

Original Article

Examining the Effect of Utilitarian Value on Customer Purchase Experience: Online Platform versus Brick and Mortar at Retail Outlets in Subang Jaya, Malaysia

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Abstract: *In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, businesses are increasingly turning to online shopping as a means to expand their market reach while also maintaining a focus on brick-and-mortar (offline) shopping. This research examines the impact of utilitarian value on customers' purchase experience at a retail outlet in Subang Jaya, Selangor, considering both online and offline shopping channels. Additionally, the study aims to compare the differences in shopping behavior between online and offline customers and identify key drivers of customer experience in both contexts. Using exploratory research and a quantitative approach, data was collected from 250 respondents across different age groups who have access to the internet. The findings reveal that Immediate Possession significantly influences the purchase experience in both online and offline settings at the retail outlet in Subang Jaya, Selangor, indicating its importance as a key driver. The research provides valuable insights into the relationship between customer purchase experiences online and offline, suggesting that immediate possession invokes various value dimensions that collectively contribute to the overall customer experience. Future research should consider additional factors impacting customer purchase experiences, such as product quality, service reliability, and security trust. Moreover, the retail outlet management should explore multi-format utilization behaviors and address other factors affecting customer satisfaction and loyalty across different channels.*

Keywords: *Retail outlet, Subang Jaya, Selangor, online shopping, offline shopping, utilitarian value, purchase experience, customer behavior, immediate possession, multi-channel study.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In response to the dynamic shifts observed in the Malaysian retail landscape, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, retailers have undergone significant transformations to adapt to evolving consumer behaviors and market conditions. Recent data from the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2020) underscores the profound impact of movement restrictions and lockdown measures on retail sales, prompting retailers to reassess their strategies and embrace innovative approaches to meet the changing demands of consumers.

One notable trend that has emerged in the retail sector is the rapid expansion of multi-channel retailing. This approach involves integrating both offline and online channels to offer consumers a seamless shopping experience. Retail outlets in Subang Jaya, Selangor, epitomize this trend by providing a blend of physical and digital shopping environments. These outlets recognize the importance of catering to diverse consumer preferences and offering a range of options to enhance customer satisfaction (Chen & Shen, 2021).

Brick-and-mortar stores continue to play a vital role in the retail landscape by providing customers with tangible experiences and personalized assistance. Despite the growing popularity of online shopping, many consumers still value the opportunity to interact with products physically before making a purchase. Additionally, brick-and-mortar stores offer a sense of immediacy, allowing customers to obtain products instantly without waiting for shipping (Rahman et al., 2022).

On the other hand, online platforms offer unparalleled convenience and accessibility, particularly in situations where physical mobility is restricted. Consumers appreciate the convenience of shopping from the comfort of their homes and the ability to access a wide range of products with just a few clicks. Moreover, online platforms often provide personalized recommendations and a seamless checkout process, further enhancing the overall shopping experience (Rose et al., 2023).

Customer experience has emerged as a critical factor influencing consumer behavior and brand loyalty in the retail sector. Positive interactions with retail outlets, both offline and online, significantly contribute to customer satisfaction and retention. Factors such as ease of navigation, product availability, and responsive customer service play a crucial role in



shaping the overall customer experience (Chen & Shen, 2021).

Against this backdrop, the present research aims to delve deeper into the dynamics of customer purchase experience across offline and online channels at retail outlets in Subang Jaya, Selangor. By examining variations in shopping behavior and identifying key drivers of customer experience, the study seeks to provide actionable insights for retailers to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To examine the influence of utilitarian value on customer purchase experience across offline and online channels.
2. To compare and analyze differences in shopping behavior between offline and online shoppers at retail outlets in Subang Jaya, Selangor.
3. To identify the primary drivers of customer experience in both offline and online shopping environments.
4. To provide practical recommendations for retailers to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty based on the study findings.

These objectives will guide the research process, which will involve data collection through surveys and subsequent analysis using quantitative methods. By addressing these objectives comprehensively, the study aims to generate valuable insights that contribute to the advancement of the retail industry, not only in Malaysia but also beyond its borders.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer behavior in retailing is often categorized based on utilitarian and hedonic values (Chandon et al., 2020). Utilitarian value refers to the practical benefits obtained from the shopping process, emphasizing efficiency and task accomplishment (Teller et al., 2021). It is characterized by rational decision-making and a focus on fulfilling specific needs and objectives (Sarkar & Das, 2022).

Consumers seeking utilitarian value prioritize functional aspects such as product quality, convenience, and affordability (Basaran & Ozan Buyukyilmaz, 2023). They approach shopping to an end, aiming to acquire products that serve their immediate needs efficiently (Chandon et al., 2020).

Information attainment is crucial for consumers to make informed purchase decisions and mitigate perceived risks (Noble et al., 2020). Online channels provide extensive product information, allowing consumers to compare features and prices (Kwon & Jain, 2021). Access to reviews and ratings further enhances consumers' knowledge and confidence in their choices (Sarkar & Das, 2022).

The internet's accessibility has transformed information-seeking behavior, enabling consumers to gather product information conveniently (Katawetawaraks & Wang, 2023). Online retailers leverage detailed descriptions and customer feedback to facilitate informed decision-making (Katawetawaraks & Wang, 2023).

Price plays a significant role in consumers' channel preferences, with online platforms often perceived as offering competitive pricing (Chiang & Lin, 2022). While brick-and-mortar stores are valued for immediate possession, online channels excel in price transparency and discounts (Degeratu et al., 2020). Consumers respond differently to pricing strategies across channels, with online shoppers being more price-sensitive (Chiang & Lin, 2022).

Price comparison tools empower consumers to make cost-effective choices and capitalize on discounts and promotions (Wang et al., 2021). The perceived value of products influences consumers' willingness to pay and their channel selection (Sulaiman et al., 2024).

Immediate possession is a key consideration for consumers, particularly in brick-and-mortar retailing (Noble et al., 2020). Physical stores offer instant gratification, whereas online retailers entail delivery delays (Noble et al., 2020). Consumers' preference for immediate possession influences their channel choices, with convenience and speed being critical factors (Chiang & Lin, 2022). Online retailers strive to minimize delivery times to compete effectively with brick-and-mortar stores (Chiang & Lin, 2022). However, the allure of immediate possession remains a unique selling point for traditional retailers (Sulaiman et al., 2024).

Assortment-seeking reflects consumers' desire for product variety and choice (Noble et al., 2020). Online channels offer a broader assortment due to fewer space constraints, catering to diverse preferences (Teller et al., 2021). The availability of a wide range of products enhances consumers' satisfaction and allows them to optimize their shopping experience (Teller et al., 2021).

Agglomeration of retail stores provides consumers with access to diverse assortments, offering convenience and choice (Teller et al., 2021). The breadth and depth of product offerings influence consumers' perceptions of value and their likelihood

of repeat purchases (Basaran & Ozan Buyukyilmaz, 2023).

The research theoretical framework delineates models for understanding customer purchase experience in both online and offline shopping contexts. These models elucidate the factors influencing consumer behavior and channel preferences, providing insights into contemporary retail dynamics.

A) Research Theoretical Framework Model

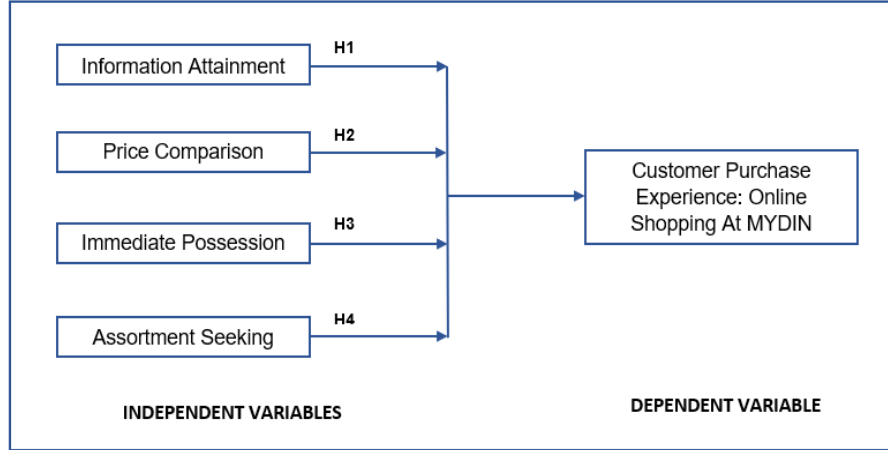


Table 1: Research Theoretical Framework: Customer Purchase Experience for Online Shopping at Retail Outlet in Subang Jaya, Selangor

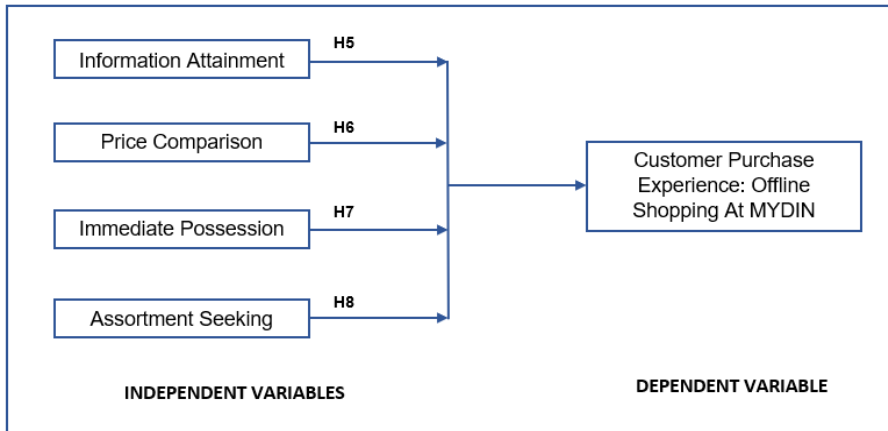


Table 2: Research Theoretical Framework: Customer Purchase Experience for Offline Shopping at Retail Outlet in Subang Jaya, Selangor

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A) Research Design

In this study, a comprehensive research design incorporating exploratory, descriptive, and causal research approaches is employed to facilitate a thorough comparison and contrast of fundamental aspects. The quantitative approach is utilized, enabling rigorous statistical analysis and the generalization of results based on a sizable sample size (Hair et al., 2020). Structured data collection methods are utilized to ensure the collection of reliable and valid data for subsequent analysis.

B) Research Population

The research population consists of individuals aged 18 and above with internet access, totalling 300 respondents. However, only 250 valid responses were obtained and considered for analysis. The sample encompasses diverse age groups to ensure the representativeness and inclusivity of the research findings (Malhotra, 2022).

C) Research Sample

The research sample is drawn from Malaysian consumers, specifically patrons of retail outlets in Subang Jaya, Selangor, including users of the hypermarket's online platform. The aim is to understand and predict consumer channel switching behavior between online and offline shopping channels. A descriptive survey method is employed, utilizing self-convenient

sampling techniques to gather data from shoppers at retail outlets in Subang Jaya (Sekaran & Bougie, 2021).

D) Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire serves as the primary research instrument, featuring a Likert seven-point scale to measure respondents' opinions and perceptions accurately. The questionnaire is meticulously designed to align with the research objectives and facilitate swift responses from participants (Saunders et al., 2023).

E) Data Analysis Method

Data collected from the survey are analyzed using SPSS Statistics and Data Analysis software. This software enables systematic data processing and robust statistical analysis, providing valuable insights into consumer behavior and channel preferences (Field, 2024).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A) The Response Rate

Two hundred fifty respondents were included in the study. The graph depicts the proportion of male and female participants engaged in both online and offline shopping activities. Figure 3.1 illustrates that most of the respondents shopping at retail outlets in the Subang Jaya area are female, constituting 65% or 163 out of the total 250 respondents, while males represent 34.8% or 87 respondents. The findings indicate that female customers are more actively involved in both online and offline shopping compared to their male counterparts. This observation provides insights into the gender distribution among shoppers, highlighting the predominance of females in retail consumption patterns.

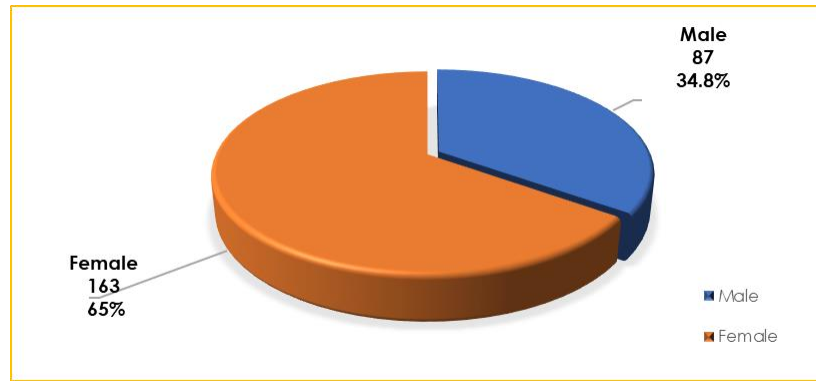


Figure 1: Gender Respondent Rate

B) Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics for offline shopping at the Retail Outlets in Subang Jaya Store reveal a comprehensive overview of customer experience across various dimensions. With a mean score of 5.4280 and a standard deviation of 1.18084, customers generally perceive offline shopping at the Subang Jaya Store as convenient. This suggests that the store layout, accessibility, and availability of products contribute positively to the overall shopping experience. Scoring slightly higher with a mean of 5.5920 and a standard deviation of 1.14489, customers feel secure while shopping at the Subang Jaya Store. This indicates that measures such as surveillance, lighting, and staff presence help foster a sense of safety and trust among shoppers. The mean score of 5.7120 and a standard deviation of 0.97203 suggest that customers consistently have positive experiences when shopping offline at the Subang Jaya Store. This encompasses factors such as helpful staff, ease of navigation, and a pleasant atmosphere within the store. With a mean score of 5.8360 and a standard deviation of 0.8833, customers find offline shopping at the Subang Jaya Store to be enjoyable. This implies that the overall ambience, customer service, and product variety contribute to a pleasurable shopping experience. Customers also perceive shopping at the Subang Jaya Store as comfortable, as indicated by a mean score of 5.6400 and a standard deviation of 1.07098. This suggests that factors such as seating arrangements, aisle width, and temperature control contribute to a comfortable shopping environment. In summary, the descriptive statistics highlight that customers have positive perceptions across various aspects of offline shopping at the Retail Outlets in Subang Jaya Store. The store excels in providing convenience, security, good experiences, enjoyment, and comfort, contributing to overall customer satisfaction and loyalty.

OFFLINE SHOPPING					
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS	N	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
CONVENIENCE - RETAIL OUTLETS, SUBANG JAYA STORE	250	1	7	5.4280	1.18084
SECURITY - RETAIL OUTLETS, SUBANG JAYA STORE	250	1	7	5.5920	1.14489
GOOD EXPERIENCE - RETAIL OUTLETS, SUBANG JAYA STORE	250	1	7	5.7120	0.97203
ENJOYABLE - RETAIL OUTLETS, SUBANG JAYA STORE	250	1	7	5.8360	0.8833
COMFORTABLE - RETAIL OUTLETS, SUBANG JAYA STORE	250	1	7	5.6400	1.07098

Table 3: Customer Experience Level Offline Shopping

The descriptive statistics for online shopping at the Retail Outlets in Subang Jaya Online provide a comprehensive understanding of customer experiences in various aspects. With a mean score of 5.2640 and a standard deviation of 1.10235, customers express a considerable level of delight in their online shopping experiences. This suggests that the online platform effectively meets or exceeds customer expectations, leading to a high level of satisfaction and enjoyment. Despite a slightly lower mean score of 5.1560 and a standard deviation of 1.13526, customers still generally report satisfaction with their online shopping experiences. While not as high as delight, this indicates that customers find the online platform satisfactory in meeting their needs and preferences. The mean score of 5.4800 and a standard deviation of 0.91485 suggest that customers feel secure when shopping online at the Subang Jaya Online platform. This indicates that measures such as secure payment gateways and data protection protocols contribute to a sense of trust and confidence among customers. With a mean score of 5.8600 and a standard deviation of 0.82652, customers find online shopping at the Subang Jaya Online platform highly enjoyable. This indicates that the platform offers a user-friendly interface, seamless navigation, and engaging features that enhance the overall shopping experience. Customers also report feeling happy with their online shopping experiences, as indicated by a mean score of 5.3360 and a standard deviation of 1.13324. This suggests that the online platform effectively caters to customer needs and preferences, leading to positive emotional responses. In summary, the descriptive statistics highlight that customers generally have positive experiences when shopping online at the Retail Outlets in Subang Jaya Online. The platform excels in providing delight, satisfaction, security, enjoyment, and happiness, contributing to overall customer satisfaction and loyalty in the online shopping domain.

ONLINE SHOPPING					
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS	N	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
DELIGHTED – RETAIL OUTLETS, SUBANG JAYA ONLINE	250	1	7	5.2640	1.10235
SATISFACTION – RETAIL OUTLETS, SUBANG JAYA ONLINE	250	1	7	5.1560	1.13526
SECURITY - RETAIL OUTLETS, SUBANG JAYA ONLINE	250	1	7	5.4800	0.91485
ENJOYABLE - RETAIL OUTLETS, SUBANG JAYA ONLINE	250	1	7	5.8600	0.82652
HAPPINESS- RETAIL OUTLETS, SUBANG JAYA ONLINE	250	1	7	5.3360	1.13324

Table 4: Customer Experience Level Online Shopping

C) Correlation Analysis

Every hypothesis formulated must be tested to examine or confirm the conjectured relationship; it is expected that solutions can be found to correct the problem encountered (Sekaran, 2003). In this study, the hypotheses were tested using correlation and regression analysis.

4.12.1 There are four hypotheses in this research for online shopping:

H1: Information Attainment has a positive and significant effect on customers' purchase experience towards online shopping.

H2: Price Comparison has a positive and significant effect on customers' purchase experience towards online shopping.

H3: Immediate Possession has a positive and significant effect on customers' purchase experience towards online shopping.

H4: Assortment Seeking does not positively and significantly affect customers' purchase experience towards online shopping.

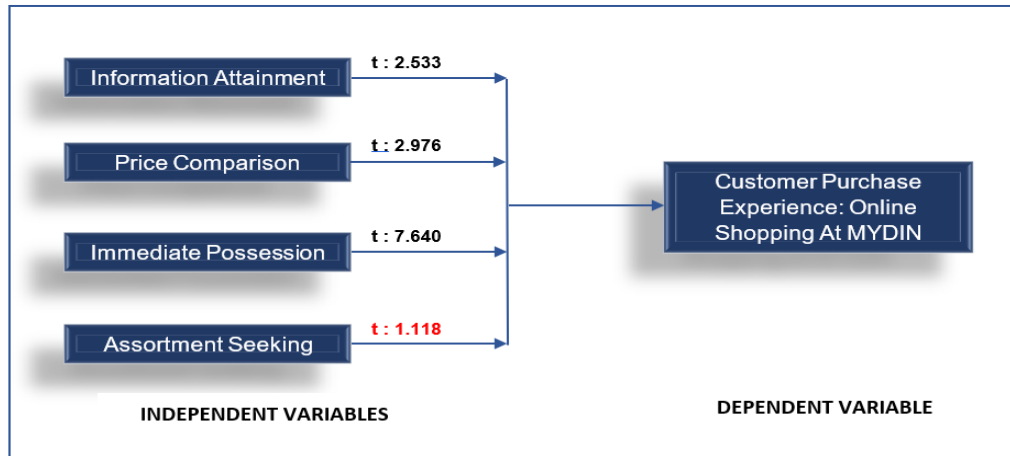


Table 5: Research Theoretical Framework: Customer Purchase Experience for Online Shopping at Retail Outlet in Subang Jaya, Selangor

The hypotheses indicate that 3 independent variables show positive and supported Online Shopping at Retail outlet in Subang Jaya, Selangor (t value more than 1.65).

There are four hypotheses in this research for offline shopping:

H5: Information Attainment has a positive and significant effect on customers' purchase experience towards Offline Shopping (brick and mortar).

H6: Price Comparison does not positively and significantly affect customer purchase experience towards Offline Shopping (brick and mortar).

H7: Immediate Possession has a positive and significant effect on customers' purchase experience towards Offline Shopping (brick and mortar).

H8: Assortment Seeking does not positively and significantly affect customer purchase experience towards offline shopping (brick and mortar).

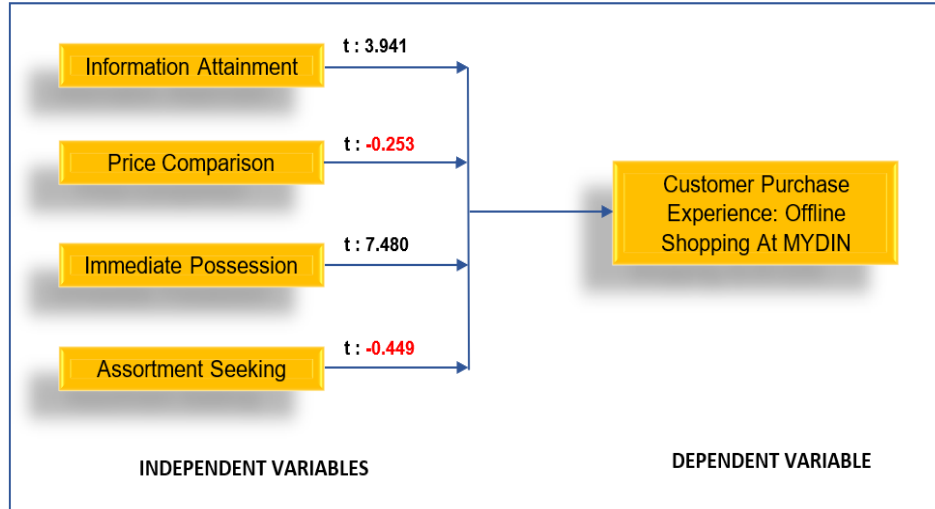


Table 6: Research Theoretical Framework: Customer Purchase Experience for Offline Shopping at Retail Outlet in Subang Jaya, Selangor

From the above hypotheses, 2 Independent Variable showed positive and supported towards Offline Shopping at Retail Outlet in Subang Jaya, Selangor. (t value more than 1.65).

D) Discussion

The study conducted on customer shopping experiences, both online and offline, at retail outlets in Subang Jaya, Selangor, provides valuable insights into consumer behavior and preferences in the retail sector. The findings reveal distinct patterns between male and female shoppers, with females being more actively engaged in both online and offline shopping activities. Additionally, descriptive statistics shed light on customer perceptions of offline and online shopping experiences, highlighting various aspects such as convenience, security, enjoyment, and satisfaction. Furthermore, correlation analysis examines the relationships between different variables and customers' purchase experiences in both online and offline settings.

The observation that female customers dominate in both online and offline shopping activities aligns with recent studies. For example, research by Wang and Sun (2021) found that women tend to engage more in retail consumption due to factors such as societal norms, shopping preferences, and convenience, which corroborates the findings of this study. Thus, the predominance of female shoppers in Subang Jaya reflects broader trends in consumer behavior identified in contemporary literature.

Descriptive statistics indicate that customers generally perceive offline shopping at the Subang Jaya store positively across various dimensions, including convenience, security, good experiences, enjoyment, and comfort. These findings resonate with recent research emphasizing the importance of factors such as store layout, staff interaction, and ambiance in shaping offline shopping experiences (Moussa et al., 2020). The high mean scores and relatively low standard deviations suggest consistent positive perceptions among customers, indicating a strong foundation for customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Similarly, descriptive statistics for online shopping at Subang Jaya Online demonstrate high levels of satisfaction and enjoyment among customers. Factors such as delight, satisfaction, security, and happiness contribute significantly to shaping positive online shopping experiences. Recent studies, such as that by Xu et al. (2023), have highlighted the importance of user experience, website design, and security measures in driving customer satisfaction and retention in e-commerce, which aligns with the findings of this study.

The correlation analysis tests hypotheses regarding the effects of different variables on customers' purchase experiences in both online and offline settings. For online shopping, variables such as Information Attainment, Price Comparison, and Immediate Possession show positive and significant effects, aligning with recent theoretical frameworks. This suggests that factors like access to information, competitive pricing, and quick delivery influence customers' perceptions and behaviors in online shopping. Similarly, for offline shopping, variables like Information Attainment and Immediate Possession exhibit positive and significant effects, indicating their importance in shaping customer experiences in brick-and-mortar stores.

The study provides comprehensive insights into customer shopping behaviors and experiences in Subang Jaya, Selangor, across both online and offline channels. By understanding factors that drive customer satisfaction and loyalty, retailers can tailor their strategies to meet evolving consumer preferences and enhance overall shopping experiences.

IV. CONCLUSION

A) Conclusion

In conclusion, the study sheds light on the dynamics of consumer shopping behavior in Subang Jaya, Selangor, emphasizing the significant role of gender in influencing both online and offline shopping activities. Female shoppers are notably more engaged in retail consumption compared to their male counterparts. Moreover, the analysis of customer perceptions reveals that both offline and online shopping experiences in Subang Jaya are generally positive, with factors such as convenience, security, and enjoyment playing crucial roles in shaping customer satisfaction and loyalty.

B) Recommendations

Based on the findings, retailers in Subang Jaya can implement several strategies to enhance customer experiences and drive loyalty further:

1. Tailored Marketing Strategies: Retailers should develop marketing campaigns and promotions specifically targeted towards female shoppers, considering their higher engagement in both online and offline shopping activities.
2. Enhanced In-Store Atmosphere: Investing in-store layout, ambiance, and staff training can further improve the offline shopping experience. Creating a welcoming and comfortable environment can encourage repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth recommendations.
3. Optimized Online Platforms: Continuously improving website design, user interface, and security measures can enhance the online shopping experience. Retailers should prioritize user-friendly navigation and ensure secure payment gateways to build trust and confidence among online shoppers.
4. Personalized Customer Engagement: Implementing personalized recommendations and targeted communication-based on individual shopping preferences can strengthen customer relationships and foster loyalty in both online and offline channels.
5. Continuous Monitoring and Adaptation: Retailers should regularly gather feedback from customers and monitor evolving trends in consumer behavior to adapt their strategies accordingly. Staying agile and responsive to changing market dynamics is key to maintaining competitiveness in the retail landscape.

By implementing these recommendations, retailers can not only improve customer satisfaction but also foster long-term loyalty, ultimately driving sustainable growth and success in the competitive retail market of Subang Jaya.

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