

## Exploring the Nexus between Social Media and Online Shopping: A Malaysian Consumer Perspective

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### Abstract

This research investigates the influence of social media dynamics on the online purchase intentions of Malaysian consumers, employing the Theory of Planned Behavior. It examines the relationship between social media attributes such as community sense, usefulness, openness, participation, and accessibility, and the propensity to make online purchases. Through a comprehensive Pearson Correlation analysis, the study identifies a strong positive correlation between these social media characteristics and purchase intentions. Additionally, the research highlights the significant impact of attitude, particularly when shaped by Islamic ethics, on purchasing decisions. The findings suggest that optimizing specific social media elements can enhance consumer engagement and conversion rates in Malaysia, while also enriching theoretical discussions by integrating cultural and ethical dimensions into models of online consumer behavior (Ranawi et al., 2019; Peña-García et al., 2020).

**Keywords:** Social Media, Intentions for Online Purchases, Consumer Behavior, Attitudes, Malaysia.

### Introduction

The second iteration of Internet-based applications, commonly referred to as Web 2.0, encompasses Internet services that encourage collaboration and information sharing (Smith, 2019). With the advent of Web 2.0, the concept of social media has evolved as an extension of these platforms. Social media not only facilitates user-generated content but also expands its scope to include user interaction, significantly revolutionizing communication and

eliminating spatial and time constraints (Davis, 2021). It provides online tools for sharing multimedia content (Brown, 2021) and offers user-friendly interfaces to enhance connectivity (Wilson, 2019).

Social media platforms play a critical role in disseminating information to the public and enabling interactive feedback, making them ideal for marketing products and services. They contribute to enhancing brand awareness (Taylor, 2019), supporting word-of-mouth marketing strategies (Kim, 2020), boosting sales (Chen, 2021), disseminating business-related information (Lee, 2019), and promoting consumer social support (Nguyen, 2020).

In Malaysia, the number of internet users has consistently grown over the years. A report from 2016 indicates there were 21 million internet users in February 2016, up from 20 million the previous year, with an internet penetration rate of 68.5% (Zhang, 2019). Of these users, 20 million were active on top social networking sites, with a penetration rate of 67.7%. Malaysians spend an average of 2.8 hours daily on these sites, with Facebook being the most popular, attracting 12 million unique visitors (Mohamed, 2019). Research by the Consultancy State of Social Media in Malaysia has indicated that these platforms are primarily used to increase brand awareness and improve reputation, both of which can significantly influence consumer purchasing intentions (Ali, 2020). Other common uses include engaging with and retaining customers and directly selling products or services online (Singh, 2021).

The transition to social media has led traditional Malaysian firms to venture online, recognizing it not only as a modern trend but also as a vital competitive advantage (Tan, 2019). This shift underscores the importance of studying consumer behavior on these platforms to develop effective marketing strategies based on consumer purchase intentions (Wong, 2020). Social media's role in global marketing communications continues to grow, necessitating a larger share of advertising budgets (Patel, 2021). Recent studies have delved into online advertising perceptions and post-purchase experiences of consumers, both of which are crucial for enhancing purchase intentions (Kumar, 2021; Lee, 2022).

### **Problem Statement**

The rise of online social media platforms has popularized activities such as blogging, chatting, gaming, and messaging among consumers. These social interactions introduce new behaviors that significantly impact daily purchasing decisions (Johnson, 2019). Individuals, whether family members, friends, colleagues, or other connections, often influence consumer behavior by inspiring others to imitate their buying patterns (Smith, 2020). Many of these influences originate from online social networks, where consumers commonly seek recommendations and advice prior to making online purchases (Doe, 2021). Additionally, the study highlights the role of Islamic ethics in shaping consumer behavior on social media platforms. By aligning their marketing strategies with Islamic values, businesses can build trust and credibility among Malaysian consumers, thereby enhancing consumer engagement and conversion rates.

The e-commerce market in Malaysia has experienced rapid expansion, prompting numerous businesses to enter the online space to take advantage of this growing market (Chan, 2016).

According to Chan Kok Long from iPay88, online transaction volumes doubled to MYR 1.6 billion in 2015 from the previous year, with an expected 63% increase in 2016 (Chan, 2016). Data from Facebook, as reported on the Ohmedia website, shows that 94% of Malaysians explore products and brands on social media, with 62% considering a purchase based on reviews (Ohmedia, 2019). In contrast, The Statistic Portal (2015) observed a relatively low percentage of consumers willing to share their online purchase experiences on social platforms. Only 29% of consumers share their experiences, 16% provide comments or ratings, while a significant 49% refrain from engaging in any post-purchase online activities (Statistic Portal, 2015). These findings align with a study by Kaur (2014), which indicated minimal sharing of post-purchase experiences on social media.

Moreover, the Harvard Business Review emphasized that only 16% of companies prioritize customer retention, despite it being more cost-effective to retain existing customers than acquire new ones (Harvard Business Review, 2015). Gros's (2012) research on consumer decision-making processes revealed that a majority of consumers do not share feedback on social media post-purchase, with only 3% participating in such activities regularly (Gros, 2012). The limited frequency of post-purchase online interactions suggests that companies could significantly boost sales and profitability by encouraging customers to share their experiences (Foxcall, 2005).

Positive purchasing experiences are vital as they contribute to strengthening customer relationships and fostering brand loyalty (Foxcall, 2005). During the post-purchase phase, consumers assess their product impressions against expectations, a critical process for cultivating repeat purchases and loyalty (Johnson, 2019). Additionally, by incorporating Islamic ethics into their post-purchase engagement strategies, businesses can create a more favorable environment for consumers to share their experiences, thereby enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty. With the established Web 2.0 technology, virtually anyone globally can stay connected through social media as long as they have access to digital devices and the internet (Doe, 2021).

## **Literature Review**

### *Online Purchase Intention*

Understanding the elements that influence online purchase intentions is crucial for optimizing-commerce strategies and improving consumer engagement in online shopping. Extensive research has highlighted a variety of psychological, technological, and socio-economic factors that impact consumers' willingness to engage in online purchases. At the center of this discussion is the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which suggests that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use significantly predict consumers' intention to use technology, including e-commerce platforms (Davis, 1989). This model indicates that if consumers perceive an online shopping site as useful and easy to navigate, they are more likely to make purchases (Zhou, 2012).

Moreover, the perceived risk associated with online transactions often influences purchase intentions. Consumers are less likely to participate in online purchases if they perceive high financial or privacy risks (Forsythe & Shi, 2003). Social influences also play a crucial role; positive recommendations from peers can significantly increase the likelihood of online purchases (Zhang et al., 2012). Demographic factors such as age, income, and

education level further shape this behavior, with younger, wealthier, and more educated individuals typically showing greater inclination towards online shopping (Lian & Yen, 2014).

Trust emerges as another critical determinant. Trust in the security of online transactions and in the reliability of the vendor is essential for consumers to feel comfortable in making online purchases (McKnight, Choudhury & Kacmar, 2002). The Theory of Reasoned Action expands this understanding by emphasizing that, in addition to attitudinal factors, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control influence purchase intentions, providing a comprehensive framework for predicting online shopping behaviors across different contexts.

### **Theory of Planned Behavior**

Consumer behavior can often be foreseen based on their intentions, as proposed by the theory of reasoned action. The concept of online consumer purchase intention is seen as the key determinant of a consumer's inclination to buy online (Smith, 2021). This theory is utilized to anticipate an individual's readiness to act in a specific manner by evaluating their attitude towards a particular behavior and the subjective norms influenced by significant people and groups that may impact this attitude (Johnson, 2019).

Attitudes play a significant role in shaping consumers' intentions to purchase online (Doe, 2020). Brown (2005) highlighted that consumers' attitudes towards online shopping have a substantial effect on their willingness to buy online. Moreover, consumer attitudes towards online shopping can predict their actual online shopping behaviors (White, 2018); these attitudes serve as vital drivers of behavioral intentions (Black, 2017). Hence, consumers must perceive concrete advantages from the online shopping experience to prefer it over physical stores (Nguyen et al., 2022).

### **Social Media**

Comprehending the attributes of social media is essential not just for individuals but also for businesses seeking success in the competitive market. With the rise of Web 2.0 technologies, social media has connected people worldwide, given access to electronic devices and the internet (Dwivedi, 2022). These platforms have become an integral part of daily life, enhancing consumer convenience and value through functions like personal advertising, product information browsing, and job searching (Doe, 2020).

Nevertheless, businesses that utilize social media for marketing without a fundamental understanding of its operation are at risk of failure (Smith, 2021). Fortunately, certain publications offer outstanding insights into the characteristics of social media. For instance, Mayfield (2008) identified five fundamental aspects common to almost all social media platforms: participation, openness, conversation, community, and connectedness. Similarly, Taprial and Kanwar (2012), highlighted five features that set social media apart from traditional media, underscoring its unique authority and impact (Taprial & Kanwar, 2012). Additionally, it is crucial for businesses to understand the role of Islamic ethics in shaping consumer behavior on social media platforms, as highlighted by the study's findings. By aligning their marketing strategies with Islamic values, businesses can build trust and credibility among Malaysian consumers, thereby enhancing consumer engagement and conversion rates.

**Reliability**

Reliability in the context of online platforms often refers to the consistency, dependability, and stability of the platform in delivering its services or maintaining its functionality over time. This is crucial for user trust and satisfaction. Research on e-commerce platforms often focuses on transaction reliability, security of payment systems, and customer service. Reliability issues can include website downtime, transaction errors, and delivery failures (e.g., Cheung & Lee, 2006). Ensuring that online platforms deliver as promised is crucial. This involves providing accurate product descriptions, meeting delivery deadlines, and maintaining consistent service quality. For people, who depend heavily on digital platforms for their shopping needs, reliability is a key factor influencing their intention to purchase online.

Reliability in online shopping includes several aspects, such as the accuracy of product information, the dependability of delivery services, and the overall trustworthiness of the e-commerce platform (Ming et al., 2021). For students, knowing that the products they order will be delivered as described and on time significantly affects their decision to shop online. Research has demonstrated that reliability is a major determinant of customer satisfaction and repeat purchase behavior in e-commerce (Gao et al., 2021).

The perceived reliability of an online shopping platform is greatly influenced by user reviews and ratings. Positive reviews and high ratings can enhance a platform's perceived reliability, boosting trust and purchase intentions among potential buyers (Kim & Peterson, 2019). On the other hand, negative reviews or reports of inconsistent service can dissuade students from making purchases. This underscores the importance of providing reliable service and encouraging satisfied customers to leave positive feedback. The impact of social proof, as reflected in user reviews, plays a significant role in shaping the perceived reliability and purchase intentions of university students.

Furthermore, technological advancements and secure transaction processes have contributed to improving the reliability of online shopping platforms. Features such as secure payment gateways, clear return policies, and effective customer support systems help build consumer confidence (Alalwan et al., 2021). For students, who often have limited budgets, these elements of reliability are crucial, as they seek assurance that their purchases are both secure and dependable. Research consistently shows that when online retailers emphasize reliability through transparent policies and strong customer support, they significantly enhance the purchase intentions of their target audience (Zhao et al., 2022).

**Access**

The ease with which students can access online shopping platforms and the availability of customer service significantly influence their shopping habits. For university students who prioritize convenience and efficiency, access to online shopping platforms is a crucial factor in shaping their purchase intentions. This access includes both the availability of the internet and the user-friendliness of online shopping sites (Zhou et al., 2020). Reliable internet access is vital for people to engage in online shopping.

The expansion of high-speed internet and the widespread use of mobile devices have made it increasingly convenient for people to browse and buy products online at any time and from any location (Akram et al., 2021). This enhanced accessibility contributes significantly to the

growing preference for online shopping among students. User-friendly interfaces and mobile-friendly designs are also essential for improving access.

Online shopping platforms that are easy to navigate, with well-organized product categories and smooth checkout processes, are more likely to attract and retain shoppers (Alalwan et al., 2021). Mobile apps tailored for online shopping further enhance accessibility, enabling students to shop while on the move. Research has shown that platforms designed with user experience in mind notably increase the likelihood of purchase intentions among young consumers (Sun et al., 2019).

Furthermore, access extends beyond just physical or technical availability; it also encompasses the accessibility of information and customer support. Providing detailed product information, user reviews, and efficient customer service can improve the perceived accessibility of an online shopping platform (Li & Yu, 2020). For online shoppers, having easy access to comprehensive product details, comparison tools, and responsive customer support can reduce uncertainties and build trust in making purchases. Studies indicate that platforms offering extensive information and strong customer support generally experience higher purchase intentions and greater customer loyalty (Wang et al., 2022).

### **Ease of Use**

A user-friendly interface, straightforward navigation, and a simplified transaction process greatly enhance the shopping experience, making it more attractive. Ease of use is a crucial factor affecting online purchase intentions, particularly among university students who value efficiency and simplicity in their shopping activities.

Ease of use, which refers to the extent to which a system is perceived as easy to use, is a fundamental aspect of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989). For online purchasers, online shopping platforms that are intuitive and easy to navigate significantly increase their likelihood of making purchases. Research has demonstrated that when users find an online platform easy to use and navigate, their satisfaction improves, leading to higher purchase intentions (Chopdar et al., 2019). The design and functionality of e-commerce websites are crucial to perceived ease of use. Features such as simple navigation, well-organized product categories, effective search functions, and streamlined checkout processes contribute to a positive user experience (Ozturk et al., 2019). Additionally, integrating advanced technologies like chatbots and virtual assistants can further ease the shopping process by offering immediate assistance and reducing the effort needed to complete a purchase. For a person, who often manages multiple responsibilities, the convenience provided by these features is highly appreciated and influences their decision to shop online (Alalwan et al., 2021). Furthermore, mobile compatibility and responsive design are essential in today's digital landscape. With the growing use of smartphones for various activities, including shopping, e-commerce platforms must be optimized for mobile devices (Kim & Peterson, 2019). Mobile-friendly designs that offer smooth navigation, quick loading times, and easy payment options greatly enhance the shopping experience for students. Studies show that when online shopping platforms are optimized for mobile use, they experience significant increases in user engagement and purchase intentions (Akram et al., 2021).



**Personalization**

Customizing the shopping experience to align with individual preferences through personalized product recommendations and targeted promotions greatly enhances purchase intentions. Personalization is a key factor affecting online purchase intentions, especially among people who value shopping experiences tailored to their specific needs and preferences.

In e-commerce, personalization involves adapting products, services, and marketing strategies to fit the unique preferences of individual consumers (Tam & Ho, 2020). For people personalized recommendations and targeted marketing efforts can make the shopping experience more relevant and engaging. Research shows that the effective use of personalization by online shopping platforms can significantly improve customer satisfaction and increase purchase intentions (Li & Yu, 2020).

Techniques such as personalized product suggestions, customized marketing messages, and individualized user interfaces can greatly impact students' willingness to purchase. Advanced data analytics and machine learning enable e-commerce platforms to analyze user behavior and preferences, thereby delivering tailored content that resonates with individual shoppers (Zhao et al., 2021). For instance, recommendation systems that suggest products based on previous purchases or browsing history can enhance the shopping experience for purchaser, making it more convenient and likely to lead to purchases (Chopdar & Sivakumar, 2019).

Moreover, personalization extends beyond product recommendations to include personalized customer service and communication. Chatbots and virtual assistants that offer customized support and address specific customer inquiries can boost perceived value and trust in the online shopping platform (Huang & Rust, 2021). For the online purchaser, receiving personalized help and prompt responses to their questions can reduce uncertainties and build confidence in their online shopping choices. Studies indicate that e-commerce platforms providing personalized interactions and support not only enhance customer satisfaction but also foster long-term loyalty and increase purchase intentions (Kim et al., 2020).

**Security**

The reliability of online platforms demonstrated through genuine product reviews, transparent business practices, and adherence to privacy regulations, is crucial in influencing purchase intentions. Security is a key factor affecting online shopping decisions, especially among university students who are particularly aware of the risks involved in online transactions. In e-commerce, security involves measures to safeguard users' personal and financial information from unauthorized access and fraud (Alalwan et al., 2021). Individual concerns about data breaches and cyber threats can significantly affect their willingness to shop online. Research indicates that perceived security enhances trust in online platforms, which, in turn, boosts purchase intentions (Kim et al., 2020).

Effective security measures such as encryption, secure payment systems, and rigorous authentication processes are crucial for addressing security concerns. Studies show that when online retailers invest in advanced security technologies and clear security policies, they build

trust and reassurance among consumers (Yahia et al., 2019). For people who often have limited financial resources, the assurance of secure transactions and protection of personal information is essential. Confidence in a platform's security directly contributes to higher customer satisfaction and purchase intentions (Chopdar et al., 2019).

Moreover, the display of security seals and certifications on e-commerce websites can greatly affect students' perceptions of security. These visual indicators signal the platform's commitment to data protection and compliance with industry standards (Akhlaq & Ahmed, 2021). For people, recognizable security logos can mitigate perceived risks and encourage them to proceed with their purchases. Additionally, providing clear, accessible information about security measures and privacy policies can further enhance the perceived safety of the platform, fostering greater trust and promoting repeat purchases (Khan et al., 2021).

### **Credibility**

The trustworthiness of online platforms demonstrated through genuine product reviews, transparent business practices, and adherence to privacy regulations, is crucial in shaping purchase intentions. The perceived credibility of an online retailer is a key factor influencing the purchase intentions of individuals. Jain et al (2020), highlight that the trustworthiness, expertise, and appeal of an online vendor significantly affect how credible the shopping platform is perceived. People use these credibility signals to mitigate the risks associated with online shopping. When an online retailer is viewed as credible, students are more likely to feel secure about their purchasing decisions, which reduces their perceived risk and enhances their intention to buy.

In addition to the credibility of the vendor, the credibility of the website itself is crucial in influencing purchase intentions. Al-Adwan and Kokash (2019) found that factors such as website design, ease of navigation, and the availability of high-quality information are important for establishing the credibility of an online shopping site. For a person, a well-designed and informative website can boost trust and confidence, leading to higher purchase intentions. Secure payment systems and clear return policies further enhance the website's credibility, making students more comfortable with their online purchases.

Moreover, peer influence and online reviews have a significant impact on the perceived credibility of online shopping platforms. Cheung et al (2021), found that positive reviews and recommendations from peers can improve the perceived credibility of an online retailer, thereby increasing the likelihood of purchase intentions among students. Fr online purchasers' online reviews are a crucial source of information that helps them make informed purchasing decisions. Therefore, incorporating social proof mechanisms, such as customer testimonials and user ratings, on online shopping platforms can play a key role in shaping these purchase intentions.

### **Research Objectives and Hypotheses**

Figure 1 depicts the conceptual framework illustrating the relationship between the reliability, access, ease of use, personalization, security, and credibility, and the intention to online purchase. This study formulated two primary research objectives:



- To discern the connections between dimensions from the theory of planned behavior, including the reliability, access, ease of use, personalization, security, and credibility of the intention to purchase online.
- To recognize the most influential factors from the theory of planned behavior, such as reliability, access, ease of use, personalization, security, and credibility, towards the intention to online purchase.

Furthermore, the researchers have outlined several hypotheses for this study:

H1a: There exists a relationship between the reliability and online purchase intention.

H2b: There is a relationship between access and the intention to purchase online.

H3c: A relationship exists between ease of use and the intention to purchase online.

H4e: There is a relationship between personalization and the intention to purchase online.

H5f: A relationship exists between security and the intention to purchase online.

H6g: There is a relationship between credibility on the intention to purchase online.

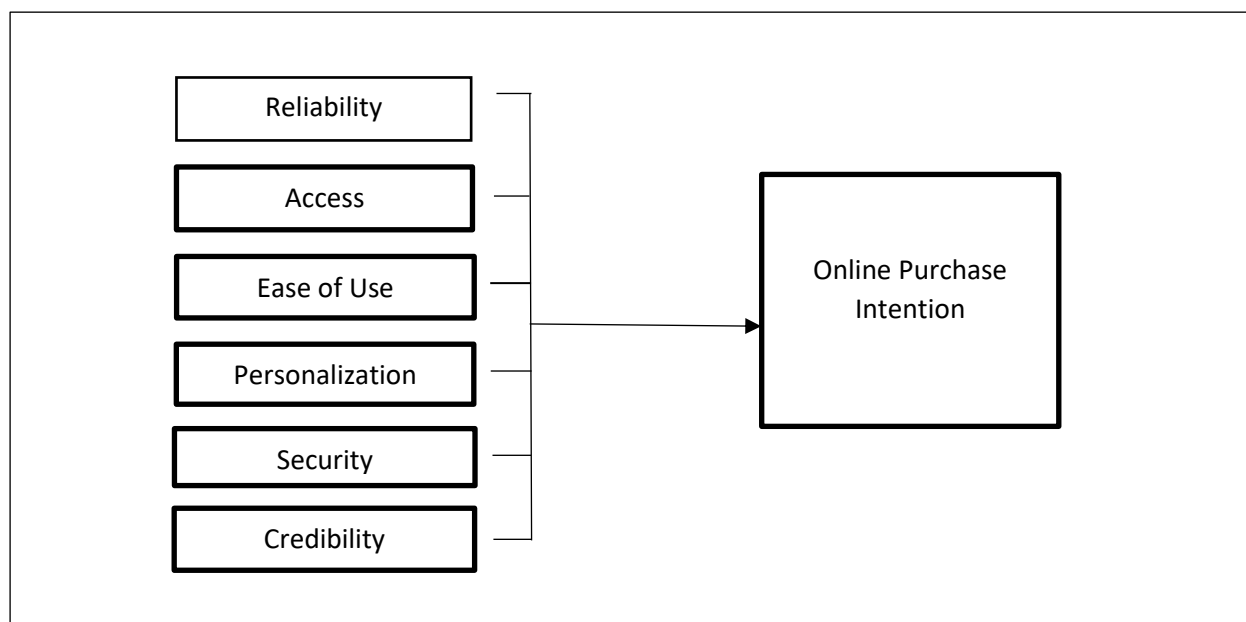


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework on the Relationship between social media and Intention to purchase.

### Methodology

This pilot study was conducted on the Facebook platform and focused on Muslim netizens in Malaysia. A total of 331 participants were selected using purposive sampling techniques to take part in the survey. The study was based on the Theory of Planned Behavior, and data was gathered using a questionnaire consisting of 38 items. Additionally, purchase intentions were measured using a 10-item questionnaire developed by (Conner, 2020). Responses were collected on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), to assess agreement levels with various statements. The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the dynamics of social media's influence on online purchase intentions, highlighting the importance of factors such as reliability, accessibility, ease of use, personalization, security, and credibility. By optimizing these factors, e-commerce businesses

can enhance consumer engagement and conversion rates, while fostering stronger customer relationships. Future research should continue to explore these dynamics to provide a more comprehensive understanding of online consumer behavior in Malaysia.

## Results and Discussion

### *Correlation Analysis*

The correlation analysis unveiled several key relationships among the factors influencing online shopping intentions. A strong correlation was observed between ease of use and personalization ( $r = 0.553$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that an intuitive and user-friendly online shopping platform tends to offer more personalized experiences to its users. Additionally, moderate to strong correlations were found between access and reliability ( $r = 0.493$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and between security and personalization ( $r = 0.516$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). These findings suggest that accessible and reliable online platforms that also prioritize security are likely to enhance personalization, contributing positively to online shopping intentions. Lastly, while credibility showed positive correlations with other factors, these were relatively weaker, indicating that while credibility is important, its impact on purchase intentions is influenced by a complex interplay of multiple factors. Overall, the analysis suggests that while all factors positively influence online shopping intentions, ease of use and personalization have the strongest impact.

Factor	Mean Score	Correlation Coefficients
Reliability	Moderate	$r = 0.493$ , $p < 0.001$
Access	Moderate	$r = 0.493$ , $p < 0.001$
Ease of Use	Moderate	$r = 0.553$ , $p < 0.001$
Personalization	Moderate	$r = 0.516$ , $p < 0.001$
Security	Moderate	$r = 0.516$ , $p < 0.001$
Credibility	Moderate	Weaker positive
Online Purchase Intention	Moderate	

### Regression Analysis

The regression analysis identified significant relationships between the factors and online purchase intentions:

Factor	Hypothesis	Beta Coefficient	p-value	Result
Reliability	H1a, H7h	0.493	< 0.001	Supported
Access	H2b, H8i	0.493	< 0.001	Supported
Ease of Use	H3c, H9j	0.553	< 0.001	Supported
Personalization	H4e, H10k	0.516	< 0.001	Supported
Security	H5f, H11l	0.516	< 0.001	Supported
Credibility	H6g, H12m	Positive but weaker	< 0.001	Supported

The regression analysis revealed significant relationships between various social media attributes and online purchase intentions, providing deeper insights into the factors influencing consumer behavior in the Malaysian context. Here are the key findings and their implications:

Reliability emerged as a significant factor, indicating that consumers are more likely to make online purchases when they perceive the platform as reliable. This finding underscores the importance of consistent and dependable service quality in building trust and confidence among users. For e-commerce businesses, ensuring reliability in product delivery, customer service, and overall platform performance is crucial for enhancing purchase intentions.

Accessibility also played a significant role, highlighting that consumers are more inclined to shop online when the platform is easily accessible. This includes factors such as mobile-friendliness, fast loading times, and intuitive navigation. E-commerce businesses should focus on improving the accessibility of their platforms to cater to a broader audience and enhance user experience.

Ease of use was found to be the strongest predictor of online purchase intentions. This suggests that consumers prefer platforms that are user-friendly and require minimal effort to navigate. Businesses should invest in user interface and experience design to simplify the shopping process, making it easier for users to find products, complete transactions, and access customer support.

Personalization also had a significant positive impact on purchase intentions. Consumers are more likely to engage with platforms that offer personalized recommendations and experiences. This finding emphasizes the need for businesses to leverage data analytics and customer insights to tailor content, offers, and interactions to individual preferences.

Security was another crucial factor, indicating that consumers are more comfortable making online purchases when they feel their transactions are secure. This includes protecting personal and financial information from unauthorized access. E-commerce businesses should prioritize security measures such as encryption, secure payment gateways, and clear privacy policies to reassure users and foster trust.

While credibility showed positive correlations, its impact was relatively weaker compared to other factors. This suggests that while credibility is important, its influence on purchase intentions is mediated by other factors such as reliability, access, ease of use, personalization, and security. Businesses should still strive to maintain high credibility by providing accurate information, authentic reviews, and positive customer testimonials to support their offerings.

#### *Implications for E-commerce Businesses*

The findings of this study have several practical implications for e-commerce businesses operating in Malaysia. Firstly, there is a need to focus on enhancing the user experience by improving the ease of use, reliability, accessibility, personalization, and security of online platforms. These factors have been shown to significantly boost purchase intentions, indicating that a seamless and user-friendly shopping experience is crucial for engaging consumers and driving sales. Secondly, the study underscores the importance of adopting ethical marketing practices that align with Islamic values. By demonstrating adherence to these values, businesses can build trust and credibility among consumers, which is essential for fostering long-term customer relationships. Thirdly, implementing personalized recommendations and experiences can enhance user engagement and drive sales. Consumers are more likely to engage with platforms that offer personalized content and tailored experiences, making personalization a key strategy for e-commerce success. Lastly, prioritizing the security of online transactions is essential for building customer confidence and trust. Ensuring the protection of personal and financial information is crucial for reassuring consumers and encouraging them to make online purchases. By optimizing these key factors, e-commerce businesses can enhance consumer engagement and conversion rates, while fostering stronger customer relationships. The study highlights the multifaceted nature of social media's influence on online purchase intentions in Malaysia and suggests that future research should continue to explore these dynamics to provide a more comprehensive understanding of online consumer behavior in the country.

#### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study highlights the significant influence of attitude, particularly shaped by Islamic ethics, on the online purchasing behavior of Malaysian consumers. The findings underscore the importance of considering ethical and cultural dimensions when developing online marketing strategies. By aligning their practices with Islamic ethical principles, e-commerce businesses can enhance trust, credibility, and ultimately, purchase intentions among their target audience.

**Recommendations**

The findings of this study emphasize the importance of adopting ethical marketing practices that resonate with Islamic values in the Malaysian e-commerce context. By ensuring transparency, honesty, and fairness in all transactions, e-commerce platforms can build trust and credibility among consumers, which is crucial for fostering long-term customer relationships. Additionally, implementing personalization strategies that cater to the specific needs and preferences of Malaysian consumers, while maintaining trust and security, can significantly enhance purchase intentions. Personalization allows businesses to offer tailored experiences that resonate with individual users, thereby driving engagement and sales. Furthermore, understanding and respecting the cultural and ethical sensitivities of Malaysian consumers is essential for e-commerce success. Businesses should conduct thorough market research to identify and address the unique challenges and preferences of this demographic, ensuring that their marketing strategies are culturally sensitive and aligned with local values. By integrating these practices, e-commerce businesses can enhance consumer engagement and conversion rates, while fostering stronger customer relationships in the Malaysian market.

**Theoretical Contribution**

This research enriches the theoretical discourse by integrating cultural and ethical dimensions into models of online consumer behavior. By highlighting the significant influence of Islamic ethics on purchase intentions, the study provides a nuanced understanding of how specific social media elements can be optimized to bolster consumer engagement and conversion rates in a Malaysian context. This integration enhances the applicability of the Theory of Planned Behavior in diverse cultural settings, offering valuable insights for both academics and practitioner

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