

THE USAGE OF INSTAGRAM AND E-COMMERCE PLATFORM DURING COVID-19 AMONG MOTHERS

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Abstract

Instagram made a shift into the e-commerce space. Almost overnight, it has become a popular marketing instrument. The usage of Instagram in the e-commerce platform has been expanding rapidly and is growing tremendously. The purpose of this study is to understand the underlying factors that influence the usage of Instagram as a shopping tool among Mothers in Malaysia during COVID-19. Using the qualitative method and phenomenology approach, the finding reveals several factors that influence Instagram usage, the various purpose of using Instagram, and benefits to the consumers. Twenty samples were selected for this study as to fulfill requirement of the study. The evidence gathered in this study are useful and can be served as guidance for consumer and marketers in using social media in future. Findings revealed that the cost and time efficiency as factors influencing the respondents' online purchase through social media. The consumer can also compare prices conveniently without feeling pressure.

Keywords: *Instagram Usage, Instagram Marketing, E-Commerce Platform, Online Purchase, Buying Behavior*

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Facing with the Pandemic

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, people, communities, and businesses face a difficult time adjusting to a new way of life. Whether we realize it or not, the internet has changed the way we live and think and how we purchase a product and communicate. Today, social media has evolved drastically and changed the digital landscape. A billion people head online to cope with life and work under lockdown. Social media are becoming more interactive and collaborative, creating new interaction opportunities between the public and organizations. The unique features of social media and its widespread use have transformed marketing methods from traditional to online, especially in communication and promotion [1].

Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly impacted buying and selling goods or services using social media through e-commerce platforms for almost a year. Now, isolation and social distancing measures have been put in place globally. Due to shops' closure, restaurants and malls are seeing huge spikes in demand and tend to get many searches via the internet and website. In this study, Instagram is a 'social media' rather than a social networking site.' Nowadays, Instagram is considered one of the most powerful social media tools, especially among young people, and has become widespread nowadays. As proof of its success, Instagram ranked second most downloaded app and the 4th most used social media in Malaysia as of Jan 2020. It has a broad and diverse audience and actively discovering and purchasing a product on the Instagram platform.

One billion people use Instagram every month, and 200 million users visit at least one business profile daily [2]. This study increases the knowledge of scholars and researchers in communication, media, and advertising in Malaysia in terms of social commerce in the advertising and marketing industry. The researcher can use this study to facilitate further research on the other sector, especially those related to social network marketing. The study provides a surface that helps people carry out similar studies among other organizations where the business environment is similar. Besides that, this study can also help online retailers increase their profits by utilizing their sales opportunities. Thus, this study also helps online retailers through social media to adapt to the changing consumer tastes and preferences to avoid heavy losses when faced with any environmental crisis in the future.

1.2 Instagram as a Part of Our Life

Instagram has become a significant part of life. This social media platform provides users with the opportunity to expand their network and provide a platform for businesspeople to interact with potential customers [3]. As news of COVID-19 spread, the trends of buying online today are changing. Baby Boomers, homemakers, and older generations are starting to see online shopping as a valid and safe option to obtain groceries and household necessities. Notably, studies on social media and how past researchers pursued social media impact consumer buying behavior many decades ago. Instagram marketing influences shopping behavior, especially the younger generations and millennial mothers. Rapid changes on the internet globally, starting from product offerings on e-commerce platforms, product reviews by consumers, and influencers on Instagram, has to a certain extent compelling them to purchase products such as gaming, fashion, beauty, and lifestyle to keep up with the trend.

The mounting concerns over the COVID-19 impact online shopping behavior and e-commerce transaction of Malaysian retailers. All business premises closed except for supermarkets, public markets, grocery stores, and convenience stores selling everyday necessities with designated operation hours from 8 am to 8 pm to prevent the virus from spreading [4]. Online shopping surges for COVID 19 virus protection, which the public has told to stay home to slow the spread globally. The consumer is changing what they are buying, when, and how during this isolation and lockdown period. One survey in the U.S. and U.K. Consumers found that 96% of Millennials and Gen Z's are concerned about the pandemic and its effects on the economy. These concerns were leading them to change their behavior more dramatically than other generations. The cutting on spending and stocking up on items. Whereas Gen X and Boomers are slightly less concerned than younger generations and less impact their shopping habits. With 24 percent of Boomers and 34 percent of Gen X, current events impact what items they purchase compared to nearly half of Millennials [5].

It is also found that product categories purchased are also changing based on a new local circumstance. Some of the product categories most affected are healthy and safe products such as hygienic and medical masks are up by more than 300% [6]. In addition to long term quarantine, for groceries, sales are up —some behavioral changes around the way people buy groceries. Many people are choosing to buy online and pick up at the store or with the delivery option. With Malaysian stay indoors to minimize contact with others, e-commerce offers online shopping experiences to the consumer. Tesco Online, Happy Fresh, Jaya Grocery, BungkusIt, and Lalamove's provides instant delivery and purchasing services that can help the consumer to buy groceries and medicine and to be delivered right to their doorstep [7].

Drastic changes and the shift of social media approaches for e-commerce marketing such as Instagram Shopping, Facebook, WhatsApp' and SNS during COVID-19 are the best medium to communicate in the current environment to the community swift manner. Social media channel allows businesses to take immediate action and educate potential consumers using a digital platform during MCO. Users can now discover shoppable products straight from the navigation menu and making it easier than ever. The impact of COVID-19 shows how the digital and marketing landscape has changed, and Malaysians have been spending more time online and shown more willingness to purchase items online now. Analysis and discussion on social media regarding epidemic situation geographically and support the public health response in real-time. Social media provides an opportunity to communicate the reason for quarantine, overcome the social distancing and mental health, and use motivational support resources during the outbreak.

1.3 Usage of Instagram as Purchasing Platform

In understanding the factors influence the usage of Instagram among Mothers during the COVID-19 in Malaysia in terms of buying the necessities product via e-commerce platforms. It is currently in trend as consumers shift their buying preferences while making purchases amid the COVID-19 pandemic in Malaysia. Digital has become 'new normal', and e-commerce is changing shopper's relationship. This study will explain the uses of Instagram related to e-commerce platforms and the challenges and opportunities in the communication field of advertising and marketing in Malaysia.

Due to its popularity in recent years, social media has been generally known as a new medium for commerce that can be used as a marketing instrument by individuals or companies. Instagram is one of the most common and preferred social media platforms for expressing and sharing experiences among young consumers in today's postmodern era [8]. Social media consumption is rising as more and more people go under lockdown. Everyone used to wonder what the "digital transformation" is actually meant. The COVID-19 pandemic has defined it better and has changed how people use social media channels and e-commerce platforms to influence consumer behavior today. Older generations are starting to see online shopping as a valid and safe obtain groceries. Online grocery orders placed by people born in the 1960s were four-time higher than average [9]. The government bodies, big organizations, entrepreneurs, including SMEs (small, medium, enterprise) seeing a move towards social media posts that portrayed so much informative news worldwide and are characterized by user-generated content [10]. This study's primary issue is to understand its usage benefits of Instagram and how it is changing the way mothers shop through an e-commerce platform in buying products during the COVID-19.

Moms are compelling demographic groups and drive most purchase decisions across various verticals, including housing, travel, healthcare, and food [11]. Moms are avid internet users and essential daily. Digital has had a significant impact on moms shopping habits, and 40 percent of mom says customer reviews make them more likely to purchase the product online and a place for connecting socially [11]. From discovery to a transaction, moms are using Instagram throughout the entire purchasing cycle. Word-of-mouth, both online and offline, about products and services plays a vital role in mom's lives when deciding whether to purchase or not to purchases on an e-commerce site.

Organizations had started implemented as a marketing tool into their online purchase via an e-commerce platform for several years before the coronavirus existed. Consumers will continue to seek digital capabilities and experiences from retailers and brands that positively impact their lives. Selling and buying transaction has been toward cashless and contactless payments to avoid human contact for future demand. Challenges from this outbreak are likely to accelerate the use of existing and new technologies and tools as people quarantined and lockdowns. There is no doubt that the crisis also has changed the e-commerce landscape from the 'social phenomena' to the 'new norm' of consumer behavior. According to Business Instagram, 68 percent of Millennial moms use Instagram daily, and 78 percent of moms take action after seeing inspiring content on Instagram [12].

Kaplan and Haenlein [13] define social media as "a group of internet-based applications that build on ideological and technological foundation of Web 2.0, which allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content". Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp have gained worldwide popularity and transformed marketing methods from traditional to online, especially in advertising and promotion. Moreover, it allows for a better speed connection between customers and companies everywhere, without the need to meet face to face. In today's business world, marketing, and promotion activities via social media allow companies to discuss and share information with consumers through many social networks' platforms. These online technologies help people use the internet to communicate with friends and share information and resources with our network of contacts. Anecdotal evidence suggests that social media is altering our opinions and influencing our choices by impacting consumers' decisions and managers' business decisions [14]. Social media also enables businesses to engage an existing customer, attract new customers, generate more sales, build brand awareness and brand image.

As the coronavirus crisis continues, social media influencers have been able to turn these restrictions into opportunities to market products. Moreover, providing advice related, including home workout, promote health, cooking and cleaning items to their followers, and adapted their social media strategies to cope with the situation. Consumer behavior is forced to change on a massive scale immediately, and shoppers are increasingly moving from buying offline to buying online. However, there are challenges. As consumer behavior changes, the marketplace also changes to become ever more competitive.

Furthermore, not everyone can adapt to this situation, especially lower-income consumers. There are also issues with the supply chain and product delivery limitation amongst the e-commerce supplier. They need to uplift their business strategies to meet shoppers.

New research on this topic can provide a solid knowledge about Instagram for marketing purposes, as businesses have been struggling to find the best way to implement their marketing strategy for Instagram over the last few years. So far, only a few studies have investigated the usage and benefit of Instagram for online purchases and not specific or little on e-commerce platforms. This indicates an exciting research gap in terms of online purchases on Instagram. The few studies that have been done on Instagram marketing have been mainly focusing on the business perspective, so there is a lack of academic research into the perspective of consumer. Hence studying this interesting research gap is academically relevant. It could provide academics with new insights and perspective on online purchases via e-commerce through Instagram. that has been entirely unexplored.

Furthermore, addressing the research gap of Instagram as a marketing tool for e-commerce platforms is attractive in terms of usage on social media because Instagram entails the excellent potential for consumers to explore new norm online buying platforms. By going in-depth regarding the consumer's perspectives of Instagram marketing app: Instagram from feed posts, Instagram Stories, Instagram Live, and IGTV, which connects with the business perspective, this research will provide an understanding of the marketing communication. This knowledge is essential since marketers have to adapt the social networking space to interact with customers quickly.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the factors that influence mothers choose Instagram as their buying platform and the changes of their behavior in selecting product to purchase in understanding of Instagram as a platform for their daily buying activities among mothers in Elmina resident Shah Alam.

The data collection conducted in a qualitative method using in-depth interviews with twenty participants used to obtain insights and personal thoughts. The interview is conducted through face to face and phone interviews. A set of questions asked to probe participation feedback, views, and experiences to get a conclusion and understand the usage of Instagram and e-commerce in buying necessities products.

A limitation of qualitative studies is related to validity and reliability because qualitative research occurs in the natural setting, and findings usually cannot be generalized to the study population, and it is not statistically representative.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Factors that Influencing Instagram Usage

Over the last ten years, the use and role of the internet have changed considerably in people's lives. Instagram's usage has risen since 2013. In Malaysia, 72% of internet users aged 16 to 64 are Instagram users [15]. With the developments in social media websites such as Instagram and apps, more and more people are accessing the internet to do more things. The uses of Instagram are unlimited, free, and straightforward. It has played the role of giving out, receiving, and exchanging information without any boundary limitation, and enabling the two-way communication flow.

Moreover, Instagram enhances online presence and identity and allows more effective Interaction not only for personal reasons but also for business purposes [16]. According to Uses and Gratification theory, audience members seek the mass media to satisfy their needs [17]. Reseaechers identified five basic group need, namely cognitive needs (e.g. acquiring information, knowledge and understanding); affective needs (e.g., emotion, pleasure, feelings); personal integrative needs (e.g., interactive with family and friends); and tension release needs (e.g., escape and diversion) [18].

Personal gratification is found to be a prominent behavioral belief about Instagram. It expresses a person's action to satisfy his or her desire [19]. For this research, the use of Instagram is more for personal indulgence. Few factors that influence Instagram usage are:

2.1.1 Use to Search for Product Information

As one of the information resources for the consumer, Instagram finds the product information they want or need. When a consumer has a specific interest in a product or service, they tend to identify available options, studying information of selected options and eventually judging which of these options can most likely deliver the best outcome. Furthermore, Earnst and Young found that consumers often use the internet as a tool for information research, including prices, before purchasing [20]. In the past research, Sprout Social revealed that 79% of users searched for more information after seeing a product or service on Instagram, and 37% visited the retail store before making a purchase [15].

Meanwhile, for businesses, Instagram is used as a marketing instrument to promote a product and enhance viral marketing to the consumers [21]. Usefulness in getting information is also one of the factors influencing social media usage to consumers and by many online businesses. The more consumers know about products, the more choices they can make as no one want to make poor choices. Social media provide many smart choices to consumers [22].

2.1.2 Use for Product Knowledge and Share Media Product

The sharing of product information happens when users post and share information about specific products on Instagram. As a result, their friends or followers can view the posted information and re-post or share it with a larger circle of friends. Instagram makes full use of its strength in photo-sharing and becomes a preferred platform to share information and interaction for product inquiry with others. Most

of the time, Instagram has been used to seek a necessity's product. It has become an essential social marketing platform crawling with influencers, brands, and marketers.

Past studies showed that emotional shoppers make purchasing decisions related to their emotions by asking other customers to make purchases about their experience as a testimony to other shoppers [23]. Another factor that influences online shopping using Instagram is derived from the number of followers and the number of likes and reviews. Those shoppers are more conscious of how the business presents itself as purchasing strong business identities influences visual shoppers' decisions.

2.1.3 Use to Shop

Instagram has incorporated enough shopping features to improve shopping on Instagram, and direct to e-commerce platforms. The shopping and checkout feature is relatively new to Instagram. Users can now search for products without leaving the app and add to shopping bag and checkout [2]. Consumers shop online because they find their choices dramatically increased. They have access to much more information when making purchasing decisions. One hundred thirty million users reported tapping to view Instagram shopping tags each month.

Moreover, busy consumers can save time and find shopping more convenient as online retailers serve their needs individually [24]. Not surprisingly, the top reasons for using the Instagram platform specifically to shop or find new products. A total of 81% of people use Instagram to help research products and services, and 11% of U.S. social media users shop on Instagram [25]. With shoppable posts, customers have an even greater opportunity to connect with the brands they love through the ability to quickly see relevant information like product descriptions and pricing with a single click without ever having to leave the Instagram application.

Shopping is a powerful feature that will indeed become even more developed in the future. After seeing a product or service on Instagram, 46% made a purchase [2]. Social commerce features such as the "Buy Now" button transform social media into a sales channel. The "Buy" button serves as a call-to-action (CTA) on a brand's social media ads or posts and links users to the brand's website to complete sales. The new features for users to tag specific products within the "stories" with "Swipe Up to Learn More.". The customer does not have to open a new app because the entire shopping experience stays within the Instagram app itself.

Fashion and shopping-related blogs use social commerce and media to entice shoppers to purchase linked items online [26]. 30% of consumers now say they have purchased major social platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and Pinterest [27]. For example, many celebrities and blogs have Instagram accounts that allow followers to like, share, and comment on the offered product. The tagged article frequently links directly to the store's shopping cart.

2.1.4 Use for Discussion

Socializing role is one of the primary reasons most people are using social networking sites, including Instagram. It makes a connection with friends and other social groups more convenient. Instagram enables users to interact with others, especially those with similar interests [28]. The sharing

and discussion of product information happen when users post and share information about specific products on Instagram. Some users prefer Instagram over Facebook because of its edge in sharing information that is relevant to them.

It describes the Instagram community or followers who use Instagram to participate in discussions, comments, feedback, and reviews, especially for foods, the latest topic, and gossips as well as a recent global phenomenon, COVID-19.

2.2 Factors Influencing Online Shopping on E-Commerce

Many prior studies have been conducted to determine what influences consumers to purchase online on an e-commerce platform. Online shopping is a form of electronic commerce that has become a new trend of shopping in today's world and the most convenient shopping way among the younger generations [29]. It allows buyers to get desired items without having to leave their home, go through the jam, search for parking while saving on traveling costs [30].

Instagram is useful for e-commerce because it can inspire people to participate, and user-generated content that led to higher purchase. Recently, an emerging subset of e-commerce called social commerce has come to the fore and used as online marketing. The combination of social media and e-commerce has changed the game for both the buyer and seller. Consumers are now actively engaging in the full shopping journey, exploring products, comparing prices to making purchases, and affecting each other's decisions with opinions and recommendations while enjoying the social intimacy and bonding. The growing popularity of Instagram has led to a rise in using a social commerce platform and made purchases through their I.G. account.

2.2.1 Perceived Benefits

Online shopping can be considered as a relative advantage or perceived benefits in the context of Malaysia. Relative advantage refers to how innovation is perceived as more benefits than it supersedes. Researchers described this as the sum of advantages that meet a consumer's needs or wants. An expressed e-commerce advantages or benefits as an economic advantage, time-saving, and overall convenience. In this study, we define the perceived benefits. In terms of convenience and meet consumer's needs [31]. Indeed, online shopping offers consumers the opportunity to purchase products and services whenever they want and wherever they are amid during COVID-19 MCO. Online shopping offers more satisfaction and safe time. Consumers can also enjoy window shopping, seek information, and compare prices conveniently without feeling pressure to purchase. It is the main trigger for why people prefer to buy in online shops to offline ones.

2.2.2 Cost and Time efficiency

Online shopping enables consumers to purchase products and services at any point of time and wherever they are located, save money, effort, and time when purchasing products [30]. For example, comparisons among online retailers regarding the price for a specific product can be made quickly and efficiently in online shopping. According to researchers, many consumers are spending more online after receiving recommendations from friends, and secondly rely on the information from reviews when making a purchase decision [32].

2.2.3 Online Trust

Customers learn from their buying experience and product use through online and offline social networks and generate word-of-mouth communication. Trust is a process, a permanent and continuing consumer experience [33]. The Oxford English Dictionary defines trust as a "firm belief (that) a person or thing may be relied upon". The term "belief" highlights the fact that trust is essentially a subjective matter. Thus, willingness to transact on the internet can be said to be "internet trust" and "when one party has confidence in an exchange partner's reliability and integrity" [34]. Trust is a crucial factor for leading customers to purchase, and social commerce could build trust for products or services. According to previous research, their peers influence has the capabilities to influence shoppers compared to unknown people. Buyers also agreed that they will not buy something that does not have positive online reviews.

Online trust can be defined as a process of repeated visits to a site as a user gains experience and believes that his or her expectations are met during the consumer perceptions, how believable the site information is and how much confidence on the site [35]. Consumers who have experienced online shopping are more familiar with e-commerce and be more confident to shop online, especially the youngest shoppers who are used to the internet environment compare to the new shoppers. The online shopping experience and trust must be different.

2.2.4 Product Selection

Online shopping offers consumers the ability to search for various products, collect more information, and have high transparency and convenience level. Fashion and shopping-related blogs use social commerce and media to entice shoppers to purchase linked items online [26]. 30% of consumers now say they have purchased major social platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and Pinterest [27]. For example, many celebrities and blogs have Instagram accounts that allow followers to like, share, and comment on the offered thousands of products. The tagged article frequently links directly to the store's shopping cart.

2.2.5 Social Media Interactivity

External information search will be essential to help consumers collecting information if the internal information is not sufficient. They need which most of the time they will be searching for other experiences like friends and relatives. Social media, such as Instagram, has become a powerful tool for e-commerce platforms when coming to online purchases. Consumers can do research, read, and see other people's comments and feedback about other brands. Furthermore, Social media enable the users to create superior bonding virtually, interact with each other's, share things, work together and as a medium for communication.

2.3 Consumer Buying Behavior

Consumer behavior can be defined into four definitions, namely, consumer behavior is the process by which individuals set the answers to the question: what is it, whether, when, where and from whom goods and services, behavior that involve themselves in planning the purchase and use of goods and services. Consumer behavior appears as a movement of the complexity of consumer movement, which is the pattern of relations.

"The field of consumer behavior studies how individuals, groups, and organizations select, buy and dispose of goods, services or experience to satisfy their needs and desire" [36].

Social media such as Instagram has developed exponentially and significantly changed the customers' shopping behavior. The Instagram app enables the customer to interact closely with retailers and other customers and influence their purchasing decisions. However, researchers and marketers are still attempting to understand online consumer behavior. For the most part, it is assumed that consumers who shop on the internet do so because it is convenient and efficient. Customer buying behavior is also shaped by a few factors, which are: credibility, informative, hedonic or pleasure and also good for the economy [36].

3.0 Paradigm and Methodology

For this study, a phenomenology design of the Qualitative method of the interview was employed. Qualitative involve the interpretation and examination of phenomena to discover underlying meaning and patterns of relationships. Furthermore, this method can provide more productive and depth data that provide insights into behavior. Qualitative research aims to help develop a better understanding of why individuals act as they do rather than developing a numeric description of what people do [37]

Hence, the phenomenology attempts to understand people's perspectives and understandings of how participants use Instagram as a marketing tool for buying the necessary products via the e-commerce platform of a particular situation during COVID19.

3.1 Method of Data Collection

Two data collection methods used In-depth Interviews and Secondary Data based on past research. Secondary information can provide the required essential insights before primary research and contribute to questionnaire development [38]. This data collection method is appropriate for the situation in which extensive, detailed probing attitudes, behaviors, motivations, or needs are required.

In-depth interviews or personal interviews with selected participants contacted where intensive individual interviews used to obtain insights and personal thoughts. Typically, the interviews take between thirty and sixty minutes and consist of private, face to face conversations between qualitative interviewer and respondent [38]. The interviews conducted in a free-flowing yet structured conversation. Moreover, during the interview, the interviewer is free to create questions and to probe responses that seem exciting and relevant to the goals and informational needs to motivate the research.

A set of structural questions asked to probe participation feedback, views, and experiences to get a conclusion and understand the usage of Instagram and e-commerce in buying necessities products during COVID-19. The respondent might be asked to explain, "What is the factor that influences Instagram usage for online shopping?". Structural questions take a step beyond direct and factual questions and help the interviewer understand how respondents have organized their feelings and knowledge within a particular area.

3.2 Population and Sample Involved

An individual between the age of 20 to 60, mothers, Malaysian citizens who have an Instagram account and have made an online purchase at least a minimum of three times within the past three months during MCO lockdown. These individuals obtain their products from Instagram and direct them to any e-commerce platform. The Quota Non-probability sampling method used for this study since it was much more comfortable, quick, and inexpensive to research. Therefore, the population from which the samples derived consists of the following participants:

3.2.1 Sample Size Determination

Quota non-probability sampling is chosen to be no representative to ensure that demographic characteristic of interest is represented in the sample. Elmina Resident: 200 peoples (aged between 20 to 60 years old). A total of 20 respondents was predetermined and selected by the quota non-probability sampling strategy. This study conducted among mother who is a Malaysian citizen, aged between 20 to 60 years, who lives in Elmina Phase EV3, Shah Alam residential area. The sample size was determined by 10 percent of the total number of residents in Elmina Phase EV3, Shah Alam.

3.2.2 Sample Selection Procedure

Three steps of sample selection processes below:

1. Dividing the population into the specific groups - Elmina Resident, Shah Alam (Malay, Chinese, Others)
2. Calculating a quota for each group – Sample Size = 200, 20 representatives from each group
3. Determining specific conditions to be met at Quota in each group – both gender males and females need to be represented equally.

A total of 20 respondents were chosen using the Quota non-probability sampling method to select the participants. The participant is a volunteer to be part of this research, and the researcher asks the volunteers to participate using WhatsApp's Community Group - Elmina Queen, U16 Resident.

Question related to Independent Variables are:

RQ1: What is Instagram Usage in e-commerce?

1. What is Instagram? How do you use Instagram? Is it essential to have an Instagram account these days?
2. What is e-commerce? As a consumer, what is the importance of Instagram, and how do you use e-commerce? (functions, relevancy)
3. How does the usage of Instagram affect the usage of an e-commerce platform as a whole?

RQ2: What are the underlying factors that influence Instagram usage for online shopping on an e-commerce platform?

1. What are the factors that influence the usage of Instagram for online shopping?
(awareness, information, discussion, online shopping)
2. What is the relationship between Instagram and e-commerce platform? Can they be related?
3. How does the usage of Instagram influence create purchase intention on an e-commerce platform?

i. Dependent Variable Instrument

Questions related to elements of the Dependent variable:

RQ3: How does the usage of Instagram and e-commerce platforms benefit consumers during MCO?

1. How do you benefit from Instagram and e-commerce during the COVID-19 MCO?
(personal use, family)
2. How does the usage of Instagram and e-commerce platforms benefit you during the COVID-19? (personal use)
3. What are the issues and challenges? (negative and positive effects)

RQ4: Apart from the benefits, how do the Instagram usage and e-commerce platform have changed consumer buying behavior? product selection during COVID-19?

1. How does the usage of Instagram impact consumer behavior and product selection during COVID-19?
2. How does the usage of Instagram create purchase intention on buying necessities products during COVID-19?

4.0 Finding and Discussion

In general, this study identified the factors that influence Instagram usage among mothers in terms of buying the necessities product on the e-commerce platform. Many prior studies have been conducted to determine what influences consumers to purchase online on an e-commerce platform. The results showed that consumers using Instagram for several reasons: to search for product information, product knowledge and sharing, online shopping, and for discussion, positively affect the purchase intention through online social media expressed: perceived benefits, cost and time efficiency, online trust and convenience.

The positive influence of perceived benefits on online purchases through social media such as Instagram among the respondents suggests that the more respondents perceived online social media such as Instagram is useful in helping them buy online, the more likely they will intend to purchase through social media e-commerce platforms. This might be due to the internet's unique characteristic that makes social media available everywhere compared to the physical shop, especially during the lockdown. Perceived benefits can be enhanced by speeding up the order and delivery process in social media, for example, Instagram WhatsApp's message or direct the consumers to their e-commerce website. If social media is not benefitting them, they will stick to the old way to purchase products.

The results also revealed the cost and time efficiency as factors influencing the respondents' online purchase through social media. The consumer can also compare prices conveniently without feeling pressure. The results suggest that the respondents may tend to buy online through Instagram if the process using Instagram in terms of ordering and delivering is simple and easy to understand. Moreover, businesses or individual can sell their product or services at a lower price because they do not need a store. Lowering the cost can benefit the consumer through cost-saving, which may lead to higher online purchase. If Instagram is hard to navigate and complicated and requires much time and cost to the customer, it might not be convenient and time-consuming to learn, and frustrating. Therefore, businesses need to ensure that the e-commerce platform in Instagram is user-friendly and requires less effort to learn to boost online social media purchases.

Online trust and social media interactivity in the study is another factor that positively affects the respondents' online purchase on social media. This suggests that mothers are influenced by someone they are valuable or important to them, such as friends, family, relatives, communities, colleagues, and more. This is because of they believe and trust in people they care and value. They tend to think advice or recommendations given by people or word-of-mouth, whom they value and not harm them. This will increase their likelihood and trust being influenced by people who are important to them to use social media such as Instagram to do online purchasing.

5.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, some key factors that influence the usage of Instagram among mothers in buying the necessities product in the e-commerce platform were identified in this study. The findings and discussions in this study can be used as a guideline for businesses and individuals to research further especially those related to social network marketing communication and appeal to mothers. Besides that, this study can also help online businesses increase their profits through social media e-commerce platforms. Thus, this study also helps online retailers through social media to adapt to the changing consumer tastes and preferences to avoid heavy losses when faced with any environmental crisis in the future.

Furthermore, there are several recommendations provided for the purpose of further studies in this topic. First future researchers are suggested to set a larger sample size of respondents in order to acquire more reliable information and generalizability of the findings. Second, is to add on independent variables to identifying dominant factors affect the usage of social media for online purchase. Finally, since e-commerce is a global phenomenon, it is worthwhile for future researchers to investigate factors that affect online mothers purchasing intention, through social media across multinational settings.

6.0 References

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