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### Working Adults' Online Buying Behaviour Towards Branded Home Electronic Products

### By

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#### Abstract

Online buying is a sort of e-commerce that allows customers to purchase products directly from sellers via a mobile application or an online web platform instead of physically visiting a store. This has enabled customers to shop at their leisure, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This study aims to examine the association between product price, product quality, and online advertisement on the online buying behaviour of working adults towards branded home electronic products in Penang, Malaysia. The Theory of Reasoned Action was used as the foundation of the conceptual framework. A total of 417 respondents in Penang were involved in this study using an online survey questionnaire. A multiple linear regression analysis was used to evaluate hypotheses. The results revealed that product price and quality significantly influenced the online buying behaviour of working adults towards branded home electronic products in Penang, Malaysia. At the same time, the online advertisement did not show a significant influence.

**Keywords:** product quality, product price, online advertisement, buying behaviour, home electronics

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### Introduction

E-shopping, often known as online buying, is a kind of e-commerce that allows users to use websites to buy goods or services from any business (Ahmed et al., 2017). Online buying is becoming more popular and preferred among consumers seeking better value propositions regarding knowledge, convenience, cost, and choice as more people become more familiar with the Internet and its benefits (Rahman et al., 2018). Consumer behaviour in online buying refers to customers' activities when utilizing the Internet to obtain information or perform transactions to buy items or services (Faisal, 2019). Consumers may purchase goods or services directly from any place at any time and can do it without paying any additional money by purchasing anything online (Kadyan et al., 2020). This is referred to as "online buying behaviour" when a consumer wishes to engage in online transactions (Emamdin et al., 2020). According to Ahmed et al. (2017), even the most difficult things are now easy to locate just by searching for the item or product's name on an online platform, and consumers can buy them online.

Furthermore, many consumers increasingly use e-commerce platforms and other digital technologies like mobile applications to buy things online (Sarah et al., 2020). Malaysia's household appliances is expected to generate \$369 million in revenue in 2021, with a CAGR of 16.08 per cent from 2021 to 2025, resulting in a market volume of \$670 million by 2025 (Statista, 2021). By 2025, the number of household appliance users is estimated to reach 7.7 million, with online sales accounting for 15% of total market revenue by 2023. Furthermore, clients do not have to leave their homes or commute to search for and get the items they want, making online buying a popular option (Faisal, 2019). Given the increasing rise of online buying, this research offers a unique chance to learn more about the potential drivers influencing online buying behaviour. Furthermore, even though online buying behaviour has been researched both worldwide and locally (Frank et al., 2020; Mokhtar et al., 2020; Rahman et al., 2018), there is still a contextual gap, where there are few studies on online buying behaviour for branded home electronic products in Malaysia. Therefore, this study aims to determine the factors associated with the online buying behaviour of working adults towards branded home electronic products in Malaysia.

#### Online Buying Behavior of Branded Home Electronic Products in Malaysia

Online purchasing in Malaysia's e-commerce market is still in its early stages (Abdul Hamid et al., 2019). Malaysians' internet use increased from 76.9% in 2016 to 87.4% in 2018 (Jaafar, 2019). As more Malaysians start to buy online, the e-commerce sector in the country is getting more vibrant (Mokhtar et al., 2020). Consequently, online buying behaviour should be researched based on attitude and perceived risk, as this will lead to more Malaysians engaging in online trade, which will have a massive influence on the country's e-commerce growth (Wai et al., 2019). Young Malaysians, who are often equipped with smartphones, internet access, and social media profiles like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, have enough personality to make their own buying choices (Mokhtar et al., 2020). As a result, social media marketing is a simple and handy marketing technique that allows vendors to connect with customers as they make buying decisions (Kumar et al., 2020).

According to Abdul Hamid et al. (2019), a recent study has indicated that consumers value websites with helpful information when selecting online. Furthermore, consumers seek information through word-of-mouth advertising or social networking sites that might provide them with pre-purchase suggestions before buying a particular product or service (Kumar et al., 2020). Women, compared to men, are characterized by a more significant interest in products such as clothing, accessories, footwear, cosmetics and perfumes, children's goods,



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tickets, and furniture. However, men are likelier to buy items online, such as household appliances, computer software, telephones, and car accessories (Chin & Goh, 2017). Additionally, consumers' online buying behaviour is influenced by perceived risk (Nawi et al., 2019). As a result, credit card fraud, online phone merchants, data theft, identity theft, and trust difficulties have all created security concerns (Mokhtar et al., 2020). Malaysian customers are less trusting in Internet security, but the younger generation is gaining support (Abdul Hamid et al., 2019). Even though the availability of high-speed broadband applications has helped to increase the percentage of people buying online, e-commerce is mainly underutilized, particularly in developing nations like Malaysia. These social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, are crucial in the business sector to understand Malaysian customer behaviour when it comes to online buying (Kumar et al., 2020). According to Export.gov (2019), Malaysia has high rates of e-commerce usage, with 16.53 million online shoppers (50 per cent of the population) and 62 per cent of mobile users using their devices to shop online, and online buyers are motivated by price advantages, product range, and availability of reviews, thanks to Malaysia's Internet and mobile connectivity, as well as public sector encouragement. Financial risk, product performance risk, time or convenience risk, privacy risk, psychological risk, social risk, and online buying delivery risk are among the seven risks that Malaysian online buyers are concerned about (Nawi et al., 2019).

On the other hand, Malaysian online buyers seek online retailers that provide free shipping, convenience, and unique bargains (Export.gov, 2019). Although several studies have been conducted on online buying behaviour, the influences and context vary (Abdul Hamid et al., 2019; Chin & Goh, 2017; Nawi et al., 2019). So, there is still a need to look into and learn more about the validity of different factors that affect how people buy things online.

From the consumer's perspective, price is what is given or sacrificed in order to acquire a product (Koththagoda & Herath, 2018). Pricing determines the perception of the transaction's value and utility, and thus consumer happiness (Vasić et al., 2019). On the other hand, AlJahwari et al. (2018) discovered that perceived product quality directly relates to overall satisfaction with buying behaviour. Furthermore, Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) found that customers' behaviour toward digital advertising is an essential determinant of its usefulness in their research on social media and online advertising. Therefore, the current study examines the potential effects of price, quality, and online advertising on online buying behaviour. It would be beneficial for digital entrepreneurs and politicians to research these specific characteristics of online buying and consumer behaviour to appropriately build their strategies for the market (Rahman et al., 2018).

#### **Underpinning Theory**

The foundation of this study is the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) by Ajzen and Fishbein (1977). TRA emphasizes the connections between attitudes, subjective norms, and behaviour, emphasizing individual motives as predictors of conduct (Liu et al., 2017). The objective of a TRA study is to understand an individual's intention in terms of readiness or desire to participate in the behaviours being evaluated (Ajzen, 1985). An individual's attitude refers to his or her positive or negative feelings toward a specific behaviour (Nguyen et al., 2019). The psychological feature part of the attitude, also called beliefs, is an appraising reaction to objects of attitude, whereas the affective part is related to one's feelings of stimuli (Lee & Choe, 2019). According to Ajzen and Fishbein (1977), consumers are regularly confronted with various options regarding stores, goods, brands, models, and colours while making purchases. Customers' attitudes about a product, a brand, a person, or an issue are the subject of this theory's application to understanding consumer behaviour (Haris et al., 2017). TRA distinguishes between related emotional and cognitive attitudes, which may be *Res Militaris*, vol.13, n°2, January Issue 2023

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distinguished due to differences in their underlying belief systems, experimental manipulations, and empirical findings (Moon et al., 2017). The current study focuses solely on online buying behaviour. Price and quality refer to perceptions about buying behaviour; however, advertising provides an "opinion" of a specific reference group that influences online buying behaviour by creating a subjective norm. As a result, the TRA is a good underlying theory to support current research.

### **Literature Review**

Previous research has found that product price positively influences working adults' online purchasing behaviour for branded home electronic products. Price influences customer perceptions, implying that people make purchases based on perceived price levels rather than actual monetary value (Ahmed et al., 2019). Working adults have the knowledge and expertise to value and compare products based on the price they pay. According to Amron (2018), consumers' pricing decisions are influenced by highly competitive pricing. As a result, one of the positive influences is product pricing.

Meanwhile, past studies also reported that product quality positively influences the online buying behaviour of working adults towards branded home electronic products in Penang, Malaysia. Quality is vital regardless of the product produced (Ganesh & Vakayil, 2018). Consumers could also distinguish between high-quality products and make more educated purchasing selections (Šugrová et al., 2017). Working adults can appraise and compare products depending on their product quality because of their user experience. The most crucial factors to consider when selecting high-quality products are durability and reliability (Mashao & Sukdeo, 2018). As a result, quality is one of the positive influences. In addition, past studies also reported that online advertisements positively influence working adults' online buying behaviour towards branded home electronic products in Penang, Malaysia. According to Giao and Vuong (2020), the advertisement informs the customer about the product or service, and its eye-catching structure and content also make the consumer happy, increasing their interest in the commercial. Working adults have easy access to the Internet, which they use to communicate with others, work, search for information, and shop online, among other things. According to Belanche et al. (2017), online advertising is much superior to traditional print advertising because of its clarity and connection. As a result, one of the positive influences is an online advertisement. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

- **H1.** Product price positively affects online buying behaviour towards branded home electronic products.
- **H2.** Product quality positively affects online buying behaviour towards branded home electronic products.
- **H3.** Online advertisement is positively affects online buying behaviour towards branded home electronic products.

### **Methods**

#### **Participants**

This study used a cross-sectional design by utilizing survey methods to examine the relationship between product pricing, product quality, online advertisement, and online buying behaviour. Penang, Malaysia, was chosen as the research location because online buying is growing among working adults. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2021), there are about 863,000 working adults in Penang, Malaysia. Based on the Sample Size

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Calculator, the total sample required is 384. Using a snowball sampling method, an online survey link was shared across various platforms such as WhatsApp, LinkedIn, and Facebook. A total of 421 sets were returned, with four sets being eliminated owing to being unable to pass the clarifying criteria questionnaires from the respondents. As a result, the total number of valid questionnaires is 417, with a response rate of 93.5%.

In terms of gender, a total of 54.9% are males, whereas 45.1% are females. Regarding age groups, the respondents aged 30 to 39 make up the largest group, accounting for 42.2%. While those aged 40 to 49 accounted for 28.3%, those aged 18 to 29 accounted for 19.9%. Meanwhile, those aged 50 to 59 accounted for 6.2%, and those aged 60 and older accounted for 3.4%. Regarding ethnicity, Malay respondents account for 46.3%, followed by Chinese at 45.1%, Indians at 6.7%, and others at just 1.9%. Lastly, in terms of marital status, 62.4% of respondents are married, and 37.6% are single.

**Table 1** Respondents' demographic profile

	-	Frequency	Percent
Age Group	18-29	83	19.9
	30-39	176	42.2
	40-49	118	28.3
	50-59	26	6.2
	60 and above	14	3.4
C 1	Male	229	54.9
Gender	Female	188	45.1
Marital Ctatas	Married	260	62.4
Marital Status	Single	157	37.6
Ed. 1.1	Malay	193	46.3
	Chinese	188	45.1
Ethnicity	Indians	28	6.7
	Others	8	1.9

#### Measures

#### Online Buying Behavior

This construct consists of five items, which are adapted from Lavanya and Saraswathi (2018) and Sharifuddin et al. (2018) using the 5-Point Likert Scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). An example of an item includes "I buy branded home electronic products online". The Cronbach alpha coefficient was .66.

#### **Product Price**

This construct consists of five items, which are adapted from Bajwa and Singh (2019) using the 5-Point Likert Scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). An example of an item includes "the prices of branded home electronic products determine your buying decision." The Cronbach alpha coefficient was .66.

#### **Product Quality**

This construct consists of five items, which are adapted from Bajwa and Singh (2019), Gu (2019), and Suhaily and Darmoyo (2017) using the 5-Point Likert Scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). An example of an item includes "it is important to buy high quality branded home electronic products". The Cronbach alpha coefficient was .62.

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#### Online Advertisement

This construct consists of five items, which are adapted from Tang and Chan (2017) and Hamdi and Khemakhem (2019) using the 5-Point Likert Scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). An example of an item includes "buying branded home electronic products by clicking into the online advertisement will save time". The Cronbach alpha coefficient was .64.

### **Data Analysis**

The Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0 was used to analyze the data. Descriptive analyses were used to determine the frequency distribution of the respondents' backgrounds and the understudied characteristics. The links between product price, product quality, online advertisement, and online buying behaviour were then examined using Pearson correlation analysis. Finally, linear multiple regression analysis was performed to investigate the unique predictor of job satisfaction. All statistical tests had a cutoff value of 0.05, which was used as a measure of significance.

#### Result

The findings of the Pearson correlation between product price, product quality, online advertisement, and online buying behaviour are shown in Table 2. It was shown that a positive correlation exists between price and employee satisfaction (r = 0.594, p < 0.01). This suggests that working adults who perceive highly competitive pricing tend to engage in online buying behaviour. Additionally, there is a significant correlation between product quality and online buying behaviour (r = 0.628, p < 0.01). Working adults tend to engage in online buying behaviour if the product quality is good. However, there is no significant correlation between online advertisements and online buying behaviour (r = 0.017, p > 0.05).

**Table 2:** Descriptive statistics and correlations among variables (N = 162)

No.	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1.	Online Buying Behaviour	3.94	.479	1			
2.	Product Price	4.07	.496	.594**	1		
3.	Product Quality	4.18	.464	.628**	.810**	1	
4.	Online Advertisement	4.10	.513	.017	.065	.017	1

Note: \*\*p < .01

The results of multiple regression analysis in examining the predictors of online buying behaviour are presented in Table 3. Results indicated that the combination of the product price, product quality, and online advertisements significantly explained 41.6% of the variance in online buying behaviour. Product quality (beta = 0.426, p < 0.01) was found to be the strongest predictor of online buying behavior, followed by product price (beta = 0.249, p < 0.01). However, the online advertisement was a non-significant predictor of online buying behaviour (beta = -0.007, p > 0.05). Thus, hypotheses H1 and H2 are supported, but not hypothesis H3.

**Table 3:** Predictors of job satisfaction (n = 162)

<b>Criterion Variable</b>	<b>Predictor Variable</b>	$oldsymbol{F}$	$R^2$	df	Beta	t	p
Online Buying Behaviour	Product Price	97.957**			0.249	3.874	0.00
	<b>Product Quality</b>		.416	(3,413)	0.426	6.642	0.00
	Online Advertisement				-0.007	186	0.85

Note: \*\*p < .01

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## **Discussion**

This study aims to determine the effect of product price, product quality, and online advertisement on working adults' online buying behaviour towards branded home electronic products in Penang, Malaysia. The results of this study showed that both the quality of the product and price are important in predicting how working adults will buy branded home electronics online.

The findings of this study reveal that product quality is the strongest predictor of online buying behaviour towards branded home electronic products among working adults in Penang, Malaysia, thus supporting H2. Our findings thus align with Ganesh and Vakayi (2018), Mashao and Sukdeo (2018), and Šugrová et al. (2017). Branded home electronics companies should focus their efforts and resources on creating high-quality items for their customers. In the competitive and challenging world of branded home electronics, producing a high-quality product at a fair price will ensure consistent revenue and encourage repeat purchases. Quality products provide organizations with several critical strategic advantages, including increased market share; new customer acquisition through word of mouth from existing customers; good brand image support; a low consumer rejection rate; and fortifying happy customers against threats from new entrants and existing competitors.

The H1 of this study was that product price positively affects online buying behaviour towards branded home electronic products among working adults in Penang, Malaysia. The finding was aligned with that of Ahmed et al. (2019) and Amron (2018). Working adults' buying behaviour towards branded home electronic products is influenced by product price, which implies that consumers make purchases based on perceived price levels rather than actual monetary worth. A very competitive price affects the consumer's decision. By looking at the perceived pricing value, consumers may see the significant and in-depth aspects of the items. The industry should rethink its company strategy and try looking at things from other angles, particularly from the perspective of customers, in order to increase revenue and aid in corporate decision-making. In terms of marketing, they can concentrate on the price factor. From the consumer's perspective, price is what is given or sacrificed in order to acquire a product. Pricing determines the perception of the transaction's value and utility and, thus, consumer happiness. Most people who buy online do so because they can compare prices and avoid overpaying.

The last finding of this study, which is related to H3, reveals the insignificant effect of online advertisement on buying behaviour towards branded home electronic products, thus contradicting studies by Giao and Vuong (2020) and Belanche et al. (2017), which said that online advertisement influences online buying behaviour. Consumers' responses to online advertisements via social media greatly influence the product's correctness (Hee & Yen, 2018). According to Kasuma et al. (2020), security and privacy are among the most important factors influencing consumer preferences for online shopping. They may prefer to avoid social media online advertisements if they involve a substantial worry about security (John et al., 2017). Thus, due to the security and privacy concerns, the working adults in this study do not require online advertising to influence them towards buying branded home electronic products online.

#### Limitations, Future Research, and Conclusions

The study proved helpful as a starting point for future industrial and academic research on the issue of online buying behaviours. However, there were certain drawbacks to the study's execution. Due to time constraints, this study only consists of three independent variables that

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influence the online buying behaviour of working adults towards branded home electronic products in Penang, Malaysia. In a future study, more variables could be used to help people understand the study better.

This study is noteworthy because it provides insights into individual motives as predictors of online buying behaviour. As a result, our study has shown an ideal framework for understanding the interaction between attitudes, subjective norms, and behaviour, concentrating on crucial factors such as product price and quality. Product quality, in particular, is found to have the most significant impact. Nonetheless, since the impact of COVID-19 continues to put pressure on most Malaysian businesses, these organizations must adopt proper steps and make meaningful choices to increase revenue and aid in corporate decision-making. Notably, our research has contributed to the Theory of Reasoned Action by examining the attitudes, subjective norms, and behavioural components and discovering that these determine online buying behaviour.

### Acknowledgment

The authors offer special gratitude to INTI International University for the opportunity to conduct research and publish the research work. In particular, the authors would like to thank INTI International University for funding to publish this research work.

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