

## e-Shopping Behavior: An Empirical Study of Malaysian Consumers

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**Abstract:** Malaysia's e-commerce industry has grown tremendously, and many activities have been made online. One of the most common activities is online shopping or e-shopping. Online shopping behavior is the actions and decisions of customers when making purchases and completing transactions through Internet-based platforms. Consumer preference for online shopping is because it offers ease of buying or convenience, time-saving, price sensitive, anywhere-anytime, cost-effective, and other categories availability. Thus, this study investigated a few factors that affect Malaysian consumers' online purchase behavior: information availability, social influence, and trust. The researcher used an online survey and a self-administered questionnaire to gather data on the phenomenon. Data were collected from 297 Malaysian respondents using convenience sampling and analyzed using IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 26.0 version software. The results revealed that all independent variables (information availability, social influence, trust) had a significant positive relationship with the dependent variable (online shopping behavior). This study also proved that information availability was the most influential factor compared to other variables. It is hoped that this study will benefit Malaysian marketers as it focuses on the Malaysian context. This finding will also help e-retailers enhance their online sales by creating a strategy that could attract more customers as a concern for building profitable relationships.

**Keywords:** *Online shopping, information availability, social influence, trust, Malaysian consumers*

### 1. Introduction

Malaysia's pandemic reveals a desire to adapt to the changing behavior of the digital platform at a rapid rate. Individuals' lifestyles have shifted from traditional to digital ways of doing things, and life would be impossible without the internet, which people previously used to share information. Commonly, people buy goods or services from e-commerce platforms as it is comfortable to buy the needed goods as it is time-consuming, less traffic jams, and energy saving.

E-shopping, known as online shopping, refers to buying and selling goods over the Internet or e-commerce. E-commerce allows customers to find all their desired items in one place. Thus, customers can select from a wide range of goods and services when buying online. Based on the data provided by Malaysia eCommerce Statistics and Trends in 2024 (commissionfactory.com), Malaysia gained 362,000 new digital consumers between 2022 and 2023. Amongst all the internet users, 9 out of 10 are currently digital consumers and 61.3% of Malaysian internet users buy at least one product or service online every week.

Nathan et al. (2021) mentioned that Lazada, one of the online shopping platforms that attract Malaysian consumers, has experienced an increase of 80% in orders placed compared to the pre-pandemic. Meanwhile, in 2023, a survey made on online consumer behavior in Malaysia shows that fashion remains the top category of items purchased by the respondents. The second most popular is groceries, with 38 percent of respondents mentioning that they bought groceries on e-commerce platforms (Statista Research Department, 2024).

### Problem statement

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, consumers have shifted to online stores to purchase products and services. They spend more time at home, leading them to buy items online (Ismail et al., 2020). This is supported by Naseri (2021), who stated that 80 percent of Malaysians purchased online during the pandemic.

Most of the stores post their unique products and services on digital platforms, thus attracting customers to buy. However, some people have doubts about making buying decisions as they cannot see and touch the goods directly. Thus, personal experience is important in influencing the purchase that products and to minimize

potential loss, they just try to buy cheaper of them. This situation makes traditional shopping still popular among customers and online shopping is perceived negatively (Junhan, 2023). Besides, the study by Daroch et al. (2021) mentioned that buyers were in favor of traditional shopping as the information about products stated in online stores is not satisfactory for them in making purchase decisions.

A similar situation goes for social influence in which some consumers seem not affected by social conditions around them. Tarhini et al. (2018) found that consumers are more likely to depend on themselves rather than others in deciding to use or reject a new system.

Despite so many advantages, using e-shopping generally requires customers to disclose their personal information. Nevertheless, some customers are reluctant to reveal their personal data on targeted websites as it is confidential, worried it will be misused by any parties. Referring to online shopping, Daroch et al. (2021) found that the transaction between buyer and seller does not involve face-to-face interaction, which makes it non-socialized, hence the buyer is sometimes unable to develop trust. Some customers may feel that online shopping is risky and not trustworthy. In 2020, in line with technological advancement, most customers shifted their traditional shopping behavior virtually, unfortunately, it was reported that fraud cases in online shopping reached nearly 70% (Hoh, 2020).

Thus, this study aimed to explore the factors affecting online shopping behavior among Malaysian consumers. And identify the most important factor that influences online shopping behavior among Malaysian consumers.

## 2. Literature Review

### Online Shopping

Wong et al. (2024) define online shopping behavior as the actions and decisions of customers when making purchases and completing transactions through internet-based platforms. This behavior is shaped by various factors, including convenience, accessibility to information, pricing, product variety, and the ability to compare options.

Waqas and Wu (2023) reviewed 30 research studies published between 2020 and 2022 in databases "Scopus and Web of Science" associated with the benefits and challenges of online shopping from the perspective of customers during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study revealed that the factors of time-saving, convenience, accessibility, interactive services without physical boundaries, trust, website attractiveness and cost-saving motivated customers to shop online during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, financial scams, privacy concerns, poor quality of products and services, fraud promotions and decreased social interaction were challenging factors that hindered the development of online shopping.

Regitha et al. (2021) found that brand loyalty, visual merchandising, decision factors, product attributes, and discounts can affect user's e-shopping behavior. This study was done on Shopee users among students of International Business Administration (IBA) in Unsrat, Indonesia regarding their actions on online shopping.

### Relationship between information availability and online shopping behavior

A study by Al Hamli & Sobaih (2023) focused on the importance of information availability on websites. The respondents of this study were 3,544 do-it-yourself (DIY) online shoppers from the United Kingdom (UK). A scenario-based experiment was conducted in which a few criteria were tested in the study, and the effect of each criterion on consumers' pattern shopping behavior was investigated. Findings show that product information on websites plays a major role in the consumer buying process. Lack of information is associated with service failures. Insufficient or misleading information will have negative effects on consumer shopping behavior.

Gulfranz et al. (2022) analyzed the factor of functional and psychological dimensions that influence online impulsive buying within e-commerce platforms. 1489 customers of two leading Chinese e-commerce platforms: Jindong and Taobao, were the respondents and answered the questionnaire through an online survey website. The study found that if the e-commerce platform provides satisfactory information in an easily accessible

manner, then consumer purchasing decisions can be made. Thus, a good image is developed and a long-term relationship is built between the customers and the platforms.

Novialeta and Slamet (2021) investigated the relationship between information availability and online shopping behavior. The type of research was descriptive using quantitative data. The data were collected from 200 respondents who use online shopping, from Batam, Indonesia, using convenience sampling. The result showed that information availability had a negative relationship with online shopping behavior among online shoppers from Batam. Thus, the availability of the information supplied by online sellers does not influence consumers to buy online.

**Table 1: Summary of Literature of Information Availability on Online Shopping Behavior**

Author (s) & Year	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Finding
Al Hamli & Sobaih (2023)	Online shopping	Information availability	Product information is associated with online shopping
Gulfraz et al. (2022)	Online shopping	Information availability	Availability of information influences consumers' buying behavior
Novialeta and Slamet (2021)	Online shopping	Information availability	Information availability has a negative relationship with online shopping behavior.

**Relationship between social influence and online shopping behavior**

The impact of trust, perceived reliability, social influence, and peer recommendation are factors that influence buying behavior towards online shopping in a study by Vaibhav et al. (2024). Purposive sampling methods were used in collecting the data from five districts of Haryana, namely Rohtak, Jind, Hisar, Mahendragarh, and Gurgaon. This study found that social influence has a significant positive relationship with buying decisions. This means that external factors like social networks, media and opinions from peers influence consumers in making online purchase decisions.

Furthermore, Gusti et al. (2023) examined how social media such as live streaming, promotional tools, online reviews and celebrity endorsement impact online shopping behaviors. Thus, 543 Gen Z consumers in Indonesia who are familiar with social media and online shopping were chosen as respondents of this study. This study used purposive sampling and Structure Equation Modeling (SEM) was applied to assess the data. The result shows that customers' online review has a significant positive influence on online shopping behavior. It is indicated that potential customers tend to gain more confidence in making the purchase decision when a product receives higher reviews.

Davis et al. (2021) investigated the relationship between social influence and online purchasing behavior. The information was gathered from 556 respondents in Hyderabad, Chennai, and Bangalore. The result showed that social influence had a positive relationship with online shopping behavior in Hyderabad, Chennai, and Bangalore. Moreover, the researchers posit that people tend to interact through social groups, which motivates others to shop online.

**Table 2: Summary of Literature of Social Influence on Online Shopping Behavior.**

Author (s) & Year	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Finding
Vaibhav et al. (2024)	Online shopping	Social influence	Social influence is associated with consumers' purchase decisions
Gusti et al. (2023)	Online shopping	Social influence	Reviewing social media influences consumers' purchase behavior
Davis et al. (2021)	Online shopping	Social influence	Interaction among people in social groups influences consumers to shop online.

**Relationship between trust and online shopping behavior**

Al Hamli & Sobaih (2023) investigated the factors of product variety, convenience, payment method, trust, and psychological affecting online shopping amid COVID-19 in Saudi Arabia. 220 online shoppers were respondents who fulfilled a set of questionnaires in this study. The finding reveals that trust has no significant positive relationship and has a low correlation with consumers’ decisions in e-commerce shopping. Sharing sensitive information such as credit cards and buyers’ data may lead to fraud, which should be disclosed. Nowadays by using highly sophisticated technology, it is easier for hackers and cybercriminals to hack consumers’ data, posing threats in the modern digital world.

Sima and Hayani (2021) identified the relationship between trust and consumers’ buying behavior in online shopping in Malaysia. Social media networks such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Telegram, and Instagram were the platforms used to distribute the questionnaires randomly to the 335 respondents. The result showed that trust had a positive relationship with consumers’ buying behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic in Malaysia. Additionally, the researchers reveal that a person who trusts an online shopping platform is more likely to shop online than a person who has doubts.

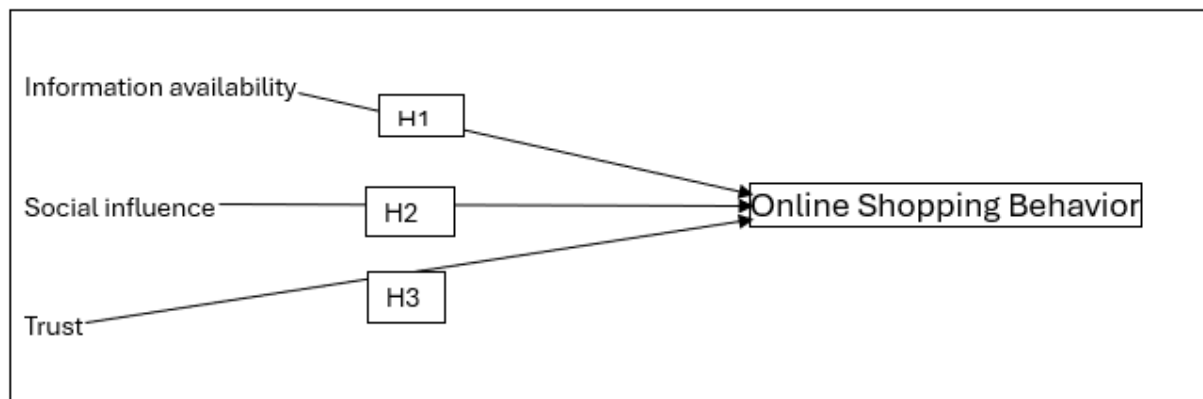
Ru et al. (2021) studied the relationship between trust and online shopping behavior on e-commerce exchanges during the COVID-19 pandemic. The data were collected from 203 participants, including students, housewives, and freelance businessmen from Da Nang, Vietnam using a convenience sampling technique. According to the study, during the COVID-19 pandemic, e-commerce exchanges were influenced by trust. Customers expect better service and security from e-commerce platforms. Many people are afraid to shop online because e-commerce platforms do not adequately protect their privacy, trust, and confidence. Due to this, protecting consumers’ privacy and security is always a necessity.

**Table 3: Summary of Literature of Trust on Online Shopping Behavior.**

<b>Author (s) &amp; Year</b>	<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>Independent Variable</b>	<b>Finding</b>
Al Hamli & Sobaih (2023)	Online shopping	Trust	Trust has no significant positive relationship and has a low correlation with consumers’ decisions in e-commerce shopping.
Sima and Hayani (2021)	Online shopping	Trust	Trust in online shopping platforms makes a person more likely to shop online compared to a person with doubts.
Tan et al. (2021)	Online shopping	Trust	Trust influences consumers to shop online

From the studies above, the following framework was formed.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**



- H1:** Information availability has a significant relationship with customer’s online shopping behavior.
- H2:** Social influence has a significant relationship with customer’s online shopping behavior.
- H3:** Trust has a significant relationship with customer’s online shopping behavior.

### 3. Methodology

#### Population and Sampling Technique

Consumers in Malaysia who make online purchases were selected as the population of this study. Hulland et al. (2017), recommended using convenience sampling as this is a marketing-based study and the target population is often unknown. Hence, a set of questionnaires was distributed randomly to 297 consumers via email, WhatsApp messenger and telegram. Moreover, in analyzing the data, Statistical Package for the Social Science Software (SPSS) version 26.0 was used for that purpose.

#### Instrument

The questionnaire was divided into three (3) sections. Section A focused on the demographic information and the nature of the research. Section B included the questions related to independent variables: information availability, social influence, and trust. Section C consisted of the online shopping behavior (dependent variable). Both Section B and C used a 5-point Likert Scale, ranging from 1 for "Strongly Disagree" to 5 for "Strongly Agree".

### 4. Finding and Analysis

#### Reliability Test

The reliability test is figured by corresponding the score of every scale thing with the aggregate score for every perception (normally singular review respondents), contrasting that with the difference for all individual thing scores (Goforth, 2015). The rule of thumb states that the acceptable reliability is 0.7 and above (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011). A Cronbach's alpha is a reliability coefficient that indicates how well the items are. In a set are positively related to one another.

**Table 4: Result of Reliability Analysis (n=297)**

Variables	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Information Availability	5	0.861
Social Influence	5	0.870
Trust	4	0.849
Online shopping behavior	4	0.790

Table 4 shows the values of Cronbach's alpha for dependent variables and independent variables. The results were greater than 0.60 which ranges from 0.790– 0.870, contributing that all variables are both reliable and consistent (Taherdoost, 2016). Social influence obtained the greatest Cronbach's alpha value at 0.870, followed by information availability at 0.861. The third one was trust with Cronbach's alpha value at 0.849 and the lowest Cronbach's alpha, 0.790 was online shopping behavior.

#### Pearson Correlation Analysis

Pearson Correlation was used to identify the possible relationship between the variables and analyze the strength of the relationship between the two variables.

**Table 5: Summary of Pearson Correlation (n=297)**

		1	2	3	4	5	6
Mean_Information Availability	Pearson	1					
	Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)						
Mean_Social Influence	Pearson	.481**	1				
	Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.000					
Mean_Trust	Pearson	.571**	.522**	1			
	Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000				
Mean_Online Shopping Behavior	Pearson	.498**	.440**	.469**	1		
	Correlation						

Sig. (2-tailed) .000 .000 .000

\*\* . Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 demonstrates the relationship between independent variables (information availability, social influence, trust) and dependent variables (online shopping behavior). Based on the table above, shows a moderate association between three independent variables and online shopping behavior: information availability ( $r=0.498$ ), social influence ( $r=0.440$ ) and trust ( $r=0.469$ ). These correlations were significant with a p-value of 0.01 significance level.

### Multiple Regression Analysis

By performing the regression analysis, the researcher can find out the most significant dimension that influences the dependent variable.

**Table 6: Summary of R-square (n=297)**

Summary		Anova	
R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Sig.
0.570 <sup>a</sup>	0.325	47.001	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Dependent Variable. Online Shopping Behavior			

According to Table 6, the value of R<sup>2</sup> for online shopping behavior as the dependent variable is 0.325. Therefore, it can be concluded that the variance of online shopping behavior is explained by information availability, social influence, and trust for 32.5 percent of the variance, while the remaining 0.675 (67.5 percent) is explained by other variables that were not included in this study.

**Table 7: Summary of Coefficient (n=297)**

Dimensions	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		p-value
	$\beta$	S. E	$\beta$ eta	t	
Information Availability	0.351	0.074	0.289	4.768	.000
Social Influence	0.156	0.046	0.196	3.367	.001
Trust	0.186	0.057	0.202	3.239	.001
Dependent Variable. Online Shopping Behavior					

Based on the p-value from Table 7, information availability influenced online shopping behavior with a value (0.000) less than (0.01), social influence influenced online shopping behavior with a value (0.001) less than (0.01) and trust influenced online shopping behavior with the value (0.001) less than (0.01) Thus, H1, H2, H3 are supported.

Meanwhile, the beta value showed a correlation coefficient that ranged from 0 to 1 or 0 to -1. The closer the value is to 1 or -1, the stronger the relationship. Therefore, based on the  $\beta$  value, information availability became a substantial contributor to online shopping behavior at  $\beta = 0.289$ . As a result, information availability was proven as the most dominant component influencing shopping behavior compared to the other independent variables.

**Table 8: Summary of Hypothesis Testing**

Research Objectives	Hypothesis Statement/ Research question	Decision
To study the factors influencing online shopping behavior among Malaysian consumers.	H1: There is a significant positive relationship between information availability and online shopping behavior.	Supported
	H2: There is a significant positive relationship between social influence and online shopping behavior.	Supported
	H3: There is a significant positive relationship between trust and online shopping behavior.	Supported



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To identify the most important factor that influences online shopping behavior among Malaysian consumers.	What is the factor that most influences online shopping behavior among Malaysian consumers?	Information Availability
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## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

The researcher summarized that all the research objectives and questions had been met based on the data and findings. The result was identified by the researcher based on the results of various tests. Based on multiple regression analysis, hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 are supported.

**Research Objective 1:** To study the factors influencing online shopping behavior among Malaysian consumers.

The result of the Correlation Coefficient analysis revealed a moderate association between three independent variables and the dependent variable: information availability ( $r=0.498$ ), social influence ( $r=0.440$ ) and trust ( $r=0.469$ ). It was based on the rule of thumb which states that a coefficient ranging between  $+0.41$  to  $+0.70$  shows a moderate correlation.

The result shows that H1 is supported; information availability has a positive relationship with online shopping behavior. Thus, the finding of this study is in line with the result by Shazadi, (2023). This researcher stated that the availability of information in an online store eliminates the need for physical contact, but it also significantly impacts customers when relevant information is provided. When customers have access to all the necessary product information, including visuals and other details, they are more likely to choose the online store for their purchases. Providing consistent products is crucial for customer satisfaction and loyalty. The outcome of this study is also in line with Manandhar and Timilsina (2023) who discovered a positive relationship between information availability and student customer behavior in online shopping in Kathmandu. This finding aligns closely with Mustafa et al. (2011) research, which identified information quality as a key factor influencing customer behavior in online shopping. Similarly, the results are consistent with Guo et al. (2012) earlier study, which emphasized the significance of information quality in determining customer behavior in online shopping.

Moreover, the result shows that H2 is supported; social influence has a positive relationship with online shopping behavior. The finding of this study is also parallel with the result of a previous study (Kusmaharani and Halim, 2020), particularly in social influence factor. These researchers agree that social influence had a significant relationship with online shopping behavior where social influence encouraged online shopping behavior on Indonesian indie cosmetic products.

Furthermore, the result shows that H3 is supported; trust has a positive relationship with online shopping behavior. The finding of this study also aligns with the result by Sima and Hayani (2021) mainly in the factor of trust. These researchers agree that trust is associated with online shopping behavior which reveals that a person who trusts an online shopping platform is more likely to shop online compared to a person who has doubts.

**Research Objective 2:** To identify the most factor that influences online shopping behavior among Malaysian consumers.

The findings showed that information availability was the dominant factor in this study. The strength of the relationship is defined by the closer the value is to 1 or -1, which means the stronger the relationship. Through multiple regression analysis, information availability showed the greatest Beta ( $\beta$ ) value of 0.289 compared to other variables.

The findings of this study align with previous research by Tzeng et al. (2020), indicating that information availability significantly influences shoppers' pre-purchase information search behavior in e-retail. Dissatisfaction arises if the information posted on websites is unattractive thus customers leave without making any purchases (Cyr, 2008). On the other hand, attractive and informative websites encourage customers

to buy continuously and increase their satisfaction (Sabiote et al., 2012; Szymanski & Hise, 2000; Tzeng et al., 2020). Park and Kim (2003) identified product information quality as a key factor directly impacting user satisfaction, while also fostering consumer loyalty. Wang et al. (2009) demonstrated that information quality and perceived value in online communities significantly affected customer trust, with information quality directly influencing consumer loyalty. Al-Tit (2020) emphasized the importance of accurate and relevant information quality in developing consumer loyalty within an online store's quality dimension.

In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of providing information for frequently purchased items to potential customers, enabling easy comparison and informed decision-making. Malaysians, like many consumers, prioritize information when making purchases, seeking the best price and advantages. Thus, e-commerce businesses should focus on communicating value through information provision, ensuring the quality of product information, and evaluating its impact on sales. Online shops with high-quality information availability benefit from increased comparison opportunities afforded by the Internet, making information availability a key marketing indicator that influences purchasing decisions.

This study also helps in understanding the factors that influence online shopping behavior among Malaysian consumers which consists of information availability, social influence, and trust. After all, it shows that the factor of information availability is the most significant in influencing online shopping behavior among Malaysian consumers.

### Recommendations

This study examined the factors influencing online shopping behavior among Malaysian consumers (information availability, social influence, and trust). The researcher believes that future studies can be conducted to identify other variables that can influence behavior in online shopping. It also suggests expanding the scope of the study by comparing online purchasing behavior among generations X, Y, and Z including ethnicity or cultural components, as this study's findings need to be more generalizable and not only limited to Malaysia.

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