Gen Z Consumers' Online Shopping Motives, Attitude, and Shopping Intention

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Abstract

The Internet's explosive growth has facilitated e-commerce and online retailing development. Consumers also benefit from product and service customization, ease of transactions, and real time interactive communications. Gen Z consumers were the main target respondents in this study due to their growing number and dominance in global markets, including Thailand. This study aimed to investigate whether Gen Z's online shopping intention would be influenced by such independent variables as hedonic motive, simplicity motive, and usefulness motive. In addition, attitude towards online shopping was hypothesized to mediate the relationship between the independent variables and online shopping intention. The research results were statistically analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling. The analysis revealed that hedonic and usefulness motives had a significant impact on attitude towards online shopping. Furthermore, attitude towards online shopping had a significant impact on online shopping intention. However, simplicity motive did not have a significant impact on attitude towards online shopping. The findings have considerably contributed to marketing practices in the digitally connected world.

Keywords: *Generation Z, motive, online shopping, attitude, purchase intention*

Introduction

The explosive growth of the Internet has facilitated e-commerce and online shopping for years. Consumers get what they want online, and sellers can expand their distribution and communication channels. The development of online shopping platforms allows consumers to customize products and services (such as trip booking, food ordering and online product design), simply make payments, and interact with sellers. However, e-commerce business is inundated with competition. Those who survive tend to understand customer needs and try to fulfill them.

Generation Z (Gen Z) consumers have become an attractive prospect for retailers worldwide due to their growing numbers and dominance in global markets (Tunsakul, 2018). According to previous studies, Gen Z consumers show less loyalty to specific brands, and it is not easy to grab and hold their attention (Priporas et al., 2017). Born in 1995 or later in the digital era, Gen Z consumers are highly educated, innovative, and technologically savvy (Bassiouni & Hackley, 2014; Priporas et al., 2017). Studies have revealed that Gen Z consumers are interested in new technologies, prefer simplicity, desire to feel safe, desire to escape from reality, have high expectations, and care more about experience (Wood, 2013; Priporas et al., 2017). Brown (2017) mentioned in his article *AdReaction: Engaging Gen X, Y, and Z*, that it is not simple to access Gen Z consumers using advertising campaigns. They prefer ad content to other compositions, such as presenters or music. In addition, they tend to have selective exposure to ad campaigns in which they are interested, and not the campaigns that intrude upon their privacy. According to Tunsakul's (2018) study, Thai Gen Z consumers showed positive reactions to service scape alignments which include human elements, as well as physical ambience. As a study on Gen Z's consumer behavior can help contribute to business and marketing theories and practices, this research, therefore, aimed to add empirical evidence regarding Gen Z consumers' online buying behavior that would have both theoretical and practical benefits and implications.

Scope of the Study

This study emphasizes Thai Gen Z consumers' online shopping motives, attitude, and shopping intention. Thai Gen Z consumers were the focal respondent group of this study, due to their growing numbers and their influence on revenue streams of both online and offline businesses.

Research Objectives

This research aimed to investigate the influence of online shopping motives on Gen Z consumers' attitude towards online shopping and online shopping intention. The objectives consisted of two parts: 1) whether online shopping motives consisting of hedonic motive, simplicity motive, and usefulness motive significantly influence Thai's attitude towards online shopping; and 2) whether Thai Gen Z consumers' attitude towards online shopping has a significant impact on their online shopping intention.

Significance of the Study

The study has value for e-commerce businesses to formulate online strategies to motivate Gen Z customers, to satisfy their needs as well as to retain them. Furthermore, the research implications will add to the store of academic knowledge concerning business management and marketing fields of study. Enhancing Gen Z customers' hedonic, simplicity, and usefulness experiences on online shopping platforms may increase revenues.

Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Development

Independent Variables: Hedonic Motive, Simplicity Motive, and Usefulness Motive

Hedonic motive refers to experience-based enjoyment derived from the entire consumer buying process, including consumption of products or services (Mort & Rose, 2004). Hedonic motive is related to a consumer's cognitive-rational and problem-solving information processing (Escobar-Rodriguez & Carvajal-Trujillo, 2013). Bilgihan's (2016) study revealed that hedonism significantly influenced customer e-loyalty by creating positive online customer experiences in e-commerce. A study by Ingham et al. (2015) indicated that hedonic motive also played a significant part in influencing Internet-enabled television shopping intentions, as shopper motivations included a relaxed attitude and enjoyment. In addition, a website visitor can also be influenced by his or her hedonic motive (Alavi et al., 2016).

Simplicity motive and usefulness motive are terms derived from Davis' (1989) perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness, respectively, in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The Model suggests that a user's adoption or acceptance of a new technology is influenced by such factors as its perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. Examples of new technology include new mobile applications, smart phones, social media, and gadgets. Perceived ease of use refers to the user's belief that a particular system would be easy to use, or free of effort compared to other systems (Davis, 1989). Simplicity motive, therefore, refers to a user's perception of how easy or difficult it will be to perform a particular action (such as shopping at a favorite online store) compared to other actions (such as shopping from other retailing platforms). Perceived usefulness is defined as the user's belief that using a particular system will enhance work performance within an organizational context in which people's performances are reinforced by rewards, raises, and promotions (Davis, 1989). Therefore, usefulness motive refers to a belief that performing an action will help achieve an objective. According to Davis (1989), perceived ease of use significantly affects perceived usefulness.

Mediator: Attitude towards Online Shopping

Attitude refers to internal or latent disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to a psychological object (Ajzen, 2012). According to Park and Kim (2013), attitude is defined as user preferences when using certain technologies and devices. The attitude towards a behavior is based on a person's readily accessible behavioral beliefs with respect to the behavior (Ajzen, 2012). According to Davis' (1989) TAM, attitude is significantly influenced by perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. This is consistent with a study by Chang et al. (2012) in that simplicity motive significantly affected attitude towards adoption of English learning among college students. In addition, Childers et al.'s (2001) study confirmed that attitude is directly and significantly influenced by hedonic motive.

According to the information above, the research hypotheses H_1, H_2, and H_3 concerning shopping motives and attitude towards online shopping are formulated as follows:

H_1: Hedonic motive had a significant impact on Thai Gen Z consumer's attitude towards online shopping.

H_2: Simplicity motive had a significant impact on Thai Gen Z consumers' attitude towards online shopping.

H_3: Usefulness motive had a significant impact on Thai Gen Z consumers' attitude towards online shopping.

Dependent Variable: Online Shopping Intention

The term 'online shopping intention' is used instead of 'purchase intention' to identify Gen Z consumers' intention to shop from their favorite online store. Consumer purchase intention can be defined as the desire of consumers to purchase a product or service (Ku, 2011). The purchase intention represents a customer's likelihood to purchase a product or use a service in the future (Zeithaml et al., 2016). Before a consumer intends to make a purchase, he or she usually believes in the information he or she has (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). According to Chu and Lu (2007), purchase intention is determined by perceived value based on an overall assessment of the costs and benefits of a given market offering. In addition, purchase intention can be in the stages of pre-purchase and post-purchase decisions. Regarding the Internet, online shopping intention is an important predictor of actual buying behavior, and it refers to an outcome of criteria assessment by consumers regarding web site quality, information search, and product evaluation (Abdul-Muhmin, 2010; Yang & Lai, 2006). According to Davis (1989), attitude and perceived usefulness are predictive of behavioral intentions. This is consistent with studies by Kuo and Yen (2009), and Rezaei et al. (2016) in that a person with favorable attitude towards an action tends to perform that particular behavior.

According to the information above, research hypothesis H4 regarding attitude towards online shopping and online shopping intention is stated as follows:

H_4: Attitude towards online shopping had a significant impact on online purchase intention.

Figure 1 represents the conceptual model of this study, depicting relationships among all the hypotheses. The conceptual model derives from Davis' (1989) Technology Acceptance Model in which attitude is influenced by different motives, and in which attitude has an impact on behavioral intention. The relationship between each of the variables is supported by the information above.

Figure 1 *The Conceptual Model*

Research Methodology

Study Respondents and Sampling Procedure

The target population was Thai Gen Z consumers born after 1995 who had online shopping experience. The target respondents' attributes encompassed university undergraduates (as they are Gen Z consumers) who had favorite online stores as previously specified. The selection of target respondents used a purposive sampling method which depended on the researcher's judgment that

the sample would represent the target population. As the target respondents were the author's students, they were approached via LINE application groups for each class section in one semester. Selected students were requested to complete online questionnaires posted in each LINE group.

Research Instruments / Questionnaire

For the independent variables, the measurements of hedonic motive (three items, Cronbach's α = .774) were adapted from Escobar-Rodriguez and Carvajal-Trujillo (2013), simplicity motive (four items, Cronbach's α = .810) were adapted from Davis (1989), and usefulness motive (four items, Cronbach's α = .793) were also adapted from Davis (1989).

For the mediating variable, attitude towards online shopping, the measurements were adapted from Childers et al. (2001) with four items (Cronbach's α = .834).

Table 1 *Summary of Measures and Item Reliability*

Measures	Items	Cronbach's α (N = 584)
Hedonic Motive		
1. I have fun when shopping from my favorite online stores. 2. When I shop from my favorite online stores, I feel happy. 3. Shopping from my favorite online stores is very entertaining.	3	.774
Simplicity Motive		
1. I find it easy to shop for what I want from my favorite online stores. 2. My favorite online stores offer clear and understandable interactions. 3. I am skillful at navigating through applications or web pages of my favorite stores. 4. Overall, my favorite online stores are easy to use.	4	.810
Usefulness Motive		
1. My favorite online stores enable me to accomplish shopping very quickly. 2. My favorite online stores enhance effectiveness in information search. 3. Shopping from my favorite online stores is useful. 4. My favorite online stores offer advantageous transactions.	4	.793
Attitude towards Online Shopping		
1. I feel that shopping from my favorite online stores is wise. 2. I feel that shopping from my favorite online stores is good. 3. I feel that shopping from my favorite online stores is sensible. 4. I feel that shopping from my favorite online stores is rewarding.	4	.834
Online Shopping Intention		
1. Given a chance, I will continue shopping at my favorite online stores. 2. I am willing to shop at my favorite online stores in the near future. 3. I will continue shopping at my favorite online stores.	3	.812

The measurement of online shopping intention (three items, Cronbach's α = .812) was adapted from Jaafar et al. (2011). The respondents were asked to indicate their response to all questions on a five point scale consisting of 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neutral*, 4 = *agree*, and 5 = *strongly agree*.

Table 1 shows the measures of all variables, including the number of items and Cronbach's Alphas (α). The Cronbach's Alphas for all items and 584 samples ranged from .74 to .834, which are acceptable as being reliable according to Maholtra (2007).

Data Gathering Procedure

Primary data were gathered via self-administered questionnaires from respondents. A link to the online questionnaire was sent to all target respondents through LINE groups. The process of data gathering took three days (from August 21–23, 2019). In total, 584 responses were received, higher than the minimum requirement of appropriate sample size as recommended by Berenson and Levine (1999). All questions were answered because they were required and could not be skipped.

Research Results

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic profiles in this study comprised three main sections, including gender, income, and frequency of visiting favorite online stores. A Google Form document provided descriptive data, including frequency and percentage; the results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 *Demographic Profile of Respondents*

Demographic Profile of Respondents		Descriptive Statistics	
		Frequency	**Percent**
Gender	Male	248	42.5
	Female	336	57.5
Income	Below 5,000 Thai Baht	97	16.6
	5,000 –10,000 Thai Baht	245	42.0
	10,001 –20,000 Thai Baht	183	31.3
	Over 20,000 Baht	59	10.1
Frequency of Visiting Favorite Online Stores	Less than once a month	88	15.1
	Once a month	144	24.7
	2 –4 times a month	237	40.6
	More than 4 times a month	115	19.7

According to Table 2, out of a total of 584 respondents, the majority were female (336, or 57.5%), while 248 respondents (42.5%) were male.

Regarding income levels, a majority of respondents (245, or 42.0%) had monthly income levels of between 5,000–10,000 Thai Baht. The minority of respondents had monthly income of over 20,000 Thai Baht, which comprised 59 respondents, or 10.1%.

With respect to respondents' frequencies of visiting their online favorite stores, the majority, 237 or 40.6%, visited two to four 4 times a month, whereas the minority, 88 respondents or 15.1%, visited less than once a month.

Table 3 shows the means and standard deviations of all variables for the conceptual framework (N = 584). The highest mean for each variable indicates that most respondents felt the same way about the measure, while the lowest mean indicates that the largest number of respondents thought differently about the measure or question.

Table 3 *Means and Standard Deviations of All Variables of Conceptual Framework* (N = 584)

Number	Measures	Mean	Standard Deviation (*SD*)
	Hedonic Motive		
HM1	1. I have fun when shopping from my favorite online stores.	4.35	0.757
HM2	2. When I shop from my favorite online stores, I feel happy.	4.27	0.757
HM3	3. Shopping from my favorite online stores is very entertaining.	4.09	0.892
	Average Scores of Hedonic Motive	**4.24**	**0.668**
	Simplicity Motive		
SM1	1. I find it easy to shop for what I want from my favorite online stores.	4.30	0.741
SM2	2. My favorite online stores offer clear and understandable interactions.	4.10	0.790
SM3	3. I am skillful at navigating through applications or web pages of my favorite stores.	4.17	0.758
SM4	4. Overall, my favorite online stores are easy to use.	4.28	0.719
	Average Scores of Simplicity Motive	**4.21**	**0.60**

Table 3 *Means and Standard Deviations of All Variables of Conceptual Framework* (Cont.)

	Usefulness Motive		
UM1	1. My favorite online stores enable me to accomplish shopping very quickly.	4.07	0.857
UM2	2. My favorite online stores enhance effectiveness in information search.	4.10	0.819
UM3	3. Shopping from my favorite online stores is useful.	4.14	0.768
UM4	4. My favorite online stores offer advantageous transactions.	4.10	0.838
	Average Scores of Usefulness Motive	**4.10**	**0.645**
	Attitude towards Online Shopping		
AT1	1. I feel that shopping from my favorite online stores is wise.	3.97	0.846
AT2	2. I feel that shopping from my favorite online stores is good.	4.03	0.816
AT3	3. I feel that shopping from my favorite online stores is sensible.	4.06	0.806
AT4	4. I feel that shopping from my favorite online stores is rewarding.	3.98	0.811
	Average Scores of Attitude towards Online Shopping	**4.01**	**0.670**
	Online Shopping Intention		
OSI1	1. Given a chance, I will continue shopping at my favorite online stores.	4.08	0.850
OSI2	2. I am willing to shop at my favorite online stores in the near future.	4.03	0.832
OSI3	3. I will continue shopping at my favorite online stores.	4.15	0.768
	Average Scores of Online Shopping Intention	**4.09**	**0.697**

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The main objective of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is to determine the degree of model fit. According to Hair et al. (2006) and Ho (2006), there are two important types of goodness-of-fit in order to determine the results of a measurement model. First is an Absolute Fit Measure assessing the level of fit for the proposed model with the actual data (Ho, 2006). The key indices used for statistical analysis include Chi-square statistics, Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) (Hair et al., 2006; Ho, 2006).

Typically, an insignificant difference between the actual and predicted matrices is expected for Chi-square statistics (χ^2), which should not be more than 2.0. However, according to Hair et al. (2006), there is no generally acceptable point for Chi-square statistics because the Chi-square ratio result is sensitive to the sample size, especially when the number of respondents is larger than 200. Researchers are thus warned not to rely only on Chi-square statistics. The other recommended key indices are GFI and RMSEA (Ho, 2006).

The CFA results from this study (Table 4) with the use of modification fit indices show that the model fits with the dataset: $\chi^2(N = 584, df = 171) = 2.010$, $p < .05$, and GFI shows quite an acceptable fit at .955, which is close to 1 (0 = poor fit, and 1 = perfect fit). For the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), the smaller values indicate better model fit. Values ranging from .05 to .08 are considered acceptable, values from .08 to .10 indicate mediocre fit, and those greater than .10 indicate poor fit (Ho, 2006). In addition, since the recommended value for the incremental fit indices should be above 0.90 (Hair et al., 2006; Ho, 2006), the baseline comparison fit indices of Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Relative Fit Index (RFI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) for this study show improvement for the hypothesized model (default model). When compared to the null model, from 0.026 (or 1 – 0.974) to 0.062 (or 1 – 0.938) appears to be so small as to be of little practical significance. Therefore, the model fits well with the dataset.

Table 4 *Summary of CFA Fit indices of Measurement Model*

	Measures of Absolute Fit			Measures of Incremental Fit				
	χ^2/df	RMSEA	GFI	NFI	RFI	IFI	TLI	CFI
Requirement	< 2.0	Acceptable at 0.05 - 0.08	Close to 1	0.900	0.900	0.900	0.900	0.900
Model	2.010	0.042	0.955	0.950	0.938	0.974	0.968	0.974

Hypothesis Testing

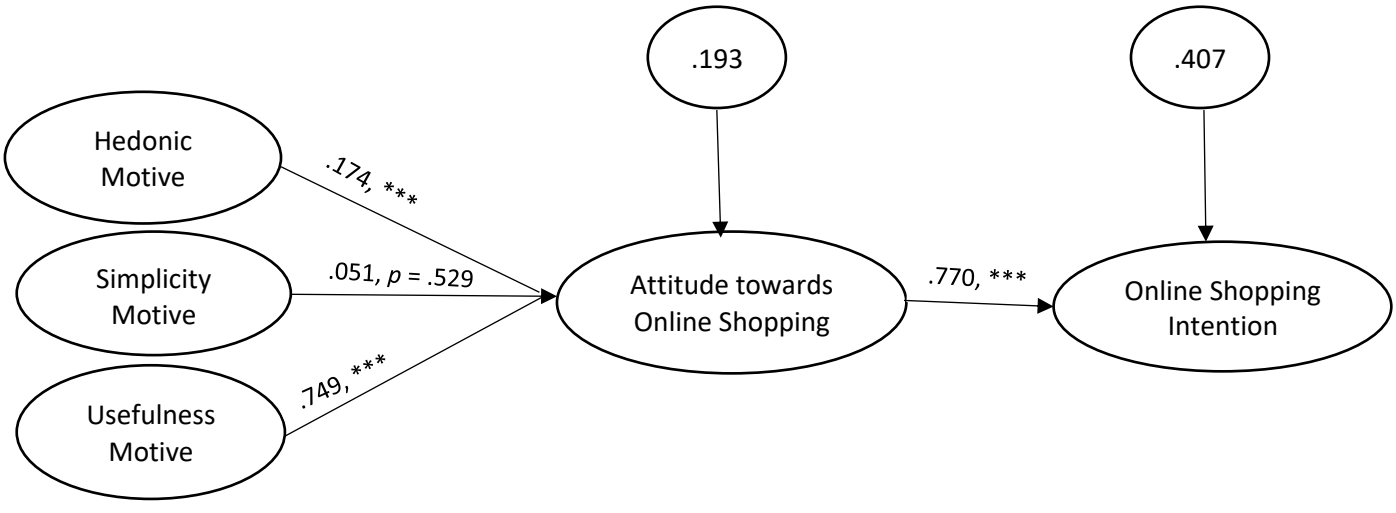
Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to investigate and explain the relationships among the predictor variables and dependent variables. Table 5 shows the summary of SEM Fit Indices of the Measurement Model, which indicates that the model fits well with the dataset.

Table 5 *Summary of SEM Fit Indices of Measurement Model*

	Measures of Absolute Fit			Measures of Incremental Fit				
	χ^2/df	RMSEA	GFI	NFI	RFI	IFI	TLI	CFI
Requirement	< 2.0	Acceptable at 0.05 - 0.08	Close to 1	0.900	0.900	0.900	0.900	0.900
Model	2.266	0.047	0.949	0.942	0.930	0.967	0.960	0.967

The results of SEM indicate that the unstandardized regression weights are significant by the critical ratio test (CR > ±1.96, p < .05), except for the relationship between simplicity motive and attitude towards online shopping. The explained variances for all independent variables are represented by the squared multiple correlations (R^2). The percentage of variance explained ranges from .593, or 59.3% (purchase intention) to .807, or 80.7% (attitude towards online purchase). For all measurement variables, the residual variances (1-R^2) ranged from 19.3% to 40.7%. Figure 2 shows the structural path model with hypotheses 1 to 4. The solid lines represent the hypotheses supported by the findings while the dotted lines represent those not supported by the findings. The arrows pointing to the latent constructs of attitude towards online shopping and online shopping intention represent unexplained (residual) variances for these two factors. The residual variances are calculated by subtracting the factors' squared multiple correlations (explained variances). Hence, for this hypothesized model, 19.3% of variation in attitude towards online shopping is unexplained, or 80.7% of the variance is accounted for by the joint influence of hedonic motive, simplicity motive and usefulness motive. Similarly, 40.7% of variation in online shopping intention may be influenced by other factors, or 59.3% of the variance is accounted for by the joint influence of hedonic motive, simplicity motive, and usefulness motive, as well as in attitude towards online shopping.

Figure 2 *Structural Path Model with Summary of Findings*



Note. *** p < .001

According to the structural path model with standardized path coefficients (Figure 2), hedonic motive had a significant and positive impact on attitude towards online shopping (β or standardized regression weight = 0.174, $p < .001$). Simplicity motive, however, had no significant impact on attitude towards online shopping (β = .051, $p > .05$). Usefulness motive had a significant impact on attitude towards online shopping (β = .749, $p < .001$). Lastly, attitude towards online shopping had a significant impact on online shopping intention (β = .770, $p < .001$).

Table 6 shows the hypothesis statements, unstandardized regression weight, critical ratio, *p*-value, and whether each hypothesis is supported by the dataset.

Discussion and Conclusions

This study has fulfilled two main research objectives. The first objective was to find out whether online shopping motives consisting of hedonic motive, simplicity motive and usefulness motive significantly influence Thai Gen Z consumers' attitude towards online shopping. The results show that the shopping motives–except for the simplicity motive–had significant impacts on Thai Gen Z consumers' attitude towards online shopping, and Hypotheses 1 and 3 were supported by the findings. These results were also supported by Childers et al.'s (2001) study in that hedonic motive played a significant part in influencing attitude towards online shopping behavior. Furthermore, the results were also consistent with Davis' (1989) work in that attitude is influenced by perceived usefulness (usefulness motive). However, H2 was not supported by the findings. It is assumed that Gen Z consumers may not pay much attention to simplicity of using an online shopping platform because they are already skilled at using it or accustomed to it. On the contrary, other generations might consider simplicity an important element of an online shopping platform.

Table 6 *A Summary of Hypothesis Testing*

No.	Path of Relationship	Unstandardized Regression Weight	Critical Ratio (CR)	*p*-value	Hypothesis Supported
H_1	Hedonic motive had a significant impact on Thai Gen Z consumers' attitude towards online shopping.	.195	3.729	.000	Yes
H_2	Simplicity motive had a significant impact on Thai Gen Z consumers' attitude towards online shopping.	.061	0.629	.529	No
H_3	Usefulness motive had a significant impact on Thai Gen Z consumers' attitude towards online shopping.	.823	8.429	.000	Yes
H_4	Gen Z consumers' attitude towards online shopping had a significant impact on online shopping intention.	.780	14.115	.000	Yes

The second objective was to find out whether Thai Gen Z consumers' attitude towards online shopping has a significant impact on their online shopping intention. The empirical evidence shows that Thai Gen Z consumers' attitude had a significant impact on online shopping intention. Hypothesis 4 was also supported by the findings. The research results were consistent with Davis (1989) in that behavioral intention is influenced by attitude towards system use. In addition, the results were also supported by studies by Kuo and Yen (2009) and Rezaei et al. (2016), in that a person with favorable attitude towards an action tends to perform that particular behavior.

Research Implications

This study provides some useful implications for e-commerce and online shopping behavior. This research results are both consistent and different from the theory of TAM and previous studies. Even though the study shows that simplicity motive does not significantly influence Gen Z consumers' attitude towards online shopping, it is recommended that simplicity of ease of use be taken into account in the development of online shopping platforms. Online retailers should still pay attention to providing a pleasant shopping experience. Many consumers enjoy shopping through flash sales, dynamic pricing (prices change regularly), or coupon collecting. In addition, simplicity of shopping platforms includes ease of subscription, transaction, page navigation, payment, and order tracking. Previous studies suggest that simplicity significantly influences behavioral intention and action. Lastly, online retailers should also pay attention to the usefulness of an online shopping platform. Smart phone users, for instance, keep mobile applications they find useful, and uninstall those they do not. Usefulness is the ability of a system to help users fulfill their goals, save cost and time, and quickly search for information. An e-marketplace such as eBay, Lazada or Shopee allows buyers to search for and compare product information, to get what they want, and to pay the best prices for products. E-marketplaces nowadays also give consumers hedonic experiences and are easy to use. Fulfilling users' motives will influence consumers' attitude and behavioral intention in the end.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

The main limitation of this study was that it was conducted in a private university in which most respondents had a high level of purchasing power. Furthermore, the respondents are all Thai nationals, and may not represent Gen Z in general. Future research is encouraged to expand comparisons between Gen Z consumers and other generations. As generational gaps and differences exist, research on Gen Z consumers' behavior in different business categories can add empirical knowledge about Gen Z consumers as compared to other generations.

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