



GEN Y CONSUMER'S SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION, BRAND LOYALTY AND PURCHASING INTENTION IN MALAYSIA: INVESTIGATING THE MODERATING ROLE OF BRAND TRUST

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the associations between social media communication (SMC), brand loyalty (BL) and brand trust (BT) and its influence on purchase intention (PI) of the Gen Y Consumers in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia. The study looked into the role of brand trust in moderating the relationship between social media communication, brand loyalty, and purchasing intention. The study adopted the quantitative research method. The population of the study consisted of Gen Y consumers, living in Malaysia. A sample size of 361 responses were collected by using the convenience sampling procedure. A structured survey approach was applied and the responses were collected by online mode through google forms. The statistical package for social science (SPSS) 23 was utilised for the analysis of the data. The results revealed that the SMC influence among the Gen Y consumers had a positive effect on PI. In addition, the association between BL, BT and PI was not significant. Equally, BT moderated the association between SMC and PI. The results can help marketers to grows effective promotion stratagem to improve SMC, build BL and trust particularly in the fast-food business in Malaysia.

Keywords: Social Media communication, Brand loyalty, Brand Trust, Purchase Intention, Gen Y

INTRODUCTION

Marketing is a crucial and powerful aspect in an organisations's ability to grow and sustain sales. (Maharsi, Njotoprajitno, Hadianto, & Wiraatmaja, 2021). As a result, an organisation possesses a sound strategy for identifying market prospects as well as current prospects in order to grow and sustain itself. Technological advancements and globalisation have a significant impact on societal economic growth, causing practically all aspects of economic activity to increase. Consumers are increasingly looking for a pattern that will allow them to accomplish their everyday obligations effectively and efficiently (Erlangga et al., 2021). As the business world becomes more competitive, organisations must constantly seek for the best and most efficient marketing plan for their products. (Sasono et al., 2021). In a corporate world that is always changing and full of uncertainty, all organisations must swiftly and effectively. In today's ever-changing and dynamic business environment, retail managers must be able to comprehend and predict how different sorts of customers behave while purchasing various items and services to meet their needs (Nazelina, Novitasari, Fikri, & Asbari, 2020). With the increasing number of online surfers and the growing amount of online enterprises that use SMC to do business, social media communication (SMC) is developing in popularity. Offline sales fell by 4.3 percent in 2018, while internet sales rose by 5.3 percent (Guinebault, 2018). According to Ubamarket (2018), 76 percent of buyers aged 18 to 24 research fashion products online before purchasing them. SMC has a major influence on the shopping decisions of 35% of these consumers (Ariyanti et al., 2020). This study aims to uncover the exact elements

that influence consumers' purchasing intentions (PI), with a particular focus on fast-food restaurants among Gen Y. what is pertinent about BT is that is a profoundly investigated field with many researches interrogating its impact in online and offline PI. Similarly, brand loyalty (BL) is a forward-looking concept that is a significant measure of a company's success in a highly competitive market. As a result, a great deal of effort has gone into investigating the essential antecedents of BL in various circumstances (Hwang, Choe, Kim, & Kim, 2021; Ko & Chiu, 2008). These rivulets of investigation have resolved that the expansion of BL reejects the degree of customers satisfaction. In addition, Vanharanta, Kantola, and Seikola (2015) argued that a complete understanding of the experiential side of customer interactions allows for more accurate loyalty prediction. Fast food is famous in today's world for its parsimony, efficacy, and awesomeness. As a result, due to the swift meal preparation that allows people to feel good quickly. Malaysia's fast-food sector has transformed to be a most prevalent choice for the numerous clients. Malaysia's food business has the opportunity to grow its operations as a result of changing client habits. According to Habib, Dardak, and Zakaria (2011). Meanwhile, according to Malaysia Population (2018), Gen Y consumers account for the majority of the country's population of 12.67 million individuals. This research builds on previous work by merging diverse areas of interest in a novel way. The first contribution looks at the role of SMC, BL, and BT in a single theoretical testing model. The second contribution is the use of the theory of planned behavior TPB (Ajzen, 1985, 1991; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) and

capable of drawing relevant theoretical implications by demonstrating that the investigation is theoretically sound. When a person has a positive intention, a favourable subjective norm, and a weak perceived behavioural conflict, it is expected that their intention to perform behaviour would improve. The final contribution is the moderating role of BT in the association between SMC, BL and PI. As a result, Gen Y students were chosen as the proper target audience for this study. Consequently, the existing research is investigating the link between SMC, BL, BT, and GenY PI in Malaysia. It hopes to fill in the gaps in how SMC, BT, and BL influence customers' PI among Malaysia's Gen Y. The influence of SMC, BL and trust on consumer behaviour and perception has been studied. Despite this, there aren't enough reviews that tell marketers how SMC, BL, and BT effect Gen Y's purchasing intentions. The moderating function of trust between SMC, BT, and BL and Gen Y PI, as well as the direct effects of SMC, BL, and BT on Gen Y buy intentions, must be established.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF HYPOTHESIS

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

TPB was advanced by Ajzen (1985). According to TPB, many human behaviours may be predicted based on behaviour intention, and customers can act in a purposeful and planned way. The output variable (PI) is attached on the context of TPB in this study since PI is seen through the lens of customer's overall behavior. In TPB, purpose is seen as a forerunner to authentic behaviour. Because the majority of existing research has taken place in the United States and Europe, (Meng & Choi, 2016) There is

still a scarcity of new viewpoints. Thus, research in the Malaysian context can serve to clarify the significance and popularity of earlier established links. The TPB simulates the impact of reasons on intention and, as a result, on behaviour.

Purchase Intention (PI)

PI is the supposed promise to purchase goods on a repeated basis in a particular target market (Surucu, Yesilada, & Maslakci, 2020). It is a key influence in shaping what and what not to purchase in upcoming situations. PI also promotes product quality and brand loyalty. According to Tariq, Rafay Nawaz, Nawaz, and Butt (2013) product attributes and brand image also increase our understanding of purchasing intention. These are all characteristics that would positively impact a consumer's PI, and the literature lacks consideration of elements that might positively or adversely influence buy intention by combining BL and BT into a single model.

Social Media Communication (SMC)

The term "social media" denotes to Internet digital networks, and apparatus people utilize in having access to content and ideas. SMC involves the creation of network-based platforms for encouraging participation and engagement (Moslehpour, Dadvari, Nugroho, & Do, 2021). Therefore, SMC denotes to data shared by individuals on SMC sites in various formats, such as textual messages, images, and videos (Kristina & Sugiarto, 2020). Specifically, the Gen Y, use the Internet to find online information, viewpoints, and product ratings, SMC has grown in importance in consumer decision-making.

Brand Trust (BT)

A purchaser's trust in a specific product is described as a customer's trust in the brand due to earlier interactions with the brand. It also has a good relationship with the product, which in turn has a favorable association with BT (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005). The importance of trust in evolving positive and necessary disposition toward a product, as well as instigating brand devotion leading to a firm bond between client and the product. Even when product qualities and values are uncertain, earlier study has demonstrated that BT has a major impact on brands which clients are attached to.

Brand Loyalty (BL)

BL is described as a consistent purchase of one product over time and a refusal to switch to a competitor's brand (Porral & Lang, 2015; Sasmita & Mohd Suki, 2015). Client's BL is a individual who has an understanding with a specific product, and their insight of product is described as "consumers feel brand equity as an added value to products or services associated with brand names" (Zheng, Cheung, Lee, & Liang, 2015). BL can also be defined as the outcome of significant cognition initiation and PI. BL is more about the decision-making units' behaviour in making repeat procurements of products from a specific organisation. Consumers' constant preference for the same product acquisition in convinced invention or provision groups is referred to as BL.

The relationship between SMC and PI

Effective execution of SMC initiatives can help businesses build valuable relations with their clients by enhancing PI (Hanaysha, 2018) and obligation as well as producing favourable word of mouth. Firms must prioritise social media as a

marketing strategy to remain competitive in today's difficult business settings. To optimise the efficiency of their marketing programme, global firms hire various social media specialists and consultants to get improved endorsements on the elements and appearances of their adverts before publishing them on social media. Furthermore, buyers see SMC as a way to interact with a variety of brands at any time. The way consumers engage with one another has altered as a result of recent advancements in communication technologies. Among 283 respondents, Mao, Zhu, and Sang (2014) investigated customer purchase intent based on SMC Findings revealed a positive association between SMC and PI. The following postulation says:

H1. SMC has a positive effect on PI

The relationship between BL and PI

A product designation carries the produce's reputation or dependability, which is good for BL and PI. A client, will prefer a product if attached to the product or loves the brand passionately. A buyer is more likely to acquire a product that is more familiar to them or that they have already used. Most businesses' primary purpose is to make a lot of money or sell a lot of products, and brand loyalty is critical to achieving this goal. Due to its characteristics, reputation, superiority, characteristics, and worth, the consumer typically wants to pay money for a product, and they are frequently faithful to purchase repeatedly (Danish et al., 2018)." The product designation transmits the reputation or dependability of the goods, and the vitality for BL and PI. The overall goal of this research is to determine whether consumer BL is linked to PI.

H2. BL has a positive effect on PI.

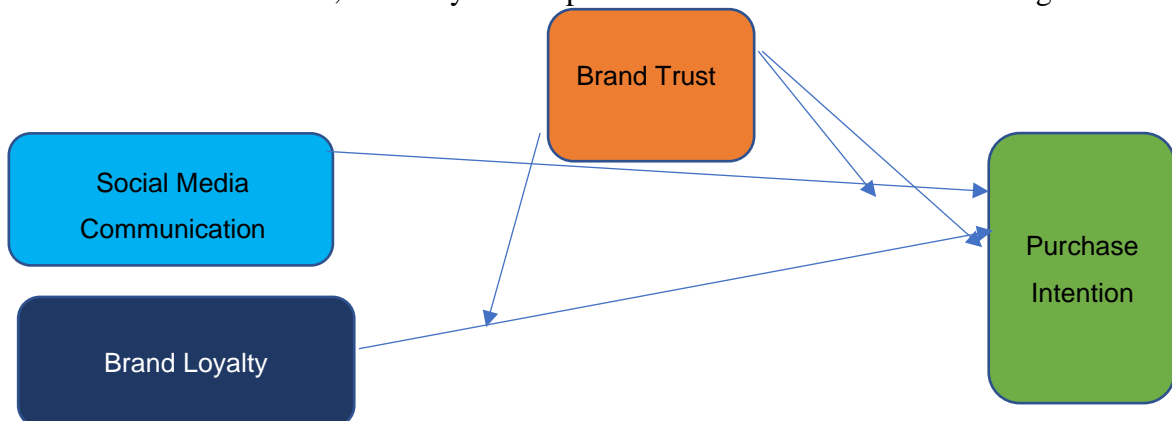
The relationship between BT and PI

Wu, Chen, and Chung (2010) opined that among the most significant qualities between client and seller is the matter of trust. As a result, it has aroused the curiosity of researchers. Trust in a brand can be characterised in a variety of ways. Brands need consumer trust because it influences their PI. Consumers who are already convinced that the brand is preferred to be bought. When clients are loyal to a brand, it is easier for businesses to research what products are manufactured in order to improve product sales. Yaraş, Yetkin Özbük, and Aydın Ünal (2017) demonstrated that BT had a beneficial influence on brand PI. There is a relationship between BT and PI, denoting that as BT grows, so does the worth of PI (Takaya, 2019). Punyatoya (2015) presumed that trust in a product lead to higher PI. According to, Limbu, Wolf, and Lunsford (2012) active promotion strategies can lead to a favorable relationship between BT and PI. Hence this study hypothesis that.

H3. BT has a positive effect on PI.

Conceptual Framework of the research.

Through the foregoing hypotheses, this research attempts to evaluate the effect of SMC, BL, and BT on PI. As a result, the study's conceptual framework is as indicated in Fig 1.



The Moderating role of BT

Rather than the direct effect of brand trust, other investigations have looked at trust as a moderating possibility. Elliott and Yannopoulou (2007) said that with a high level of participation and high insights of buying risk, trust has become increasingly important. In general, trust is the idea that something or someone will perform as expected and will not let you down. Brand trust, according to Ballester and Munuera-Alemán (2001), is the assumption of a brand's reliability and intentions. When a customer has faith in a brand, they will suggest it to others. As a result, if a client lacks faith in a product, it risks not being suggested or taken into account during PI. Indeed, according to Roldán, Sánchez-Franco, and Real (2017), client's disposition to a given product are higher if the client feels a better disposition for trust. As a result, trust is a crucial component of SMC as well as BL. As a result, the following hypothesis is put forth:

H4: BT moderate the relationship between SMC, and PI.

H5: BT moderate the relationship between BL and PI.

METHODOLOGY

Research strategy

A survey method was utilised to obtain data from 361 Gen Y fast-food lovers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The use of a quantitative method to carry out this study. To reduce response bias and sample error, respondents were informed about the study's goal and promised that their responses would be kept private. The questionnaire was constructed based on many measuring items for the components before beginning the data gathering process. Only 361 responses were obtained from the 400 sets of questionnaires that were circulated. The survey had a 90.2 percent response rate.

Measurement

A three-item scale modified from a study of PI was used to assess purchase intent (Pavlou, 2003). Furthermore, a 6-item scale was used to measure the magnitude of SMC (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016). Four items were chosen from a study by Gil, Andrés, and Salinas (2007) to measure BL (Hameed, 2013). 8 items used to gauge BT were drawn from research conducted by (Jarvenpaa, Tractinsky, Saarinen, & Vitale, 2000). All of the questions were graded on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Table 1
Mean and Standard Deviation

Variables	Number of Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Purchase Intention	3	5.3740	.96811
Social Media Communication	6	5.3730	1.04488
Brand Loyalty	4	2.8137	.104371
Brand Trust	6	2.9371	.93293

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was created in a multilingual format that included both Malaysian and English language options. The cover page of this questionnaire included a short-lived outline as well as the goal of the present study. There were two sections to the survey. The first component included respondents' profile such as the participant's age, gender, restaurant preference, and educational level, all of which were used to gather information from the participants., Section B detailed the current study's construct measurement, which included 3 IVs: SMC, BL, and BT, as well as a dependent variable (PI) to explore their correlations.

Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

In this section, we'll focus on the latent variables used in the investigation. Using descriptive statistics, the mean and standard deviation of the latent variables are calculated. For ease of understanding, Muhammad, Jantan, and Taib (2009)'s score interpretation has been modified. They recommended three alternative levels of scoring. Low-level scores fall below 2.33, moderate-level scores fall between 2.33 and 3.67, and high-level scores fall between 3.67 and above. The ultimate outcome is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 shows that the total mean for the variables spans from 2.6741 to 5.3740. The PI means and standard deviation of 5.3740 and .96811, respectively, are significant. This indicates that the respondents are eager to purchase something. BL has a mean of 2.8137 and standard deviation of .104371 suggesting that consumers displayed some loyalty to the brands. Table 1 also displays that the mean score for BT is 2.9371, with a SD of .93293, meaning that the restaurant's consumers are still attached to the brand. Furthermore, the data suggests that SMC has a mean of 5.3730 and standard deviation of 1.04488 revealing the massive influence of SMC over the brands.

RESULTS

Demographic profile of respondents

When the respondent's information was investigated, it was found out that woman made up 54.7 percent of the participants, while men made up 45.3 percent. Most of

the Gen Y had a first degree, according to the respondents' profile. Furthermore, only 233 (64.5%) of the 361 Gen Y were female, while 128 (35.5%) were male, according to the respondent profile. The responders' age range was revealed in the profile. The 15–22-year-old age group included 350 people (97 percent), followed by 6 people in the 23–26-year-old age group (1.7 percent). Those between the ages of 27 and 30 made up 4% of the population, while those between the ages of 31 and 35 made up 1%. (.3 percent). Furthermore, Fuddruckers Malaysia respondents had the highest percentage of patrons (95.3%), followed by KFC (71.7%), McDonalds (56.5%), and 4 Fingers (47.7%). (13.0 percent). Yoshinoya comes in second with 21 percent (5.8%), followed by A&W (15.2%), D'Lusious (3.9%), Wendys (3.6%), Crazy Potato (12.3%), AFK (11.3%), and lastly Texas Chicken (11.3%). (6.3 percent). 1.7 percent

Table 2
Participants Profile

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	128	35.5
Female	233	64.5
Age		
15-22	350	97.0
23-26	6	1.7
27-30	4	1.1
31-35	1	3
Restaurants		
Fuddruckers Malaysia	95	26.3
Kentucky Fried Chicken	71	19.7
McDonald's Burger	56	15.5
4 Fingers Restaurant	47	13.0
Yoshinoya Restaurant	21	5.8
Allen and Wright. (A&W)	15	4.2

D'Lucious Cafe	14	3.9
Wendys Burger	13	3.6
Crazy Potato	12	3.3
Away From Keyboard	11	3.0
Texas Chicken	6	1.7

Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha was 0.876 for all variables, indicating that each of the 21 questions was outstanding. Table 3 demonstrates that SMC (with six questions) is the most trustworthy independent variable, with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.92, which is higher than 0.70. In the meantime, the Cronbach's alpha for the following variables is more than 0.70: PI (three questions), brand loyalty (four questions), and BT (with

eight questions). The PI factor is depicted in Table 3 with questions with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82. 0.87 for BL and 0.91 for BT. Because the Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.70, the question on PI, BL, and BT is considered credible.

Table 3
Reliability Result

Variables	No of items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
PI	3	0.82
SMC	6	0.92
BL	4	0.87
BT	8	0.91

Correlations Analysis

The correlation between variables is significant at a P-value of 0.05. The associations between BL and BT, PI and SMC are significant at .420, .081, .238, and .443. As a result, all of the values are significant at a P-Value of 0.05. (2 tailed). There is a substantial link between BL and PI, with a significant correlation of .443.

With a substantial correlation of .081, BL and PI have the weakest link. The correlation between PI and SMC was .460, showing that there was just a minor association. Finally, the relationship between PI and SMC was also strong, at .523. (See Table 4)

Table 0.
Correlation Analysis

		Brand loyalty	Brand Trust	Purchase Intention	Social Media Communication
Brand Loyalty	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-Tailed)	1			
	N				
Brand Trust	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-Tailed)	.420**	1		
	N	.000			
Purchase intention	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-Tailed)	.122	-.189**	1	
	N	.050	.000		
Social Media Communication	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-Tailed)	-.238**	-.141**	.523**	1
	N	.000	.007	.000	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple correlation is an analysis measure used in the (SPSS) to forecast the value of construct. To begin, Table 5 shows that the R value is 0.742, which is higher than the anticipated value of 0.7. As a result, the independent variables and dependent variables have a fair level of predictive relationship. The test data's p

value is 0.000(Sig) in Table 4, indicating that the outcome is less than 0.0005. Furthermore, the overall regression is significant; as a result, the regression model is judged a good fit for the data. Table 4 shows the results of multiple regressions for the three hypotheses. Only hypothesis 1 was supported (H1) as H2 &H3 were not supported.

Table 5
Regression Analysis

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t-Value	Sig.
	B	Std Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.552	.352		7.243	.000
Brand Loyalty	.068	.049	.073	1.378	.169
Brand Trust	-.172	.051	-.166	3.399	.001

Social Media Co.	.529	.046	.571	11.476	.000
R ² .554	Adj R ² .307	F= 39.337	Sig. = .000	DF = 4	

Regression analysis was utilised to examine the study hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 4. Table 4.16 summarizes the findings of the study. The R square (R²) for BL, BT, SMC and PI was .554 with an adjacent R square (R²) of .307 and a F value of 39.337, basic to the analysis. This implies

that 4 IVs can explain 55.4 percent of the variation in PI. According to the findings, there is no substantial link between BL and PI. Purchasing intent = -166 (p > 0.01) has no positive link with brand trust. PI, on the other hand, has a strong influence on SMC (= .571, p > 0.00).

Table 6
Summary of Analysis

Hypothesis	Outcome
H ¹ : SMC has a significant influence on Gen Y's PI in fast food brands	Supported
H ² : BL has a significant influence on the purchase intention of Gen Y towards fast foods.	Not Supported
H ³ : BT has a significant influence on the PI of Gen Y towards fast foods.	Not Supported

Moderation Analysis

The proposed model was validated using Hayes' PROCESS macro, which is bootstrap-based (Hayes, 2013). PROCESS is a well-known statistical resampling technique that estimates the model's parameters and standard errors solely from the sample. This technique estimates accurate and proper confidence intervals for indirect effects, as opposed to the Baron, Kenny, Baron, and Kenny (1986) causal step approach. Using hierarchical multiple regression analysis, Hypothesis 4&5 is evaluated. The SMC

variable was included in stage 1 and accounted for 14.0 percent of the variance in PI, as shown in Table 7. BT has a significant impact on PI (= 0.255; t = 14.142; p.000), according to the findings. When the moderator is added at Step 2, the outcome explained roughly 53.5 percent of the variance in PI (= .282; t = 11.369; p.000). The interaction item had a significant effect of (= .418; t = 11.232; p.000) when it was input at Step 3. The findings revealed that SMC has a substantial impact on PI As a result, Hypothesis 4 was supported.

Table 7
Result of Moderation Analysis

Variables	Model 1 Step 1	Model 2 Step 2	Model 3 Step 3
SMC (Beta)	.485	.469	.444
Moderator variable			
BT (Beta)		.112	.118
Interactive between variables			
SMC *Brand Trust			.089
R ²	.1406	.5358	
Adj. R ²	.0198	.2871	
Sig F change	.000	.000	
Durbin-Watson			1.82
Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
.0153	.0103	.0016	.0435

Table 8
Hypothesis Summary

Hypothesis	Outcome
H4: The positive relationship between SMC and PI will be moderated by BT.	Supported
H5: The positive relationship between BL and PI will be moderated by BT	Not Supported

DISCUSSION

This study focused on how the associations among the Gen Y consumers between the age group of 15 -25 years and the interaction of SMC, BL, BT and how they impact their PI towards fast-food restaurants. The results of the study depicted that SMC and BL had a positive

impact on PI of Gen Y consumers. However, BT did not generate a positive impact toward PI of Gen Y consumers. Regarding the moderation result, BT moderated the relationship between SMC and PI. Unfortunately, BT could not moderate the relationship between BL and PI. When considering the prior literature, similar results were found in different

products and service contexts. Reza Jalilvand and Samiei (2012) have identified that SMC has a strong positive impact on consumer PI. Similarly, previous research from (Kim & Ko, 2010) and Hutter, Hautz, Dennhardt, and Füller (2013) supports this position. This might be read as Gen Y's commitment to fast-food restaurant purchases being seriously reconsidered. The third hypothesis found that there was no link between BT and PI. Customers may watch and decide based on what is shown to them, so business organisations must be cautious in positioning their BT. As a result, this conclusion is consistent with Shamsudin, Hassan, Majid, Ishak, and Lumpur's (2020) prior finding of a negative association between BT and PI. In terms of the moderation outcome, BT moderates the relationship between SMC and customer PI. According to the findings, Gen Y wants to indicate PI, which is consistent with previous research, showing that marketers see Gen Y as a suitable target for internet marketing.

IMPLICATIONS

The investigation of the direct effects of SMC, BL, and BT on PI in the fast-food business contributes to knowledge in this field. Managers can use the findings of this study to gain better recognition and a long-term competitive edge. The most dependable signs of a connection between a customer's interest and the purchase itself are the consumer's buy intentions. These findings emphasise and combine critical aspects that influence PI in the context of SMC. In Malaysia, more businesses are turning to SMC to help them grow their businesses and earn more money. The experimental findings of this study show that relying on SMC has a favorable impact on customer trust and PI

for both consumers and businesses. According to the TPB the more individuals who rely on the media to meet their requirements, are loyal and exhibit trust, the more significant the PI will become in a person's life and have a greater impact on them.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted only on the Gen Y consumers between the age group of 15 – 25 years who are in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia. This aspect limits the study as the purchase intentions can vary between different age groups and also across gender. Furthermore, the impact of the tested variables can be different for older generations having high levels of experiences with the known brands. In addition, the study was restricted to only those consumers who were active on SMC like Facebook, Instagram, We Chat and Twitter.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Sequel to some endorsements for further research investigations, referrals to theories and empirical results from other domains impact the research of SMC to some extent. It would be more logical to explore various models and techniques in future study to discover which model shows the best fit. Finally, because this study focuses on the factors that influence consumers' buying habits in the context of PI. Future research should look into demographic sample differences. Gender or age variations in the influence PI are examples of this. These aspects, as well as the impact of digital marketing and artificial intelligence on customer PI could be explored in future research.

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