

E-store Attribute Importance Dimensions, Shopping Enjoyment, and Purchase Intention: An Examination of Lazada Website

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Abstract

The current study aimed to examine the effects of three attribute importance dimensions on shopping enjoyment and purchase intention at Lazada's website. The sample of this study is composed of 211 students of a private university in Thailand. A hypothesized model was proposed, and it was analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM). The results indicated that internet shoppers' preference on the importance of merchandise variety and importance of price orientation positively affects their shopping enjoyment toward Lazada's website. In turn, their shopping enjoyment increased their purchase intention at Lazada's website. Practical implications for managerial consideration and limitations of the study are also discussed.

Keywords: Internet shopping; E-store attributes; Shopping enjoyment; Purchase Intention

Introduction

In today's business world, online shopping has become so trendy and profitable that shopping websites have been catering millions of customers around the world, and they have been posting profits that equaled or even surpassed the profits of well-established shopping centers (Daniel, 2018; Soper, 2019). Prior studies on online shopping revealed that online shoppers tended to prefer shopping in a website with interactive features (Chen & Tan, 2004; Childers, Carr, Peck, & Carson,

2001; J. Kim, Fiore, & Lee, 2007), and their decisions to purchase a product were influenced by the overall attractiveness of the website (Pebrianti, 2016). Prior studies also showed that customers' satisfaction on online shopping and purchase decisions depended on logistical support, technological characteristics, information characteristics, homepage presentation, product characteristics, convenience, attitude toward online shopping, and hedonic values among others (Childers et al., 2001; Ho & Wu, 1999; Khare & Rakesh, 2011; Pebrianti, 2016; Ramayah & Ignatius, 2005). The inclusion of hedonic values as antecedents of online purchase intention highlighted the influence of positive affect as a potent influencer of purchase intention.

In the literature, positive affect has been linked to thinking, motivation, and decision making (Isen, 2001), and numerous studies conducted in non-online retail businesses have linked positive affect and purchase intention and behavior (Donovan, Rossiter, Marcoolyn, & Nesdale, 1994; Joo Park, Young Kim, & Cardona Forney, 2006; Mohan, Sivakumaran, & Sharma, 2013). Donovan et al. (1994), in particular, found in their study that pleasure or pleasantness of the store environment make shoppers stay longer in the store and spend more money than initially planned. Citing the findings of Donovan et al. (1994) regarding the effects of positive emotions on purchase intention and behavior, Kim et al. (2007) posited that the pleasure felt by shoppers in a physical shop can also be experienced by online shoppers in the form of online shopping enjoyment. Kim et al. (2007) hypothesized that online shopping enjoyment could be enhanced by the interactive features and online store perception, and, in turn, it motivated online shoppers to stay at an online store and develop patronage intention towards that online store. The results of the study unraveled that, indeed, image interactive technology and online store perception could enhance online shopping enjoyment. In other studies, shopping enjoyment is positively related to purchase intention (Lu & Yu-Jen Su, 2009; Ramayah & Ignatius, 2005).

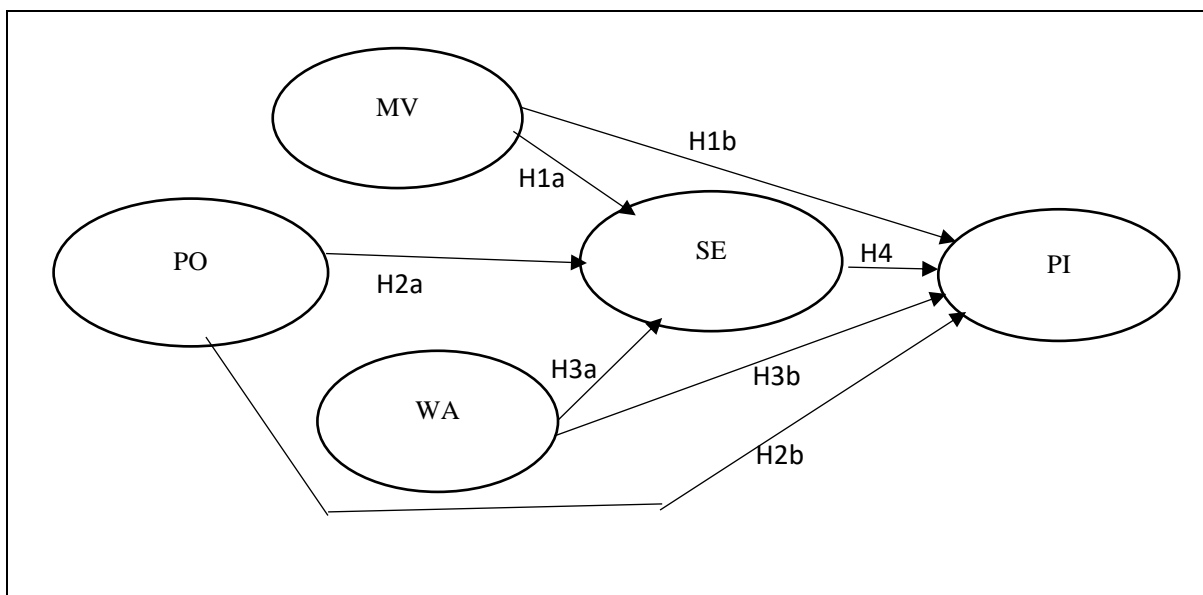
Two of the biggest and most successful online shops in the world today are Amazon and Alibaba (Daniel, 2018; Soper, 2019), and their business models have inspired up and coming online shops that are also starting to take significant market shares of the online retail market. One of such newer businesses is the Singapore-based Lazada. The company has been showing remarkable progress in the past few years, and it is expected to get more significant market share in Southeast Asia's e-commerce space in the near future (Boonnon, 2019; Leesa-nguansuk, 2019). The Southeast Asian e-commerce is expected to reach US\$240 billion by 2025, with the projection that Indonesia, Vietnam, and Thailand would be the top markets at US\$ 53 billion, US\$ 15 billion, and US\$ 13 billion, respectively (Boonnon, 2019). Lazada has been actively promoting its business operation in Thailand, and it has a long-term plan that, according to its President, Jing Yin, "includes serving brands and sellers of all sizes to ensure they are well-positioned to ride the e-commerce boom in Southeast Asia." The question, however, is: how capable is Lazada's online platform in influencing online shoppers in Thailand to purchase their products?

The current study's primary objective is to contribute to answering the question raised in the preceding paragraph by examining both the antecedents of shopping enjoyment and online purchase in the context of Lazada's e-store attributes importance. Following the conventional use of intention as a surrogate of actual behavior based on the notion that the former is the most direct predictor of the latter; the current study uses purchase intention instead of actual purchase behavior.

Literature Review and Research Hypotheses

Previous studies have contradicting views on the typologies of online shoppers. Some researchers suggested that online shoppers are different from offline shoppers (Alba et al., 1997; Burke, 1997; Rohm & Swaminathan, 2004). Burke, for instance, revealed that online shoppers tend to be more concerned with convenience, and they are more willing to pay extra to save time. On the other hand, there are some researchers who argued that online shoppers do not differ from offline shoppers in terms of their perceptions of the store attributes importance (Ganesh, Reynolds, Lockett, & Pomirleanu, 2010). Following the concepts proposed by Ganesh et al. (2010) that store attribute importance issues are relevant to shopping online, the current study proposed a structural model that hypothesized that the dimensions of e-store attribute importance dimensions have significant influences on both shopping enjoyment and purchase intention at Lazada's website, and shopping enjoyment has a positive impact on purchase intention. Figure 1 illustrates the proposed structural model.

Figure 1. Hypothesized model



Note. MV = merchandise variety; PO = price orientation; WA = website attractiveness; SE = shopping enjoyment; PI = purchase intention.

Importance of Merchandise Variety

One of the e-store attribute importance dimensions proposed by Ganesh et al. (2010) is the merchandise variety. Ganesh et al. (2010) defined it as “relate to the variety of products offered by the site, brand names available, and the availability of new products.” (Ganesh et al., 2010, p. 209). In previous studies conducted in offline stores, product variety was found to influence shopping motives (Kaur & Singh, 2007; Patel & Sharma, 2009), and store attributes that also include product variety were found to affect shopping behaviors (Erdem, Ben Oumlil, & Tuncalp, 1999; Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard, & Hogg, 2007). Therefore, borrowing the notion put forward by Ganesh et al. (2010) that offline and online shoppers do not differ in terms of viewing store attributes importance, the current study posits that merchandise variety available in the website positively influence online shoppers’ enjoyment and purchase. As the website in question is Lazada, which boasts the availability 450 of brands in Thailand (Boonnon, 2019), the hypotheses under this segment therefore are:

H1a. Importance of merchandise variety positively affects shopping enjoyment at Lazada.

H1b. Importance of merchandise variety positively affects purchase intention at Lazada.

Importance of price orientation

Price orientation is another factor under e-store attribute importance dimension. Ganesh et al. (2010) proposed that the factor is comprised of “items that involve the availability of special deals, the frequency of sales and specials, and notification of sales or specials” (p. 109). Previous studies provided empirical evidence that shopping enjoyment has an influence on bargain hunting and price information search (Forsythe & Bailey, 1996; H.-Y. Kim & Kim, 2008), highlighting the connection between pricing, shopping enjoyment, and possible purchase. As price orientation is an e-store attribute importance dimension, the current study proposes that an online store with attractive price orientation enhances online shoppers’ shopping enjoyment as their bargain hunting and price information search have become more convenient. The bargain hunting and price information search due to the availability of prices are also expected to increase the chance of purchase. Lazada offers different brands of products from sellers of all sizes and a visit at its website revealed price tags for those products; hence, it is expected that Lazada’s emphasis on price orientation facilitates an increase in bargain hunting and search for price information that can increase shopping enjoyment and purchase intent. Therefore, the current study hypothesizes that:

H2a. Importance of price orientation positively affects shopping enjoyment at Lazada.

H2b. Importance of price orientation positively affects purchase intention at Lazada.

Importance of Website Attractiveness

Ganesh et al. (2010) described website attractiveness as “the appearance and design of the website.” Previous studies supported the idea that online shoppers tend to spend more time exploring attractive websites, and the attractiveness influences them to develop purchase intentions (Bai, Law, & Wen, 2008; Sutcliffe, 2002). Also, design aesthetic and quality, as an aspect of website attractiveness, was also found to influence shopping enjoyment (Cyr, Head, & Ivanov, 2006). Furthermore, website attractiveness or aesthetic has been linked with hedonic shopping motivation and other psychological reactions such as satisfaction and arousal (O’Brien, 2010; Pebrianti, 2016; Wang, Minor, & Wei, 2011). Hedonic motivation refers to the classic motivational principle that people engage more in pleasurable activities and avoid situations that can cause difficulties or pain (Ahtola, 1985). Therefore, in light of the hedonic shopping idea that online shoppers tend to enjoy browsing online shops and the findings of the cited studies that website attractive influence purchase intentions; the current study hypothesizes that website attractiveness, as Lazada’s e-store attribute, has a positive impact on shopping enjoyment and purchase intention. Hence, the hypotheses are:

H3a. Importance of website attractiveness positively affects shopping enjoyment at Lazada.

H3b. Importance of website attractiveness positively affects purchase intention at Lazada.

Shopping Enjoyment

In the literature, shopping enjoyment in online shops were associated with a variety of favorable outcomes such as spending more shopping time in the e-store, increased purchase intention, increased repurchase intention, and customer satisfaction (Falk, Hammerschmidt, & Schepers, 2010; Hart, Farrell, Stachow, Reed, & Cadogan, 2007; Lu & Yu-Jen Su, 2009; Ramayah & Ignatius, 2005). In light of these findings, the current study postulates that the shopping enjoyment felt by online shoppers at Lazada make them stay longer on the website, which increases their purchase intention. Therefore, the hypothesis is:

H4. Shopping enjoyment positively affects purchase intention at Lazada.

Method

Data Collection and Sample

Survey questionnaires were distributed to 300 bachelor’s degree students of a private university in Thailand. Of the distributed questionnaires, 211 or 70% were usable for multivariate analysis. Of the 211 respondents, 131 (62.10%) were female and 80 (37.90%) were male. The respondents were composed of 75 (62.10%) first-year students, 49 (23.2%) second-year students, 51 (24.2) third-year students, and 33 (15.60%) fourth-year students.

Measures

All of the latent variables were measured by multi-item, rather than single-item, scales for improved content and construct validity, internal consistency, and test-retest reliability (Hinkin, 1995). Each latent variable had three measured items, satisfying the specification requirement for SEM analysis (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). The instruments were adopted from previous studies, and they have been known to have Cronbach's alphas that surpassed the reliability threshold requirement of .70 (Nunnally, 1978).

Merchandise Variety. A 3-item scale developed by Ganesh et al. (2010) were adapted to measure merchandise variety. The items measure the importance a shopper places on the breadth of a web store's offerings and that it has the newest products and known brands. The items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scales ranging from 1 (not at all important) to 7 (extremely important). The items have a reliability alpha of .86. An example of the items is "availability of wide variety."

Price orientation. The variable was measured using a 3-item scale also proposed by Ganesh et al. (2010). The items measure the importance a shopper places on an online store having deals, sales, and new products. The items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scales also ranging from 1 (not at all important) to 7 (extremely important). The reliability of the measurement is .75. An example of the items is "frequency of sales or special deals."

Website attractiveness. Website attractiveness was measured using a 3-item scale also proposed by Ganesh et al. (2010). The items measure the importance a shopper places on the design of an online store being innovative and visually appealing. The items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scales ranging from 1 (not at all important) to 7 (extremely important). The items have a reliability alpha of .85. An example of the items is "Attractiveness of the website."

Shopping enjoyment. To measure shopping enjoyment, a 3-item scale of Falk et al. (1990) was adapted. The items were slightly modified to suit the Lazada context. The items measure the degree to which a person believes that shopping at Lazada is likable and absorbing. In the current study, 7-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) was the indicator for the respondents' degree of agreement to each item. The scale has a reliability of .77. An example of the items is "shopping at this website is exciting."

Purchase intention. To measure purchase intention, a 3-item measure of Wang et al. (2011) were adapted and slightly changed to indicate that the website they intended to purchase from was Lazada. The items measure the probability that a customer will buy something at Lazada. A 7-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), was the indicator for the respondents' degree of agreement to each item. The scale has a reliability of .85. An example of the items is "after browsing the website, I intend to purchase from the website immediately."

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations of all variables in the current study. As can be seen in the mean, the respondents have more favorable attitudes toward the importance of merchandise variety ($\bar{x} = 5.58$), price orientation ($\bar{x} = 5.42$), and website attraction ($\bar{x} = 5.72$). The respondents also have a higher level of shopping enjoyment at Lazada ($\bar{x} = 5.45$). As expected, all variables are correlated positively.

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients

	Mean	SD	MV	PO	WA	SE
MV	5.58	1.18				
PO	5.42	1.11	.33***			
WA	5.72	.95	.42***	.46***		
SE	5.45	.89	.26**	.38***	.40***	
PI	4.81	1.31	.24**	.22*	.20*	.47***

Note. MV = merchandise variety; PO = price orientation; WA = website attractiveness; SE = shopping enjoyment; PI = purchase intention. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

As a requirement before testing the structural model, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was first performed to test the hypothesis that a relationship between observed variables and their underlying constructs exists. The assessment revealed that the measurement model indicated good model fit indices ($\chi^2 = 162.53$, $df = 80$, $\chi^2/df = 2.03$, PGFI = .605, GFI = .907, SRMR = .058, RMSEA = .070, CFI = .938). The five latent variables also fulfilled convergent validity requirements as each construct had a reliability scale of more than .70, average variance extracted of at least .50. Table 2 shows the factor loading of each item, and the construct reliability and average variances extracted for each construct.

Table 2. CFA factor loadings, constructs reliability, and average variance extracted

	Item	MV	PO	WA	SE	PI
MV1	Availability of wide variety.	.85				
MV2	Availability of brand name products.	.76				
MV3	Availability of latest products.	.83				
PO1	Special deals.		.73			
PO2	Notices about sales and new products.		.70			
PO3	Frequency of sales or special deals.		.70			
WA1	Attractiveness of the website.			.81		
WA2	Cutting-edge site.			.80		
WA3	Well-designed websites.			.80		
SE1	Shopping at this website is exciting				.73	
SE2	Shopping at this Website is interesting				.73	
SE3	Shopping at this website is enjoyable				.72	

PI1	After browsing the Website, I intend to purchase from the Website immediately.	.78
PI2	After browsing the Website, the likelihood of me purchasing from the Website immediately is high.	.87
PI3	I rate my chances of purchasing at the website immediately as high.	.78

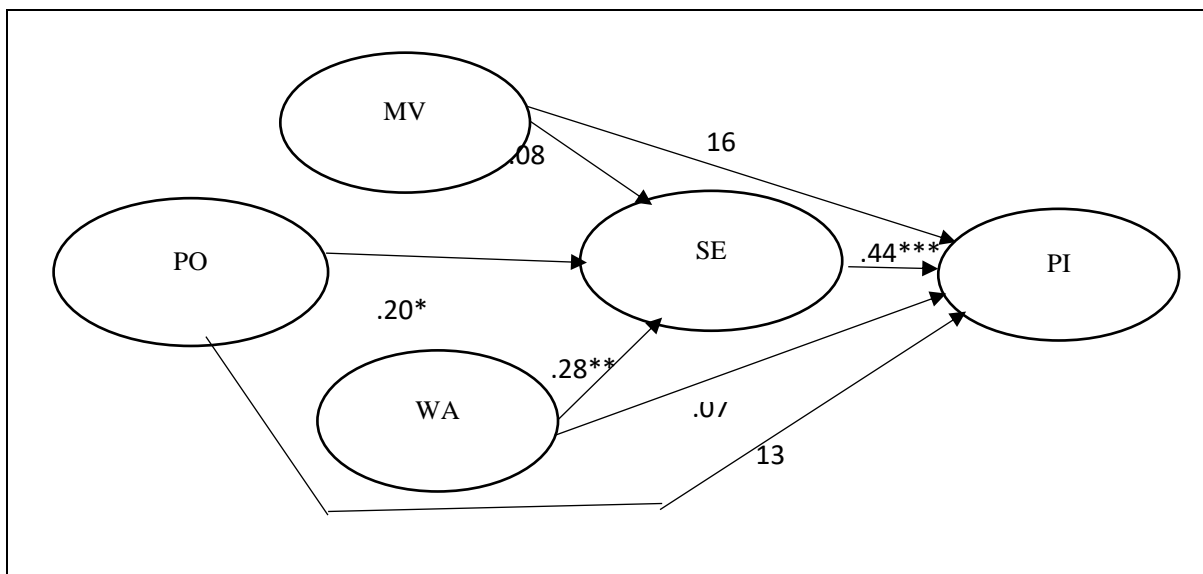
Construct Reliability	.86	.75	.85	.77	.85
Average Variance Extracted	.67	.51	.65	.53	.65

Note. MV = merchandise variety; PO = price orientation; WA = website attractiveness; SE = shopping enjoyment; PI = purchase intention.

The Hypothesized Model

The values in the fit indices of the hypothesized model were identical to their values in the CFA model ($\chi^2 = 162.53$, $df = .80$, $\chi^2/df = 2.03$, PGFI = .605, GFI = .907, SRMR = .063, RMSEA = .070, CFI = .938). As shown in Figure 2 and Table 3, the assessment results indicated that the signs of the structural path estimates were in parallel with their hypothesized relationships. However, the examination of the size and significance of the path coefficients revealed that only three of the hypotheses are supported. As shown in Figure 1, price orientation and website attractiveness are found to affect shopping enjoyment positively, supporting hypotheses H2a and H3a. Shopping enjoyment, in turn, affects purchase intention positively, in support of H4.

Figure 2. Hypothesized model showing the path estimates



Note. MV = merchandise variety; PO = price orientation; WA = website attractiveness; SE = shopping enjoyment; PI = purchase intention. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 3. Hypotheses and Findings

	Hypothesized paths	Standardized β	Standard Error	Result
H1a	MV \longrightarrow SE	.08	.12	Not supported
H1b	MV \longrightarrow PI	.13	.08	Not supported

H2a	PO	→	SE	.20*	.14	Supported
H2b	PO	→	PI	.05	.12	Not supported
H3a	WA	→	SE	.28**	.12	Supported
H3b	WA	→	PI	.07	.10	Not supported
H4	SE	→	PI	.44***	.11	Supported

Note. MV = merchandise variety; PO = price orientation; WA = website attractiveness; SE = shopping enjoyment; PI = purchase intention. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Discussion and Research Implication

Lazada has aimed to become a major player in Southeast Asia's e-commerce boom, and the company has laid out its long-term plan in Thailand that includes retailing products from sellers of all sizes to cater the needs of the ever-growing number of online shoppers. The current study proposed a structural model with the primary objective of examining the influence of merchandise variety, price orientation, and website attractiveness on shopping enjoyment and purchase intention at Lazada's website. It is expected that the results would provide valuable insight into whether online shoppers' preference on the importance of e-store attributes lead to shopping enjoyment and purchase intention at Lazada's e-store, or not. The proposed model was analyzed through structural equation modeling, the results of which have a variety of managerial implications.

The first set of implications pertain to the findings that merchandise variety has no significant effects on both shopping enjoyment and purchase intention. These findings contradict previous findings in offline stores that product variety influenced shopping motives and shopping behaviors (e.g., Patel & Sharma, 2009; Solomom et al., 2007). The findings also contradict the notion advanced by Ganesh et al. (2010) that offline and online shoppers do not differ in terms of viewing store attributes importance in the context of merchandise variety. The current study deduced that, unlike in offline stores where shoppers have physical contacts with the products that they can even try on, the absence of the physicality of the products limits the shopping experience of the online shoppers, and, therefore, do not elicit their shopping enjoyment and purchase intention as actual tangible products in offline shops do. As an implication, therefore, Lazada's management needs not to focus more on the merchandise variety to make the shopping experience of online shoppers enjoyable or to elicit purchase intention. However, the results do not mean that Lazada needs to reduce its products as other factors like hedonic buying behavior or need-influenced buying motivations are still influenced by merchandise variety.

The second set of implications are concerning the findings that, although price orientation has no significant direct effect on purchase intention, it has a positive impact on shopping enjoyment, which, in turn, influences purchase intention. The effect of price orientation on job enjoyment supports the advanced proposition that attractive price orientation enhances online shoppers' shopping enjoyment as their bargain hunting and price information search become more convenient as special deals and offers are made available at the website. Furthermore, as demonstrated by the finding that

shopping enjoyment positively affects purchase intention, it can be inferred that, regardless of the absence of the direct influence of price orientation on purchase intention, the online shoppers who enjoy their website exploration on special deals and sales are likely to develop higher purchase intention. Based on the results, Lazada has to maintain or improve their pricing orientation as it is proven in the current study to influence shoppers' enjoyment in online shopping, and, in turn, higher levels of purchase intentions are aroused.

The last set of implications are in light of the findings that website attractiveness that, although do not also influence purchase intention directly, has a positive impact on shopping enjoyment, which, in turn, increases purchase intention. The significant effect of website attractiveness on shopping enjoyment is consistent with findings of prior studies that revealed the positive influences of website attractiveness on shopping enjoyment (Cyr et al., 2006) and hedonic shopping motivation (O'Brien, 2010; Pebrianti, 2016). However, the insignificant effect of website attractiveness on purchase intention is not in line with earlier findings that attractive websites influence online shoppers to develop purchase intentions (Bai et al., 2008; Sutcliffe, 2002). Lazada's management, therefore, needs to keep their website attractive as it impacts shopping enjoyment positively which, as hedonic shopping motivation implied, encourage the shoppers to engage more in the enjoyable online shopping made possible by the aesthetic and attractive website design. The enjoyable shopping experience, in turn, increase shoppers' intention to purchase a product from Lazada.

Limitations and Future Research Direction

The current study has several limitations. First, cross-sectional data, which can only offer information of a single moment in time, were used in the study. The predictive power cross-sectional data is flawed as they lack the ability to make accurate causal inferences (Finkel, 1995). The study can be improved in the future by utilizing a longitudinal approach. In a longitudinal study, each participant is observed at multiple time points, thereby allowing trends in an outcome to be monitored over time (Sedgwick, 2014).

The variables posited to affect shopping enjoyment and purchase intent were only limited to three e-store attribute importance dimensions proposed by Ganesh et al. (2010). Future research may improve this research by also including motivation dimensions and other factors relevant in unraveling the cause of shopping enjoyment and purchase intention at Lazada's website.

Lastly, since the data were collected only from university students coming from a private university in Thailand, there is a limitation of the results generalizability. As a procedural remedy for future research, researchers may broaden the research scope to also include respondents from other universities or even employed individuals. Using more respondents from different demographics can represent the population better and, therefore, improve the generalizability of the results.

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