting platform. The current research is vital to examine the perception or awareness level of the consumers towards online shopping activities especially in Malaysia, Meanwhile, it provides an useful information to the local business both the retailers who currently operate brick-and-mortar or brick-and-click store the possibility to invest money on this virtual platform while contribute to country's socio-economic development. Aiming on the same threshold, the findings are significant to the international business to startup the online business or penetrate to Malaysia. Due to these reasons, it is important to study on the potential or existing customers their level of attitude towards online shopping activities that could be seen extensively promoted and advertised through various channels from social networking (facebook and twitter) to social media (television and newspaper).

2. Literature Review

E-commerce is no more a strange word to any developed countries and some profound studies have been proven that e-commerce was constantly grown up in developing countries. In a related study by Hana, Mike and Parvaneh (2012) showed that expansion of online business into developing countries is the best choice since there are potential growth in developing countries rather to keep on high expectancy to the developed countries that are growing stably and facing revenue plateau. Another study by the same authors in 2013 developing country such as China with the highest online market attractiveness score of 84.0 and ranked top of the 2013 global retail e-commerce index compared to developed countries such as Japan (83.3), United States (82.8), United Kingdom (75.7), South Korea (72.2), Germany (70.4) and France (65.2). In Malaysia, online shopping is also gaining its attention as have been stated by Masaya Ueno, the president and chief executive officer of Rakuten Online Shopping Malaysia (The Star, 2014, March 29).

A definition by Wu, Lee, Fu and Wang (2014) stated that attitude as a psychological inclination which expressed by accessing a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor and it is built through affective, cognitive and behavioral appraisal. Attitude is the positive or negative cognitive evaluation, emotional feeling and behavioral tendency held by customers during transaction (Lai & Wang, 2012; Perner, 2008). It will influence customers' judgment and evaluation during transaction and it would affect the perception towards one retailer (Lai & Wang, 2012).

According to Boundless (2011), attitude is a psychological variable that is known to influence the purchase decision process of consumers which can be measured by their facial expressions, vocal changes and other body gestures. Any change to the consumers' facial expressions, vocal changes or body gestures will show their perception towards certain online store or online business (Boundless, 2011). Furthermore, consumer's attitude also can be measured by the level of satisfaction of the consumers and trends (Hidayanto, Saifulhaq & Handayani, 2012). Hsu, Lin and Chiang (2013) defined attitude as the extent of a blog reader's positive perception about online purchase. Based on the definitions given, it is important to raise the consumers' interest and increase customer satisfaction to change customers' attitude towards internet shopping.

There are several researches on attitudes from developing countries focused on retailing (Li, Robson & Coates, 2013), family takaful scheme (Husin & Rahman, 2013), dietary supplement (Noor, Yap, Liew, & Rajah, 2014), complaint (Zhao & Othman, 2011) and education (Chen & Zimitat, 2006), digital piracy of movie (Phau, Lim, Liang & Lwin, 2013), store brand (Diallo, Chandon, Cliquet, & Philippe, 2013) and mobile phone (Petruzzellis, 2010). In Malaysia, Husin and Rahman (2013) suggested that attitude is positively influence intention to participate in family takaful scheme. Noor *et al.* (2014) also suggested that attitude is positively influence on the consumption of dietary supplements while Zhao and Othman (2011) also found that consumers with more favorable attitude towards complaining will be more likely to have complaint intention. From the previous findings, attitude is crucial to determine one's decision to perform certain behavior particularly in Malaysia.

In the online shopping context, attitude is also significant to determine the development and trend of online shopping. This statement was supported by Yulihhasri, Aminul and Ku Amir (2011) which conducted in Malaysia that attitude is the most significant variables that influence university students' intention to shop online. Besides that, the finding by Jamil & Mat (2011) indicated that positive attitude towards online purchase intention would precede actual internet shopping. It is supported by Taylor and Todd (1995) that once a person has a positive attitude towards online shopping; that particular person will possess a stronger behavioral inclination. On the contrary, consumers with negative attitude will result in less favorable to purchase through the website (Limbu, Wolf & Lunsford, 2012). To the authors'

knowledge, attitude is one of the important determinants to influence certain behavior that have been proven empirically in Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB).

3. Research Methodology

This proposed research method involved a survey of undergraduate students and postgraduate students to examine the level of attitude toward online shopping activities. Quantitative research will be conducted by distribute questionnaires asking the attitude and perception of university students towards online shopping activities since the quantitative survey is very useful to investigate the social phenomenon either using statistical, mathematical or computational techniques (Laura & Leahey, 2008). The close-ended questionnaires were distributed to internet users both experienced and no experienced online shoppers by handing them out.

This research adopts probability sampling using systematic sampling method since the respondents will be picked every fifth subject from each state. According to Daniel (2012), systematic sampling method is a probability sampling process in which sample will be randomly chosen for the first element and followed by select a fixed or systematic interval until the needed sample size is met. Most of the research proposed university students as the target respondents According to a study by Hidayanto *et al.* (2012), most of the internet users came from the age group between 20 and 25 that contributed to large proportion (66.3 percent) among other age group. This finding was in tandem with a study by Kotler (2011) that the young generation was the population that frequently performs internet shopping. From the evidences, university students are the most suitable candidates to investigate on their perception and impression towards online shopping activities. Therefore, university students from Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP) that aged between 18 and 34 are selected as respondents in Malaysia. According to Marketing Charts (2012), 48 percent of consumers aged between 18 and 34 prefer to shop online compared to 44 percent of the consumers aged 35 to 49 and 29 percent of the 50 to 64 years consumers will shop online.

A 7-point Likert-type scale score 1-Strongly Disagree to 7-Strongly Agree will be used for all questions. A related study by Losby and Wetmore (2012) proposed that this scale is commonly utilized in social science research. The Cronbach Alpha of attitude for this scale is 0.9 and this variable implied excellent internal consistency. A total of 800 questionnaires were distributed to the university students. The sample size is different for each state based on the statistics data that obtained from UniMAP Registrar Department and UniMAP Centre of Graduate Studies. Finally, the data obtained were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0.

Table 1 demonstrated the statistics data of students from UniMAP according to the state;

Table 1. Statistics Data of Students from Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP)

No	States	Number of Students (approximately)	Students Percentages (%)	Sample size	Exact Number of questionnaires
1	Johor	483	9	29	60
2	Kedah	999	16	59	80
3	Kelantan	582	10	35	50
4	Melaka	122	2	7	30
5	Negeri Sembilan	175	3	10	35
6	Pahang	251	4	15	40
7	Perak	801	13	47	70
8	Perlis	308	5	18	50
9	Penang	700	11	42	70
10	Selangor	943	15	56	180
11	Terengganu	326	5	19	50
12	Sabah	230	4	14	50
13	Sarawak	169	3	10	35
	Total	6089	100	361	800

Sources: UniMAP Registrar Department and UniMAP Centre of Graduate Studies

4. Findings and Discussion

Based on the sources of UniMAP Registrar Department and UniMAP Centre of Graduate Studies, the total number of students consisted of about 6000 and the appropriate sample size required for the total population of 6000 people was at least 361 for the margin error of 5 percent (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran, 2001). Therefore, a self-administered questionnaire was distributed to the total of 800 respondents to avoid incomplete data and missing responses from the respondents. After two weeks of data collection by hand with the total 800 questionnaires distributed, 662 (83 percent) were returned and 138 (17 percent) were unreturned or incomplete questionnaires. Table 2 showed the summary of questionnaires distributed at UniMAP;

Table 2. Summary of Questionnaires Distributed

	Total	Percent (%)
Distributed questionnaires	800	100
Collected questionnaires	662	83
Unreturned/incomplete questionnaires	138	17

Table 3 illustrated the demographic profiles of the respondents including gender, education level, states, number of internet experience, number of online shopping experience and frequency of online shopping.

Table 3. Respondent Demographic Characteristic

Variables	Category	Fequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	-Male	156	23.6
	-Female	506	76.4
Education	-Bachelor degree	632	95.5
	-Master's degree	18	2.7
	-Doctoral level	12	1.8
States	-Johor	68	10.3
	-Melaka	24	3.6
	-Perak	60	9.1
	-Selangor	160	24.2
	-Sabah	50	7.6
	-Kedah	50	7.6
	-Negeri Sembilan	30	4.5
	-Perlis	26	3.9
	-Terengganu	24	3.6
	-Sarawak	43	6.5
	-Kelantan	51	7.7
Number of internet experience	-Pahang	30	4.5
	-Penang	46	6.9
	< 1 year	22	3.3
	1 – 3 years	117	17.7
	4 – 6 years	210	31.7
Number of online shopping experience	> 6 years	313	47.3
	0 times	135	20.4
	1 – 5 times	344	52.0
	6 – 10 times	61	9.2
Frequency of online shopping	> 10 times	122	18.4
	-Weekly	9	1.4
	-Monthly	94	14.2
	-Quarterly	128	19.3
	-Semiannually	118	17.8
	-Annually	178	26.9
	-None	135	20.4

Results from the demographic section were demonstrated in frequency and percentage number to illustrate demographical data. In this study, a higher distribution of gender was female (506), representing 76.4 percent was higher than male respondents (156), representing 23.6 percent. In term of educational level, majority of the respondents were from bachelor degree representing 95.5 percent of the total sample and doctoral level with the lowest respondent rates that accounted for 1.8 percent. In term of states, most of the respondents came from Selangor which account for 24.2 percent and Terengganu with the lower respondent rates of 3.6 percent of the total sample.

From the table, it indicated that among the 662 respondents, 47.3 percent of them were using internet more than 6 years, 31.7 percent had 4 to 6 years internet experience, 17.7 percent had 1 to 3 years internet experience and only 3.3 percent of the respondents that were using internet less than 1 year. In term of online shopping experience, majority of the respondents purchased from the electronic platform 1 to 5 times, representing 52 percent of the total sample and the second higher response rates of 20.4 percent belonged to the respondents without any online shopping experience. There were 178 respondents (26.9 percent) had purchased online annually, 128 respondents (19.3 percent) had purchased online quarterly, 118 respondents (17.8 percent) had purchased online semiannually, 94 respondents (14.2 percent) had purchased online monthly and 9 respondents (1.4 percent) had purchased online weekly.

Table 4. Descriptive Finding for Attitude

Variables / Items	Mean	SD	Level
- The idea of using Internet to buy a product or service is appealing.	4.31	1.45	Moderate
- I feel that it takes less time in evaluating and selecting a product while shopping online.	4.23	1.64	Moderate
- I can purchase the product anytime 24 hours a day while shopping online.	4.66	1.77	Moderate
- It is easy to choose and make comparison with other products while shopping online.	4.38	1.66	Moderate
- I get on time delivery by shopping online.	4.14	1.63	Moderate
- I like to shop through Internet.	4.00	1.73	Moderate
- Online shopping is a good idea.	4.69	1.60	Moderate
- Online shopping is a wise idea.	4.19	1.64	Moderate
- I think positively toward shopping online.	4.51	1.47	Moderate

Table 4 indicated the mean score and standard deviation of attitude toward online shopping. The instruments used for this study were adapted from Heijden, Verhagen and Creemers (2003), Hsu, Lin and Chiang (2012), Limayem, Khalifa and Frini (2000) and Sultan and Uddin (2011) to measure attitude towards online shopping activities. Since the measurement items used for these variables were 7-point Likert scale, thus, interpretation of mean score was categorized into low, moderate and high. Subsequently, the mean scores of 1 to 2.99 was treated as low, mean score of between 3.00 to 4.99 was treated as moderate and the mean score between 5.00 to 7.00 was treated as high (Lopes, 2012). Hence, based on the findings, all nine items that scored between 3.00 and 4.99 indicated a moderate level. The results showed that the respondents (undergraduate and postgraduate students) held a neutral perception towards online shopping activities. Item that achieved highest mean score (4.69) for attitude was "Online shopping is a good idea." while the lowest mean score (4.00) indicated "I like to shop through Internet."

Based on the analysis, the standard deviation for all measurement instruments fell between the range of 1.45 and 1.77 reflect that the existence of considerably acceptable variability within the data set. The results demonstrated that the studied variable had different responses from the respondents, thus implied the existence of acceptable changes in responses.

5. Concluding Remarks

The results obtained demonstrated that the students have shown moderate level of attitude toward online shopping activities in the public university. In other words, university students are moving towards adopting online shopping as the shopping platform when they think positively on performing online purchases. The researchers look forward to provide Malaysia government, retailers both operated online business and traditional business as well as the consumers that consisted of university students some informative findings concerning online shopping. This research hopes to assist this group of people obtains some positive outcomes from online shopping while contributes to country's socio-economic. The findings can contribute some useful literature on attitude particularly in the context of undergraduate and postgraduate students in Malaysian public universities. Since the current study focused on one specific university, it would be interesting if future research could conduct research on other universities in Malaysia and included also working adults into the future study. Other factors such as website design or features, web advertising, promotions and brand could be

added for future research to provide comprehensive and extensive explanation on online shopping activities.

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