

Digital influences on online shopping among Gen Z in Kedah: The role of social media interaction, online reviews, and price sensitivity

Nuraini Abdullah^{1*}, Nuradibah Mokhtar², Tisya Farida Abdul Halim³ and Siti
Aina Safikah Shamsol⁴

^{1,3,4} Faculty of Business & Communication, University Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP), Kangar, Perlis, Malaysia

² Faculty of Economics and Business, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), Kota Samarahan, Sarawak

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ABSTRACT

Online shopping has reshaped consumer behaviour, especially among Gen Z, who are heavily influenced by social media interaction, online reviews and price considerations in their purchasing decisions. This study aims to investigate how social media interaction, online reviews, and price considerations impact the purchasing decisions of Gen Z consumers in Kedah, Malaysia. Using a quantitative survey approach, data was collected from 384 Gen Z respondents in Kedah, focusing on their social media usage patterns, reliance on online reviews and responses to pricing considerations. The results revealed a significant positive correlation between active social media engagement, positive perception of online reviews, and price consideration among Gen Z consumers in Kedah. In contrast, regression analysis revealed social media as the strongest predictor in influencing this demographic's online shopping behaviour. The study provides insight on how digital platforms would affect consumer behaviour, especially among Gen Z. It highlights the need for businesses to understand and align their marketing strategies with the unique preferences of this Gen Z. This approach will enhance customer engagement at the exact times and help companies to stay relevant and competitive in the ever-evolving online marketplace. However, the study has a geographical limitation and only relies on self-reported data, which may give a biased response. Future research should expand to include diverse regions, adding additional variables for deeper insights. The findings underscore digital platforms' role in shaping Gen Z consumer behaviour. They also highlight opportunities for businesses to fine-tune marketing strategies that suit this tech-savvy demographic, increasing their competitiveness in the online marketplace.

^{1*} Corresponding author. E-mail address: nuraini@unimap.edu.my
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1. INTRODUCTION

Today, online shopping has transformed consumer purchasing decisions by its convenience and wide range of accessibility at the fingertips, particularly influencing Generation Z (Gen Z), where Gen Z is embracing the new way of shopping. They are the pioneer generation entirely exposed to the digital era, which cultivates comfort and technological proficiency. The booming of digital media in the early 90s makes this generation spend their time online, engaging with social media, reading reviews and actively collecting information before purchasing (Grigoreva et al., 2021). Consequently, online shopping is the preferred retail channel for Gen Z, offering convenience, access to diverse products, and personalised experiences (Larano et al., 2023).

Amid an ever-changing era, Deloitte Global 2023 Gen Z and Millennial Survey (Deloitte, 2023) reported that Gen Zs agreed they are most concerned about their cost of living (35%) and unemployment (22%). In addition, more than half (53%) of Gen Z reported that high living costs prevent their financial success (Bank of America, 2023). Three out of four also changed their spending habits with the rise in inflation. In parallel, 45 per cent of Malaysian Gen Z have their most significant issue in the cost of living and their economic growth (20%). Etiqa's Gen Z Financial Health Survey (2023) disclosed that Malaysian youth are more financially savvy, with 45 per cent confident in managing their finances. This survey revealed their financial decision-making and how they prioritise their spending. Endless inflation increments make Malaysian Gen Z fear they have insufficient savings for emergencies and other financial goals (64%), have poor credit (48%) and are unable to afford healthcare or medical expenses (31%). All these factors change 95 per cent of Malaysian Gen Z spending habits. Understanding their unique online shopping behaviour is crucial for businesses seeking to attract and engage this influential demographic.

Understanding Gen Z's relationship with social media can give educators, marketers and policymakers insights. Based on the Status of Social Commerce Report, 2021 (The Influencer Marketing Factory, 2021), 96% of Gen Z refer to social media as their primary shopping source, and 81% discover new products and services via social media. This can be reflected when TikTok, YouTube and Instagram are the top platforms Gen Z uses on social media (Reuters, 2023). A study conducted by Nielsen Malaysia (2024) reported that 87% of Malaysians Gen Z have made an online purchase in the past year, showing that social media has emerged as a powerful force shaping purchasing decisions. In line with that, data from the International Council of Shopping Centres (ICSC) (2023) found that 85 % of Gen Z purchasing decisions are affected by social media. A recent survey conducted by Rakuten Insight in 2023 highlighted a significant trend, revealing that 37% of respondents in Malaysia frequently engage in social commerce purchases. This statistic underscores the pivotal role of social media platforms in influencing customers' buying behaviour. As users increasingly turn to social media not only for social interaction but also as virtual marketplaces, it becomes imperative to explore the intricate dynamics at play.

Besides social media, online reviews could also shape Gen Z's perceptions and trust in brands through their value for money, product quality and user experience (Johan et al., 2022). The evolving e-commerce landscape has given birth to electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM), where online reviews serve as a valuable tool for consumers to obtain product information and increase confidence during purchasing. This influences their decision-making before purchasing a product, particularly online shopping (Chen et al., 2022). Gen Z priorities speed, convenience and efficiency in the shopping experience (46%) (ICSC, 2023). Therefore, online reviews act as influencers for Gen Z because they are the people Gen Z know best. This can be supported by the statistics from The Power of Review (2023), which proved that 90 per cent of Gen Z are less likely to buy a product if there are no reviews, and 54 per cent of them read reviews while shopping in-store. They depend significantly on online reviews to determine whether to make a purchase.

First impressions deeply impact our interactions, behaviours, and daily lives. Like purchasing goods, price perception plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer behaviour and purchase decisions in online shopping. Based on ICSC (2023), discount or off-price retailers are Gen Z shoppers' most frequently visited stores (48%). The feature of comparing prices from any shop at any time and anywhere (30%) is one of the top reasons why Gen Z do online shopping. ICSC (2023) added that if 30 percent of Gen Z shops online due to its convenience, 20 percent shop because of a better price. Following that, Business Insider (2019) divulged that 60 per cent of Gen Z consumers use price to decide which brand they want to buy. In line with that, the Rakuten (2023) survey disclosed that 68% of Malaysians actively check prices before purchasing. This behaviour reflected the consumer's concern not only on monetary value, but they also have an interest in perceived benefits and expectations towards their return on investment. Gen Z, in particular, highly values money and seeks to maximise the benefit they receive from their purchases.

Therefore, several questions have been developed for this study as follows:

- (i) How do social media, online reviews, and price collectively impact customer purchase decisions?
- (ii) Which factors are the strongest predictors of customer purchase decisions?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Online shopping has revolutionised how purchases are made, especially for Generation Z, which is known for its strong digital presence and tech-savvy nature, which significantly influences how this generation makes purchase decisions. Social media is not just for connecting with friends anymore; it is a hub for sharing opinions, recommendations, and experiences that shape what people buy. Online reviews have become a quick suggestion to many shoppers, offering insights into product quality and reliability from real customers and a price perspective. By exploring these factors, this review sheds light on how Generation Z approaches online shopping and what drives their decisions.

2.1 Customer purchase decision

Customer purchase decisions are a core aspect of consumer behaviour, involving the process through which individuals assess and select products to meet their needs, desires, and expectations. This decision-making journey ultimately determines their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the purchase. A purchase decision reflects a choice among multiple alternatives, underscoring the need for diverse options to support well-informed decisions. This process is influenced by preceding activities, such as identifying needs, gathering relevant information, and evaluating potential options (Chen et al., 2022; Guo et al., 2020).

The purchase decision stage is a pivotal point in the consumer journey, thoroughly evaluating factors such as brand, quantity, model, purchase location, budget, timing, and preferred payment methods (Hanaysha, 2018). Consumers draw upon internal resources, such as their previous experiences, alongside external influences, including marketing efforts and independent information sources, to guide their decisions. Recognising these factors is crucial for marketers seeking to understand the evaluation process that leads to purchase decisions.

Other factors, such as brand perception and loyalty, also impact consumers' choices and preferences. Loyal customers tend to exhibit repeat purchase behaviour and influence emotional and cognitive associations with the brand. Customer trust and online reviews increase trust in online platforms, and the usage of secure payment also significantly influences decisions (Pavlou & Gefen, 2020).

By gaining deeper insights into consumer behaviour, businesses can craft effective marketing strategies and deliver targeted product information through appropriate channels. Understanding these dynamics

allows marketers to align their efforts with consumer preferences and improve the overall decision-making experience for their target audience.

2.2 Social media interaction

Forbes (2013) examined the influence of social media recommendations on consumer behaviour, revealing a pattern where users tend to purchase low-cost items or luxury products based on suggestions from peers who are not traditionally seen as opinion leaders. Their study also noted a shift from platforms like Facebook to faster, real-time alternatives such as Twitter, driven by users' demand for up-to-date information.

Leerapong and Mardjo (2013) focused on the factors driving online purchase decisions via social networks, particularly Facebook. They identified relative advantages, trust, perceived risk, and compatibility as key elements shaping consumers' purchase decisions on the platform. Similarly, Sharma and Rehman (2012) found that positive and negative information shared on social media significantly influences consumer purchasing behaviour, with users frequently engaging in word-of-mouth recommendations on these platforms. Di Pietro and Pantano (2012) explored the role of social networks, such as Facebook, in shaping purchase decisions, highlighting enjoyment as a key factor motivating social media use. Their research underscored the importance of perceived usefulness, ease of use, and enjoyment of social media tools in influencing consumer behaviour. Mangold and Faulds (2010) provided a broader perspective, observing that social media impacts every stage of the consumer journey, from information gathering to post-purchase activities such as sharing dissatisfaction or feedback. Together, these studies emphasise the multifaceted role of social media in shaping consumer behaviour, demonstrating its influence across various platforms and purchase decision stages.

2.3 Online reviews

Online reviews have become a cornerstone of internet-based marketing, significantly shaping consumer purchase intentions (Ahn & Lee, 2024; Huang et al., 2019). These reviews typically present arguments in the form of pros and cons, with negative reviews often exerting a more profound influence on consumer decisions than positive ones (Risselada et al., 2018). Research highlights the role of online reviews in fostering trust and acceptance among users, with negative reviews frequently perceived as more authentic and impactful than their positive counterparts (Weisstein et al., 2017).

The credibility of reviews varies depending on their source, with reviews from independent forums generally perceived as more trustworthy than those from corporate websites (Fernandes et al., 2022). Reviews written by individuals with direct product or service experience are particularly persuasive (Stein & Ramaseshan, 2016). Various attributes, such as review richness, relevance, star ratings, and reviewer identity, significantly influence consumer attitudes and buying decisions (Bigne et al., 2023; Sayfuddin & Chen, 2021). Both the quantity and quality of reviews play a critical role in shaping consumers' perceptions of products and sellers (Ismagilova et al., 2020). Furthermore, recent reviews are often more reliable since they reflect up-to-date information about products and services (Shareef et al., 2019).

Moreover, the style and content of a review can enhance its appeal and clarity, further guiding consumer decisions (Stein & Ramaseshan, 2016). Enhancing reviewer credibility by including real names, profile photos, or verified purchases has positively influenced consumer trust and purchase decisions (Kim et al., 2020; Bae & Lee, 2011). These findings underscore the pivotal role of online reviews in shaping consumer behaviour in the digital marketplace.

2.4 Price considerations

Price is crucial in influencing consumer purchasing decisions, offering insights into product attributes and being a significant factor in consumer choice (Kotler & Keller, 2012). It is particularly influential for

frequently purchased products, affecting consumers' decisions regarding stores, products, and brands (Albari & Safitri, 2018). Consumers exhibit rationality by carefully evaluating the benefits they expect to receive in exchange for the price they pay, highlighting the discerning nature of their decision-making process (Al-Mamun & Rahman, 2014).

Price can be analysed across three dimensions: reasonable, fixed, and relative. A reasonable price balances quality and service at an acceptable cost while fixed pricing ensures a uniform price is offered to all buyers, providing consistency (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Meanwhile, relative price is determined by the perceived quality and service provided by the seller, reflecting consumer expectations (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014).

Price competitiveness is key to consumers' perception of a product's value and a business's ability to stand out. Unlike other parts of the marketing mix, which typically add to costs, price is the one factor that directly drives revenue and significantly impacts purchasing decisions. (Reinaldo & Chandra, 2020). Consumers are more likely to purchase when the price aligns with their perceived benefits, underscoring the importance of a rational pricing strategy.

Companies often use strategic promotions to encourage consumer purchases, build brand preference, and drive sales. These promotions enhance consumer trust and influence purchase decisions when paired with effective pricing strategies.

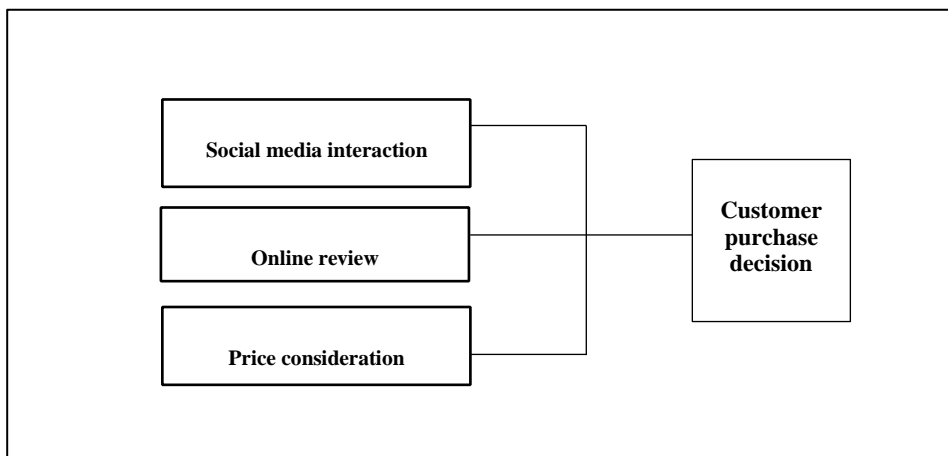


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

2.5 Underpinning theory

Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard proposed that the Consumer Decision-Making Model is a fundamental theory that explains the complex process consumers experience when making purchase decisions. This model outlines a comprehensive journey through various sequential stages, shedding light on each phase's psychological and behavioural dynamics. The initial stage involves problem identification, where the consumer identifies a need or issue that drives consideration for a purchase. After that, searching for information occurs, attracting users to gather data from various sources such as online reviews, social media, personal networks and marketing communications.

As consumers gather information, they evaluate alternatives, carefully weighing product features, brand reputation, and price. This culminates in the purchase decision stage, where consumers make choices influenced by rational considerations and emotional factors, reflecting their perceived value and potential

satisfaction. Post-purchase evaluations follow as consumers reflect on their decisions, assessing satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Positive experiences foster brand loyalty, while negative encounters can lead to future adjustments in decision-making criteria.

This grounded theory serves as a structured framework, recognising that the decision-making process is dynamic and influenced by multiple internal and external factors. Recognising the importance of each stage, the Consumer Decision Making Model offers researchers and marketers valuable tools to gain a holistic understanding of how consumers navigate from recognising a need to make an informed purchase decision and beyond. By delving into the ins and outs of this model, businesses can adapt their strategies to effectively connect with consumers at every intersection of their decision-making journey, ultimately increasing customer satisfaction and brand loyalty.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design, data collection and sampling

This study adopts a quantitative approach, employing methods that facilitate the translation of findings into numerical data and assumptions based on the collected data. The research target demographic consists of individuals born between 1995 and 2010 who reside in Kedah, Gen Z, and are actively engaged in online shopping. Kedah, a state in Malaysia with a diverse population, provides an ideal environment to study the factors influencing customers' online shopping decisions within a specific geographic region. This research employed a convenient sampling method to ensure practicality and efficiency in data collection, recognising the challenges of reaching and engaging a diverse Gen Z population with 384 samples.

A survey questionnaire with a Likert scale was utilised in this study. Participants were asked to rate the importance of social media, online reviews and price in influencing their purchase decisions, with response options ranging from "5 = strongly disagree" to "1 = strongly agree." The Google Forms platform was used for the data collection due to its accessibility, which required only internet connectivity. This accessibility makes it convenient for the respondents to respond to the survey at their convenience. This alleviates the response rate and reduces participation barriers.

The research instrument used in this study was to clarify various online shopping behaviours among Generation Z individuals. Respondents were asked how often they engage in online shopping activities and the main factors influencing their decision-making process. The role of social media in shaping purchase decisions was examined through how specific aspects of social media influence the purchasing behaviour of respondents. The importance of online reviews is explored by assessing participants' reading habits, preferences regarding review content, and the extent to which reviews influence their purchase choices. Additionally, participants will assess the importance of price in their decision-making process. Using closed questions, the research instrument also sought to gather insights into the important determinants of online shopping behaviour among Generation Z consumers. Table 1 indicates the sources of the measurements adopted and adapted in this study.

3.2 Instrument development

The research instrument used in this study was to clarify various online shopping behaviours among Generation Z individuals. Respondents were asked how often they engage in online shopping activities and the main factors influencing their decision-making process. The role of social media interaction in shaping purchase decisions was examined through how specific aspects of social media influence the purchasing behaviour of respondents. The importance of online reviews is explored by assessing participants' reading habits, preferences regarding review content, and the extent to which reviews influence their purchase choices. Additionally, participants will assess the importance of price in their decision-making process. Using closed questions, the research instrument also sought to gather insights into the important

determinants of online shopping behaviour among Generation Z consumers. Table 1 indicates the sources of the measurements adopted and adapted in this study.

Table 1. Sources of instruments

Measurements	Item	Sources
Customer purchase decision	5	Pavlou and Dimoka, (2006)
		Lackermair et al. (2013)
		Kukar-Kinney et al., (2012)
		Zhao et al. (2021)
Social media interaction	5	Zhao et al. (2021)
Online reviews	5	Reshma (2019)
Price	5	Fernandes et al., (2022)
		Kukar-Kinney et al., (2012)

The reliability analysis of the measurement scale used in this study was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha of the Social Science for Statistical Package (SPSS), which evaluates the internal consistency of the items in each scale. Variables have consistent reliability across all scales, ranging from 0.794 to 0.834.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1 Demographic profile of respondents

Results from Table 2 revealed that the gender distribution of the sample is 47 per cent female respondents and 53 per cent male respondents. Almost a similar distribution in gender signified the balanced response among male and female respondents. The age distribution shows that most respondents are between 20 and 22 years old, with 33 per cent, followed by 23 to 25 years old and 26 to 29 years old, with 28 per cent. Malay ethnicities are the largest group with 37 per cent of respondents, followed by others with 23 per cent, and 20 per cent for Indians. This diversity ensures that this study covers a broad spectrum of cultural perspectives in Gen Z. Household income data shows that income below RM 2,000, between RM5,001 and RM10,000 and between RM2,001 and RM5,000 are among the top, with 37 per cent, 22 per cent and 21 per cent, respectively. Respondents were also asked about the frequency of online shopping, where almost 22.4 per cent of the respondents use it only 1-10 times a year to purchase online. On the other hand, the group of shoppers who shop several times a week, with 18.5 per cent and once a week, with 20.6 per cent, shows a significant portion of people who frequently shop online.

Table 2: Demographic Profile

Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	180	46.9
Male	204	53.1
Age		
14-16 years old	20	5.2
17-19 years old	24	6.3
20-22 years old	126	32.8
23-25 years old	107	27.9
26-29 years old	107	27.9
Race		
Chinese	75	19.5
Indian	77	20.1
Malay	142	37.0

Others	90	23.4
What is your current occupation?		
Employed	295	76.8
Student	40	10.4
Unemployed	49	12.8
What is your approximate monthly household income?		
Above RM 10,000	75	19.5
Below RM 2,000	143	37.2
RM 2,001 - RM 5,000	80	20.8
RM 5,001 - RM 10,000	86	22.4
How often do you use online shopping applications to make purchases?		
1-10 times a year	86	22.4
A few times a month	73	19.0
Once a week	79	20.6
Once a year	75	19.5
Several times a week	71	18.5

4.2 Hypotheses testing

Inferential analysis

Relationship between social media interaction and customer purchase decision of Gen Z in online shopping

Hypothesis testing on the correlation coefficient between customer purchase decisions and social media interaction indicated a powerful positive relationship with 0.835**. This suggests that as engagement with social media increases, the likelihood of making a purchase decision also increases.

Social media platforms will likely influence consumer attitudes and behaviour by providing information, reviews, and advertisements that guide purchasing decisions. According to Yang (2024), social media plays various roles in today's world. It includes the main stages of the purchase decision, which start with problem identification. Customers are aware of the needs or problems caused by internal or external stimuli that drive them to seek information on how to solve the problem. After evaluating available alternatives, purchase decisions tend to be swayed by other factors such as promotional activities, which can change the final purchase behaviour. This is when social media plays a role in user-generated content (UGC), advertising and promotion, social interaction and influencer marketing.

This strong correlation underscores social media's critical role in the modern buying process for Gen Z consumers. Previous research by Renu et al. (2018) also found that social media engagement significantly influences consumer purchase intention. Similar studies conducted by Azizpuddin and Shahrom (2024) and Hasan et al. (2020) also found similar findings that social media has an impact on customer purchase decisions. Past researchers have also conducted studies in specific areas, such as Khatib (2016), who revealed a significant relationship between Saudi customers in the Aseer Region. Wulandari and Rauf (2022) studied the relationship among users at Muhammadiyah Tangerang University and found it to be positively correlated. Ardiansyah and Sarwoko (2020) added the variable of brand awareness, and Hanaysha (2022) added brand trust as the mediator, discovering a similar result between social media and customer purchase decision. This supports Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Social media interaction positively affects Gen Z's purchase decisions in online shopping.

This research indicates a significant relationship between social media interaction and customer purchase decisions among Gen Z in online shopping contexts. Social media platforms influence consumer behaviour by providing product recommendations, facilitating peer discussions, and promoting brand engagement. Gen Z consumers often rely on social media channels such as Instagram and TikTok to

discover new products, seek validation through likes and comments, and make informed purchase decisions based on user-generated content. The influence of social media on consumer behaviour is underscored by its ability to create perceived benefits such as social currency and brand affinity (Sharma & Rehman, 2012). Positive interactions and engagement on social media platforms can enhance brand visibility and trust, encouraging Gen Z consumers to explore and purchase products recommended or endorsed within their social networks. Moreover, the immediacy and accessibility of social media content allow Gen Z consumers to gather real-time information, compare product features, and assess user feedback, contributing significantly to their purchase decision-making process. Thus, social media is a powerful tool for marketers to leverage in understanding and influencing Gen Z consumer behaviour in online shopping environments.

Relationship between online reviews and customer purchase decisions of Gen Z in online shopping

The correlation coefficient between customer purchase decisions and online reviews is 0.803**, reflecting a strong positive relationship. This indicates that online reviews are a crucial factor in the decision-making process. Consumers rely heavily on the opinions and experiences others share through online reviews before purchasing. This is due to the emergence of pivotal sources of information via online product reviews to assess the quality and utility of products. A strong correlation suggests that the more consumers engage with online reviews, the more likely they are to make an informed purchase decision based on this information. Previous research by Fernandes et al. (2022) found that online reviews significantly impact consumer purchase decisions. Similar to that, Choi and Maasberg (2021), Sharma and Kumar (2023) and Chen et al. (2022) revealed that online reviews also have a significant influence on consumer perception and purchase intention.

Online reviews are emerging as important in shaping customer purchase decisions among Gen Z online shoppers. Gen Z consumers value peer recommendations and testimonials, with online reviews as a reliable source of information that guides their choice of products and brand priority. The credibility and authenticity of online reviews significantly impact Gen Z consumers' trust and confidence in brands and products (Thakur, 2018). Positive reviews increase perceived product quality and satisfaction. Guo et al. (2020), while negative reviews can deter potential customers or prompt careful consideration before purchasing. Quantity and quality of reviews, such as star ratings and reviewer identity, play an important role in influencing the perception of Gen Z users and shaping their purchase decisions (Bigne et al., 2023). Therefore, effective online review management is essential for businesses aiming to foster positive consumer sentiment and drive sales among Gen Z in a competitive online market. While Regina and colleagues (2021) found parallel findings between online reviews and purchase decisions among Bukalapak Medan City. This supports,

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Online reviews positively affect Gen Z's purchase decisions when shopping online.

Relationship between price and customer purchase decision of Gen Z in online shopping

The correlation coefficient between customer purchase decisions and price is 0.823***, indicating a strong positive relationship. This suggests that price is a significant determinant in the purchase process. Consumer awareness and consideration of price significantly influence their purchasing decisions. A higher focus on price, whether through comparison or perceived value, correlates with an increased likelihood of purchasing. This indicates that pricing and promotion strategies can significantly impact consumer behaviour. Akdogan (2021), Albari (2020), and Levrini and Jeffman dos Santos (2021) mentioned that price plays an important role in consumer preferences towards a product. This can be supported by past researchers, who have also integrated factors such as purchase goals and brand image as moderating or mediating variables. Weisstein et al. (2017) examined consumer price perception towards purchase behaviour while purchase goals were the moderating variable, and Sihombing et al. (2023) added brand image as the mediator. It showed that price is considered one of the most significant attributes in consumer choice.

Particularly Gen Z, the lowest price or best deal is among the factors that attract them to purchase (Accenture, 2017). In addition, Seemiller and Grace (2017) divulged that even though Generation Z shares similar characteristics with Millennials, they have different generational cohorts with specifics and characteristics. Thangavel et al. (2022) added that Gen Z possesses tremendous purchasing power because of the widespread opportunities of digitalisation and globalisation of economies. This supports hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Price has a positive relationship with the customer purchase decision of Gen Z in online shopping.

This study reveals that price exerts a significant but nuanced influence on Gen Z's purchase decisions in online shopping. While price sensitivity is evident among Gen Z consumers, other factors such as brand reputation, product quality, and the overall value proposition also weigh heavily in their decision-making process (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Gen Z consumers are rational in evaluating the price-to-value ratio, preferring offerings that align with their perceived benefits and budget constraints (Al-Mamun & Rahman, 2014). Competitive pricing strategies can attract Gen Z consumers, especially with promotional offers and discounts that appeal to their desire for value and affordability. However, excessive pricing or perceived discrepancies between price and product quality may deter Gen Z consumers from completing their purchases, highlighting the importance of transparent pricing strategies that align with consumer expectations. Overall, while price remains a critical factor in Gen Z consumers' purchase decisions in online shopping, its impact is mediated by broader considerations such as social media influence and online reviews. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for businesses seeking to engage and convert Gen Z consumers in the digital marketplace.

Table 3: Interrelation between Variables

Variables	Customer Purchase Decision	Social Media Interaction	Online Review	Price Consideration
Customer Purchase Decision				
Social Media Interaction	0.835**	-		
Online Review	0.803**	0.744**	-	
Price Consideration	0.823**	0.789**	0.797**	-

Regression analysis

Table 4.4 indicates that social media has a regression coefficient (β) of 0.409, with a t-value of 10.242 and a p-value of less than 0.001, indicating a significant positive effect on customer purchase decisions. This supports H1, which posits that social media interaction has a positive relationship with Gen Z's online shopping decisions regarding customer purchase decisions. Furthermore, this significant effect confirms H4, indicating that social media interaction significantly predicts Gen Z customers' purchase decisions in online shopping. This is aligned with a study by Ivyany et al. (2021), which found that purchasing online is more trustworthy as it comes from reliable testimonials from previous customers. Next, online reviews have a regression coefficient (β) of 0.276, with a t-value of 6.790 and a p-value of less than 0.001, suggesting a significant positive effect on customer purchase decisions. This supports H2, which posits that online reviews positively correlate with Gen Z customers' purchase decisions in online shopping.

Table 4: Regression Analysis

Variables	β	t	p	R^2	ΔR^2	F
				.793	.792	486.263
Social media interaction	.409	10.242	<.001			
Online review	.276	6.790	<.001			
Price consideration	.280	6.344	<.001			

*p<0.05; **p<0.01

Price has a regression coefficient (β) of 0.280, with a t-value of 6.344 and a p-value of less than 0.001, indicating a significant positive effect on customer purchase decisions. This supports H3, which posits that price has a positive relationship with customer purchase decisions of Gen Z in online shopping. Therefore, the analysis confirms that social media interaction, online reviews, and price consideration all significantly positively affect customer purchase decisions, with each factor being statistically significant at the 1% level. Additionally, the strong effect of social media, as evidenced by its high regression coefficient and significant t-value, further confirms H4, establishing that social media is a significant predictor of customer purchase decisions among Gen Z in online shopping.

5. LIMITATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the main limitations of this research is the sample size and demographic scope. This study focuses specifically on Gen Z users in specific geographic areas. This limited scope means that the findings may not fully capture the characteristics and behaviours of the various Gen Z consumers worldwide. For example, cultural differences, economic conditions and regional preferences can significantly influence shopping behaviour. Therefore, future research could benefit from larger and more diverse samples that include Gen Z consumers from various regions and backgrounds. This broader approach will increase the generalizability of the findings, providing a more comprehensive understanding of Gen Z's online shopping behaviour on a global scale. Another limitation is the narrow scope of variables considered in this study. Although this research has focused on social media, online reviews and price as the main factors influencing purchase decisions, many other potential influences have not been explored. Website aesthetics, accessibility, trust, price offerings, security, delivery, and quality positively correlate with customer online shopping (Patro, 2023). Expanding the range of variables in future research via examining them, bridging the gap by providing a more holistic understanding of what motivates Gen Z to make online purchases, and offering more profound insight into consumer behaviour.

Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data through questionnaires presents another limitation. Self-reported data can introduce biases such as social desirability bias; it is one of the pioneer forms of response bias studied in social science (Teh et al., 2023). Respondents answered according to what they perceived as socially accepted instead of the real answers. This can distort the results and affect the accuracy of the findings. Additionally, recall bias can occur when respondents are asked to recall past shopping behaviours and influences, which may not always be accurate. The recall bias can harmfully affect the estimation of the determinants of satisfaction measures (Prati, 2017).

Future studies could incorporate observational or behavioural data to reduce this bias, such as tracking online shopping activities or analysing purchase history. Combining self-reported data with these objective measures will lead to more accurate and reliable insights into Gen Z's online shopping behaviour.

One suggestion for future research is to broaden the scope of the dependent variable. Although this study focused solely on customer purchase decisions, future studies could explore other related outcomes. For example, examining customer satisfaction, brand loyalty, and repeat purchase intentions can provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behaviour. These additional dependent variables can offer insight into how initial purchase decisions translate into long-term customer relationships and brand engagement.

This study's independent variables include social media interaction, online reviews, and price consideration. Exploring the effects of additional independent variables would be valuable for future studies. Brand loyalty, product quality, personal recommendations from friends and family, and marketing strategies can significantly influence Gen Z's online shopping decisions. By incorporating a wider range of independent variables, future research can provide a more nuanced and detailed analysis of the factors driving online purchasing behaviour. Next, this study focused exclusively on Gen Z consumers. While this demographic is important given their growing purchasing power and unique behaviours, future research should consider expanding to include other age groups. Researchers can identify similarities and differences across age groups by comparing the online shopping behaviour of different generations. This comparative approach can reveal valuable insights into how online shopping behaviour evolves with age and how marketing strategies may be needed to target various demographics effectively.

Finally, expanding the range of variables in future research can provide a more holistic understanding of what motivates Gen Z to make online purchases, offering more profound insights into consumer behaviour. For example, integrating psychological factors such as consumer attitudes, motivations, and perceived risk can enrich the analysis. In addition, considering the influence of socio-economic factors, such as income level and educational background, can further improve the understanding of Gen Z's online shopping habits. A holistic approach will allow researchers to capture the complexity of consumer behaviour and provide more robust recommendations for marketers and businesses.

6. CONCLUSION

Considering everything, the digital influence of social media is the most impactful factor in online shopping. This highlights the need for businesses to prioritise active engagement on social platforms. Online reviews, for example, play a vital role in creating trust to guide their purchase decisions, emphasising the value of maintaining a responsive online presence. While price, on the other hand, is still a key factor in determining online shopping behaviour of Gen Z, ultimately, this study highlights the importance of understanding Gen Z's digital habits, where businesses would have an opportunity to connect with Gen Z and to thrive in today's competitive online marketplace.

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8. CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

None declared.

9. AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Nuraini Abdullah and **Nuradibah Mokhtar** conducted the introduction, literature reviews, discussion and methodology sections. **Tisya Farida** wrote the discussions and conclusion section, while Siti Aina Safikah Shamsol performed the data analysis and methodology sections. All authors read and approve the final manuscript.

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About the Authors

Dr Nuraini Abdullah is a lecturer at Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP). Her current interest is in Behavioural Economics, Financial Literacy, Human Capital, Entrepreneurship. She has several articles in the *Journal of Consumer and Family Economics*, *Journal of Human Ecology*, *Journal of Emerging Economics & Islamic Research*, and *Pertanika Journal of Social Science & Humanities*.

Dr Nuradibah Mokhtar is a senior lecturer at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. She earned her Doctor of Philosophy on 2017 in Consumer Science from Universiti Putra Malaysia. She has several articles in variety of journals such as *Pertanika Journal of Social Science and Humanities*, *Malaysian Journal of Consumer and Family Economics*, *Asian Social Science* and *Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*.

Dr Tisya Farida is a passionate lecturer and researcher currently attached to UniMAP. Specializing in operations research, and business analytics, with expertise in system dynamics and mathematical modeling. Focused on optimizing SME performance, sustainable business practices, and data-driven decision-making. Actively involved in developing business-oriented curricula, supervising postgraduate research, and contributing to impactful studies published in journals and conferences.

Siti Aina Safikah Shamsol is International Business student at Universiti Malaysia Perlis (Unimap).