

# Consumer's Buying Behaviour for Malaysia's Traditional Handicraft

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Received June 12, 2022; Revised July 29, 2022; Accepted September 19, 2022

## Cite This Paper in the Following Citation Styles

(a): [1] Chiam Chooi Chea, Joshua Tan Juat Huan, Lim Yee Wui, Chan Sin Yee, "Consumer's Buying Behaviour for Malaysia's Traditional Handicraft," *Universal Journal of Management*, Vol. 10, No. 4, pp. 63 - 68, 2022. DOI: 10.13189/ujm.2022.100401.

(b): Chiam Chooi Chea, Joshua Tan Juat Huan, Lim Yee Wui, Chan Sin Yee (2022). *Consumer's Buying Behaviour for Malaysia's Traditional Handicraft*. *Universal Journal of Management*, 10(4), 63 - 68. DOI: 10.13189/ujm.2022.100401.

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**Abstract** Traditional Handicrafts are products selling the concept of "heritage" of a community or a country. Traditional handicraft products can play a significant role in generating income and contributing to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of a country. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in the year 2019 and the after effect of the pandemic, the growth of a country has been affected negatively. This is because the closing of borders of countries and the travelling in and out of those countries have been halted for the past two years. Hence, there is expected to be a surge in the number of visitors to Malaysia. Hence, Malaysia needs to formulate the appropriate strategies to boost the increase in traditional handicraft products. A total of 231 respondents were collected for this study via survey form with twenty items on the five variables, namely; consumers' knowledge, subjective norms, and characteristics that are significant on the intention to purchase Malaysia's traditional handicrafts products. Nevertheless, perceived behavioural control is not significant to purchase intention towards Malaysia's Traditional Handicraft. This study would be able to provide insights to various stakeholders, policymakers, and sellers on how to design and introduce the right activities to attract awareness towards the beauty and value of heritage handicraft products.

**Keywords** Traditional Handicraft, Buying Behaviour, Malaysia's Traditional Handicraft Purchase Intention

## 1. Introduction

Tourism plays a vital role in generating national income for a country. Malaysia's traditional handicraft products are being stigmatised and were perceived to be not good or not quality enough for the foreign markets. This is a major issue that needs to be addressed, and the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture started to address this problem by launching the first online store and mobile application; "Karyaneka" in the year 2014, which allows patrons to browse and purchase the handicraft products around the world [21]. Handicraft is a handmade object that has artistic, cultural and historical significance; and the object is made from certain material with a specific and unique pattern and workmanship [6]. It also can be said as a unique object that represents a country's tradition, heritage, culture, and pride. The traditional handicrafts in Malaysia are usually made with special dyeing technique, weaving technique on pieces of cloth (batik), metal, wood, fabric ceramic and rattan [16]. Globalisation has commercialised traditional handicraft. This may be viewed as a setback as the product may be below par, and this will tarnish the reputation of the handicraft. In view of this, many efforts have been made by both government and non-government organisation, such as the Ministry of Tourism, Jabatan Warisan Negara, Malaysian Handicraft Development Corporation to preserve the purity, originality, quality, and survivor of the arts.

### 1.1. Research Problem

Though the “Karyaneka”, online handicraft has increased the awareness on the handicraft products because the sale for the products has increased in year 2014 as compared with previous year [21]. This has increased the growth of income for Malaysia but, starting in year 2015, the situation was not very positive as the concept is stale and the sales have been fluctuating over the years, and this scenario has become worse due to COVID-19 pandemic as the number of visitors has declined due to the lockdown on the borders of all countries over the world.

The supply for Malaysia’s traditional handicraft products was not enough for the foreign market back in 2007 [20]. Despite some small successes were achieved when some craft festivals were organised in 2018 and 2019, the industry sees a decline throughout the years. Malaysia has three craft complexes, in Kuala Lumpur, Langkawi and Johor. However, due to a lack of funding allocated to the Ministry of Tourism, the physical stores were not an ideal way to maintain the sustainability of this industry. Even with plans to open more physical stores in the airport to attract the visitors (or those who transit) and more allocations given for ‘Visit Malaysia 2020 (VMY2020)’; but most of these plans failed due to the outbreak of the covid-19. Therefore, the aim of this research is to seek the possible solutions or suggestion for the crafter to make improvement and the sustainability of this industry.

### 1.2. Research Objectives

The following is the research objectives:

- 1) To assess whether consumers’ knowledge influences the intention to purchase Malaysia’s traditional handicraft products

- 2) To assess whether subjective norms influence the intention to purchase Malaysia’s traditional handicraft products
- 3) To investigate whether the perceived behavioural of control influence the intention to purchase Malaysia’s traditional handicraft products
- 4) To assess whether the characteristics influence the intention to purchase Malaysia’s traditional handicraft products

### 1.3. Research Questions

The research questions for this study are as follows:

- 1) Did consumers’ knowledge influence the intention to purchase Malaysia’s traditional handicraft products?
- 2) Did perceived behavioural of control influence the intention to purchase Malaysia’s traditional handicraft products?
- 3) Did the subjective norms attitudes influence the intention to purchase Malaysia’s traditional handicraft products?
- 4) Did the characteristic influence the intention to purchase Malaysia’s traditional handicraft products?

### 1.4. Research Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the framework used for this study. The framework has four independent variables and one dependent variable. Its independent variables are consumers’ knowledge, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control and characteristics, while its dependent variable is purchase intention.

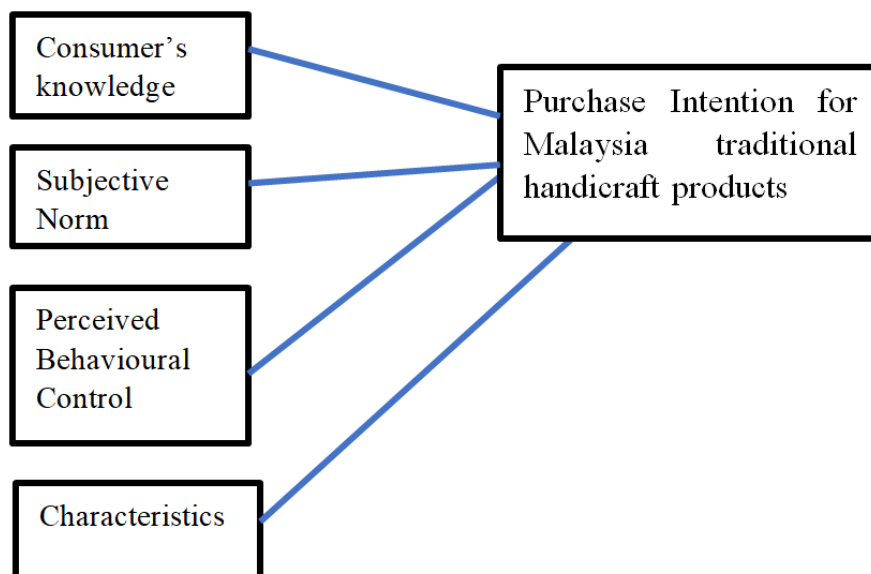


Figure 1. Research framework

## 2. Literature Review

The craft products should include various raw materials and at least 80% were hand-made. Handicraft is a presentation of cultural and heritage for a nation and it provides identity to a person. Heritage is also a living proof of a culture, and it gives a sense of belonging as it is a development historically that is represented by traditions, customs [7],[13],[14],[3]. According to [23], the handicraft products are becoming more and more commoditised due to globalisation, facing stiffer and fiercer competition with all other countries. Due to heavy competition, Jabatan Warisan Negara has tried to protect handicrafts in Malaysia by providing knowledge, technique, financial aid to the handicraft industry with the intention to stimulate and sustain the small-scale production firms. This study adopted the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) [1]. This model studies an individual's intention behaviour, which is relevant to its study of purchase intention and has been used widely on individual's behaviour over the years. This study examines the consumers' knowledge, subjective norms, characteristics and perceived behaviour of control on the intention to purchase Malaysia's traditional handicraft products.

Purchase intention is when there is a behaviour to make an individual to purchase products in the market [17]. This behaviour is a crucial piece of information for sellers as it serves as a prediction purchase tool by consumers. The process of consumer purchasing a product is a complicated process with simple end results. This study intends to study the purchase intention for Malaysia's traditional handicraft products.

Consumers' knowledge (CK) referring to a higher level of understanding in the handicraft will show more concern than those who do not [10], and therefore, a more knowledgeable person (in this arts) would be more likely to purchase the product than those who are not. The knowledge obtained from purchasing experience is one of the basic knowledge of consumers [4]. Consumers' knowledge serves as one of the information in one's experience database when purchasing a product. Hereby, the probability to purchase the products will be higher when consumer has higher knowledge for a particular product compared to those with lower knowledge on a particular product.

According to [2], subjective norms (SN) refer to the behaviour of an individual can be influenced by the behaviours of others. The influence may also be due to the number of people having in certain manner. The 'someone' here is referred to family members, idols, colleagues, relatives and/or friends. A study by [11] found that there is a relationship between subjective norms and purchase intention for counterfeit fashion goods amongst US college student. Other studies too found the same relationship between subjective norm and intention to purchase [5],[1],[11].

According to [1], perceived behavioural of control (PBC) is the extension of consumer's perception of the availability of resources and opportunities. Perceived Behavioural of Control (PBC) refers to the expansion of consumers' perceptions of resource and opportunity availability. It measures a person will to control over actual behaviour based on interests by assuming that the person reflects past experiences as well as predictable obstacles and difficulties. TPB predicts individual's expected behaviour but could not behave as expected due to opportunity and resources such as finance, time, ability and skills [8]. A person will have better control of one's behaviour when he has more chance. Other studies have found that PBC can influence the intention to purchase [12],[19],[18].

Product physical appearance is one of the main features for consumers to purchase the products because the physical attractiveness of a product is the first main attraction for consumers to purchase. Physical features include the design, packaging, colours etc. These attributes which are providing visual referrer are essential to primitivism schemata [22]. This variable is applicable to traditional handicraft products because these products rely heavily on having culture motifs/ pattern and present local culture will be more exciting for the consumer.

## 3. Research Methodology

This study uses quantitative research to identify variables that influence consumer purchasing behaviour towards traditional handicrafts in Malaysia. In addition, hypothetical and quantitative data can be tested from questionnaires, and it also prompts research questions as well as reviews of literature. This study uses quantitative research to identify factors influencing consumer buying behaviour towards traditional Malaysian handicrafts.

Questionnaires are used to collect the data from consumers both local and non-local who have the intention to purchase traditional Malaysian handicrafts. The items in the questionnaire are available for three languages; English language, Bahasa Malaysia language and Chinese. Five-likert scale questions were used for this study. Microsoft Excel was used in keying and organising the responses obtained. The descriptive results and inferential regression analyses were conducted in this study using SPSS Statistical Package. Apart from that, reliability analysis was conducted as well to test the construct of this model and R-squared was used to test the degree of movements of security by dependent variables are explained by the independent variable of the study.

Convenience sampling was used for this study because this is a traditional handicraft product and hence, it may be related to any characteristics of respondents as the traditional handicraft products are suitable for all ages, gender and background as the products can be served as

gift pack, personal use etc. The data was collected through QR code generated from Microsoft Form. In order to reach a larger and wider size of the intended population, convenience sampling was used in this study.

The questionnaire used is designed and divided into four main sections as follows:

Section A and B: Demographic details of the respondents.

Section C: Nine questions were developed to ask the opinion on Malaysia's traditional handicraft.

Section D: Twenty questions were constructed to ask on the factors in the research questions on whether these factors will influence the respondents' buying intention on Malaysia's traditional handicraft products. The items in the survey questionnaire are mostly developed by the researcher with the reference from past studies.

## 4. Results and Analysis

A total of 231 respondents were collected and analysed for this study. Table 1 shows the summary of the demographic details of the respondents of this study.

**Table 1.** Demographic of respondents

Items	Percentage (%)
Gender	
Male	43
Female	57
Nationality	
Malaysian	65
Non-Malaysian	35
Age	
19 years and below	14
20-29	27
30-39	19
40-49	20
50-59	12
Above 60 years old	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 shows that approximately 43% and 57% of the respondents from this study were male and female respectively. Approximately 65% of the respondents are Malaysian, and approximately 35% of the respondents are non-Malaysian. Non-Malaysian respondents in this study are from China, the United Kingdom, Singapore, Australia, Indonesia, South Korean, Japan, Brunei, India, Vietnam and Europe. Nevertheless, approximately 40% and 15% of the non-Malaysian are from China and Singapore. Then, approximately 38% from the female respondents are

Malaysian and 19% are non-Malaysian. Meanwhile, approximately 28% from the male respondents are Malaysian and 16% are non-Malaysian. The majority of the respondents are from the 20-29 years old with 27%, following by 40-49 years old with 20%. The lowest number of respondents for this study is of 60 years old and above. This may be due to the online data collection, which is not the forte for this age of respondents.

**Table 2.** Respondents' interest in Malaysia's Traditional Handicraft

Likert scale	Nationality	
	Malaysian (%)	Non-Malaysian (%)
Extremely not interested	3	0
Not interested	13	4
Neutral	34	30
Interested	25	29
Extremely interested	25	38

Table 2 shows that the majority of the non-Malaysians are more interested in Malaysia's traditional handicraft than Malaysian respondents, with 38% and 25% for "extremely interested" and 29% and 25% for interested respectively. However, 34% of Malaysian respondents are "Neutral" on their interest in Malaysia's traditional handicraft products. From the results, it shows that non-Malaysian respondents have higher interest in the handicraft products as compared to Malaysian respondents with 4% and 13% respectively.

**Table 3.** Platform to purchase

Platform	Percentage (%)
Physical store-tourist attraction spots	78
Physical store-retail outlets	68
Physical store-craft complexes	28
Official website	14
E-commerce platforms	12
Social media	10

Table 3 shows the platforms where respondents purchase Malaysian traditional handicraft products. Most of the respondents purchased it at the physical store-tourist attraction spot and physical store-retail outlets because handicrafts products rely heavily on the quality of the material as well as workmanship. The lowest number of purchases is from social media. This may be due to the fact that consumers' interest is piqued when they visit the physical stores, where compared to the process of doing the traditional handicraft via video, the hands-on experience makes them feel the texture and see the various designs and colours of the products. As for various online platforms, official website is one of the highest platforms in purchasing the handicraft products with 14%, followed by

e-commerce platforms (Shopee, Amazon, Lazada etc) with 12% and lastly is the social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook etc.) with 10% of the respondents having purchased Malaysia's traditional handicraft.

**Table 4.** Reasons for the purchase of Malaysia traditional handicraft products

Reasons	Percentage (%)
It is beautiful	64
It is unique	60
I am interested to buy	60
Price is affordable	50
As a gift for friends and family	43
I like it	42
It has collection value	23

Table 4 shows the reasons respondents purchase Malaysia traditional handicraft products. The highest percentage is for the reason "It is beautiful" with 64%, followed by "It is unique" and "I am interested to buy" with both 60%. The least reason for respondents to purchase Malaysian traditional handicraft products is "It has collection value" with 23%. This is because based on Table 3 above, the highest platform for purchase is the physical store-tourist attraction spots.

**Table 5.** Reliability Analysis

Variables	Cronbach Alpha
Consumers' Knowledge (CK)	0.956
Subjective Norms (SN)	0.960
Perceived Behavioural of Control (PBC)	0.870
Characteristics (C)	0.946
Purchase Intention towards Malaysia's Traditional Handicraft	0.960

Based on Table 5, all the variables have a value of higher than 0.70 for Cronbach Alpha. According to [15], Cronbach Alpha of 0.70 is at an acceptable level of reliability. This study's Cronbach Alpha's value for all the dependent and independent variables is between 0.870 and 0.960, hence it is considered acceptable and high in the reliability coefficient.

**Table 6.** Regression analysis

Regression Statistics	
R <sup>2</sup>	0.708
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.703

Table 6 above illustrates that the value of R<sup>2</sup> is 0.708, and this shows that all the independent variables will be able to explain approximately 70.8% of the dependent

variables. This illustrates a relatively strong relationship between dependent and independent variables. From table 6, the adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value is 0.703, and this means adding predictors of factors will improve the regression model by 70.3 percent.

**Table 7.** Model Summary

Coefficients		Standard Error	P-value
Intercept	-0.046	0.103	0.657
CK	0.133	0.036	0.000
SN	0.645	0.054	0.000
PBC	0.037	0.081	0.652
C	0.386	0.070	0.000

Table 7 illustrates the model summary where the consumers' knowledge, subjective norms and characteristics are significant to purchase intention of Malaysian traditional handicraft products. However, the perceived behavioural of control is not significant to purchase intention of Malaysian traditional handicraft products. Besides, subjective coefficient is the strongest predictor ( $\beta = 0.645$ ) of the dependent variable with value. This is in line with [9], it also found that subjective norm has the strongest predictor for its dependent variables.

## 5. Conclusion

Traditional handicraft products are unique products that are a heritage of a country, community, ethics etc. The need to promote and market the products to the world is crucial to create the awareness of certain uniqueness of a country to the world. It can also promote the beauty of a country and promote tourism at the same time. It can help place a country on the map in the eyes of the world when the heritage of a country is widely promoted and known to the world. Other than that, the country's income and growth can also be achieved when tourism and sales of unique traditional handicraft products are boosted. The results would be able to provide information on the purchasing behaviour and introduce new strategies to promote the traditional handicraft products to both Malaysian and non-Malaysian. Hence, promotion campaigns on the beauty of these traditional handicraft products are vital to increase the interest of buyer's intention to purchase. Other than that, promoting the beauty of Malaysia and its traditional handicraft at the global level is essential to attract buyers. Another key factor is that the price of the products has to be fair and affordable to all buyers. Proper strategies can be formulated by policy makers, promotional activities by sellers can be taken to attract buyers from both local and non-local buyers as this can promote Malaysia's traditional handicraft at the global level.

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