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Gender Effects on Internet and E-Commerce Activities in Generation "Y"

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Abstract

In the face of growth, the Internet continues to change and evolve. The Internet has given everyone the ability to communicate, launch a business, and govern, and people to meet together. Generation "Y" are connect with technology in nearly every area of life. There are search engines, news provider, forum, video sharing, and e-commerce site. The development of communication has assisted in the advancement of e-business, making traditional purchasing habits disappear. As of today, fewer studies track gender and internet usage regarding e-commerce. With this study, the researcher is looking to determine how Generation Y interacts with the internet and e-commerce in Malaysia. Detailed data was used to find out what generation Y values when it comes to e-to-commerce using the internet

Keywords : Generation Y, Consumer, Internet Usage, Technology, E-Commerce, Gender, Attitude

Introduction

An increasing trend in internet usage among businesses and individuals has had a significant impact on our conception of the world as a global village by decreasing geographic barriers and enabling quicker information exchange. We have reached a point where the majority of the world's population now lives and works in a networked society (Castells, 2000). The advent of globalisation had a large impact on virtually every field of contemporary life, such as the workplace, healthcare, and interpersonal interaction, as well as well as business. As of today, the internet is universally agreed; it has become an important resource for business and it has advanced into an indispensible part of that cannot be ignored.

Without a doubt, the internet has several significant benefits for our society. It primarily provides us with a vast array of information critical to our innovative lifestyles, allowing us the freedom to quickly lookup information and find solutions to problems. We frequently use the internet to boost our productivity, discover new interests, and ultimately expand our capacity for exploration and innovation. As a society, our generation's critical thinking skills are deteriorating in comparison to previous generations. With almost everyone having access to the internet, we can easily find answers to questions online and rely on the information provided by the internet rather than analyzing topics and thinking critically on our own. The pattern of the world's largest internet users is quite similar in several developed and developing countries. As a result, we can deduce that the largest proportion of internet users belonged to generation Y.

According to Data Portal (2021), 4.72 billion people worldwide will use the internet in April 2021, accounting for more than 60% of the world's population. Internet users are currently growing at a rate of 7.6 percent per year, which equates to an average of over 900,000 new users per day. While approximately 92.8 percent of users use mobile devices to access the internet at least occasionally, computers also account for a sizable portion of internet activity. Meanwhile, data indicates that the average global internet user spends nearly seven hours per day online.

Today's business trend and customer expectation is to conduct business at their fingertips; conducting e-commerce business increases efficiency and eliminates spatial barriers; as generation Y characteristics, they seek out fun, variety, and most importantly, flexibility (Laudon &Traver, 2013). It is observed that technology application is rapidly expanding; particularly in the field of information technology, owing to the support of a well-tuned infrastructure. This scenario is similar in developed and developing countries alike. Nowadays, there is a gradual shift among those customers away from traditional direct shopping practices toward online shopping. In this scenario, generation Y is more accustomed to online shopping and the adoption of e-commerce practices than generation X.

As an indication of the global adoption of e-commerce, it was discovered that each month, more than 9 in 10 internet users aged 16 to 64 visit online retail stores. In 2020, online consumer goods purchases will exceed US$2.4 trillion, a more than 25% increase over the 2019 level. Additionally, the average e-commerce shopper spends more than US$700 annually on online consumer goods purchases (Data Portal, 2021). Indeed, these statistics demonstrate how much our shopping habits have evolved. Online shopping has grown from virtually non-existent to worth billions of pounds each year in less than a decade. People can now shop for clothing, books, food, and electronics online, without ever leaving their living rooms (Nickson, C. 2020). Consumers benefit from a plethora of advantages associated with online shopping. The selection can appear almost limitless, and consumers are no longer limited to purchasing locally or via mail-order catalogs. Consumers can purchase from any location in the world.

The millennial generation, or generation Y as it is more commonly referred to, is defined as individuals born between 1980 and 1999. (Prensky, 2001). According to several studies, this generation possesses considerable purchasing power and is capable of impulsive spending (Chung & Al-Khaled, 2021; Parment, 2013). Parment (2013) also emphasized that low-involvement decisions are not worth the time and effort for gen Y individuals, whereas high-involvement decisions are. Understanding these distinctions is critical for marketers to develop effective marketing strategies, as is learning about the specific characteristics of their shopping behavior (Parment, 2013). The millennial generation has the highest internet penetration of any generation (eMarketer, 2013). Cisco's 2011 study of respondents aged 18 to 30 years old revealed that the majority of respondents stated that they could not live without the internet (Kerner, 2012). The Next Generation User is someone who connects to the Internet from a variety of different locations and devices.

According to Forrester Research, generation Y spends an astronomical amount of money on online commerce each year, more than USD 90.4 billion. Additionally, generation Y spends 38% more time online than adults do; ‘anytime they have access to a connection, they are online.' Serious surfers are considered to be members of generation Y. Generation Y began shopping online as teenagers or preteens, even before they began earning money. This could be a gold mine for online merchants (Grasse, 2000).

Because generation Y has grown up with computers, they are completely reliant on computers and internet access. They take shopping seriously and devote a significant amount of time online to searching, fantasizing, checking flash sale promotions, and keeping up with the latest trends (Lachman & Brett, 2013). Additionally, an Urban Land Institute study on generation Y shopping and entertainment in 2013 discovered that half of the respondents spend at least $50 per week online, while serious shoppers spend between $100 and $300 per week. As an online customer, generation Y is a no-brainer; they have never been concerned with the security risks associated with purchasing products or services over the internet; they are simply excessively trusting (Grasse, 2000).

In terms of shopping habits, Malaysian generation Y spends an astonishing amount on online commerce each year, nearly 1.8 billion ringgit (The Star, 2010). This figure is likely to double or triple in the coming years. According to the current trend, generation Y is seeking a more convenient method of shopping than the traditional method. Additionally, advancements in information technology provide positive stimuli when consumers make purchasing decisions (Mansoori, Liat, & Shan 2012; Ayupp, Ling, & Tudin, 2013). The largest generation Y population and their familiarity with technology will create a massive opportunity to leverage technology as a business media in this digital era and capture it.

Malaysia is maturing into a significant Asian e-commerce market, according to the E-Commerce Payments Trend 2020. Malaysia's exceptional growth in e-commerce sales, rising basket spend, and a young, digitally savvy population create an abundance of opportunities for merchants (JP Morgan, 2020). E-commerce is regionally concentrated; East Malaysians, for example, are 2.6 times more likely to shop online than peninsular Malaysians. Thus, there is undeniable growth in internet subscriptions and commerce in Malaysia (Export.gov, 2019). Meanwhile, travel (63 percent), consumer electronics (10 percent), and fashion (9 percent) are the most popular e-commerce product categories (JP Morgan, 2019). According to JP Morgan (2020), between 2017 and 2019, the average annual online spend per consumer nearly doubled.

When we examine the gender effect in the early years of technology, it is defined as a bias toward men's interests and styles. Women view computers as more than machines and thus regard them as masculine. Numerous researchers are debating this issue, which is viewed as evidence that culture shapes how a woman is brought up. As a result, women essentially have this phenomenon of being outside of technology. For example, numerous studies indicate that parents, teachers, and software manufacturers frequently convey to girls that computer science is not for them, thereby affecting their attitude toward information technology (Bimber, 2000).

Heimrath and Goulding (2001) argued that women feel out of place and unwelcome in computer science programs due to their minority status. As a result, historically, women avoided all forms of technology. However, women are increasingly exposed to these technologies in the modern era. Internet access is now available at home and work, and women of all ages have increased their online usage. According to a September 2013 study conducted by the United National Development Program on broadband and gender, men spend more time online than women. According to the research, men have more intense access than women. Nearly two decades after the Internet's inception, two-thirds of the world's population still lack internet access, and the unconnected are disproportionately female. Surprisingly, some countries compel women to remain offline via their legal and political systems. Gender inequalities persist in information ages such as the present, and it may be harmful to leave women behind in terms of information technology (The Broadband Commission Working Group on Broadband & Gender, 2013).

Numerous studies have documented the gender divide in technology and their attitudes toward the Internet. For example, a 1996 study reported that women experienced a higher level of disorientation and disenchantment with the internet than men (Ford & Miller, 1996). According to (Morahan-Martin & Janet, 1998), female respondents were less active online, spent less time digitally surfing and used the internet for narrower purposes than male respondents. To continue, Crocco, Cramer, and Meier (2008) report that girls and boys have a relatively equal interest in computers at the middle school level. However, according to Kim, Lehto, and Marrison (2007), men and women use the Internet for very different purposes. The disparity in internet usage is referred to as the 'digital divide,' and it has sparked numerous scholarly debates. In detail, Cullen (2001) asserts that the digital divide has evolved into a convenient metaphor for the perceived disadvantages of those who are either unable or unwilling to use these technologies in their daily lives. Additionally, it was stated that there is a specific group of people who face barriers to ICT adoption, one of which is women and girls. However, Kennedy, Wellman, and Klement (2003) assert that the digital divide is not solely a matter of accessibility, but also of barriers to Internet use.

Numerous researchers argue that men and women are fundamentally different for a variety of reasons. Men and women are distinct due to factors such as gender identity and attitudes toward gender roles (Fisher and Arnold, 1994). As a result, the question that arises is how and why gender differences affect internet usage patterns. According to Kim, Lehto, and Marrison (2007), gender differences in the way information is processed and decisions are made regarding internet usage are evident. According to a previous study conducted by Shashaani (1993), gender differences in Internet usage exist because men are more interested in computers than women are. Bimber (2000) argues that gender differences exist as a result of socioeconomic status, with men and women adapting differently to technology, which affects computer and Internet access and usage. Additionally, Additionally, Fagih, and Jaradat (2014) in Rattanaburi & Vongurai (2021)’s paper inspected perceived usefulness and perceived ease of-use to explain the adoption intention of m-commerce in Jordan and to study the moderating role of gender and individualism-collectivism to measure the adoption at the individual level. As such, the study of gender differences on the Internet remains novel, particularly in terms of

information search processes (Kim et al. 2007) Furthermore, research on Internet usage and the digital divide has primarily focused on quantifying statistical disparities in access and use (Schradie, 2021).

Significance of Study

According to Teo and Lim (1997), previous research has typically concentrated on the demographics of Internet users, the total number of Internet users, and the host sites. Additionally, previous research has been primarily quantitative, describing the distribution attributes associated with Internet usage patterns. It falls short of describing the experiences of women who use Internet services in comparison to men (Crocco et al., 2008). Thus, there is a need to explain the disparate usage patterns and to ascertain the underlying causes of such disparities, particularly in the context of the home environment. Furthermore, despite the internet's rapid growth worldwide, the majority of research on the internet has been conducted in Western countries, with very little being conducted in Asian contexts (Teo and Lim, 1997)

This research contributes significantly to the body of knowledge at both the academic and practical levels by analyzing the gender effect on e-commerce, particularly for Generation Y, which accounts for the majority of internet users worldwide. E-commerce success is contingent upon the consumer's willingness to fully utilize internet technology and conduct transactions via the internet. Thus, it is critical to understand consumer attitudes toward the internet and e-commerce to ascertain their need and demand in Malaysia and, ultimately, predict their intention to engage in e-commerce activities via the internet.

Additionally, this research is significant because it will determine the impact of generational characteristics and their intention to engage in e-commerce activities. It may assist e-commerce marketers in segmenting their market and developing marketing strategies to attract online consumers, as well as providing insight into the factors that may affect the e-commerce business. This study focuses exclusively on generation Y. Apart from its theoretical contribution, the study will benefit practitioners of e-commerce. The findings will assist businesses in designing and developing plans and solutions, as well as in expanding the implementation and use of e-commerce.

Study methodology

This is a quantitative study, and questionnaires were distributed to gather data from respondents. Due to the lower bias and greater generalizability associated with stratified random sampling, proportionate stratified random sampling was used in this study. The sample population for this study is composed of working professionals who are located in three locations: Kuala Lumpur City Center, Technology Park Malaysia, and Cyberjaya, which is home to the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) landmark. As mentioned previously, 450 questionnaires were distributed to ten companies in three distinct locations. Multiple regression techniques were used to test the hypothesis by examining the correlation between the dependent and independent variables. Demographic characteristics such as age, gender, education, income, frequency of internet and wireless use are quantified using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. Finally, all variables in this study are derived from reliable prior research findings.

Results and Discussion

Hypothesis 1: There will be a significant correlation between gender and attitude towards the internet among generation Y.

The primary goal of the study is to find out the correlation between Generation Y's view of the internet and their gender. According to the findings, there is a correlation between gender and attitude toward the internet. The R coefficient (a mathematical representation of attitude similarity between genders) is 0.333, which means that gender plays a role approximately 33% in the internet attitudes. Additionally, the value of the R is 0.577 is positive, implying that the correlation between the two variables is also positive. It seems as though there is a positive, statistically significant correlation between gender and attitudes toward the internet as well. thus, in conclusion, it is proven that H1, which was obtained as a result of the findings, the correlation, which is supported by the evidence, it is found to be supported that a significant

Women lagged behind in their use of the internet usage by at least as compared to men in the '90s, but by 2000, the gap was considerably reduced, at least in the US (Ono, 2003). More recent advertising portrays women's demographics and internet use in the marketplace, so women are finding out more about the opportunities offered by e-Commerce and e. Contemporary advertisements display contemporary women's values (Koernig and Granitz, 2006). While the overall gap between the amount of gender on the picture does not remain as much as before, it is clear that women use the internet in a different way and have different views on the concept of technology (Dittmar, et al., 2004). A recent study conducted by Papastero and Solomon (2015) concluded that the digital divide remains present in our society (as shown by There are numerous contributing factors, especially wealth, as well as well as educational level, race, gender, and geographical location, to the discrepancy. Men and women may have different socioeconomic statuses when it comes to computers and the internet, leading to differences in how much access they have to the technology (Bimber, 2000; Ono, 2003). While, on average, in general, men spend more time online than women, that is not always the case (The Broadband Commission Working Group on Broadband & Gender, 2013). In addition, men reported feeling the greatest degree of disorientation and disenchantment with the internet use was found in the women [experienced] according to Ford and Miller (1996). Less time was spent on the web, and fewer people accessed it, while women instead devoted less time to reading electronically or simply preferred other activities (Tsai & Lin, 2007). This study's conclusion follows the idea that there is a link between hypotheses and predictions and thus produces relevant data.

Hypothesis 2: Gender moderates the correlation between attitude toward the internet and e-commerce among generation Y.

The second objective of this study was to examine gender's moderating effect on attitudes toward the internet and e-commerce. According to the hypothesis testing, a significant proportion of respondents' attitudes toward e-commerce can be predicted by their attitudes toward the internet, with gender serving as a moderator. Additionally, the results indicated that gender has a significant correlation with attitudes toward the internet and e-commerce. The result indicates that the R square value for model 1 is 0.097 (R2 = 0.097), indicating that 9.7 percent of e-commerce can be predicted by a person's gender. Simultaneously, the R square value for model 2 is 0.270 (R2 = 0.270), indicating that 27% of e-commerce can be predicted by an individual's attitude toward the internet, with gender acting as a moderator. Additionally, when the R value for model 1 is 0.311 and 0.520 for model 2, it indicates that the correlation between variables is positive. The F value for computer literacy in model 1 is 42.762 and the significance level is 0.000. While in model 2, the F values for gender and attitude toward the internet are 73.523 and 0.000, respectively. The results indicated that there is a significant correlation between gender and attitude toward the internet and e-commerce, as predicted by the prediction equations (F = 42.762, p 0.05) and (F 73.523, p 0.05).

Gender, in the first hypothesis, acts as a moderator of attitudes toward the internet and e-commerce. The result demonstrates a statistically significant correlation between gender and e-commerce (= 0.311, p0.05) and gender moderate attitude toward the internet and e-commerce (= 0.300, p0.05). Thus, it supported the second hypothesis (H5) that gender influences generation Y's attitude toward the internet and e-commerce.

It has been previously suggested that there is a gender gap with regards to the internet and e-commerce, and thus, people who have a strong gender attitude may prefer not to be online; otherwise, those who are less interested in gender may be more open to the internet. Following previous research, this could be a trend. In numerous academic disciplines, people argue that males and females process information differently. When exposed to graphical or text information graphics, the average person does not show response bias towards men or women give a greater variety of answers to visual stimuli; on top of that, they accept a greater number of answers As a result, this fact, consumers may have an increasing latitude in their attitudes about e-commerce and the internet may develop an equalization of responsibility (Holbrook, 1986). The impact of gender on information technology on consumer acceptance has been investigated thoroughly. Some factors are taken into consideration when looking at the characteristics and purposes of information technology when evaluating an individual's or organization's use of it (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). According to earlier research, males see their computers as having a greater impact on their level of usefulness on the world, especially with regards to solving science problems (Shashaani and Khalili, 2001). With respect to reproduction, since males are less

idealistic in regards to pregnancy and childbirth, they value the outcome more of having children, while females have a more practical attitude toward their well-being. That is, having a child's well-being takes precedence over the idea of having a son or a daughter in many situations, and thus both genders have an optimistic perspective about their abilities to thrive, even if it does not end in offspring (Shashaani and Khalili, 2001). Also, pay more attention to the advantages in certain sectors, and in general, men place a higher value on the benefits of using IT (Dholakia and Uusitalo, 2002; Citrin et al., 2003). If one has a positive attitude toward the internet, the more exchanges and portals he or she has, which will encourage him or her to buy things online (Hernandez, Jimenez, & Martn, 2009). Based on the aforementioned findings, it was reported that gender biases users' opinions and purchasing behaviours toward the internet and e-commerce.

Study Implications

The findings have significant ramifications for business and future research. In terms of the paper's research contributions, the inclusion of gender as a moderating variable in e-commerce represents an interesting departure from the traditional approach. Recent research has treated all e-customers uniformly because the limited development of e-commerce precludes any differentiation based on moderating socio demographic variables. However, as e-commerce has grown in popularity, e-purchasing behavior can be analyzed according to the e-gender. customer's Our study established that, while certain perceptions are universal, others differ between males and females.

Without a doubt, this study's conclusion has several significant implications. The findings have considerable ramifications for practitioners, the body of knowledge, and policymakers. Additionally, these implications will serve as recommendations to managers and policymakers, as well as an addition to the body of knowledge.

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