

Online Shopping Intention among the International Students in Thailand – An Empirical Study

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between the attitude and intention of the customers towards online shopping in Thailand. It also examines whether trust and enjoyment have any influence on online shoppers to have positive shopping behavior as well. The study included Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) model to explain the online shopping attitude and intention of online shoppers in Thailand during the Corona Virus (COVID-19) pandemic. A non-probability convenience sampling technique was adopted to collect data through an online survey using google form. 80 questionnaire survey link was distributed among the target participants who do online shopping in Thailand. A total of 43 online shoppers who study international program in English both for public and private universities in Thailand participated in the survey. From the analysis it was noticed a significant relationship between perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, attitude and online shopping intention. The study also noticed that perceived risk, perceived enjoyment, and trust has a positive significant association with the attitude towards online shopping and intention towards online shopping. The result of this the study is consistent with prior studies. Future studies need to consider larger population from the international students who come to study in Thailand to have generalizability.

Keywords: Online shopping intension, Technology Acceptance Model, International students, Thailand, Perceived Risk, Trust

INTRODUCTION

Background Of the Study

In today's competitive world, marketers need to understand consumer's behavior to shape their product and services to stay competitive in the business. Consumer behavior has been defined as the process that occur when individuals or groups select, buy, use, or discard a product, service, idea, or event in order to meet their needs and preferences (Solomon, 1998). In general, consumer behavior is important to businesses because it allows them to gather information about their customers and forecast their purchasing decisions. In addition, business organizations must have knowledge and awareness of consumer behavior in order to succeed. Some prior studies have been documented that Consumers make purchasing decisions by selecting one of several options and then taking action to complete the purchase (Olshavsky & Granbois 1979; Lee, Park, & Ha 2008). According to Kotler & Armstrong, (2014), there are some characteristics that influences the consumers when they make the purchase decision; which are cultural, social, personal and psychological factors. Furthermore, these factors are

used by marketers to promote sales and promotions to customers.

Thailand is a developing country in Southeast Asia that is focusing on building effective e-commerce business models that are appropriate for its region. According to Keretho and Limstit (2002), the E-commerce was seen by the Thai government as a strategy to achieve a competitive advantage in the regional and worldwide economy. It has been observed over the years that Thailand's internet users have been steadily increasing, and at the same time, the country's mobile transition is accelerating. Thailand's online population is rapidly expanding, with 57 million users and an internet penetration rate of 82.2 percent as of the first quarter of 2019 (*Internet World Stat report*). Due to the development of logistics and e-payment systems, online consumers are more confident and comfortable to shop online. The rapid rise of the internet has made e-commerce and online purchasing easier, and it is easier for consumers to get what they want online. Thailand's e-commerce user penetration is 57.4 percent, with sales of \$4.375 million in 2019 and a forecast of 67 percent by 2023 (Statista Report). According to the Electronic Transactions Development Agency (ETDA), Thai e-commerce witnessed the fastest growth among ASEAN countries, with an estimated value of \$94.1 billion (Baht 3.2 trillion) by the end of 2018. (The Nation 2019). On online shopping platforms, customers' hedonic, simple, and beneficial experiences boost revenue. Thailand spends about \$243 on the online, with the figure predicted to rise to \$382 by 2021. (eShopWorld). A recent study found that 74% of Gen Z members spend five hours or more every day online and by 2020, Gen Z will command 40% of all consumer shopping (Dabija, & Lung, 2018).

In early December of the 2019, the Corona Virus disease (COVID-19) breaks out. Because the virus was easily infectious and spreads quickly, every country's government and the WHO advise people to stay at home. They proposed that keeping social distance, or "remaining out of places where people meet or gather and preserving distance from others," is an efficient method to reduce the spread of a viral outbreak (WHO, 2019). Thailand prohibits travel in and out of the country during this time, and lockdowns were in effect. Usually, humans react to crisis circumstances in a variety of ways. When confronted with a dangerous and unknown circumstance that they can't control, they do whatever they can to alleviate pandemic stress. During the pandemic, electronic commerce became a hallmark, and it was the only option for businesses to stay afloat during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, to remain competitive in the online shopping platform, online businesses must identify consumers with purchase intent and attitudes toward online shopping based on their purchasing activity (To, Liao & Lin 2007; Childers et al. 2001).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to understand the international students online shopping behavior in Thailand during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study further wants to identify the differences of the purchasing decisions of the international students in Thailand before and after the pandemic outbreak takes place in Thailand. The study will also look into the factors that influence a customer's decision to buy or not buy a company's product or service.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to comprehend the following aspects.

- i. To understand the online shopping behavior of international students by utilizing Technology Acceptance Model.



- ii. To understand whether trust, enjoyment and risk have any influence on international students when they purchase online.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Online Shopping

The phrase "online shopping" refers to a process in which buyers can use the internet to directly search for, select, get, and/or purchase a product or service from sellers (Javadi et al. 2012). Generally, consumers can purchase a range of goods, products, and services online through websites or applications using online shopping platforms; such as Lazada, Shopee, Alibaba, amazon etc. In general, consumers no longer need to go to a real store to shop; instead, they can shop from any internet website 24x7 (Berman & Thelen 2004). Internet connection helps establish a website to purchase, sell, or trade products or goods online. Consumers can receive a variety of product-related information and features from the internet by clicking on the necessary fields on websites and/or web pages. Consumers who shop online do not have to wait in line at the check-out counter and can purchase products or goods with a single click of a button. When compared to traditional shopping, shoppers can save time by buying online for their necessities.

Technology Acceptance Model

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was introduced by Davis in 1989. TAM is an information system model that consumers use to explain how they become aware of technology and embrace the usage of technology that is handy and improves their lives while also reducing the amount of time it takes to complete a task. According to Dillon & Morris (1996), The greater the likelihood that employees will use and embrace the new technology as valuable, the more they will recognize how it will make their job easier. This study employs this model, which considers the consumers' buying decision as well as the perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. The study includes additional variables such as perceived risk and perceived enjoyment to learn more about customers' attitudes and intentions while making a purchase decision. The study also includes consumer trust to provide greater insight into their attitudes and intentions.

Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU)

According to Davis (1989), perceived ease of use (PEOU) refers to person's belief that utilizing a certain system will make completing a task simple. In general, online shopping demonstrates how little effort people must exert in order to purchase items (Monuwe et al. 2004; Sin et al. 2012). In addition, if an online shopping system or e-commerce website is easy to use, it will undoubtedly attract customers, perhaps increasing the number of users. Moreover, consumers' propensity to utilize technology, as well as their attitude toward it, is influenced by perceived ease of use. According to David et al (1989), the person's attitude is directly influenced by perceived ease of usage.

Perceived Usefulness (PU)

Perceived usefulness (PU) means the degree to which a person believes that specific information system would improve his or her job performance (David, 1989; Kim 2012; Sin et al. 2012). In general, consumers' perceived usefulness focuses on how easy it is for them to

buy things online and what kind of experience they can have. In addition, customer's perspective on online stores is convenient and speedier than traditional brick-and-mortar stores (Dash & Saji 2008). The mindset of the consumer to purchase online will be influenced by the usefulness of online shopping (Changchit et al., 2019). Furthermore, some studies documented that perceived usefulness is directly associated with attitudes towards online shopping (Dash & Saji 2008; Kim 2012).

Perceived Risk

Perceived risk is referred as the uncertainty and fear that the customer experiences when buying products or services (Bauer 1960). According to Ko et al (2010), Perceived risk refers to the probability of failing to achieve a favorable result during online shopping, implying that people are concerned about the possibility of a poor outcome. In addition, when it comes to online buying, customers are concerned about their privacy and data leaking. If customers experience little risk, they are more likely to use internet buying and have a positive opinion toward it.

Perceived Enjoyment

Perceived enjoyment is defined as the degree to which the act of utilizing technology is considered delightful in and of itself, regardless of any potential performance repercussions (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1992). In general, it is noticed that consumers' intentions to shop online are influenced by their perceived enjoyment (Cheema et al., 2013). Cheema et al. (2013) further mentioned in the study that it is the customers who view the online shopping as enjoyable. In addition, Wolfinbarger & Gilly (2001) claimed that customers may find shopping for things online to be engaging and enjoyable. Therefore, if a user can enjoy themselves while utilizing technology, their attitude toward it will be favorable.

Trust

Trust is referred as the consumer's readiness to rely on the seller and take action in circumstances where doing so puts the customer exposed to the seller (Jarvenpaa & Tractinsky 1999). In general, consumers have a different level of trust in brick-and-mortar stores than they do in department stores on the internet (Hahn & Kim, 2009). In addition, Li et al., (2007) claimed that the subject of customer trust on the internet shopping mall stands alone because no seller-related management is visible during purchasing or selling. Additionally, it has been documented that consumer who trust online shops and conduct online transactions have a high level of trust in e-commerce (Pavlou 2003). Similarly, consumers who shop online find themselves in a precarious situation where they must utilize the internet to contact with the merchant and give personal information. Moreover, consumers will respond positively to a well-organized online shopping website with comprehensive information, a diverse product variety, a sense of secure payment, and trust (Lim & Dubinsky 2004). The trust the customer has on the online shopping has a positive influence on the customer's attitude when deciding to purchase.

Attitude Towards Online Shopping

A consumer's attitude toward online shopping is defined as their positive or negative feelings about carrying out their purchase behavior on the internet (Chiu et al, 2005). In general, the mindset of the consumer had a direct impact on their willingness to buy. In addition, the consumer's willingness allows them to continue making purchasing decisions. According to



Armstrong and Kotler, (2000), person's shopping choices are influenced by four psychological factors such as motivation, perception, learning and beliefs and attitude. Generally, attitudes are created as a result of motivation and perception, and they will then make a decision. Moreover, when it comes to estimating online purchasing rates and developing preparations for future marketing campaigns, marketers will benefit greatly from a thorough understanding of customer attitudes.

Online Shopping Intention

According to Ajzen (1991), an individual's intention may be influenced by the resources available to him or her and his or her power over a certain conduct. In general, customers' online purchases tend to be affected by their attitudes on online shopping (Limayem et al, 2004). The term "shopping intention" refers to a consumer's enthusiasm to make a purchase after discovering desirable products or services (Zhou et al., 2007). Purchase intentions highly depend on the trust factor of the consumers that they have on an online shopping (Lee et al., 2011). The more trust that consumers have, the more intention they will have on purchasing online (Jarvenpaa et al. 1999; Wakefield et al. 2004). Furthermore, when customers discover that shops are reliable and keep their promises, they will have higher intention to shop online.

Proposed Hypotheses

H1: Perceived ease of use will positively influence customer's attitude towards online shopping.

H2: Perceived usefulness will positively influence customer's attitude towards online shopping.

H3: Perceived risk will positively influence customer's attitude towards online shopping.

H4: Perceived enjoyment will positively influence customer's attitude towards online shopping.

H5: Trust of the customer will positively influence the attitude towards online shopping.

H6: The attitude of the customers will positively influence the online shopping intention.

Theoretical Framework

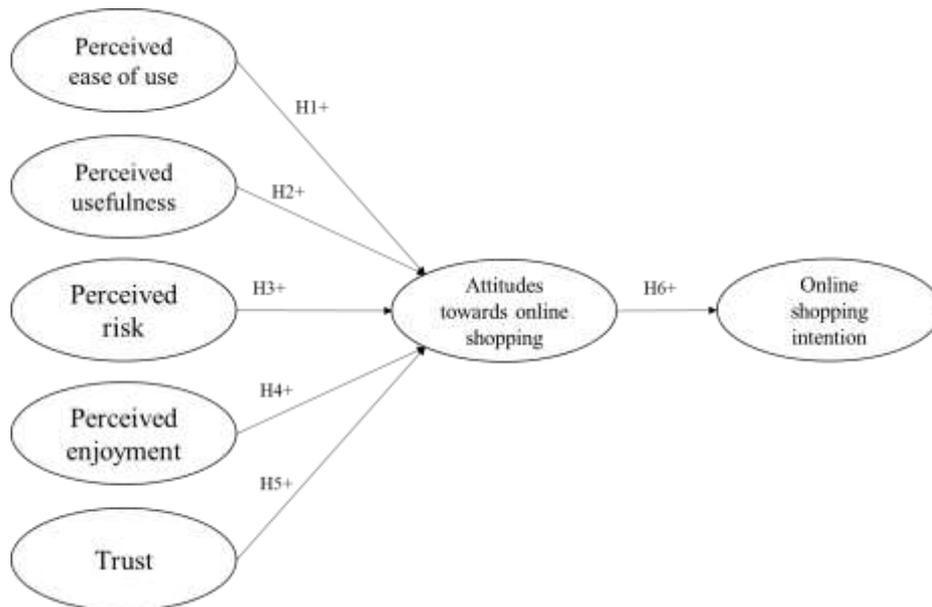


Figure 1 Theoretical Framework of the study

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

To engage with the variables relating to the online shopping intention decision of the international students studying in Thailand, an online survey was conducted to obtain quantitative data to test the proposed hypotheses. To have a better understanding of the relations between perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, perceived risk, perceived enjoyment, Trust, attitude and intention of the international students, an empirical study was adopted. An online survey was used for this research and the questionnaires in the study consist of the following; independent variables i.e., perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, perceived risk, perceived enjoyment, trust, and attitude towards online shopping. On the other hand, online shopping intention was the dependent variable. In this study the demographic information such as gender, age, nationality, income, background, the e-commerce platforms were collected. The results from the survey were analyzed to understand the association between the independent and dependent variables of the purchase decision of international students studying in Thailand.

Sample and Participants

The online survey was conducted via social-media (Instagram, Facebook, Line) at public universities, and private universities in Bangkok, Thailand. The survey was mainly conducted in the English language because the participants were studying in English in the universities in Thailand. The international students who study in the international program of public and private universities were considered as the sampling frame. International students who are studying in other programs were excluded. Further, international students who had online shopping experience from websites or applications were considered the suitable respondents

for the study. To obtain the maximum participation for the study, non-probability convenience sampling techniques were adopted. To get the maximum participation snowball sampling method was adopted. A total of 60 survey questionnaires were sent via email, Facebook, Instagram and line to get the maximum participation. A total number of 43 international students, responded in the survey.

Data Collection

The questionnaire of the survey was mainly carried out in the English as it is mainly aimed at the international students and respondents such as people with bachelor's degree, master degree, doctoral degree. Cross-sectional data were collected via an online questionnaire. A link of Google Form was sent via email, Facebook, Instagram and Line to the target population. No personal information was collected and confidentiality was maintained. Before sending the survey, the participants were asked if they had engaged with the online shopping or had experience purchasing products from online stores in Thailand. Only then the survey link was sent to the participants. If any participant changes their mind and withdraw from the survey, they can do it anytime without informing the researcher.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Information

The respondents (n=43) who took part in the survey were 21 (48.8%) female and 22 (51.2%) males. The major participants 32 (74.4%) had a bachelor degree, 9 (20.9) had a high school degree, 2 (4.7%) had a master degree and 1 had doctoral degree.

Table 1: Demographics Information

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	22	51.2%
Female	21	48.8%
Total	43	100%
Educational Stage	Frequency	Percentage
High School	9	20.9%
Bachelors	32	74.4%
Masters	2	4.7%
Doctoral	1	1%

Total	43	100%
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Monthly Income-Platform

Monthly Income (Thai Baht)

43 responses

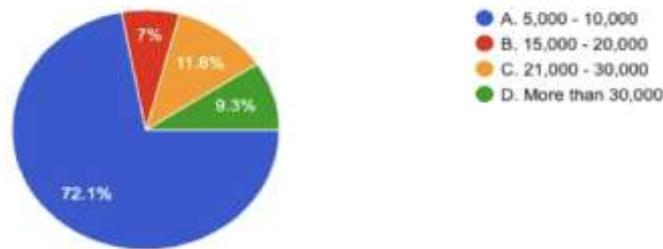


Figure 2: Monthly Income

Among the participants who took part in the survey, 72.1 % had a monthly income between 5,000 thousand baht and 10,000 thousand baht, 11.6 % had a monthly income between 21,000 thousand baht and 30,000 thousand baht, 9.3% had a monthly income more than 30,000 thousand baht and 7% had a monthly income between 15,000 thousand baht and 20,000 thousand baht.

Shopping Frequency

Among the participants, 48.8% had shopped online once a month, 46.5% had shopped online a few times per month and 4.7% had shopped online every week.

How often do you shop online?

43 responses



Figure 3: Shopping Frequency

Shopping Platform

According to the survey, the participants had used different types of platforms for purchasing products online and 41.0% had used Shopee for online shopping, and 20.9% had used

Instagram for shopping online. Among the participants, 18.6% had used Lazada and Facebook for shopping online.



Figure 4: Shopping Platform

Correlation Analysis

Bivariate correlation analysis was conducted. From the analysis it was noticed that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness have a positive relationship with attitudes towards online shopping ($r = .758$, p value = .000) and ($r = .830$, p value = .000). In addition, perceived risk was found positively connected to attitudes towards online shopping ($r = .743$, p value = .000). perceived enjoyment has a positive association with attitudes towards online shopping ($r = .717$, p value = .000) and additionally, Trust has a positive relationship with attitudes towards online shopping ($r = .778$, p value = .000). Furthermore, it has been noticed that attitudes towards online shopping is positively related to online shopping intention ($r = .799$, p value = .000). From the table below it was observed that all the correlations were significant at 0.001 level (2-tailed). Table 1 exhibits correlations among all the variables.

Table 1: Pearson’s Correlations of the variables

		Correlations						
		PEOU	PU	ATT	PR	PE	TR	BI
PEOU	Pearson Correlation	1	.763**	.758**	.672**	.641**	.676**	.683**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	43	43	43	43	43	43	43
PU	Pearson Correlation	.763**	1	.830**	.691**	.540**	.610**	.649**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	43	43	43	43	43	43	43
ATT	Pearson Correlation	.758**	.830**	1	.734**	.717**	.778**	.799**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	43	43	43	43	43	43	43
PR	Pearson Correlation	.672**	.691**	.734**	1	.613**	.618**	.681**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	43	43	43	43	43	43	43
PE	Pearson Correlation	.641**	.540**	.717**	.613**	1	.627**	.715**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	43	43	43	43	43	43	43
TR	Pearson Correlation	.676**	.610**	.778**	.618**	.627**	1	.735**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	43	43	43	43	43	43	43
BI	Pearson Correlation	.683**	.649**	.799**	.681**	.715**	.735**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	43	43	43	43	43	43	43

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was conducted to test the proposed hypotheses. From the regression analysis, it was noticed that perceived ease of use has a positive relation with attitudes towards online shopping ($\beta=0.758$, p value=0.000) with an adjusted R square of 0.564 (i.e., perceived ease of use explains 56.4% of attitudes towards online shopping). The result is statistically significant and supports hypothesis 1. The result revealed that perceived usefulness has a positive relation with attitude towards online shopping ($\beta=0.830$, p value=0.000). It was noticed that Adjusted R square for this hypothesis was 0.681 which means 68.1% can be explained. Hypothesis 2 is statistically supported. The data showed that perceived risk has a positive relation with attitude ($\beta=0.734$, p value=0.000) and it is statistically significant which means hypothesis 3 is also supported. The association has an adjusted R square of 0.527 which means 52.7% can be explained from this. The data further showed that perceived enjoyment has a positive relation with attitude towards online shopping ($\beta=0.717$, p value=0.000) with an adjusted R square of 0.502 which means 50.2% can be explained. The result is statistically significant, and hypothesis 4 is supported. Trust has a positive relation with attitude ($\beta=0.778$, p value=0.000) with an adjusted R square of 0.596, which means 59.6% can be explained from this. The association is statistically supported and hypothesis 5 is supported. Finally, attitudes towards online shopping were found a positive association with online shopping intention ($\beta=0.799$, p value=0.000) with an adjusted R square of 0.630 which means 63% can be explain from this. Therefore, hypothesis 6 is statistically supported

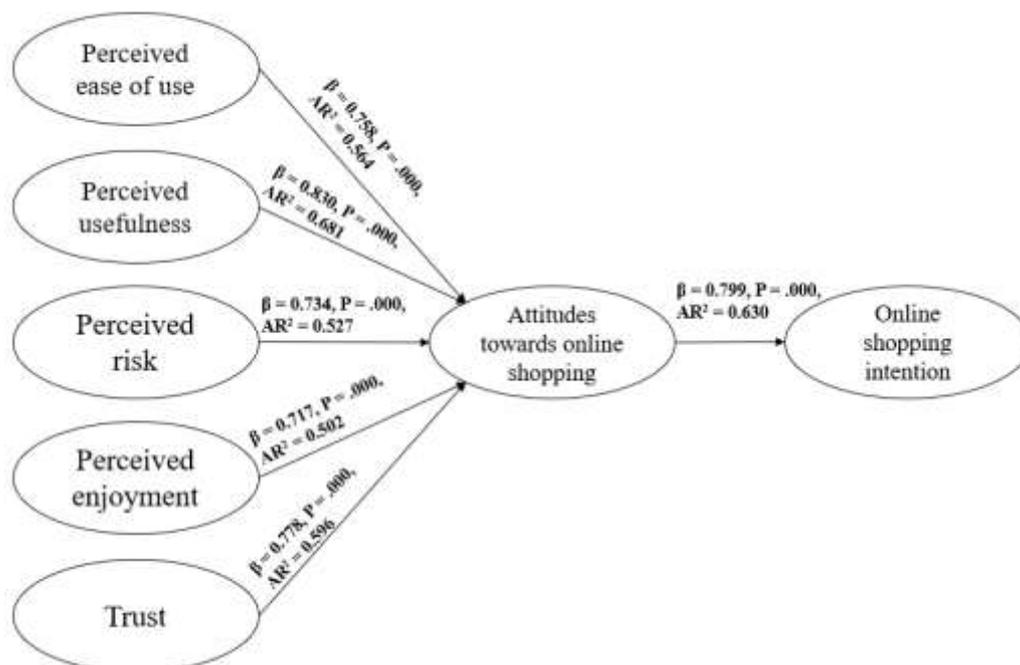


Figure 5: Regression analysis

DISCUSSION

The main purpose of the study is to examine the purchasing decision of the consumers in Thailand in the framework of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The study also focuses on the perceived risk, perceived enjoyment and trust of the international students if those can

increase the attitudes towards online shopping which can influence the shopping intention. The hypotheses of this study were statistically supported which is consistent with prior studies. From the previous study, researchers prove that attitude and intention are under-linked (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977). Attitude and online intention have strong relation between each other. Perceived usefulness, Perceived ease of use and Perceived enjoyment are important factors that affect the attitude of the international student towards online shopping intention (Chui et al, 2009). Additional factors such as Perceived risk also affects the attitude of the customers which results in the online shopping intention. However, since the coronavirus (COVID-19) happened, many consumers including students find the online shopping platforms useful and convenient due to the health concern, therefore, it has motivated them to use online shopping platforms more frequently.

The effect of the four variables is important on the online shopping attitude of the international students studying in Thailand. This shows that the attitude of the international students is affected by the user's recognition of online shopping that is useful and easy to use. The results of the study shows that perceived usefulness influences the online shopping attitude of the international students more than perceived ease of use and perceived enjoyment. Perceived usefulness is the major factor for the international students to choose the online shop and the enhance the customer's satisfaction with the online store (Chui et al. 2002). When international students realize that online shopping is useful for them, it affects positively on the ease of use for online shopping.

Although previous studies show mixed results that perceived ease of use influences the attitude, the present study proves the importance of perceived ease of use in the online shopping context. The study shows that perceived ease of use and the attitude towards online shopping is linkage. Online shopping websites or applications (Lazada, Shopee, Alibaba) which are easy to use will allow the international students in Thailand to gather information about their purchase. While gathering information, the international students also seek out reviews and news about the online shop which they planned to purchase from. If the online shop's reviews and news of the shop meet the international student's expectations, they will trust the online shopping websites or applications (Lazada, Shopee, Alibaba). When the online shop wins the trust of the international students, it will increase their positive attitude towards online shopping and increase the online shopping intention. If the international students are satisfied about using online shopping, it increases the intention towards online shopping.

Perceived enjoyment is one of the important factors in online shopping and it has a connection with the attitude towards online shopping. If the international students feel joy and satisfaction after using the online shopping to purchase, it increases the attitude and the intention towards online shopping. Perceived usefulness and trust of the international students have positive influence on their attitude towards online shopping, which have a direct relation with the intention towards online shopping. However, perceived ease of use, perceived risk and perceived enjoyment have less influence on the international student's attitude and intention. The only reason which could lead to this outcome is the Corona Virus disease (COVID-19) which can spread and infect people easily. Due to the health concern, the international students have to change the way they live and also have to change the way they purchase products. Online shopping becomes the solution of how people purchase products which reduce the probabilities of getting the Corona Virus disease (COVID-19). This shows that perceived ease of use, perceived risk and perceived enjoyment have less influence on the international students' attitude and intention towards online shopping, which differs from the previous studies (Davis, 1989). Before the Corona Virus disease (COVID-19) breaks out, customer's



attitude and intention towards online shopping is mainly influenced by the ease of use and risk however, health concerns led the customers which causes the perceived usefulness to be influenced on the customer's attitude and intention towards online shopping more than the perceived ease of use, perceived risk and perceived enjoyment.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This paper examined the relation between perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, trust, perceived risk and perceived enjoyment towards the customer's attitude and intention towards online shopping. The results of the study showed that due to the health concern, international students' perception and intention to use online shopping is influenced by the usefulness of it. The present study showed that trust and perceived usefulness of online stores is positively related to the intention of the international students. Due to the pandemic, more people are inclined to shop online and their attitudes are positive towards online shopping. The marketers need to understand the need of the consumers and make a platform where data privacy will be maintained. When online platform can ensure the data privacy, consumers will have a higher tendency to purchase their desired product from online platform.

Recommendations

Future study needs can focus both Thai and international students from Thailand who use online shopping during the pandemic time. The study can make a comparison between Thai and international students and how it is helpful for them. The future study can include some other variables like website design, price, subjective norms, social influence, to understand the purchasing decision of international students.

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