

# Confession of an Online Shopaholic: Teenage Youths' Purchasing Behavior towards Online Retailing Preferences

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**Abstract**—In the era of globalization, internet usage has grown tremendously. Due to the rapid growth of Internet, came the emergence of online retailing, where users purchase goods and services in a website through online. Thus, it has created a vast range of product categories that can be found, besides creating choices for users, it also created opportunities for marketers to expand their business. So as the internet transforms, consumers among teenage youth have more options and preferences. Now they have another way in buying goods, not just relying on the conventional method. By using online retailing they can retrieve information faster, more choices, time and money saving. A variety of services are available in online retailing world, not just buying goods, consumers can book or buy tickets online, pay the bills virtually. But even though access to the internet is easy compared to the older days, it is still difficult to justify whether the youth are fond in making purchases through the internet and to understand their purchasing behaviour towards online retailing. The respondents selected for this research was the teenage youth with a sample size of 70 peoples.

**Index Terms**—Online retailing, teenage youths purchasing behavior, shopaholics.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Traditional shopping environments have always been associated with the people, in terms of their social and psychological needs. The environments in the context are the local communities where most of the sellers and buyers live which they regard as vital to them [1]. Furthermore, it is not just an ordinary place to go and do shopping, people spent their time shopping talking or meeting with each other. While buying goods can be considered as a daily routine, hence it becomes an important part of their life. The public has established a relationship with these traditional shopping environments and has provided people like they belong to the community and feel connected to their presence. A sense of belonging is presence in traditional style shopping environments.

It is true what they say about seeing is believing, consumers would mostly want to feel, see, and touch the products on they wish to consume, thought it depends on the product itself. So naturally when people that wants to buy something to fulfill their needs, buying groceries or books for example, they would want to touch and examine the products, so shopping malls would be the perfect place to do so. Every time they go to the same malls, in a way they will

feel that the places are very intriguing to do their shopping, and perhaps feel connected or special bond towards it. While traditional shopping environments will stay on for years to come, some suggested that people nowadays tend to just stay at home and do their shopping online. On top of that, Guest has mention one of the reasons are they could minimize their time in malls, and also an assumption that the malls lack of product range, discounts, and other specialty offers and promotion is through performing a less hassle online retailing [2].

On the other hand, shopping online is really a time saver and surprisingly a variety of offer and discounts too. Users would be surprise by the price that they could get compared to the prices in mall. A wide range of products and merchandises too can be found on the internet, almost everything that is available and legal on this planet, just a click away. In Newbery's view, online retailing can be defined by type of product. A hard product is on the websites and can be uniquely specified, for example electrical appliances and also other explainable retail product, such as books, music, clothes and many more [3]. Generally there is no crystal clear definition of e-retailing or online retailing that can be conclude, but in short e-retailing is an online shopping experience or process which consumers purchase goods or services in real-time, through the Internet, and also includes accepting payment and delivering the goods. According to Yang, many believe that online retailing has seen rapid growth in market. In any industry, internet-only companies have emerged, while the ones who are still on the conventional method, they transitioning towards Internet and online services, thus leading to an increasing amount of competition among online retailers [4]. Most companies that sell goods and services traditionally have a website that users could go through and just browsing through instead of going to the actual shop. Any company that provides online retailing together with online payment system as part of their business would be deemed as an advantage, and therefore competitors would not want their adversary to gain advantage and so they created one for themselves. All of these websites of online retailing would only benefits more to consumers, as they will have more choice and options.

Meanwhile in Malaysia, online consumers are relatively low yet expanding vigorously compared to a more modern country. In a study, those who did shop online, airline tickets were the most purchased, followed by books and music. However most of the amount per transaction was less than RM500.00. Most companies now are adopting the internet as a medium to sell their products and services, for

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examples Lelong.com and Mudah.my [5].

The numbers are increasing day by day due to the emergence of websites that offer products and services via the Internet. The amount spent on goods per transaction might be low because consumers are still not fully convinced by it, especially in terms of security and guarantees. The situation of online retailing in Malaysia is still not fully convinced by it. It's more like a trial and error situation and identifies the advantages to them [6]. The rise of online retailing websites such as Air Asia, Maybank2u, Cinemas, Zalora and many more of it that offers purchasing and transactions through the internet are becoming increasingly popular among internet users. It offers them time consumption and even discounts, or in Air Asia's case, passengers could choose their seat, and check in online for their flights. However, Aw argued that certain business in Malaysia has not been looking forward in getting engage in the new medium or market, especially the companies in retail industry. The hesitation of retailers to venture into internet retailing is mainly because they do not recognize the level of acceptance of their intended target consumers towards purchasing online. Not many companies are willing to do so [7].

One of the future consuming powers is teenage youth. According to United Nation, teenage youth is defining as a person age between 15 to 24 years old. They also added that young people are diverse in character or content and vary from country to country. Hence, it can be said that for those who are under the age of 14 can be determined as children, For example in Malaysia, The National Youth Development Policy of Malaysia specifies youth as people aged between 15 to 40 years old [8]. So it can be concluded that even though different country might have different age category for youth, it can still be understood that youth are relatively somewhere in between teenager and adult. Teenage youth is also a part of consumers, as everyone can be regard as consumers as long as they purchase or use products and services. Huge amount of money has been spent by marketers in doing research in trying to predict, or anticipate youth behaviors. It is worth notice that whatever youth adopt today will be an indication to older groups what will they adopt in the near future. Companies should not make any assumptions or predictions on consumer's attitude, because it is as tough as predicting consumer's mind [9]. Sanders specifies that teenage youth or our teenagers nowadays are hipper, more informed, and probably wealthier, which explains why they the ones that flooding the outlets nationwide. Retailers and merchants are competing with each other to attract and grab these influential consumers by fulfilling their demands to fit their lifestyle [10]. Teenage youth are ranked as the most purchasing power today. Their habits and behaviour are heavily influenced by the media, both printed and electronic. It is no surprise that teenage youth are early adopters in most of the things, they like to explore and tend to experiment with their external environments. Because of that wise retailers would definitely take the opportunity in creating a demand for them, for example fashion, as the saying goes "fashion comes and go, but style is forever", meaning that in fashion, there are always new things to be try and create, something that is appealing to the youngsters.

In the present market, promising statistic of purchasing power of teenage youth leads to more opportunities to businesses and retailers in creating products to satisfy the demands. Teenage youth spending has risen since the 1980's and present. For example in the United States, Alhabeeb stated that in a research done by America's Research Group they found out that a youth visits the mall at least eight times a month, and most often than not, they made purchase for each visit [11]. Dillon mentioned that teenage youth are already doing their shopping through the internet and gaining valuable internet purchasing experience. As long as the medium is steady, young adults that will make online purchases will also increase [12]. A study showed that youth who at least once made online purchasing will have more of a convincing attitude towards it compared to those who don't. The factors that are influencing their purchasing behaviour towards online are not because of their customer service nor risk, but rather their own perceptions and shopping experience.

More than half of youth in Klang Valley can be considered as the most industrialized region in Malaysia. They spent an average of more than 20 hours per week on the internet, which can be considered as heavy users [13]. Furthermore, Mohd Suki discovered that the internet shoppers in Malaysia are young, affluent and highly educated [14]. However, Jarvenpaa and Todd argued that there are several reasons that influence a youth purchasing decision and buying behaviour towards online purchasing according to marketers [15]. Product understanding, shopping experience, customer service, and consumer risk are the factors that affecting the youth purchasing behaviour as well as spending power.

## II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

There are tones of websites on the internet whereby it offers a variety of products or services that we can buy, ranging from shopping online such as books, clothes, booking tickets online and even paying the bills. The internet is an information community, it also a business to find a place in this community depends on the type of site desired, and what kinds of services are offered [16]. Different consumers use different methods or websites in shaping their purchasing behaviour, especially among youth whom are today, most of them are technology literate. However there are several reasons that hinder consumers or youth in making online purchases, most of consumers reluctant in making purchases through the Internet because they are worried about the privacy of the personal information they provide on the internet [17]. Furthermore they added that privacy is the primary concern, they want their history, behaviour, and data protected. Hence, from this research we can identify what factors influencing consumers purchasing behaviour towards online retailing among youth, such as family, family friends, reference groups, and society in general for example while consumers purchase one's product, then they go for family decision, comfort, satisfaction, price and quality [18].

## III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Three specific objectives were developed in this study:

- 1) To identify types of product categories of website in online retailing that triggers teenage youth purchasing behavior;
- 2) To recognize the amount of time spend by teenage youth on online retailing websites have an impact towards their purchasing behaviour;
- 3) To study on the effectiveness online retailing towards purchasing behaviour among teenage youth.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Purposive sampling can be used with both qualitative and quantitative research. The definition of purposive sampling is a sample in which the individual units are selected by some purposive method. The purposive sampling is also known as judgmental sampling. It deliberates the choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possesses. It is a non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of informants. The researcher have to decides what are needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience. To complete the findings for the study, the researcher seek out the public views (teenage youth) towards online retailing and their purchasing behaviour regarding the issue. Obtaining mass data is more relevant than using focus group or in-depth interviews as those two would only be covering their views or opinions and it limits the objective of the research, which is to gather data among teenage youth of urban community in Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia. Furthermore a lot of questions can be asked and be distributed among youth through questionnaires as it is a fast and cost effective way in getting a large number of respondents. This research also requires statistic and data as the research would like to identify the percentage of teenage youth who shop online or their tendency towards in using online retailing preferences.

TABLE I: RESPONDENTS GENDER

No.	Gender		
	Item	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1.	Male	27	38.6
2.	Female	43	61.4
Total		70	100

TABLE II: RESPONDENTS AGE

No.	Age		
	Item	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1.	19 years	1	1.4
2.	21 years	6	8.6
3.	22 years	51	72.9
4.	23 years	9	12.9
5.	24 years	3	4.3
Total		70	100

V. RESULTS

From the total of 70 respondents (See Table I), (43%) of them are female while another (27%) of them are male. Female respondents are higher than the male respondents as usually the female embraces online retail shopping as to follow the current trends in fashion, apparel and it

accessories.

In terms of the respondents' age (See Table II), it consists of 5 different ranges of age; starting from the youngest that is 19 years old, followed by 21 years old, 22 years old, 23 years old and the oldest which is 24 years old. Respondent of the age of 22 were the dominant which filled up most of the figures with 51 youths, followed by 23 years old with 9 people, 21 years old with 6 people, 24 years old with 3 people and lastly only one person with the age of 19 years old. These teenage youth ages comprises the huge tendency to trigger online retail market in the near future.

TABLE III: RESPONDENTS SOURCE OF INCOME

No.	Source		
	Item	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1.	Education Loan	30	42.9
2.	Scholarship	5	7.1
3.	Parents/ Family	32	45.7
4.	Working	2	2.9
5.	Others	1	1.4
Total		70	100

The Table III shows the teenage youth source of income and majority of them revealed that they get their money from educational loans such as PTPTN or MARA and also from their parents or family members with 30 and 32 people respectively. Only 5 students were on scholarship, 2 students working to have an income which would have more spending power do to online transaction regularly. The category of others could be from investment or inheritance from another party.

TABLE IV: PREFERRED DEVICE

No.	Device		
	Item	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1.	Desktop	14	20.0
2.	Laptop	37	52.9
3.	Smartphone	15	21.4
4.	Tablet	4	5.7
Total		70	100

From Table IV, most of them at least own a laptop, as it is an essential device for them to do their work and assignment, especially on the go, laptop would be the ideal device for them. Furthermore browsing through laptops is more convenient because smart phones and tablets users might find difficulties in browsing, viewing small pictures and many more. They do not have the freedom to operate many things that can be done with laptops.

TABLE V: FAVORITES ONLINE RETAILING CATEGORIES

No.	Orientation		
	Item	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1.	Banking	9	12.9
2.	Fashion & Apparel	20	28.6
3.	Computer & Gadget	6	8.6
4.	Travel	10	14.3
5.	Movies & Entertainment	9	12.9
6.	Music	7	10.0
7.	Trading	3	4.3
8.	Food	3	4.3
9.	Books & Magazine	3	4.3
Total		140	100

From Table V, teenage youth are more likely to explore

and concern on their appearance, hence fashion is one of the elements that they are interested in and aspired of. Hence it is no surprise that it is the type of online retailing category is the most they usually browse as it is easier for them to look for the current trend, and can choose from a wide range of colors, designs, brands and many more, in websites such as Zalora, Topshop, Obey Lelong, Groupon and others.

TABLE VI: PAYMENT METHOD FOR ONLINE RETAILING

No.	Payment Method		
	Item	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1.	Credit Card	35	50.0
2.	Online Remittance	8	11.4
3.	Wire Transfer	18	25.7
4.	Cash on Delivery	9	12.9
	Total	70	100

Table VI summarized the respondents' payment method for online retail shopping. Credit Card or Debit Card is the smartest form among the respondents with 35 people preferred to use cards rather than bank in delivery, cash on delivery, and online remittance with the number of 18, 9, and 8 respondents respectively. ATM card for instance provide Visa or Debit card, which makes much easier for them to make a transaction whenever they need to.

TABLE VII: PURCHASING BEHAVIOR

	frequency (f)		percentage (%)		Strongly Agree (f) (%)
	Strongly Disagree (f) (%)	Disagree (f) (%)	Neutral (f) (%)	Agree (f) (%)	
Every month I will buy an item or more	13 18.6	18 25.7	20 28.6	18 25.7	1 1.4
I prefer shopping online	9 12.9	19 27.1	28 40	12 17.1	2 2.9
I spent more through online retailing	3 4.3	14 20.0	29 41.4	19 27.1	5 7.1
Risk involved prevent me to spend	1 1.4	5 7.1	26 37.1	24 34.3	14 20.0
Easy access, time saving, affordable of online retailing	1 1.4	6 8.6	22 31.4	33 47.1	8 11.4

From Table VII, many respondents answered neutral, disagree and strongly disagree because due to the fact that, they do not set any minimum or maximum target of item to buy each month. To them when they have the money or fancied for an item that is worth buying, then only they will buy online. It is not an obligation or addiction to them to buy an item or more in online retailing every month, as they have other priorities such as studies and assignments.

The emergence of on online retailing is not of a big deal to the teenage youth as they are already aware of this phenomenon. Even with a wide range of online retailing websites, they do not have the tendency to shop or spend

more money in online retailing websites. Although there are quite number of respondents who agreed to this statement, as we can relate to the previous question which the advantages of using online retailing would be the reasons why they spend more money with the existence of online retailing. Risks involved such as credit card fraud is one of the reason stopping them from making online purchases. In addition most of the parents have no idea on their children's online purchasing activity and if the students have been coned, they are afraid of informing their parents on the incident; hence the risks involved such as credit card fraud are among the reason stopping them in making online purchases.

Majority of the teenage youth agreed that easy accesses, time saving, more choices, and cheaper are the advantages that they found in using online retailing. Time is vital and they need to make the most out of it in pursuing their studies, they have many chores. Furthermore, they might have difficulties in getting to places as not all of them have their own transportation, and with limited income of course they are going for a good product at a cheaper rate than the ones selling at commercials shops, so these are some of the reasons why they agreed to the statement.

## VI. CONCLUSION

To conclude this research, the correlation between the three research objectives and the findings that had been interpreted, which the research objectives are, number one is to identify what type of product category of website in online retailing that interest consumers among teenage youth. Followed by to recognize the behaviour of teenage youth towards online retailing, and finally to study on the effectiveness of using online retailing towards purchasing behaviour among teenage youth. Fashion and apparels were chose as the online retailing category they will usually browse, but that does not mean that the respondents are willing to spend their money on it. Respondent does not usually browse other online retailing categories such as travel, movies, music, and etc, and the numbers are not as significant as fashion and apparels. This can be said that it is easier to browse fashion and apparels because from there they can keep up with the current trend or get inspirations in fashion sense. This can be conclude that even though Fashion and Apparels were chosen as the type of online retailing category they usually browse, mainly because in the website they have a very useful content and an eye catching layout with a variety of pictures such as shoes, bags, shirts and many more, Fashion and Apparels were not the answer chosen by the respondents where they have or will spend their money on.

On top of that, half of the respondent's use their laptops as their main device to shop or browse for items, desktop and smart phone are as an alternative while tablet seems to be the least used form of device. From this the researcher can conclude that laptop would be the most appropriate device to be used for the respondents, because they need to move about to do their work, rather than using desktop where it is difficult to and troublesome to set up and vice versa, while tablet is not worth buying as some of the work cannot be done using tablets, they doesn't have the necessary software's. Laptop is considered as all in one, as

consumers can view the pictures, videos, etc bigger and clearer, about the same with desktop but cheaper. There are plenty of information to gain on the respondent's behaviour, opinions and purchasing pattern towards online retailing on the Internet through this research. Online retailing or shopping will be the next big thing for the society especially among youth where most of them are technology literate. Furthermore, most of the things are now being done through online nowadays. Hence, there are a few aspects that the retailer should focus on in the effort to improve the online shopping services and experience. Not only from the consumers' point of view, but also, from the marketer's as well. Therefore, it's essential to voice out some recommendation to improve the world of online shopping especially for those it may concern. Recommendations include the following such as, exploring more on the various online shopping websites available, consider online shopping as an alternative to conventional shopping, as it is a convenience for consumers. Find a solution to increase the level of security of online shoppers in order for the consumers to have faith and trust while shopping online, and finally these product category websites should provide more information regarding the products that they offer as well as create a more user friendly page layout and design interface for online shoppers.

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