



From Scroll to Checkout: The Forces Shaping Youth Online Shopping in Malaysia

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Abstract

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and Trust*

Online shopping has become an integral part of modern consumer behaviour, underscoring the need for the retail players to understand the factors driving its acceptance among youth. This study investigates on how perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and trust influence youths' behavioural acceptance of online shopping. Data were collected from 384 respondents by using purposive sampling through an online questionnaire and analysed with SPSS, employing descriptive statistics, reliability and validity assessments, and also Pearson's correlation analysis. The results revealed that these variables have a significant positive relationship with online shopping acceptance, with trust emerging as the strongest predictor. These findings offer updated empirical insights into the behavioral patterns of young Malaysian consumers and emphasize the importance of enhancing platform usability, reliability, and credibility to foster greater engagement in online shopping.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Nowadays, online shopping is expanding and becoming essential for most businesses. It allows consumers to purchase goods and services directly through digital platforms, including websites and mobile applications. The growth has been driven by widespread internet access and the increasing use of smartphones, laptops, and tablets. Moreover, the trend has continued to accelerate since the COVID-19 pandemic, as lockdowns and movement restrictions led consumers to rely heavily on online platforms for their needs (Koch et al., 2020). During this period, environmental factors such as product variety, ease of use, payment flexibility, trust, and psychological comfort influenced consumer perceptions (Le Tan et al., 2021). In Malaysia, e-commerce adoption remains in its early stages but continues to grow as part of the country's digital transformation. In fact, young people form a key demographic in these changes. The National Youth Development Policy (1997) defines youth as individuals aged 15 to 40. Additionally, it is expected that, in the future, most retail shoppers will be from the Millennial generation. It is forecasted that the Malaysian market will serve 29% of Malaysians aged 19-35, who will be the main online shoppers (MCMC, 2017). This situation results in an increasing preference for the flexibility, convenience, and affordability offered by online shopping platforms.

The growth of social media and e-marketplace platforms, such as TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, Lazada, Shopee, and others, contributes to the rapid expansion of online shopping (Nayak et al., 2021; Kapoor et al., 2022). Additionally, the website's design, usability, and trustworthiness are crucial in encouraging consumers' behavioural acceptance. A user-friendly platform

increases satisfaction and purchase intentions (Menoe, 2020), while trust based on security, privacy, and reliability remains a vital factor in online transactions (Varma et al., 2020; Gefen et al., 2003). Given this context, it is important to understand the factors influencing Malaysian youths' acceptance of online shopping. This study focuses on three key determinants widely recognised in technology acceptance research: perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and trust. By examining these factors, the study aims to:

1. Examine the link between perceived usefulness and acceptance behaviour of online shopping among Malaysian youth.
2. Explore the link between perceived ease of use and acceptance of online shopping among Malaysian youth.
3. Assess the relationship between trust and acceptance behaviour of online shopping among Malaysian youth.

By addressing these objectives, this research provides empirical evidence on the drivers of online shopping adoption among Malaysian youth. The findings contribute to both theory and practice by helping e-commerce retailers, digital marketers, and policymakers craft strategies that better address the needs of this influential consumer segment.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Perceived Usefulness

According to Davis (1989), perceived usefulness is “the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance.” Prior studies confirm that perceived usefulness strongly influences behavioural intentions to adopt technology (Subramanian, 1994; Chuttur, 2009). In the context of online stores, usefulness is reflected in the wide variety of products, price options, and convenience they provide, which align with customers' purchasing power and improve the overall shopping experience (Angamuthu, 2020). Recent evidence highlights the changing expectations of Malaysian youth towards e-commerce platforms. A 2024 survey by Shopee, reported in mediaselangor.com, revealed that Generation Z consumers (aged 18–24) prioritise a wide range of products, competitive pricing, and quality assurance as the main factors influencing their choice of online shopping platforms. These features closely align with the concept of perceived usefulness, as they directly enhance the value and efficiency of the shopping experience. Moreover, the same report noted that Gen Z consumers rely heavily on customer reviews, product ratings, and influencer endorsements when assessing online stores. In fact, the online platform has developed its system, which prioritises usefulness and trust as they are interrelated. Besides, the online platform also offers perceived functional benefits often supported by credible and transparent service quality. It shows that perceived usefulness does not solely focus on technical efficiency, but also includes informational and experiential value, which helps consumers feel confident in their purchasing choices. Therefore, Gen Z's acceptance of online shopping is influenced not only by the utility of digital platforms but also by the trustworthiness embedded in their design, delivery, and communication practices. Therefore, the hypotheses are as follows;

H1: There is a relationship between perceived usefulness and acceptance behaviour of online shopping among youth in Malaysia.

2.2 Perceived Ease of Use

Perceived ease of use refers to the extent to which customers believe that online shopping can be carried out with minimal effort. It reflects both the physical and mental effort required when using technology (Shirazi et al., 2021). Studies show that when users perceive online platforms as easy to navigate, their attitudes towards online purchasing improve, leading to higher acceptance and adoption of online shopping (Rashid et al., 2022). Recent Malaysian studies

reinforce the importance of perceived ease of use for online shopping adoption among youth. In Kuala Lumpur, research conducted during the pandemic revealed that ease of use was the strongest predictor of purchase behaviour, outperforming variables such as perceived usefulness, trust, and price (Yee, T., Govindan, S., Munusami, C., & Yusop, H., 2023). Likewise, in post-COVID-19 studies among youth in Sabah, website usability and convenience significantly influence online shopping behaviour, particularly when paired with strong social media influence and user interface experience (Rahlin, Jas et al. 2024). A previous study Abd Aziz and Abd Wahid (2018) found that perceived ease of use was also a critical mediator that simultaneously affected online purchase intention. It showed that youth do not just prefer e-commerce platforms to be functionally efficient. Still, they also need them to be intuitively navigable, easy to search, fast to load, and to minimise friction in tasks like checkout. Therefore, the second hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

H2: There is a relationship between perceived ease of use and acceptance behavior of online shopping among youth in Malaysia.

2.3 Trust

Trust plays a vital role in shaping young people's acceptance behaviour in online shopping. In the Malaysian higher education context, a recent study examining Shopee usage among university students found a strong, positive relationship between trust in the platform and the students' intention to purchase via Shopee. An empirical study suggests that even among digitally literate users, trust in the brand or platform remains a key factor in online adoption. Furthermore, research on Gen Z consumers in Malaysia has reinforced this finding, showing that trust is one of the key predictors of purchase intention, alongside usefulness and social influence (Nur'ain Achim et al., 2024). Security and privacy are consistently identified as critical components of trust. A past study by Wei et al. (2025) found that youth in Pahang highlighted security, including data protection and policy clarity, as essential for trusting a digital marketplace. Similarly, a qualitative study of youth purchasing luxury perfumes online highlighted that the reputation of sellers, proof of authenticity, peer reviews, and prior experience are key indicators of trust. When these signals are strong, acceptance behaviour increases (Isamudin, N. F., & Islam, I. B., 2023). Hence, the hypothesis is as follows;

H3: There is a relationship between trust and acceptance behaviour of online shopping among youth in Malaysia.

Thus, based on the hypotheses H1 to H3 formulated, the conceptual framework for this study is illustrated in Figure 2.1.1.

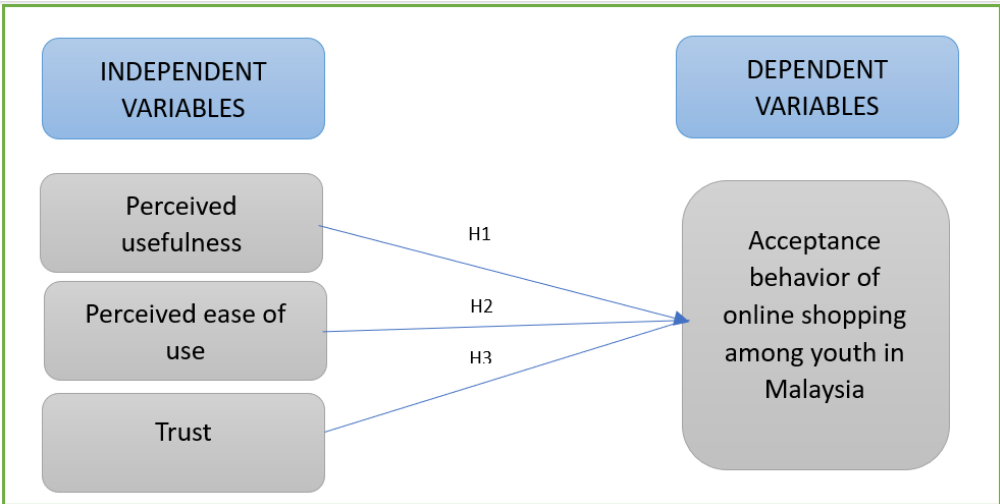


Figure 2.1 : The conceptual framework of the factors influencing the acceptance behaviour of online shopping among youth in Malaysia.

3.0 RESEARCH METHOD

This study investigates the factors influencing online shopping acceptance among Malaysian youth, with a focus on perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and trust. A quantitative research design was employed to analyse the relationships among these variables. Primary data were collected through online questionnaires distributed to Malaysian youth. Respondents assessed each item using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Additionally, secondary data from academic articles and journals were reviewed to support the study’s conceptual framework. A non-probability purposive sampling method was adopted, as youth constitute the most active demographic in online shopping. The target respondents included individuals of different genders, ages, and ethnic backgrounds. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2019), the youth population aged 15–40 totals 15.1 million; however, this study focused on the 18–30 age group, which comprises the most frequent online shoppers. Referring to Krejcie and Morgan’s (1970) sample size determination table, a minimum of 384 respondents was required. Accordingly, 384 valid responses were collected via Google Forms. The data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics software, including descriptive statistics, reliability and validity tests, normality assessments, and Pearson’s correlation to examine the relationships among the variables.

4.0 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

A total of 384 valid questionnaires were collected, meeting the required sample size for this study. Table 4.1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Of these, 63.3% were female and 36.7% were male. Regarding age, the largest group (33.3%) was between 24 and 26 years old (128 respondents), while the smallest group (8.1%) was between 18 and 20 years old (31 respondents). Ethnically, 35.4% were Malay (136 respondents), 32.8% Chinese (126 respondents), and 31.8% Indian (122 respondents). Concerning marital status, most were single (61.5%), with 38.5% being married. In terms of education, the majority of respondents had at least a bachelor’s degree (63.3%), followed by diploma holders (24.7%), SPM level (7.3%), and master’s degree holders (4.7%). Regarding occupation, nearly half were employed (48.7%), 29.2% were self-employed, and 22.1% were students. For monthly income, the largest proportion (27.3%) reported earning between RM3,001 and RM4,000, while 11.7% earned less than RM1,000.

Table 4.1: Frequency of sample background

Variables	Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Gender</i>	Male	141	36.7
	Female	243	63.3
<i>Age</i>	18-20 years old	31	8.1
	21-23 years old	117	30.5
	24-26 years old	128	33.3
	27-30 years old	86	22.4
	30 years old and above	22	5.7
<i>Races</i>	Chinese	126	32.8
	Indian	122	31.8
	Malay	136	35.4
<i>Marital Status</i>	Single	236	61.5
	Married	148	38.5
<i>Education Level</i>	SPM Level	28	7.3
	Certificate Diploma	95	24.7
	Bachelor's Degree	243	63.3
	Master's Degree	18	4.7
<i>Occupation</i>	Students	85	22.1
	Self-employed	112	29.2
	Employed	187	48.7
<i>Monthly Income</i>	Below RM 1000	45	11.7
	RM1001-RM2000	62	16.2
	RM2001-RM3000	68	17.7
	RM3001-RM4000	105	27.3
	RM4001-RM5000	74	19.3
	RM50001 and above	30	7.8

Based on the sample composition, the respondents in this study were mainly from the youth. Therefore, this study indicates that young respondents are using online shopping. A fundamental type of analysis is descriptive analysis. It was previously used to analyse data to better describe, display, and summarise data (Ayush Singh Rawat, 2021). Descriptive analysis was utilised in this study to present the quantitative description in an understandable format. It condenses a large amount of material into a brief summary. Numerous demographic profiles, including frequency, mean, percentage, and average, will be provided through descriptive analysis. It also includes a variety of graphs, such as pie charts and bar charts, to identify and demonstrate data.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis

The study operationalises three independent variables: perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and trust, as well as one dependent variable, namely the acceptance behaviour of online shopping.

Table 4.2: Descriptive statistics for acceptance behavior of online shopping

Variables	Mean	Std Dev
Perceived of Usefulness	4.71	0.204
Perceived Ease of Use	4.74	0.196
Trust	4.71	0.220
Acceptance Behavior of Online Shopping	4.73	0.193

According to Table 4.2, the highest mean is perceived ease of use, at 4.74, while the lowest mean is for the trust and perceived usefulness variable, at 4.71. Consequently, judging from the mean values, two of the independent variables construct above scale 4, where it is considered

high, as it concludes that many youths' respondents agree that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use do influence acceptance behaviour of online shopping.

4.3 Validity, Reliability and Normality Analysis

The confirmatory analysis of items and variables was carried out through validity, reliability, and normality tests. The internal accuracy of the constructs was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, as shown in Table 4.3. In summary, the results indicate that all values exceeded 0.7, as recommended by many previous studies, suggesting that the research framework meets an appropriate standard (Glenn, 2021).

Table 4.3: Validity, Reliability and Normality Analysis of Model

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
Acceptance Behavior of Online Shopping	0.900
Perceived of Usefulness	0.920
Perceived Ease of Use	0.886
Trust	0.956

Particularly, trust exhibits the highest Cronbach's alpha value of 0.956, indicating greater consistency and reliability for this variable. It is followed by perceived usefulness (0.920), acceptance of online shopping behaviour (0.900), and perceived ease of use (0.886). Since all alpha values for the Cronbach's coefficients exceed 0.7, the overall results of the reliability test demonstrate strong accuracy and precision for all independent variables and the dependent variable. The skewness and kurtosis values were assessed to evaluate normality, ensuring the data collected is normally distributed.

4.4. Pearson's Correlation Coefficient

Table 4.4.: Pearson's Correlation Coefficient

	Item	Perceived of Usefulness	Perceived Ease of Use	Trust
Acceptance Behavior of Online Shopping	Pearson's Correlation	.943**	.880**	.957**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	384	384	384

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2-tailed)

Table 4.4 shows that trust has a very strong positive relationship with online shopping acceptance ($r = 0.957$), followed by perceived usefulness ($r = 0.943$) and perceived ease of use ($r = 0.880$). All correlations were statistically significant at $p < 0.01$, confirming the positive links among the variables. These findings imply that trust is the most influential factor in shaping youths' acceptance behaviour towards online shopping in Malaysia.

4.5 Summary of Hypothesis Testing

This study aims to identify the factors influencing the acceptance behaviour of online shopping among youth in Malaysia, focusing on perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and trust. A correlation analysis was conducted for each indicator to examine the relationships between the variables. IBM SPSS Statistics' Pearson correlation analysis provided the correlation coefficient results. A summary of the hypothesis testing regarding the relationship between the

factors influencing online shopping acceptance among youth in Malaysia and perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, as well as trust, is presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis Statement	Pearson's Correlation (r)	Conclusion
H1: There are positive influencing factors of perceived usefulness towards acceptance behavior of online shopping among youth in Malaysia.	.943**	<i>Highly positive Correlation</i>
H2: There are positive influencing factors of perceived ease of use towards acceptance behavior of online shopping among youth in Malaysia.	.880**	<i>Highly positive Correlation</i>
H3: There are positive influencing factors of trust towards acceptance behavior of online shopping among youth in Malaysia	.957**	<i>Highly positive Correlation</i>

Notes: 1) Dependent variable is Acceptance Behaviour of Online Shopping. 2) **Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2-tailed)

H1 was supported by this study, according to the data in Table 4.5, as the correlation value indicates positive factors influencing perceived usefulness towards acceptance behaviour of online shopping among youth in Malaysia. The p-value is significant, demonstrating a high positive correlation at 0.000 between the variables since $p < 0.01$. Perceived usefulness has a moderate positive correlation at $(r=0.943)$. Additionally, this study validated the second hypothesis (H2), which identified positive factors influencing perceived ease of use towards acceptance behaviour of online shopping among youth in Malaysia. Consequently, the p-value is significant and shows a high positive correlation at 0.000 between the variables since $p < 0.01$. Perceived ease of use exhibits an excellent positive correlation at $(r=0.880)$. Finally, H3 displays a similar pattern, indicating that the relationship between acceptance behaviour of online shopping and trust was validated by this study and demonstrated a positive relationship $(r=0.957, p < 0.01)$. This study aims to explore the factors influencing acceptance behaviour of online shopping among youth in Malaysia, focusing on perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and trust.

5.0 DISCUSSION

The findings of this study show very high positive correlations between perceived usefulness ($r = .943, p < 0.01$), perceived ease of use ($r = .880, p < 0.01$), and trust ($r = .957, p < 0.01$) with the acceptance of online shopping among young people in Malaysia. These coefficients demonstrate that the three factors are strongly connected and collectively influence young consumers' willingness to participate in online shopping activities. Such high levels of correlation imply that Malaysian youth now consider usefulness, ease of use, and trust as inseparable parts of their digital consumption experience. This section explores several contextual, behavioural, and methodological reasons that may explain the strength of these relationships.

One of the most compelling explanations for the strong correlations is the digital maturity of Malaysian youth. The current generation of young consumers, typically aged between 18 and 30 years, is the first to have grown up with widespread access to the internet and smartphones. According to the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) in 2023,

over 99% of Malaysians aged 18–35 have access to smartphones and high-speed internet, with most spending at least five hours daily on digital platforms. For this demographic, technology use feels intuitive rather than something that has been learned. As a result, the cognitive barrier to adopting online shopping is minimal. This technological fluency directly boosts perceived ease of use; the belief that using an online shopping platform requires little effort. Young people are accustomed to fast-loading apps, integrated payment systems, and responsive mobile designs, which reduce perceived effort and increase satisfaction. Simultaneously, high familiarity also reinforces perceived usefulness because these consumers have already internalised the benefits of e-commerce, such as convenience, time efficiency, product variety, and price comparison. When usefulness and ease of use are perceived together, they naturally reinforce each other, explaining their high correlation with acceptance behaviour.

Another major factor contributing to the strong associations is the ongoing enhancement in the design, reliability, and customer experience of major e-commerce platforms. Leading platforms in Malaysia, such as Shopee, Lazada, and TikTok Shop, have invested heavily in creating user-friendly interfaces and advanced technologies to ensure seamless transactions. The 2024 Shopee Gen Z Consumer Survey reported that fast delivery, a wide range of products, and quality assurance are the three main reasons why youth prefer Shopee over other platforms (*MediaSelangor*, 2024). These factors also align with the concepts of perceived usefulness and trust. Moreover, simplified payment gateways, one-click checkouts, and transparent refund policies enhance perceived ease of use and build confidence in the purchasing process. Consequently, improvements in e-commerce infrastructure create a reinforcing loop: as systems become more reliable, consumers perceive them as both easier and more beneficial to use, leading to higher acceptance and stronger correlations among the studied variables.

Pardede et al. (2018) and Sembada and Koay (2019) found that trust mediates the relationship between perceived ease of use and behavioural intention, demonstrating that even if a system is technically simple, consumers may avoid using it without sufficient trust. Conversely, a trusted platform can offset minor usability flaws because trust offers reassurance and reduces perceived risk. Therefore, the high correlation coefficient between trust and acceptance behaviour ($r = .957$) in this study likely reflects this reinforcing relationship. Among Malaysian youth, trust and technological confidence are interconnected: the more assured consumers feel about data security, product authenticity, and payment reliability, the more they recognise the value and ease of the online shopping experience.

Additionally, the behavioural effects of the COVID-19 pandemic also help explain the magnitude of the observed correlations. During Malaysia's Movement Control Orders (MCOs) between 2020 and 2021, e-commerce became an essential service for daily life. Youth consumers who were once casual online buyers were forced to rely on digital platforms for groceries, clothing, and other essentials. Studies by Le Tan et al. (2021) and Koch et al. (2020) show that this period dramatically accelerated digital adoption and normalised online transactions as part of routine consumption behaviour. This widespread exposure helped shape long-term habits and foster a sense of comfort with online systems. After the pandemic, many young consumers continued shopping online because it had become a habitual and preferred mode of consumption. The repetitive nature of digital transactions enhanced perceived ease of use through familiarity and increased perceived usefulness by demonstrating the tangible benefits of online shopping. Moreover, positive post-purchase experiences during the pandemic likely strengthened trust in established platforms. Therefore, the post-pandemic digital lifestyle may have amplified all three constructs: usefulness, ease of use, and trust, resulting in exceptionally strong correlations in the present study.

Youth behaviour is heavily influenced by social influence and digital word-of-mouth. Social networks, peer reviews, and influencer endorsements serve as trust-building mechanisms in online commerce. Nayak et al. (2021) and Varma et al. (2020) note that younger consumers depend on user-generated content and online reviews when making purchase decisions. Positive feedback from peers or influencers not only increases trust but also reinforces perceived usefulness by validating the platform's reliability and efficiency. In Malaysia, the integration of social media in e-commerce, such as Shopee Live and TikTok Shop,

further blurs the line between social interaction and online shopping. When recommendations come from trusted sources within their social networks, youth perceive online platforms as more credible and valuable, thereby strengthening both emotional (trust) and cognitive (usefulness), as well as the ease of acceptance behaviour. This merging of social and technological trust helps explain why correlations between these constructs are so strong.

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings align with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposed by Davis (1989), which posits that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use jointly influence behavioural intention. Over time, as e-commerce systems become more reliable and user-centred, these constructs tend to merge in the user's perception. What was once a rational decision ("this website is easy and useful") becomes an automatic belief ("shopping online is natural"). This psychological simplification reduces conceptual boundaries between variables, resulting in higher empirical correlations. In essence, for digital-native Malaysian youth, usefulness, ease, and trust are not separate judgments but facets of the same experience, which is the confidence and comfort with online transactions.

6.0 CONCLUSION

In summary, the strong correlations among perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and trust in online shopping acceptance among Malaysian youth can be attributed to several interconnected factors, such as widespread digital literacy and familiarity with technology. These elements demonstrate the maturing of Malaysia's e-commerce landscape, where youth consumers no longer evaluate online shopping through isolated factors but see it as a seamless, trustworthy, and highly beneficial activity. The constructs explain the remarkable strength of the correlations observed in this study and emphasise the enduring importance of trust, ease, and usefulness in shaping digital consumer behaviour.

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