The Relationship between Soft Sell Advertising and Online Purchase Intention

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Abstract: Understanding customer's needs and identifying factors that led to purchase intention is recognize as one of the mechanisms could be used to ensure the success in business. Several approaches have been introduced to enhance customers' purchase intention especially in online platform settings, and soft sell is one of the examples. Prior research has widely discussed the impact of soft sell advertising; however, studies that looked into soft sell advertising and purchase intention in the context of Malaysia still very lack. Thus, this study aims to identify the relationship between soft sell advertising and online purchase intention among generation Z (Gen Z). Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) is used as the theoretical foundation for this study. About 111 UTHM students who are being categorized as Gen Z have participated in answering the survey questions. The data was collected by using a quantitative research method where self-administered questionnaires and online surveys have been applied. The data were analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software to determine demographic information, variables and the relationship between soft sell advertising and online purchase intention. From the analysis, it showed that the level of attitude toward the advertisement dimension towards online purchase intention is at a high range level. In terms of relationship, all dimensions have a positive significant relationship towards online purchase intention where attitude toward the advertisement has the highest correlation coefficient is 0.604. This study can be used by future researchers to have further understanding on how soft sell advertising works towards online purchase intention especially among different generations.

Keywords: Soft Sell Advertising, Purchase Intention, TRA, Gen Z

1. Introduction

Advertising is one of the popular tools used to promote business (Hoi, 2020). While advertisement is defined as an activity to promote goods and services using different types of media and channels (Sunderaraj, 2018). Several approaches have been introduced to enhance customers' purchase intention especially in online platform settings, and soft sell is one of the examples (Zhuang *et al.*, 2021).

According to Silva *et al.* (2020), there is over 90 percent of brands reported utilizing multiple online platforms for advertising to create awareness and enhance sales. Besides, enjoyment offered by online purchasing including variety of product and services selection help to ease shoppers' life (Tarhini *et al.*, 2019). A variety of product and services, easy to make comparison between other distributors also examples of online purchase benefits.

Internet has become essential and part of daily life globally (Yuvaraj & Suresh, 2018). The advancement of new technologies has also changed the way advertising reach out the potential consumers via online platforms. According to a study by Kietzmann *et al.* (2021), the new wave of technologies changed the way advertising works and widened the mechanism of advertising, and soft sell is one of the examples. In recent years, the principle of soft sell advertising has enhanced the emergence of a variety of phrases of terms such as emotional advertising or affect based advertising (He, 2018). Several mechanisms used to support advertising including Facebook Ads, WhatsApp, Instagram, and short message service (SMS) (Appel *et al.*, 2020).

Prior research has widely discussed the impact of soft sell advertising; however, studies that looked into soft sell advertising and purchase intention in the context of Malaysia still very lack (Hermawan, 2021). Moreover, soft sell advertising normally being practiced in passive media environments (Lies, 2019) which has attracted researchers to explore more in online purchase environments (Peña-García *et al.*, 2020). Besides, according to Lee and Lee (2019), the elements of emotions in online purchase environment plays a significant role in retailing and online purchase environments. However, the effect toward consumer's purchase intentions remains understudied (Zhang *et al.*, 2020). According to a study conducted by Chillakuri (2020), Generation Z buying behavior helps businesses to differentiate this generation from previous generations. Past studies proved that the youth generation tend to give more positive attitude to make a purchase by using online platform (Dharmesti *et al.*, 2019). However, previous studies also have demonstrated that consumers among Gen Z are less loyal to certain brands or products and it is hard to capture and retain their attention (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021). Moreover, this generation consist of people who are born in a deep- seated technological world and cannot live without internet connection or technological devices which are being used as a medium to share information, exchange and express opinions, preference, and emotion (Szymkowiak *et al.*, 2021). Hence, this study aims to identify on how soft sell advertising that adopted the emotional elements can attract consumer among Gen Z towards purchase intention.

Therefore, to achieve the research objectives the level of soft sell advertising towards online purchase intention among Gen Z and the level of online purchase intention among Gen Z are measured. Consequently, the relationship between soft sell advertising and online purchase intention among Gen Z is identified.

This study was conducted among students in UTHM, which included students from campus of Parit Raja and Pagoh. In conducting this study, a quantitative approach with questionnaires act as research instrument. Respondents among the range of ages from 18 to 24 years old are being selected as the target population as they fall in the Gen Z category and the more details information can be gathered from this population.

There are several significant can be highlighted in this study. First, this study can be used by future researchers to differentiate the different types of advertisement that have been practiced by businesses in growing their market sales and the effect toward consumer behavior. Moreover, the finding of this study can help future researchers to identify and analyze pattern behavior of consumer based on different type of groups and segments. Besides, this study can be used by businesses to identify the significant impact of emotional and psychological elements in soft sell advertising towards purchase intention in increasing sales revenue. Lastly, this study could help government to produce future entrepreneur or a business owner that have creative thinking way in attracting potential consumer to

enhance towards increasing revenue of sales. The increasing number of sales by businesses will help the government to grow the economy of the country and offers more beneficial facilities for the citizens.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Online Purchase

The growth of technology such as internet has encouraged toward the increasing number of online purchase activities (Ventre & Kolbe, 2020). According to Hasim *et al.* (2020), online purchase offers enjoyment as it helps shoppers to make comparisons between pricing offered, customize preferred services and greater features to access information. Besides, online purchase offers various choices of goods and services with lowest price besides fastest way to make a purchase (Sharma & Klein, 2020). They only need to browse through the Internet to purchase the desired products (Hanjaya *et al.*, 2019). As mentioned by Yu *et al.* (2020), consumers can make an online purchase of desired products or services with just a few clicks.

2.2 Online Purchase Intention

Intention to purchase refers as the desire to purchase a certain product or services within a given term of time (Ismagilova *et al.*, 2020). While online purchase intention refers as consumer's willingness to make a purchase over the internet (Meskaran *et al.*, 2021). Online purchase intention can also be defined as a consumer's willingness to purchase a product or service they desire from an online store (Naseri, 2021). Meanwhile, according to Agrawal (2022), online purchase is defined as the desire of online shoppers to purchase products and services offered over the internet or by using virtual purchase carts. Similarly, Ariffin *et al.* (2018) defined online purchase intention as consumer's readiness to use the internet to make a purchase of product or services or to make comparison between price of product.

2.3 Soft Sell Advertising

Soft sell advertising refers as one type of advertisement that focuses on transmits mood and emotion through a magnificent scene into the message (Okazaki *et al.*, 2010). According to Phillips and Pohler (2018), soft sell advertising is an example of indirect appeal that is less irritating towards the audience or readers in terms of content of advertisement. Soft sell advertising is subtle and indirect which focus on stimulating an emotional response from the audience towards the advertisement (Okazaki *et al.*, 2010; Phillips & Pohler, 2018). Soft sell advertising is one type of advertisement that is suitable to apply in the context of love, humor and joy which focus on enhancing the audience or readers of advertisement to act in the way that advertisers desire (Hussain *et al.*, 2020). The content in soft sell advertisements is typically subtle and indirect, with a picture or atmosphere expressed through a beautiful scene, the creation of an emotional tale, or some other indirect mechanism (Campbell *et al.*, 2020).

2.4 Generation Z

Generation Z (Gen Z) is generally defined as generation born after 1995 (Dolot, 2018). For this generation they are entirely dependent on the use of technology in their daily life. Hence, Gen Z are being recognized as generation who are born and raised in the digital world and what distinguishes them from other generations is that their existence is more connected to electronic and digital world such as mp3 players, short massage, cell phones and social media technology (Xen & Salim, 2020). Similarly, according to Pichler *et al.* (2021), generation Z are known as the generation that are fully aware of the growth of technology as this generation tends to spend a great deal of time with their smartphones.

2.5 Theoretical Background

There are several theories that have been used to explain purchase intention in online shopping including Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977) , Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) and Pure Affect Model. However, only Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) has been adopted in this study.

(a) Theory of reasoned action

In theory of reasoned action, the elements that are being focused on are attitude towards act or behavior, subjective norm, behavior intention and behavior. Theory of reasoned action has proposed that consumer purchase intention can be determined from its desires (Fishbein, 2008). According to a study conducted by Tsai *et al.* (2010) theory of reasoned action is being used to support the relationship between attitude, belief and purchase intention. Likewise, Okazaki *et al.* (2010), stated that attitude toward the advertisement, credibility of the advertisement and irritation in advertising are the dimensions used to measure the relationship of soft sell advertising and purchase intention. This theory provides a framework for a better understanding, which can be used to predict consumer behavior. TRA commonly being used by marketers to predict consumer's attitude and behavior (Tsai *et al.*, 2010).

2.6 The Relationship between Soft Sell Advertising and Online Purchase Intention

The development of this study was adopted from Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) model. In developing this study, two variables were added which are credibility and irritation (Okazaki *et al.*, 2010). This study has one dependent variable which is online purchase intention and independent variable with three dimensions which includes: attitude toward the advertisement, credibility and irritation.

(a) Attitude toward the advertisement

In advertising, attitude toward the advertisement is found to be an indicator to measure the effectiveness of the advertisement (Zhang & Yuan, 2018). The attitude portrays by the consumer influenced consumer action will lead to positive effect on the purchase intention (Prakash *et al.*, 2019). Attitude toward advertisements influences purchase intentions (MacKenzie *et al.*, 1986). Further, people who were likely to have a positive perception about the retailer will also have a positive attitude toward the advertisement. Numerous factors, such as perceived advertising value, perceived benefits, joy, electronic word of mouth, and perceived social presence, have been identified as shaping consumer attitudes in the online world (Pang, 2021). According to Hu and Chaudhry (2020), consumer's attitudes in the offline environment are positively related to social engagement in the form of real time consumer care. Hence, it is possible that the same effect will be observed in the online world. These predictions can then be useful in designing advertisements, as previous results suggest that attitudes toward advertisements affect attitudes toward purchase intentions.

(b) Credibility

Blackshaw (2008) mentioned that listening, trust, transparency, originality, responsiveness, and affirmation are the dimensions that are being used to explain advertising credibility. According to Schouten *et al.* (2020), credibility in advertising is known as the degree to which an advertisement can generate significant trust in its truthfulness and lead to acceptability. Likewise, McKenzie *et al.*, (1986), credibility in advertising gives a positive effect on consumer's attitude toward advertisement which will encourage consumer to intention to purchase. Past studies proved that credibility give a positive impact and directly increase consumer's attitude to advertisement, brand and purchase intention (Singh & Banerjee, 2018). A high degree of credibility has a positive effect on consumer's attitudes toward advertising and brands and increases the chances toward purchase intention.

(c) Irritation

Tone, style and format in delivering the advertisement is known as one of the important factors that will be used to measure whether the advertisement is irritating or not (Shareef *et al.*, 2019). Numerous research has demonstrated that the increasing level of irritation increasing generated by an advertisement might result in a decrease of effectiveness of an advertisement (Todri *et al.*, 2020). As mentioned by Okazaki et., (2010), soft sell advertising found to be less irritating towards readers and lead to strong buying intentions among readers of the advertisement. Moreover, consumers tend to see advertisements as unpleasant or invasive when the advertisers use approaches that irritate, offend, or insult them or are overly manipulative. Hence, irritation is one of dimensions in soft sell advertising that affect the purchase intention.

(d) Online purchase intention

Konuk (2018) demonstrated that consumer's purchase intention product is influenced by the product's perceived value and advertising. Moreover, advertising can elicit either favorable or adverse reactions from consumers (Hess *et al.*, 2020). Advertising might elicit an emotional response from consumers and making offered products more appealing. Hence, there is a relationship between specific features or characteristics that can be controlled including the message's information element and the response and for the outcome. For the variable that can be controlled consist of attention, purchase intention and comprehension. Purchase intention is the thought that arises after the desire to purchase has been established and are being included with certain features (Sakar *et al.*, 2019).

2.7 Research Framework

Hartono and Holsapple (2019) defined that a research framework is the process of conceptualization of the framework of the research and factors that contribute to intention. There are three main dimensions of soft sell advertising used to measure and explain this the framework of soft sell advertising which are attitude toward the advertisement, credibility of the advertisement and irritation in advertising that have been developed to measure the study that is being conducted is relevant with the topic (Okazaki *et al.*, 2010). According to Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), TRA can be used to predict consumer's intention from their behavior or preferences.
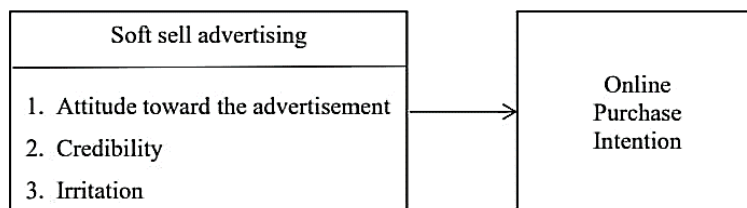
Figure 1: Research Framework

2.8 Hypothesis

H1 : There is a significant relationship between attitude toward the advertisement and online purchase intention.

H2 : There is a significant relationship between credibility and online purchase intention.

H2 : There is a significant relationship between irritation and online purchase intention.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

In this research, both descriptive research and quantitative research are being applied to carry out this research. Descriptive research used to provide a detailed and highly accurate picture of the research. Besides, descriptive research also helps to create a set of categories that will help researcher to identify new data that contradicts previous data and helps to develop a set of categories or classify types. The sequence's steps or stages can be used to clarify and report on the context of situation or the background. As mentioned by Dulock (1993), descriptive research is a type of research used to describe facts and characteristics of interest of a specific population or region systemically and accurately. Hence, descriptive research helps to develop a precise image of the characteristics of specific people or groups (Burns & Burns, 2008).

3.2 Sampling Method

This study has been conducted in Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM) which included UTHM Parit Raja, Johor and UTHM Pagoh, Johor. The population of students is 18,446 students. According to Etikan and Bala (2017), sampling method is a selection process in which a number of subjects are chosen from the population based on the specific characteristics or quality to the research respondents. In conducting this study, simple random sampling method has been used to collect the data among the respondents. Hence, a set total of 375 respondents has been selected as sample by referring to sampling schedule of Krejcie and Morgan (1970).

3.3 Research Instruments

Quantitative method with set of survey questions has been used by researcher in conducting this study. Quantitative method used to discover the demographic of a specific population or group. Tn this study, the questionnaire has been divided into three sections which has been categorized as Section A, Section B and Section C. Section A will be explained regarding demographic of respondents while Section B is regarding soft sell advertising. Section C asked regarding the online purchase intention.

3.4 Data Collection

Data collection is a process of collecting information from all relevant sources in order to find answers related with the research problem, to test hypothesis between variables and to evaluate the results. According to Hox and Boeije (2005), there are two categories of data collection which are primary data collection and secondary data collection.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a process that relies on data collected by using data collection methods. In this study, primary data is referred to the data collected by using online questionnaire. Descriptive analysis and correlation analysis used to analyze the data that have been collected.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Response Rate

A total of 375 set of questionnaires have been distributed to UTHM students who have been categorized as Gen Z, however only 111 sets were getting back which is equal to 29.60%. Table 1 below shows the response rate from the questionnaire answered by UTHM students.

Table 1: Questionnaire Response Rate

Population	Sample Size	Questionnaire Distributed	Questionnaire Received	Percentage (%)
18,446	375	375	111	29.60

4.2 Reliability Test

Cronbach's alpha reliability test was utilized to determine the approach to internal consistency for each scale item in the study. 30 questionnaires were sent to 30 UTHM students who are being categorized as Gen Z as part of the pilot test. The results of the surveys were evaluated by using SPSS. The following table summarizes the pilot study's reliability test. Table 2 show the Cronbach's Alpha value for 30 respondents while Table 3 is the result for actual data in this study.

Table 2: Cronbach's alpha value for 30 respondents

Factors	Cronbach's Alpha	Variable Value
Attitude	0.855	5
Credibility	0.919	5
Irritation	0.913	4
Online Purchase Intention	0.805	4

Table 3: Reliability test (actual study)

Factors	Cronbach's Alpha	Variable Value
Attitude	0.858	5
Credibility	0.914	5
Irritation	0.941	4
Online Purchase Intention	0.851	4

4.3 Descriptive Analysis (Demographic)

Table 4: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Male	35	31.5	31.5	36.7
Female	76	68.5	68.5	100.0
Total	111	100	100	

Table 4 shows the number of male respondents which equal to 35 respondents while the number of female respondents is 76 students

Table 5: Age of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
18-20 years	8	7.2	7.2	7.2
21-22 years	48	43.2	43.2	50.5
23-24 years	55	49.5	49.5	100.0
Total	111	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 shows the majority of respondents that answered the questionnaire in this study is age within 23 to 24 years with a total of 55 respondents.

Table 6: Faculty of Respondents

Faculty	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
FPTP	76	68.5	68.5	68.5
FSKTM	13	11.7	11.7	80.2
FKEE	4	3.6	3.6	83.8
FKAAB	4	3.6	3.6	9.4
FPTV	4	3.6	3.6	91.0
FKMP	4	3.6	3.6	94.6
FAST	4	3.6	3.6	98.2
FTK	2	1.8	1.8	100.0
PPD	0	0	0	
PPUK	0	0	0	
Total	111	100.0	100.0	

Table 6 shows the majority of respondents that answered the questionnaire in this study is according to faculty. In this study, respondents from FPTP provide the highest response with 76 respondents while the lowest from FTK with only 2 respondents. However, there were no respondents participated among PPD and PPUK students.

Table 7: Year of study of respondents

Year of Study	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
1	7	6.3	6.3	6.3
2	6	5.4	5.4	11.7
3	20	18.0	18.0	29.7
4	78	70.3	70.3	100.0
Total	111	100.0	100.0	

Table 7 shows the year of study of respondents. In this study, respondents from 4th year of study provide the highest response with 78 respondents while the lowest is respondents among 2nd year of study with only 6 respondents.

Table 8: Experience purchasing products or services after seeing an advertisements

Have experience purchasing product after seeing an advertisement	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Yes	76	68.5	68.5	68.5
No	13	11.7	11.7	80.2
Total	111	100.0	100.0	

Table 8 shows most of the respondents have experience purchasing product after seeing an advertisement with 76 respondents while 13 respondents answered they have no experience purchasing product after seeing an advertisement.

Table 9: Factors led to make that purchase

Factors led to make that purchase	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
I love the product	30	27.0	27.0	27.0
The product can solve my problem	23	20.7	20.7	47.7
I attracted with the advertisement	54	48.6	48.6	96.4
I fell empathy toward the seller	4	3.6	3.6	100.0
Other	0	0	0	
Total	111	100.0	100.0	

Table 9 shows most of the respondents answered that "I attracted with the advertisement" as factor led to make that purchase with 54 respondents while "I feel empathy toward the seller" has the lowest respondents with only 4 respondents.

4.4 Descriptive Analysis (Variables)

Descriptive analysis is used to examine the characteristics of individual variables. Data were analyzed by researcher to describe the mean and standard deviation of all variables which are attitude toward the advertisement, credibility, irritation, and online purchase intention. Besides, this analysis is recognized as one of the efficient ways to differentiate each part in the mean distribution based on the Likert Scale to measure the level of all the independent variables and dependent variable.

(a) Attitude toward the advertisement

Table 10: Mean and standard deviation for attitude toward the advertisement

No	Item Attitude Toward The Advertisement	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1	Advertisements with graphic or video content are interesting.	4.49	0.672
2	Advertisements with graphic content are easier to understand.	4.35	0.709
3	Advertisements with graphic content are more pleasant and entertaining to see.	4.45	0.643
4	Advertisements with emotional content help to enhance emotions.	4.03	0.847
5	Advertisements with emotional content really help to achieve the objective of the seller to sell the product	4.01	0.847
	Total Average	4.26	0.60

Table 10 shows the mean value, standard deviation, and the level of agreement for each item for attitude toward the advertisement variable. For the level of agreement, the level will be defined as low if the level is between 1.00 to 2.33. Moderate level is between 2.34 to 3.67 while level value between 3.68 to 5.00 is categorized as high average mean high level. From the table, the highest value of mean is from question 1 with statement "advertisement with graphic content or video content are interesting" (M= 4. 49, SD= 0. 672). While the lowest mean score is statement from question 1 (M= 4. 00, SD= 0. 847) which is "advertisement with emotional content really help to achieve the objective of the seller to sell the product". Hence, the average of mean value is 4.26.

(b) Credibility

Table 11: Mean and Standard Deviation for Credibility

No	Item Credibility	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1	Advertisements with visual or emotional orientation are convincing.	4.49	0.672
2	Advertisements with an actual picture or situation help to verify the authenticity of the advertising.	4.35	0.709
3	Advertisement's credibility is important.	4.32	0.800
4	Advertisement's credibility helps to identify the truthfulness of the messages or information delivered.	4.24	0.789
5	Advertisements delivered using graphic or video content is acceptable.	4.29	0.706
	Total Average	4.23	0.67

Table 11 shows the value of mean and standard deviation of the level of agreement for each item for credibility variable. From the table, the highest value of mean is from question 1 with statement "advertisement with visual or emotional orientation are convincing" (M= 4.49, SD= 0.672). While the lowest mean score is from question 4 (M= 4. 24, SD= 0. 789) which is "advertisement's credibility helps to identify the truthfulness of the messages or information delivered". The total average of mean value for credibility variable is 4.23.

(c) Irritation

Table 12: Mean and standard deviation for irritation

No	Item Irritation	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1	Advertisements with too much graphic content are disturbing.	3.37	1.250
2	Advertisements with overrated emotional graphic or video contents are irritating.	3.40	1.193
3	Advertisements that appear without my consent are annoying.	3.68	1.308
4	Advertisements with complex visual content insult my intelligence.	3.12	1.284
5	Advertisements with too much graphic content are disturbing.	3.37	1.250
	Total Average	3.39	1.16

Table 12 shows the value of mean and standard deviation of the level of agreement for each item for irritation variable. From the table, the highest value of mean is from question 3 with statement "advertisements that appear without my consent are annoying" (M= 3. 68, SD= 1. 193). While the lowest mean score is from 4 with statement (M= 3. 12, SD= 1. 284) which is "advertisements with complex visual content insult my intelligence". For this variable, the average mean of value is 3.39 which is at moderate level of agreement for all item for irritation variable.

(d) Online purchase intention

Table 13: Mean and standard deviation for online purchase intention

No	Item	Mean (M)	

	Irritation		Standard Deviation (SD)
1	I feel attracted to purchase products that use gentle approach.	4.23	0.726
2	I would love to try a product that focuses on solving my problems rather than the urge to buy.	4.37	0.738
3	I can imagine myself buying products that evoke positive emotions.	4.09	0.815
4	I can imagine myself buying another product from the same brand in the future.	4.18	0.789
5	I feel attracted to purchase products that use gentle approach.	4.23	0.726
	Total Average	4.22	0.64

Table 13 shows the value of mean and standard deviation of the level of agreement for each item for online purchase intention variable. From the table, the highest value of mean is from question 2 with statement "I would love to try a product that focuses on solving my problems rather than the urge to buy" (M= 4. 37, SD= 0. 738). While the lowest mean score is statement from question 4 (M= 4. 18, SD= 0. 789) which is "I can imagine myself buying another product from the same brand in the future". For this variable, the average mean of value is 4.22 which is at high level of agreement for all item for online purchase intention variable.

4.5 Normality Test

Normality analysis is one of the analyses that need to be completed to proceed to the next test which is correlation analysis. According to Driscoll (1996) the normality test was used to determine if the study population was normally distributed or not normally distributed. If the data are normally distributed, the Pearson correlation coefficient is used to perform a data parametric test. However, if the data are not normally distributed, a non-parametric test utilizing the Spearman correlation coefficient will be performed. Besides, researchers must determine the normality test of the data distribution using either the Kolmogrov-Smimov test or Shapiro-Wilk tests. 4.3 Tables

Table 14: Mean and standard deviation for online purchase intention

Variables	Kolmogrov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig	Statistic	df	Sig.
Attitude towards the Advertisement	125	111	0.000	911	111	0.000
Credibility	155	111	0.000	871	111	0.000
Irritation	0.125	111	0.000	928	111	0.000
Online Purchase Intention	0.133	111	0.000	918	111	0.000

Table 14 shows that the results of normality test by using Kolmogrov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk test. In this study, 111 number of respondents were used, and Kolmogrov-Smirnov values were considered because it was exceeded 50 respondents. This analysis shows that all the value of variables, p value < 0.005 which is 0.000. Hence, this data is not normal, and the non-parametric test of Spearman's Rho correlation test will be used to describe the relationship between two variables and to achieve the objectives of the study.

4.6 Correlation Analysis

In this study, Spearman Rho's correlation will be act as a toll to measure the relationship between two variables. Spearman rho's correlation is a non-parametric test that is used to determine the degree of relationship between two variables, according to Patrick *et al.* (2018).

(a) The Relationship between soft sell advertising and online purchase intention

Table 15: Level of Coefficient Correlation

Item	Correlation Coefficient
Correlation between Attitude Toward the Advertisement and Online Purchase Intention	0.604**
Correlation between Credibility and Intention to make Online Purchase	0.522**
Correlation between Irritation and Intention to make Online Purchase	0.136

Table 15 shows Spearman correlation results for the relationship between soft sell advertising and online purchase intention. Based on the results in table 15, it shows that the result for attitude toward the advertisement is 0.604, credibility is 0.522 while irritation is 0.136. Thus, there is a significant relationship between all three variables with online purchase intention as the value of p is more than 0.05.

4.7 The level of Correlation

The results shows that attitude toward the advertisement and credibility have a significant relationship with online purchase intention with r= 0.604 and r= 0.522 which is moderate strength of relationship. However, irritation has a significant relationship with online purchase intention r= 0.136 which is weak strength of relationship.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

(a) Research Question 1: What is the level of soft sell advertising towards online purchase intention among Gen Z?

Table 16: Level of soft sell advertising towards online purchase intention

No	Item Irritation	Average Mean Score	Level
1	Attitude toward the advertisement	4.26	High
2	Credibility	4.23	High
3	Irritation	3.39	Medium

In this study, descriptive analysis has been used to describe the average mean score of each independent variable. Table 16 shows the level of average shows the level of average mean score for each variable that have been measured. Based on these three dimensions, attitude toward the advertisement has the highest level with mean score 4.26. Besides, credibility also at high level with mean score 4.23. For irritation, the level of irritation is at medium level with mean score of 3.39. Hence, the results that have been analyzed significantly confirm the hypotheses that have been set. The result shows the attitude toward the advertisement is strong factor that influence online purchase intention

among Gen Z. According to Okazaki *et al.*, (2010), attitude toward the advertisement, credibility and level of irritation in soft sell advertising influence customer's purchase intention.

(b) Research Question 2: What is the level of online purchase intention among Gen Z?

Table 17: Level of online purchase intention among Gen Z

No	Item Online Purchase Intention	Average Mean Score	Level
1	I feel attracted to purchase products that use gentle approach.	4.23	High
2	I would love to try a product that focuses on solving my problems rather than the urge to buy.	4.37	High
3	I can imagine myself buying products that evoke positive emotions	4.09	High
4	I can imagine buying another product from the same brand in the future.	4.18	High

Table 17 illustrates the findings for level of intention towards online shopping among gen Z. The findings show the overall level of factors that influence intention towards online shopping adoption among generation Z. According to the results, all variables are at high level. The results show that attitude toward the advertisement, credibility and irritation are strong factors that influence online purchase intention among generation Z. As mentioned by Arora and Aggarwal (2018), Gen Z tend to make an online purchase from advertisement that offer joy and entertainment which can be found in soft sell advertising (Okazaki *et al.*, 2010).

(c) Research Question 3: What is the relationship between soft sell advertising and online purchase intention among Gen Z?

Table 18: Result of hypothesis between independent variables and dependent variable

Item	Average Mean Score	Level
H1 = There is a significant relationship between attitude toward the advertisement and online purchase intention.	0.604**	Positive significant relationship
H2 = There is a significant relationship between credibility and online purchase intention.	0.522**	Positive significant relationship
H3 = There is a significant relationship between irritation and online purchase intention.	0.136	Positive significant relationship

Based on table 18, the result shows that there is a positive significant relationship between all variables in this study. Attitude toward the advertisement, credibility and irritation are list of examples influence online purchase intention among generation Z. According to Okazaki *et al.*, (2010), attitude toward the advertisement, credibility and irritation are categorized as factors that influence purchase intention. However, according to a study conducted by Cahyani and Artanti (2020) advertisement can also produce an uncomfortable or annoying sentiments toward the viewer which results in a diminished willingness to make a purchase. As a conclusion, all hypotheses have been accepted which are H1, H2

and H3. As mentioned by Okazaki *et al.*, (2010), Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) is one of theory used to identify the relationship of soft sell advertising towards online purchase intention.

5.2 Limitation of Study

There are several limitations in completing this study. The first limitation is the selection of respondents in conducting this study. Since this study is focusing on generation Z among UTHM students, hence the results cannot be used to represent the whole generation of generation Z in Malaysia. Besides, limitation towards the process of collecting the data among respondents. It can be seen as only quantitative method that are being used as data collection method in conducting this study. Hence, the time in collecting the data among respondents is longer. In addition, quantitative method does not allow respondents to give their feedback regarding the topic as the respondents were required to choose the answer based on set of questions and answer distributed by the researcher. Lastly, this study focused on generation Z only while not other generation that are available.

5.3 Recommendation for Future Research

Future researcher may improve the proposed model and validate some of the rejected hypothesis. There are some recommendations to improve the model and the result obtained in the future research. The first recommendation is to broaden the scope of responses to include students from the Parit Raja area, rather than just UTHM students. The time period for collecting data can also be extended so that more data can be gathered. For future research, researchers can also employ qualitative methods to analyze the soft sell advertising toward online purchase intention, such as satisfaction. When doing similar studies with online shoppers, researchers can compare and contrast the results. Last but not least, when distributing questionnaires, it is important to keep the questions short and clear for the respondent to understand. Hence, this research can contribute to enhance the knowledge for the business sector to understand the respondents' perceptions on soft sell advertising dimensions towards online purchase intention.

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