



## Extended Practice of Technology Acceptance Model; Impact of Personal Innovation and Ease of Use on Internet Shopping Intentions: A Study on Apparel Buyers' Purchase Intention in Malaysia

**GholamReza Zandi** 

Associate Professor, University of Kuala Lumpur (UniKL), Business School, Malaysia. E-mail: zandi@unikl.edu.my

**Sandy Low Bee Choo**

Ph.D. Candidate, University of Kuala Lumpur Business School, Malaysia.

**Imran Ahmed Shahzad\*** 

\*Corresponding author, Business Incubation Center, University of Faisalabad, Pakistan; Skema Business School, Sophia Antipolis France. E-mail: imran\_rana77@hotmail.com

**Mohd Farid Shamsudin**

Associate Professor, University of Kuala Lumpur (UniKL), Business School, Malaysia. E-mail: mfarid@unikl.edu.my

### Abstract

The progression of Internet as a vehicle to penetrate and develop markets is far reached. Advancement in telecommunication and technology are very rapid in Malaysia. Further, the spur is supported and promoted by the government whilst Malaysian's are receptive to this. However, Malaysian retailers seem to channel much of its turnover through the old avenue. This study is a litmus test on Malaysians awareness on the local apparel sites. Some of the highlighted rationale to shop for apparels online is the experience, convenience and availability. On the flip side, non-user friendly, safety and non-sensory environment are underscored. These variables are analyzed using Chi-Square analysis to test its statistical independence, followed by correlation and further regressed. The research is focused on university students within Klang Valley. There are limited resources to previous studies done on this subject as source of reference. Therefore, further studies can bring forth insights on retailers in Malaysia and the consumer's behavior; or either one, as the catalyst influence awareness on our local apparel sites. Rhetorical as it may sound, no one is prepared to assume risks in a questionable market.

**Keywords:** Online, Purchase Intention, Internet, Technology Model, Innovation.

## Introduction

This study investigates the apparel's industry utilization of the new channel of purchasing through the internet. Although the World Wide Web has past its infancy phase throughout the world, it is still very much new to the Malaysian apparel industry. It is seen to be the way forward and survival of the apparel industry in completing not only in the Malaysian market but also appealing towards the global market. Existing businesses would want to expand their operations beyond the Malaysian boundaries. Therefore, going online is the 'fast-track' catalyst for business presence, growth and profitability. Nevertheless, following the trend is not a guarantee for success although failing to do so can be disastrous. Therefore, it is vital to substantiate the strategy and its implementation for the apparel industry to go online. Apparel businesses must have a comprehensive affiliation towards the targeted segments. This can ensure that the business is taking the right step in order to capitalize on the opportunities. The production of apparels does not require intricate technology. It is more focused on fashion designers' art of creation. Hence, from a global perspective, everyone is on a level playing field. Nonetheless, given the scenario in Malaysia, the cultural integration coupled with government support and human capital development (Shahzad et al., 2018), gives Malaysia an edge over some other global players. One of the main reasons is of its cultural diversities. It creates a synthesis of apparel designs for the multi-racial and multi-ethnic populations. Therefore, it provides a variety whilst complementing diverse market niches. The Malaysian government has made a hefty investment in enhancing the information and communication technology sector which leads to a very fine tuned framework and platform. Thus, small and medium enterprises (SME's) can have a very wide global presence if they fit in and adopt the best strategies to suit their business. The purpose of this research is to conduct a survey on Malaysian market towards online apparel industry on the awareness, services offered and performance (Shahzad & Bhatti, 2008) of existing online sites thus gauging consumer's purchasing power of apparel online. The data from the survey is of valuable information for existing online apparel businesses and guidelines for prospects' apparel business.

Since the mid 1990's, the Malaysian government set the precedence on integrating ICT, supporting both public and private ventures. Going online creates a win-win situation for the parties involved, given that they utilize their resources innovatively. Structured framework and economic plans are laid and revolve around ICT from then on. However, the performance is not in the satiety state (Shahzad et al., 2018; Shahzad, Farrukh, Yasmin, 2020). However, until today, the response has been discouraging. Currently, there are only 12% of the 5.5 million household's broadband users are in Malaysia (The Star, 2007; Naseri et al., 2021). The low number of penetration in the households reflects the SMEs support here in Malaysia. The majority of Malaysian SMEs are hesitant and holding back from stepping in harmony with the Malaysian government's effort in promoting ICT. Further, it is hurting the Malaysia's economy in terms of global presence. From the demand perspective, trust and confidence in online purchasing are inadequate. The main reason is this technology eradicates the sense of control over transactions.

## Background

The Internet is defined as a colossal of computers that are interconnected. It offers organizations an inexpensive and sophisticated tool for advertising, taking and placing orders, promoting their philosophies, and communicating with their customers all over the world (Palumbo and Herbig, 1998; Noor, Noranee, Zakaria, Unin, & Suaee, 2020). At first, it was developed for military purposes after the Second World War by the US Defense Advanced Research Project Agency (DARPA). Later, ARPANET (the first version of Internet) was adopted from the DARPA to interconnect different universities and government computers throughout the States. The notion of the development is to participate in knowledge sharing (Zandi, Aslam, Selamat & Umar, 2018) activities between the parties. As the development progressed, evolution took place and therefore, internet came into being, as what we know today. Today's society finds it hard to maneuver information without it. A simple personification is Google, which stands as the most popular search engine, exemplifies the momentous of internet influence.

Internet presents an apparatus in approaching a targeted segment. Therefore, demographics segmentation are sliced and diced virtually of conventional method. However, consumers' appeal towards online will surely differ. For example, an apparel made for athletes can be delivered through physical stores, mail catalogue, and also online. According to the standard discussions of buying frequency, relatively few buyers in a product category account for the majority of purchases (Hallberg, 1995). Consumer behavior is basically derived from the seven steps in the Consumer Decision Process Model. Consumers need for recognition will trigger the search for more information which then leads to pre-purchase evaluation of alternatives. After the purchase is done, consumption takes place followed by the post-consumption evaluation and divestment. Whilst scholarly researches do not corroborate the divergence between traditional and online consumer behavior, it is often argued that building trust and confidence has been added to the online buying process (Lee, 2002; Liebermann and Stashevsky, 2002; Liang and Lai, 2002). Cheung et al (2003) identified two groups of uncontrollable factors on online purchasing behavior, namely characteristics and environmental influences, and three groups of controllable factors, namely product/service, medium and merchant/intermediary characteristics. The interaction of controllable and uncontrollable factors underpins also the online decision-making process (O'Cass and Fenech, 2003; Zain, E. N. M., et. al., 2020).

Schoenbachler and Gordon (2002) report that there is now competitive pressure on retailers to add an online presence. To date little is known of the full extent of fashion retail involvement in the Internet. Over the Internet, brand positioning does not mean it's a mutually exclusive process. For instance, Louis Vuitton can push its brand presence in two folds, appealing to the targeted market whilst educating the traditional or online segment vice versa. Therefore, it is in line with Jackson and Shaw's (2000) findings that market positioning strategies through branding have become an increasingly important selling feature in the apparel industry. On the

other hand, competitors are just a click away. Therefore, turning visitors into purchasers becomes the challenge. Incentives must be given out to entice browsers and turn them into purchasers and hence, successfully stamp “cognitive-lock-in” on the purchasers and therefore creates loyalty towards the brand. Of course there are some other initiatives such as purchase with purchase promotion and creating a “community” like what eBay has successfully done in order to further stomp consumers’ loyalty. This value enhancing measures would eventually be a standard offering online. In all, businesses must rigorously innovate themselves to shrug off competitions and make their presence prevalent especially in a fierce and virtually accessible environment.

## Literature Review

**Online Purchasing Intention:** Park and Stoel (2005) and Cheong, Muthaly, Kuppusamy, & Han, (2020) in their study on of brand familiarity, experience, and information on online apparel purchase points out that consumers are hindered to shop online because of the risks associated with the internet, namely security, privacy and trustworthiness issues. Most of the transactions over the internet are done with “familiar” brands; brands that are “recognizable” through experience with other shopping arrangements. These sorts of brands do have a positive weight on consumers’ purchase inklings. In line with this study, Yoh (1999) found that previous experience with internet shopping positively influenced the consumer’s overall attitude and belief about internet shopping. Positive influencers are experiences associated with the brand, such as store, purchase and/or usage of the brand. Exposure towards the brands such as through commercial advertisements and reference from trusted groups should enhance brand familiarity. Therefore, with higher familiarity with the brand amplifies consumers’ confidence towards, hence, ebbing the perceived risks.

Through Multivariate and univariate analyses, Park and Stoel (2005) found a significant effect of brand familiarity and previous experience on perceived risk and purchase intention, and no effect on the amount of information on perceived risk and purchase intention. These findings which supports their hypotheses of the study is consistent with the findings of other peers’ research (Howard, 1973; Howard and Sheth, 1969; Laroche et al., 1996; Yoh, 1999 and Elliot and Fowell, 2000). However, there are two hypotheses that diverge from previous studies by Jasper and Ouellette (1994), which found that the amount of product information presented by the retailers and/or perceived by consumers negatively influenced perceived risk and positively influenced purchase intention. Therefore, internal information, particularly awareness with brands offered online and preceding occurrence shopping online influences discernment of risk associated with shopping online, as well as intentions to buy online.

**Online Interactivity:** Lee (2002) and Cheong, Muthaly, Kuppusamy, & Han, (2020) found that consumers were hesitant to purchase online because they lacked information acquired through direct contact with the product. Fiore and Fin (2003) emphasized on interactivity of image in an online environment, where interactive refers to the ability to create and manipulate images of a

product or environment on a web site. This may enhance users' hesitancy towards purchasing online even without sensory information as it is an activity, developing an image or placing it in a different environment. The importance of website interactivity is also supported by much scholarly research (Dholakia and Rego, 1998). Purchasers of apparel online need more information other than about the individual product itself.

There was no significant difference between male and female subjects in willingness to purchase (Fiore and Fin, 2003). Their study supported that images that functions as providing sensory information has a positive influence on approach responses towards an online retailer. If entertainment created by the newness of the image interactivity function were responsible for enhancing the approach responses, then the entertaining functions would require frequent updates (Pine and Gilmore, 1999). Shih (1998) offers that the vividness of an image has positive effect on approach responses towards the website thus proving that a positive relationship with level of approach response variables. Image interactivity functions that produce high levels of each of the contributing factor may have the strongest or longest lasting effect on approach response. It is also suggested that more advanced image interactivity functions become prevalent, simpler images interactivity functions may appear relatively archaic, losing their appeal and potentially limiting their influence on approach responses.

**Factor affecting online purchase intentions:** Situational Factors; Gehrt & Yan (2004); AL-Hassani, Khakimova, & Alfadaa, (2020) proved that situational factors have significant influence on online and catalog format selection and perceptions of attributes that are crucial to that selection. Apparel purchasers stress importance on transaction services and retailer personality. Time constraint has a positive correlation with merchandise and service factors. The results suggest that clear merchandise illustrations, easily navigated Web Sites, prompt and consistent delivery (transaction service), as well as an attractively designed site, well- developed copy, and the availability of well-known brands (retail personality) are measures that online apparel retailers could utilize to reduce the perceived shopping risk. Time scarcity also has a significant impact on consumers' product choice and store choice (Ratneshwar and Shocker, 1991). Palmer (1997) noted that Internet format was found to take the longest time for shopping for a product followed by stores and catalogs, where as internet retailers themselves also take the most time to deliver merchandise.

**Impact of Colors:** Nitse et. al. (2004); Yew, & Kamarulzaman, (2020) studied the impact of color in the e-commerce marketing of fashions, which indicated that the inconsistency of these colors representative did cause companies to lose sales and customers. This indirectly leads to dissatisfaction and complaints from customers. 58.1% respondents said that they would never make a repeat purchase if there were differences in colors from what was ordered on the website. This indication of customer retention is negatively impacted.

**Patriotic v Cost Effectiveness:** The adaptation of new products is a critical issue faced by many foreign apparel manufacturers and retailers expanding into the international market. Studies conducted on consumers' perceptions about domestic versus foreign apparel have found that American consumers prefer US made apparel to imports (Beaudoin, 1994). The US textile trade deficit reveals that consumers are purchasing more imported apparel than domestic apparel (American Textile Manufacturers Institute, 1995, 1997). In a study by Dickson, Lennon (2004); Aji, Berakon, & Md Husin, (2020) on Chinese consumer market segments for foreign apparel products, the highest level of monthly apparel expenditures of all groups is the US brand value consumers. The same goes to US made apparel, marking the highest value of expenditures. These expenditures hold major differences for all the three segments supporting either Chinese brands or China-made apparel. They also discovered that price and quality are necessary attributes powering Chinese consumer purchasing, both gender are potential consumer of foreign-made and foreign- brand apparel, and the higher income group are more likely to buy foreign-made apparel.

**Dimensions of Online Shopping:** Kim (2003); Rahman, Yazdani, Hamid, & Al Mamun, (2020) studied the dimensions of online shopping consisting of four factors – transaction/cost which was perceived as most important; interactivity holds the second most important factor; followed by site designs and incentive programs. Credit card security, privacy assurance, access to a major credit card and information on the reliability of the seller were among the issues of the online transaction identified. Issues on cost are basically fast delivery time, cheaper process than retail stores, no or low shipping, handling charge and money-back guarantee. By these implications, Kim suggested that establishing a risk-free image will be the key strategy for retailers to boost up their sales and visits from shoppers online. Encouraging credit card companies to make consumer protection assurances and a monitoring system that is consistent to update customer's particulars will also help in online retailing. The most important predictor of consumers' purchases intentions on clothes, jewelry or accessories is the incentive program. The study proves that site design was not a significant attribute on the impact to consumers' purchase intentions. Online shoppers these days are well educated on the online environment where they are prepared for ups and downs on the speed of the internet and colors and fabric variations in screen and actual material.

**Socio-demographic:** Kim (2002) and Rahman, Yazdani, Hamid, & Al Mamun, (2020) noted that the current socio-demographic transformation in consumers' market has significantly altered consumers' expectations and demands during shopping experiences. Efficiency in a more entertaining way is the new de facto. The convergence of satisfaction from an enjoyable shopping experience coupled with convenience and excellent service brings about a new challenge to the retailers. Value for money is also factored in the challenge. Further, the convergence of this expected anticipation does not diverge from channels and/or mediums. Therefore, the diminish "touch-and-feel" items such as jewelry, groceries, and apparels have

brought about and given rise to universal non-sellable items. Thus, the question rises whether the Internet will replace traditional malls. However, it is to be noted that Peterson (1997) suggested that Internet channel will only displace the distribution of revenues among channels or among members within the channel. It is similar to catalogue shopping's association with the current traditional mall before Internet came into existence. The replacement of traditional malls is unlikely because the "real" experience of shopping can never be brought forth by Internet. However, the "sense of ownership" may be replicated in other ways, such as through customization in the sense of what Dell has successfully achieved. Furthermore, eBay and Amazon.com through aesthetics and trustworthiness, values which they highly have promoted in its "community" with experiences that traditional malls might not be able to offer. In this study, attention was not given to catalogues and brick-and-mortar stores. Therefore, specific characteristics and its component of values are undermined.

**Gender:** Chiu et. al. (2005) studied on the influence online purchase intentions and concluded that both males and females have similar influence of personal innovativeness and perceived usefulness on attitude. Only males have influences of personal awareness of security and only females have the influence of perceived ease of purchasing, on both attitudes and online purchase intentions. Bem (1981) suggested that gender may be conceptualized as psychological constructs and both, male and female consumers are not at bipolar extremes on such dimensions as personal innovativeness, and thus they might vary based on degrees of femininity or masculinity.

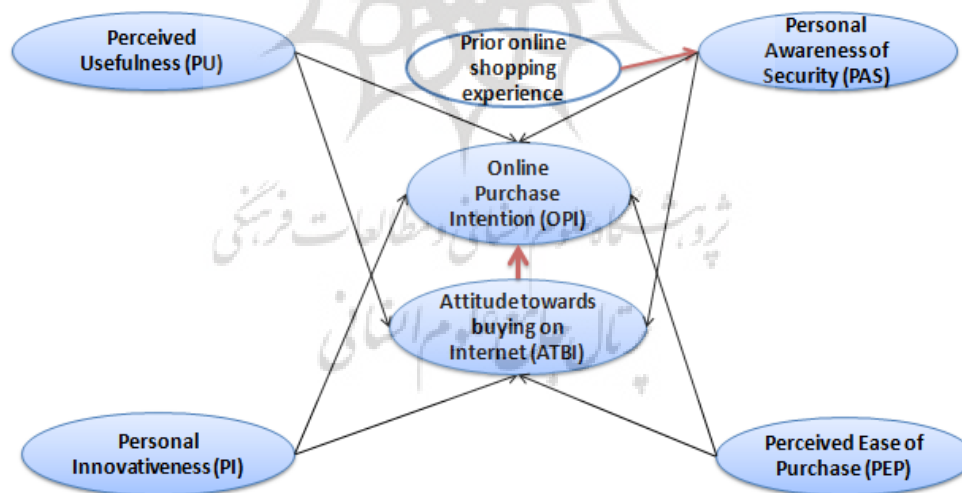


Figure 1. Research Framework

## Methodology

A sample size of 100 respondents is targeted to answer a series of fourteen questions. These 100 respondents are randomly selected. The venue chosen is Multimedia University, Cyberjaya Campus where there are 8,554 students from various countries. The utilization of computer and

technology in Multimedia University being situated right in the heart of Multimedia Super Corridor, Cyberjaya is fairly higher as compared to other universities. Students these days use the internet to communicate with their friends and families, do their homework, to have fun during their leisure time and basically do whatever that can be done online; students tend to discover it first. Therefore university students, the main explorers of the World Wide Web are targeted in this study. The respondents must be Malaysians, studying on campus, with the quota of 60% females and 40% males. The fieldwork was carried out in 5 days, where 20 surveys were conducted everyday according to the table below. The two sessions were chosen within the interval time where students had a break or the beginning of a class.

**Table 1.** Survey details

Session		Number of Survey
<b>Morning</b>	Male	4
10-11.30am	Female	6
<b>Evening</b>	Male	4
3-4.30pm	Female	6
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>

All questionnaires were personally administered. Questions were validated so that they were completely answered.

**Instrument design:** The questionnaires were designed to have a few parts covering the following; demographics, Internet usage, Internet knowledge (Zandi, Shahzad, Farrukh and Kot, 2020), Spending habits, Reasons to shop online, Awareness on the Malaysian sites, Ideal mode of online apparel site and What is lacking in the Malaysian apparel sites. Demographics include age, gender, level of education, how their allowance is earned and whether they possess their own transport. These questions are on a nominal scale. The age groups are broken up into three groups—below 18, between 19–25 and 25 and above. Females and males are track in gender. The level of education covers those who are currently pursuing Foundation, Diploma, Bach Degree and Master's Degree. Allowance earned by students is usually derived from Parents, Loans, Scholarships or Part-Time Jobs (Shahzad, Bhatti & Khalid, 2007). Ordinal questions on Internet usage and knowledge (Zandi, Singh, and Shahzad 2021) were asked to know if there are differences between those who uses the internet often, or just to shop. Questions asked consisted of both means of shopping that is offline and online including the spending habits. The reasons for shopping online or avoid shopping online were asked on a five point Likert scale; from agree strongly to disagree strongly. These reasons listed were taken from the literature review studied – Fun, Shopping Online Experience, Safety, Convenience, Speed, Sizing (Measurements shown are not accurate), Colors (Shades are different on screen), Fashion Availability (Not all styles are available), Current Offers (Differs from the physical stores), Pricing (More expensive),



Shopping Environment (Non Sensory Environment), Shipping Hassles (Being at home to receive packages), Safety (Credit Card Transactions), Time & Information Search Effort, Non User Friendly Website.

The main question is the awareness of the Malaysian apparel site and whether purchase is done at these sites after understanding the habits and reasons for shopping online. The questions on the ideal mode of internet apparel site, is to give retailers an idea of what consumers are ready for. It is the preference of consumers among these five groups; General Merchandiser Retailer (Megastore, all items under one site), General Fashion Retailer (Apparel of all brands under one site), Fashion Designer Retailer (Specific apparel brand, stand alone site), Product Specialists Fashion Retailer (Apparel of a category, e.g. all pants only) and By auction (Ebay.com.my). The last question using a five point Likert scale as well, narrows down to what is lack in the Malaysian apparel site and common reasons why the website does not work - Website Features and User friendliness, Lengthy Transaction Process, Physical Stores has more varieties and easily access, Prices are higher.

**Method of Analysis:** The scoring results of the evaluated variables were analyzed using statistical software – SPSS and Microsoft Excel. The utilization of SPSS is for the analysis of the frequency distribution of the score results for each of the variable. Data is first tabulated using cross tabulation to analyze the frequency and percentage of the respondents. Cross tabulation analysis, also known as contingency table analysis, is most often used to analyze categorical data. A cross-tabulation is a two or more dimensional table that records the frequency of respondents that have the specific characteristics described in the cells of the table. Cross-tabulation tables provide a wealth of information about the relationship between the variables. Data is then analyzed using Chi Square analysis to test for statistical independence, whether the variables are independent, having no relationship where it will show no significance or dependant on each other, where its significance will be shown.

Pearson Coefficient of Correlation is then applied to compute the correlation for each combination of variables. This correlation coefficient, measures the linear correlation between two variables. A correlation of zero means there is no relationship between the two variables. For a negative correlation, the variables work opposite each other. When there is a positive correlation between two variables, as the value of one variable increases, the value of the other variable also increases. The variables move together. As a final point, regression is used to examine the relationship between one dependent and one independent variable. Here, we measure the awareness as the dependant variables and all other variable as independent variable.

## Results

Table 2. Descriptive Results

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	100	1	3	2.18	0.51991
Gender	100	1	2	1.4	0.49237
Education	100	1	4	2.24	0.90028
Allowance	100	1	4	1.82	0.74373
OwnTransport	100	1	2	1.39	0.49021
YourselfAsA	100	1	5	3.48	1.36685
Spending_apparel	100	1	4	2.84	0.88443
Spending_apparelonline	100	2	4	3.87	0.46395
IU_usetheinternet	100	1	5	2.24	1.28802
IU_shoponline	100	1	5	3.89	1.24637
IU_shopforapparelanymeans	100	1	5	2.36	1.05906
IU_shopforapparelonline	100	2	5	4.53	0.68836
IKNI_knowledge	100	1	3	1.47	0.64283
IKNI_knowledgelatestshops	100	1	3	1.87	0.76085
SO_fun	100	1	4	2.1	0.98985
SO_onlineexperience	100	1	4	2.44	0.94623
SO_safety	100	1	5	2.77	1.0811
SO_price	100	1	4	2.39	1.09078
SO_speed	100	1	4	2.47	1.09595
SO_unavailability	100	1	4	1.85	1.01876
SOA_sizing	100	1	4	1.77	0.98324
SOA_colors	100	1	4	1.84	0.91806
SOA_fashionavailability	100	1	4	1.78	0.92747
SOA_currentoffers	100	1	4	1.95	1.06719
SOA_pricing	100	1	4	1.99	1.06832
SOA_nonsensoryenvironment	100	1	5	2.3	1.04929
SOA_shippinghassles	100	1	5	2.74	1.00121
SOA_safety	100	1	4	2.06	0.96211
SOA_timeinfosearch	100	1	5	2.43	1.15693
SOA_nonuserfrenly	100	1	5	2.07	1.05653
AMAO_aware	100	1	2	1.72	0.45126
AMAO_puchaseditem	100	1	2	1.92	0.27266
MIAS_genmerchandise	100	1	5	2.94	1.22119
MIAS_genfashionretailer	100	1	5	2.98	0.92091
MIAS_fashiondesignerretailer	100	2	5	3.1	0.79772
MIAS_productspecialistsretailer	100	2	5	3.64	0.65935
MIAS_byauction	100	1	5	4.08	0.91762
LMAO_nonuserfrenly	100	1	4	2.01	0.77192
LMAO_lengthy	100	1	4	2.1	0.78496
LMAO_physicalmorevariety	100	1	4	2.15	0.82112
LMAO_currentoffersdiffers	100	1	4	1.97	0.94767
LMAO_pricing	100	1	4	1.94	0.9081
LMAO_longshippingtime	100	1	4	1.85	0.89188
LMAO_safety	100	1	4	1.75	0.94682

Table 3. Regression Results

Model	Variables Entered
1	IU_shopforapparelonline, IU_usetheinternet, IU_shopforapparelanymean,
	IU_shoponline(a)
	IKNI_knowledgelatestshops, IKNI_knowledge(a)
	SO_speed, SO_onlineexperience, SO_safety, SO_unavailability, SO_fun, SO_price(a)
	MIAS_fashiondesignerretailer, MIAS_productspecialistsretailer, MIAS_genmerchandiser, MIAS_byauction, MIAS_genfashionretailer(a)
	LMAO_nonuserfrenly, LMAO_physicalmorevariety, LMAO_safety, LMAO_pricing, LMAO_currentoffersdiffers, LMAO_longshippingtime, LMAO_lengthy(a)

Table 4. Regression Results (continued)

Model Summary									
Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted	Std.	Change Statistics				
			R <sup>2</sup>	Error of the Estimate	R <sup>2</sup>	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	0.79	0.624	0.503	0.3181	0.086	2.437	7	75	0.026
e. Predictors: (Constant), IU_shopforapparelonline, IU_usetheinternet, IU_shopforapparelanymean, IU_shoponline, IKNI_knowledgelatestshops, IKNI_knowledge, SO_speed, SO_onlineexperience, SO_safety, SO_unavailability, SO_fun, SO_price, MIAS_fashiondesignerretailer, MIAS_productspecialistsretailer, MIAS_genmerchandiser, MIAS_byauction, MIAS_genfashionretailer, LMAO_nonuserfrenly, LMAO_physicalmorevariety, LMAO_safety, LMAO_pricing, LMAO_currentoffersdiffers, LMAO_longshippingtime, LMAO_lengthy									

Table 5. Regression Results (continued)

ANOVA							
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	12.573	24	0.524	5.179	0	
	Residual	7.587	75	0.101			
	Total	20.16	99				
e. Predictors: (Constant), IU_shopforapparelonline, IU_usetheinternet, IU_shopforapparelanymean, IU_shoponline, IKNI_knowledgelatestshops, IKNI_knowledge, SO_speed, SO_onlineexperience, SO_safety, SO_unavailability, SO_fun, SO_price, MIAS_fashiondesignerretailer, MIAS_productspecialistsretailer, MIAS_genmerchandiser, MIAS_byauction, MIAS_genfashionretailer, LMAO_nonuserfrenly, LMAO_physicalmorevariety, LMAO_safety, LMAO_pricing, LMAO_currentoffersdiffers, LMAO_longshippingtime, LMAO_lengthy							

## Conclusion

From the study, it shows that awareness towards online apparel industry in Malaysia is still low, where only 29% out of 28% of all survey participants reported to have shopped online. The most important factors that affected their decision to shop online was safety, user friendliness of the website and also speed which refers to the prolong shipping time. The conclusion of this study provides a starting point for the retailers who are interested in venturing into online sales. These retailers must be prepared for either their physical stores to co-exist with an online store, along with other retailers of similar product category, or to start an online store to cover the top three

priorities shoppers look for. These priorities are user friendliness, payment and transaction security and lastly, shipping time.

The next step is to channel the existence of these stores to their loyal customers and other shoppers. When designing communication, safety and speed are elements to be communicated apart from the brand and uniqueness of the apparel because these are what shoppers look out for. The advertisements can be strategically-placed in websites that are frequently visited by your target market. If the brand of apparel is a sportswear, advertisements during games or sports updates site would be most relevant to be seen by the target market. These products can also be added to affiliate the provider. Direct mail and e-mail advertising can also be used by utilizing databases in existing stores or buying databases from companies. Communication of the presence of Malaysian apparel sites to the target market can be done through the utilization of the five elements identified in this survey. Firstly, users need to feel fun shopping online. Having more competitive prices than physical stores, availability of products in the online version of the store is guaranteed, that is, there should either be more variety if the online store carries the same items as the physical store. Finally, the website should be user friendly and secure for credit card transactions.

Retailers can hire professionals to develop a user friendly website bringing the product and enhancing available features. The apparel industry has always been an intensive, competitive business. Advanced features like 3D, having a 360 degree model of a piece of apparel, or allowing them to mix and match different pieces of apparel can be value added services which attracts people to the site. It will be even better if programmers can develop a mechanism that applies the shopper's measurement to a personal virtual model so that shoppers can then see how an outfit might look on them and further mail it to their family and friends. Customer service plays an important role these days. To make shoppers appreciate the apparel site more, retailers can have sales assistant who can clarify questions from shoppers. Personal shopper which is present at exclusive stores now can be virtually available. Shoppers mostly need more opinions on apparel. Therefore, the existence of these virtual personal shoppers can recommend various outfits based on data input by the shopper.

Availability of product is one of the most attractive reasons to visit trend setters. This segment desires to be seen in the trendiest outfit. Although the product is still not at physical stores yet, it is best to be updated on the site to show that it is coming soon. Hence, a website should be updated regularly to provide regular news to loyal shoppers of the site. Achieving the bookmark which is considered the favorite site for a shopper will provide regular visits. Reasons for using favorite sites include the ease of using of a website, quick downloading, frequent updates, having a lot of coupons and incentives, usage of cutting edge technology, games and chat. Retailers need to ensure safety of credit card transactions. Educating shoppers about transfer of electronic payment using Secure Electronic Transaction (SET) system that allows for encryption of all transaction data will build up trust among shoppers to make purchase. A site

which offers more electronic payment options will be most convenient for shoppers. There are many electronic payment options offered other than credit card, for example, the debit card, smart card, online wallets and also wireless purchase.

Auction is a way of communication of these Malaysian apparel sites currently. Most shoppers chose auction as the ideal mode of purchasing through a Malaysian apparel site. Retailers can consider this point and find ways to inculcate its online presence to attract shoppers. Retailers may consider advertising on auction sites or collaborating with existing auction sites. Survey participants such as students who drive to university or college are also focused in this study as they have a strong influence on the studied subject. Vehicle owners may be seen as the wealthier students as compared to the rest. They occupy a demographic with much influence on the usage of internet to shop, shopping for apparel, awareness and purchasing through Malaysian websites. They tend to have a higher level of internet know-how, which typically translates to knowledge regarding the latest online shopping options too.

Advertising in this segment can be done through a lot of ways. Auction is definitely one way to capture their attention. Another way includes using car stickers, where they can display it in their cars for being the first to know about the apparel sites. Level of education also plays a part in areas such as knowledge about latest shops, usage of internet to shop, shopping for apparel online and most importantly purchasing from the Malaysian apparel sites. Campaigns in universities and colleges can be held to create awareness of Malaysian apparel sites. Taking part to sponsor a university sports day event to promote sportswear or even more relevant, the online game tournament where featured games are football or baseball, associated with sportswear will definitely instill the brand of apparel in participant's mind. Such awareness campaigns should include live trials to these sites to build up confidence in purchasing through the online sites. Trials especially important in displaying a website's user friendliness and a speedy credit card transaction. Trials in apparel online can be replaced by regular usage then to users who shop often and are committed to the brand. This is because the perceived notion of fun and hassle free online purchasing is able to continuously make them stay thus creating loyalty towards the sites.

Another aspect of this survey refers to the introduction and raising awareness of the state we are in currently. It is crucial that the strategies we come up with can be targeted to the general public, as a whole. Seeing that the usage of the internet is not that high, by moving at a faster pace, we can seek ways to team up both internet and apparel online to create public awareness of apparel sites. This study has its set of limitations. First, in geographical provisions, it only covers the Klang Valley region. Second, target respondents are students with the age range of between 18 to 25 years old. Third, the results of online survey are accumulated for, thus, the study could not distinguish a meticulous analysis on the subjects. Therefore, the study only analyzes a focused group of respondents. The reason for selecting these respondents is because the Internet boom congregated with this age group. Thus, the respondents were exposed to the global interconnectivity early in their adolescent making them more tech savvy. Further, this study

perceive these respondents as the new working force of the future, making them the trend setters and influencers for the next 3 to 10 years for young working adults.

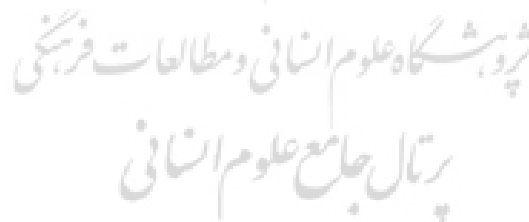
Extending this survey to a larger sample size covering the whole of Malaysia, which includes the urban and rural markets not only in Peninsula Malaysia, West Malaysia gets a fair share of the results as well. Age group covered can be extended until 50 and above to get feedback from those retired who maybe looking for a new hobby to purchase online. Respondents can be asked about three most familiar Malaysian apparel sites that they could recall. This way, the most popular site could be used as an example for other upcoming sites. On the other hand, retailers to play a significant role in servicing this industry. Understanding the risks and issues that retailers have to address and assume would further give us a holistic comprehension on how we could spur on Malaysian awareness of its local apparel sites.

### **Conflict of interest**

The authors declare no potential conflict of interest regarding the publication of this work. In addition, the ethical issues including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and, or falsification, double publication and, or submission, and redundancy have been completely witnessed by the authors.

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