

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**INFORMATION NEEDS AND
INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF
MALAYSIAN ONLINE SHOPPERS**

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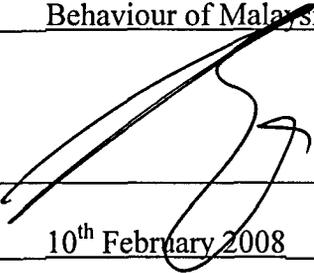
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Candidate's Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the result of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any other degree or qualification.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined Malaysian online shoppers from the following perspectives: (1) demographic characteristics, (2) information needs, and (3) information seeking behaviour. 'Online shopping' in this study means activities of seeking information online about products/services, and purchasing either through online or offline retailers. Data was collected through a web survey, constructed using the software subscribed from SurveyMonkey.com. To obtain a sample that closely represents the Malaysian Internet population, multi-mode solicitation methods were used to invite respondents to respond to the cross-sectional and self-administered questionnaire. Four thousand permission-based e-mails and four thousand permission-based SMS were sent to potential respondents. An animated web banner advertisement on TheStar Online was also used. The survey ran for two months, from 24th June 2003 to 31st August 2003. One hundred and seventy-seven completed responses were received, and SPSS version 12 was used for data analysis. Results show that 42.9% made online purchases in the past five years while 57.1% did not. The information characteristic that made most respondents (77.6%) purchase online was: "*Able to seek products/services information 24 hours a day from anywhere*". Both purchasers (73.7%) and non-purchasers (65.3%) indicated that the most needed information on a retailer's website was "*Pricing and charges*". Apart from the web, purchasers used "*Newspapers*" (76.3%) as their information source. On the other hand, non-purchasers used "*Catalogues/brochures/leaflets*" (81.2%), followed by "*Websites*" (67.3%). Both purchasers (73.7%) and non-purchasers (69.3%) used "*Search engines*" as the starting point for online search. The main barriers that purchasers and non-purchasers faced online were the currency and quality of needed information provided by online retailers. The Chi Square test of independence indicated that respondents with more Internet experience were more likely to be online purchasers ($\chi^2=8.231$, $p=0.041$), and a higher percentage of purchasers rated themselves as 'Advanced/Expert' web searchers compared to non-purchasers ($\chi^2=0.164$, $p=0.027$). In addition, as the number of years of Internet experience increased, the level of expertise in web search ability also increased ($\chi^2=35.397$, $p=0.000$). Finally, the study found that the majority of Malaysian online shoppers employed information seeking steps online similar to those used in Choo's web moves (Choo et al., 2000).

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