

Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Buying Behaviour of Youth

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Abstract--Purpose The aim of the study is to analyse the impact of social media in consumer buying behaviour of the youth in Malaysia.

Design/Method/Approach: This research has adopted a primary quantitative design where the data instrument used was close ended survey. The questionnaire was distributed among 300 youth consumers where it was filled by 289 Malaysian consumers belonging to the age group of 18-24. The survey was analysed with the help of structural equation model (SEM) on Smart PLS model while considering the involvement of moderation in the model. The independent variable used in this research was Social Media Marketing which was analysed via five sub-variables: entertainment, interaction, trendiness, WoM, and customization. The dependent variable in the study was consumer behaviour which was measured by three sub-variables: brand preference, brand loyalty, and willingness to pay a premium price. The moderating effects of brand equity are assessed with the determinants of social media marketing on the components of consumer behaviour.

Findings: The findings of the study revealed that the WoM in the social media marketing was the most significant factor in affecting the consumer behaviour as it positively influenced brand preference, brand loyalty and willingness to pay a premium price. In addition, there were other determinants as well, such as interaction, entertainment and customization that significantly affected the components of consumer behaviour. The variable trendiness was excluded due to high discriminant validity with other variables. Lastly, brand equity is only found to have moderating effects with entertainment on brand loyalty and willingness to pay a premium price.

Practical Implications: The major limitation of this research can be considered its generalizability beyond the Malaysian consumers. Considering the entire sample constitutes of Malaysian consumers only, the results cannot be necessarily applicable to consumers belonging to other regions. Thus, the practical implication of this research is limited to Malaysian youth.

Keywords--Social media marketing, consumer behaviour, brand equity, brand preference, brand loyalty, price premium, youth, Malaysia

I. Introduction

Background of the Study

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Consumer behaviour is not a narrow term but a very broad one because its impact is not only limited to the sales of the business but also to the goodwill and the reputation of the company. In this an age of technology when people communicate with each other faster than ever before, they share their experiences with one another and their attitudes are shown.

Malaysian market has experienced a major rise in the number of social media users, with the youth being the major number. According to Statista (2019), the number of active social media from 2017 is on the verge of rising with the number reaching up to 26 million in 2023, as seen in figure 1 below:

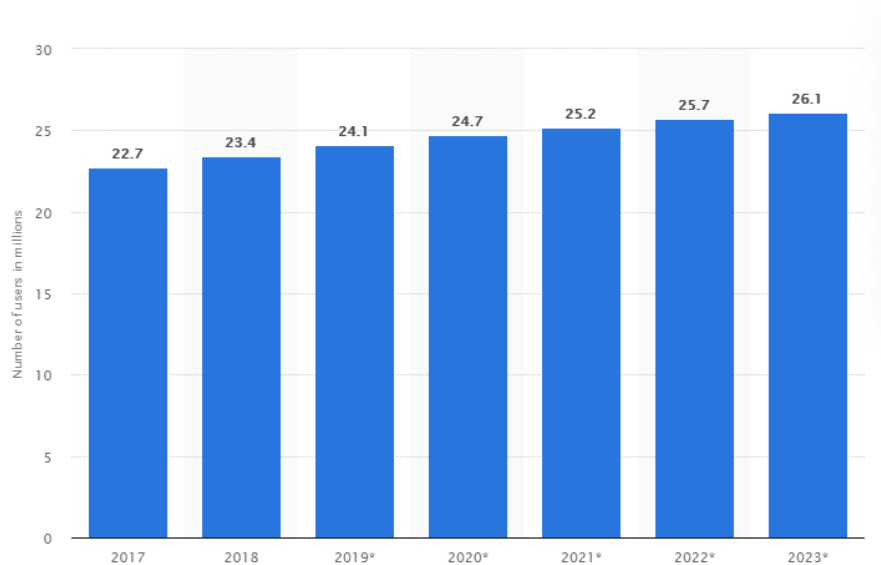
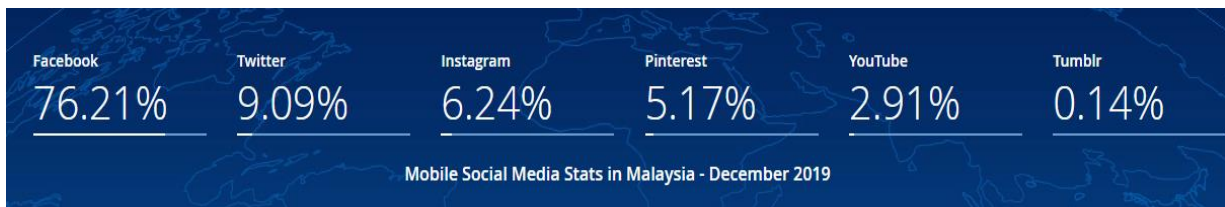


Figure 1: Number of Social Media Users in Malaysia

Source: Statista (2019)

While assessing the segmentation of the users in the market, according to the social media users, it can be evaluated that the large concentration of the users is on Facebook, which is 76.21% of the total users in the market, followed by Twitter (9.09%). The percentage of users on Instagram is 6.24%, while the picture collection app Pinterest is 5.17% and YouTube carries 2.91% of the social media users (Global Stats Counter, 2020)



Further assessing the most used platform of the social media, the industrial demographic shows that the most popular and followed industry on Facebook in terms of fans and the like pages is that of electronics, followed by beverages, beauty products. The 4th and 5th popular industry in the Malaysian market is that of ecommerce sites and the retail food brands respectively, taking up the popularity share. The figure 2 below shows the top 5 most popular industry of Malaysian on Facebook.

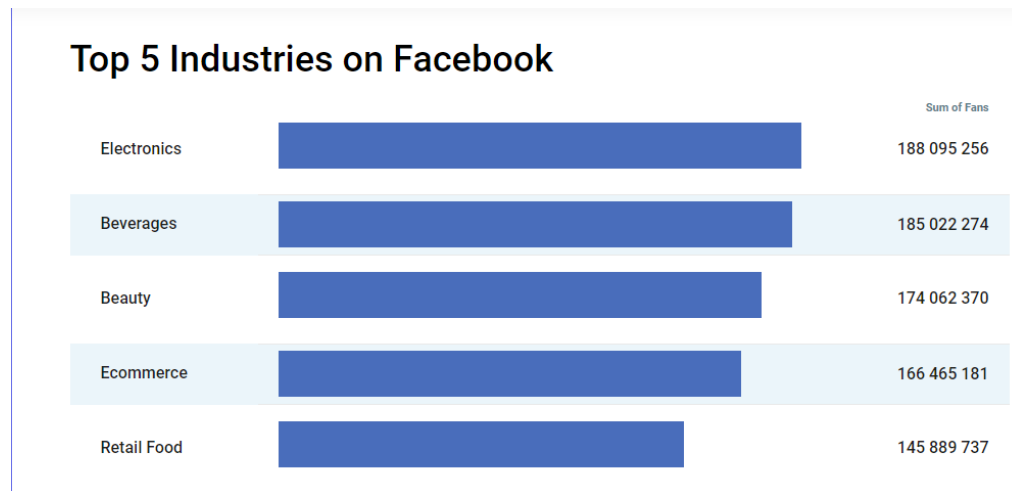


Figure 2: Top 5 Industries of Malaysia on Facebook

Source: Social Bakers (2019)

Problem Statement

There has been a major shift in the marketing strategies used by the brands. The brands in the last decade relied heavily on the television, out of home and print medium to advertise and market their brands. However, the shift has occurred in the last decade to the digital medium with the social media being the top priority of the brands to attract youth and influence their buying pattern. The social media is presumed as the most effective medium as it takes the strengths of both above the line (ATL) and Below the Line (BTL) frameworks, as a hybrid model, where the two-way communication, instant feedback, extensive reach and stupendous targeting tops.

The topic of the impact of the social media on the purchasing power and buying patterns of the youth has been a widely researched topic by academicians and marketers such as the study of (Kaur et al 2014), even in Malaysian context but is generalized to its approach in demographic segmentation. The problem lies in the lack of research being industry-specific and pertaining to the youth of the country which constitute 54% of the population being active social media users and for the brands to target on.

Research Question

“What is the impact of social media on consumer buying behaviour of the Youth in Malaysia?”

Research Aim and Objectives

There is always a primary aim of the research which has to be met at the end of the research. The aim of the study is to analyse the impact of social media on consumer buying behaviour of the youth in Malaysia. Objectives are which have been formulated in order to meet the primary aim of the study. Objectives include identifying the concept of consumer buying behaviour, analysing the relationship between social media and consumer buying behaviour, identifying market trends of Malaysia and the usage of social media in the youth of Malaysia.

Rationale and Scope of the Study

This is not a very new topic as many types of research have been carried out in the past to analyse the impact of social media on consumer behaviour. However, the researcher found a gap that those researches were not very much focused on a specific place and particular age group. Whereas this research takes Malaysia and its youth into consideration in the entire study where latest journals and literature have been used and all the statistics have been collected from the sources that were authentic.

Scope of the study is not narrow because social media and consumer behaviour both are such topics that have an extremely broad implementation. This study is highly beneficial for the marketers especially the ones in Malaysia as this research provides detailed insights and critical analysis. They can learn how they can use social media as an effective tool to target the youth of Malaysia. This study is also beneficial for the students especially having a major in marketing. Social media is still a growing trend and many researchers are still carrying out researches on this. There will be many who will be carrying out researches in the future as well and this research will provide them with secondary data.

II. Literature Review

Social Media and its Significance

Technology has always been a factor which has been changing consumer behaviour and that changing behaviour has to be catered by brands in order to generate sales and satisfy their customers. There was a time when there were only selected platforms such as radio and print media through which advertising could have been done (Roche et al, 2017). Today also such platforms are a big chunk of the budget for the brands and advertising agencies. However, a drawback that has been figured out in recent times is that these mediums do not enable two-way communication which has become a need for businesses (Shareed et al, 2019).

In this time, social media has evolved itself as a platform which provides two-way communication and through which customers can give reviews and feedbacks. This is one of the most essential reason due to which brands find it necessary to target their customers through social media. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat are few of the many platforms of social media which are used by millions of people (Glucksman, 2017). Social media has also helped brands target audiences that they desire. Brands are observed targeting and positioning their products in a much efficient manner (Tuten and Solomon, 2017; Jermisittiparsert, Sutduean, & Sriyakul, 2019).

Social Media and Brand Equity

Brand equity is a term which is used in marketing to describe the value and recognition of the brand. It plays an important role when it comes to keeping the brand in the consideration set. It is not only essential when shopping at a supermarket, but it is also valued on social media. People seem more interested in advertisements and posts of products from brands with greater brand equity. People are seen talking about these products through comments. Brands with high brand equity are observed charging more than the ones who are new in the market and are not very much recognized by the people. Big brands are often seen setting their prices which are premium. Brand equity not just affects the price but the buying behaviour of the consumers as consumers see brands with high equity as popular and good brands. They do not see that price as high or premium and their attitude is different from those brands. Brands like Nike, Adidas, Polo, and Giordano are considered big clothing brands having high equity. People easily recognize these brands and keep interaction with brands strong through various mediums such as social media. These brands are liked by the people in Malaysia and the rest of the world as well (Ahmed et al, 2016).

Analysis of Market and Consumers of Malaysia

Malaysia is a developing country which has been observed to make progress in many areas in recent times (Alatas, 2018). Consumers in Malaysia are getting more and more sophisticated with increased knowledge of products. People in Malaysia are gradually getting aware of the threat to the environment and all this is because of the use of media especially the social media and this has also increased the demand of green products to some extent just like the other parts of the world (Khor and Hazen, 2017). People in Malaysia read blogs, personals, social and political news mostly on social media. Social media

was a growing trend but it has boosted much more with smartphones and various internet-enabled gadgets. Many of the people not only share photos and videos with their mates and family but they also share latest updates of flights, online shopping, discount offers, hotel bookings etc.

Unlike America and other developed countries where everybody regardless of age is seen using social media through their smartphone, in Malaysia, young adults are observed using social media more on phones (Sin et al, 2012). Most of the school going students in Malaysia have computers which means that they use social media through PCs. However much of the school going students own smartphones as well. In fact, social media is among the most popular online activity in their schools. It has also been observed that teenagers use social media less for the purpose of information searching, reading or sharing but socializing (Yusop and Sumari, 2013). This need is also catered by many brands as they sponsor ads where they try to engage the audiences by different quizzes and games (Ramanathan et al, 2017).

Schools	Reading (%)	Sharing (%)	Information Searching (%)	Online Shopping (%)	Socializing (%)
Academy of Islamic Studies	41%	25%	71%	14%	90%
School of Economics & Administration	26%	24%	68%	20%	92%
School of Engineering	23%	23%	60%	10%	88%
School of Education	31%	24%	64%	9%	88%
School of Business and Accountancy	16%	22%	67%	19%	89%
School of Arts and Social Sciences	29%	18%	66%	2%	80%

Figure 3: Use of Social Media in School Going Students

Source: Yusop and Sumari

Impact of Social Media and Buying Behaviour of the Youth

Social media has been used by people from all age brackets, but youth have been observed taking more interest in social media. Social media has been a part of their routine. Young teenagers today spend most of their time on their smartphones and they have a lot of things to do with their smartphones (White et al, 2018). Their attitudes and buying behaviour heavily depend on the reviews that they get from social media. This is the reason why some of the new restaurants are crowded (Zhang et al, 2017). These young people have created groups on various social networking sites such as Facebook where they post reviews about a recent product they bought. They also rate the product in order to give an even clear opinion to other people (Khalid et al, 2018). Youth is seen more active on the pages of brands and they like to go in the comment section and add their view.

Theoretical Framework

There are many theories related to consumer behaviour but the theory of Hawkins Stern impulse buying is a theory which is focused on rational action. Stern was a person who believed in impulse behaviour. Most of the time, external stimuli is the reason behind the impulse purchases. It makes the traditional decision making unnecessary and pointless for the moment. This is divided into four categories where the first is when the candies are placed in the checkout lines in the grocery stores or supermarkets. Next is where complementary products are placed near to the main product. Like buns are placed near meat. Then comes the warranties for electronic devices. Lastly when the consumer is sure about which product, they need to buy but they are having less knowledge of the specs of that product. Social media is often observed as a tool which changes behaviour and results in impulse buying. Consumers get to know about the discounts and specs through social networking sites (Mwaisaka, 2017).

Conceptual Framework

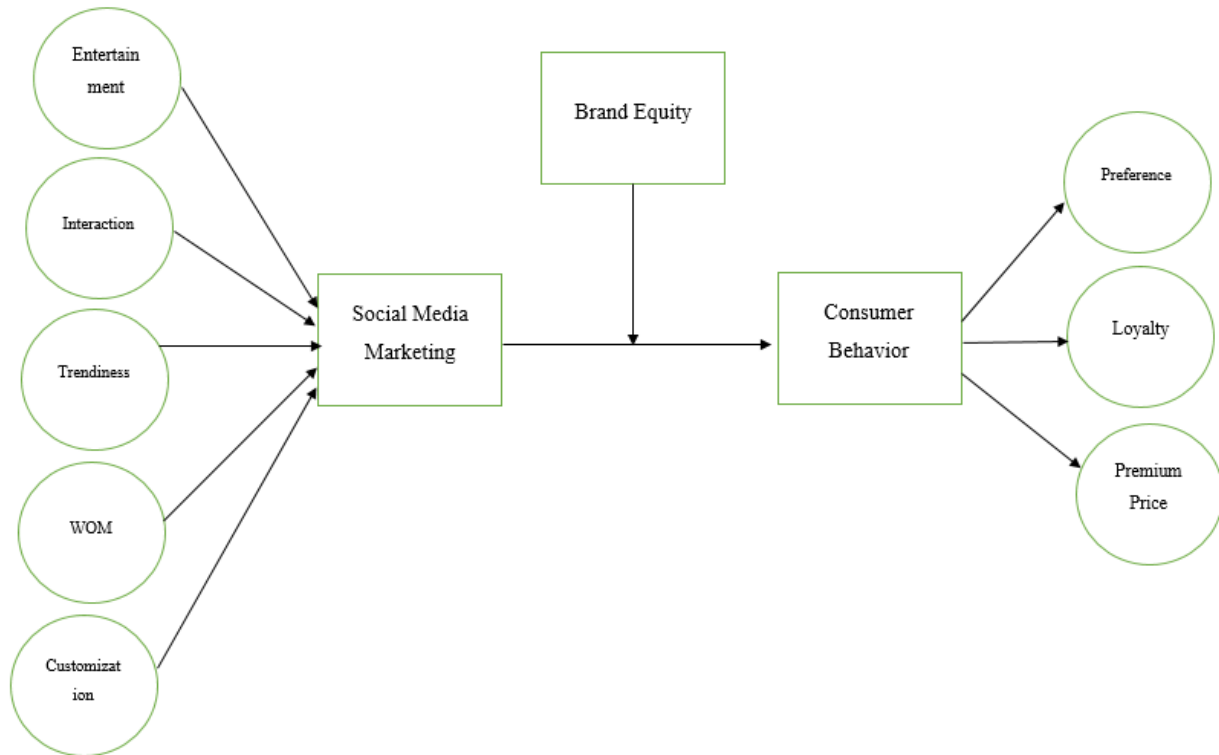


Figure 3: Conceptual Framework of the Study

The above defines the conceptual framework of the study in which it consists of the variables that are measured for achieving the aim of the study. The three major variables are social media marketing, consumer behaviour and brand equity that is measured as the moderating effects. While referring to the variable social media marketing, there are five determinants that are utilized for representing the social media marketing which consists of entertainment, interaction, trendiness, word of mouth (WOM) and customization. The determinants that are used for measuring consumer behaviour are preferences, loyalty and premium price. Thus, on the basis the determinants of social media market which are entertainment, interaction, trendiness, word of mouth (WOM) and customization, these are measures on the elements of consumer behaviour. In addition, the moderation effect of brand equity is measured with the determinants of the social media market on the components of consumer behaviour.

III. Methodological Design

Research philosophy is basically the belief under which the entire research is carried out. There are three types of research philosophies which are known as positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism (Ryan, 2018). Positivism is a philosophy which takes natural phenomenon into consideration, but it has nothing to do with the factors that are external. The researcher has adopted the philosophy of positivism for this research because the natural phenomenon has been studied which is the behaviour of the consumer. The purpose behind positivism is to conduct a scientific inquiry that assumes knowledge that is gathered from observation and experience and further is measured empirically through the quantitative techniques such as experiments and survey (Bashir, Syed and Qureshi, 2017). The research approach is the direction towards a specific field of research. There are mainly two approaches that are adopted by the researcher which are called inductive and the deductive approach (Woo et al, 2017). The inductive approach is where specific case or subject is being studied in the entire study, but

it concludes with a general conclusion. However, the deductive approach is where the whole study is general, but the conclusion is specific (Zalaghi and Khazaei, 2016). In this research, the researcher has adopted the deductive approach because the researcher has formulated a hypothesis and tested it empirically in order to reach a specific conclusion.

Data Collection Method

Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods are three types of research designs which are used by researchers (Curtis and Allen, 2018). Qualitative is much raw in nature where participants share their experiences whereas quantitative is more to do with numbers and statistics. The mixed method is the mixture of both the methods (Leavy, 2017). In this research, the quantitative method is used by the researcher. The researcher has used the quantitative method for this research because questionnaire surveys have been conducted by many participants. Thus, the statistical techniques are applied to the raw data for determining the effects of social media marketing on consumer behaviour. Primary and secondary are two data collection methods that are used in the research. Primary is the raw data which is to be taken from the participants. It is considered to be more authentic than the second one because there are no intermediaries between participants and the researcher. Secondary data is the data which is already there on the internet (Henderson and Campasano, 2017). However, in this research, data has been collected through primary data collection method because the nature of the research requires obtaining the formation from the participants.

Data Analysis Technique

While referring to the method of analysing the data, Smart PLS is used to the dataset for measuring the effects. The techniques that are applied to the data consist of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and path analysis. CFA includes convergent validity, reliability, discriminative validity of the data in order to test the fitness of the data for further analysis. Lastly, the path analysis is conducted for evaluating the effects. These techniques fall under the structural equation model or also referred to as SEM. Ethics are always an important element in any field of study especially the research (Ryen, 2016). Researchers have to take ethics into consideration when carrying out research in order to make it more authentic and unbiased. The researcher has made ethics his top priority when conducting this research (Iphofen et al, 2018). Consent of all the participants was taken before making them a part of the data collection process. They were also ensured that their data will not be used for any other purposes apart from this research.

IV. Findings and Analysis

For the purpose of evaluating the probable association between social media marketing and consumer behaviour in the perspective of Malaysian youth, the researcher has adopted the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) which incorporates testing reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity and path analysis. This research paper has used SmartPLS as the medium to carry out the tests in order to obtain useful results for testing the association among the variables. This model is used because it is useful in determining the association when a mediator is involved in the model (Becker, Ringle and Sarstedt, 2018). Moreover, this model is suitable because it tests the interaction effect among independent variable and moderating variable(s) along with explaining the effect is statistically significant in predicting the dependent variable (Sarstedt et al., 2019).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

As per the study of Crede and Harms (2019), CFA is a widely used tool that is conducted in an organizational science in which its main purpose is to establish the discriminant and convergent validity on the set of variables. Particularly, the researchers mainly use CFA to evaluate the hypothesized item construct and distinctions are reflected towards the observed

data. The effectiveness and reliability of the indicators have been measured through different techniques which consist of Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for the convergent validity. With respect to the study of Hon, Chan and Yam (2012), the indicators in the factor loading which has a value below 0.6 should be ignored whereas the values above 0.6 are considered to be acceptable; however, the preferred minimum value in the factor loading is 0.6. While referring to the table below, it is found that there were only two indicators that are BE4 and BE5 having factor loadings of 0.286 and 0.388 (below 0.6) which is lower than the threshold. Therefore, these two indicators are excluded from further analysis.

Moving forward, the Cronbach's Alpha purpose is to evaluate the reliability of the variables through measuring the internal consistency on the responses (Vaske, Beaman, and Sponarski, 2017). The value of Cronbach's Alpha needs to be above 0.6 for considering the indicators to be reliable and also internally consistent. According to Baheiraei et al. (2012), the Cronbach's Alpha value being below 0.4 can indicate weak reliability and thus indicating that there is a problem with the variable. With respect to the results provided in table 1, all the variables of the study had Cronbach Alpha above 0.6; hence, this indicates that the variables have internal consistency and thus the data are reliable. As per the study of Boduszek et al. (2013) composite reliability is an appropriate and effective technique that is used for measuring the scale reliability than the Cronbach's Alpha. The threshold for the composite reliability is considered as 0.6 (Martínez, 2010). Referring to the constructs of the survey, it was found that the value of composite reliability was above 0.6 which indicates that the reliability is of composite material. Lastly, the average variance extracted (AVE) was tested which has a threshold of 0.5 as stated by Huan et al., (2013), however, the value 0.4 can also be deemed as acceptable if the composite reliability of that particular construct is higher than 0.6. With respect to the variables, every variable had AVE above 0.5; however, brand equity has an AVE of 0.419. Although Brand equity has composite reliability of 0.760; thus, the threshold that is considered for the variable is 0.4 and this implies that this variable can be retained. The initial measurement model can also be seen in Figure 4.

Table 1: Convergent Validity and Reliability Testing

Variables of the Study	Indicators	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand Equity	BE1	0.758	0.680	0.760	0.419
	BE2	0.753			
	BE3	0.849			
	BE4	0.286			
	BE5	0.388			
Brand Loyalty	BL1	0.920	0.897	0.936	0.830
	BL2	0.926			
	BL3	0.886			
Brand Preference	BP1	0.957	0.882	0.944	0.894
	BP2	0.933			

	Custo				
Customization	m1	0.932	0.647	0.840	0.726
	Custo				
	m2	0.764			
Entertainment	E1	0.887	0.817	0.914	0.841
	E2	0.947			
Interaction	Int1	0.759	0.608	0.828	0.709
	Int2	0.917			
	Trend				
Trendiness	1	0.663	0.648	0.815	0.695
	Trend				
	2	0.975			
Willingness to Pay	WO				
Premium Price	M1	0.944	0.865	0.917	0.787
	WO				
	M2	0.941			
	WPP				
Word of Mouth	1	0.888	0.874	0.941	0.888
	WPP				
	2	0.892			
	WPP				
	3	0.881			

The SEM model also requires incorporating the discriminatory validity for determining the difference between the variables with each other. Ab Hamid et al. (2017) highlights that the evaluation of the discriminant validity among the variables is critical for the prevention of the multicollinearity issue. A new method has emerged for assessment of validity assessment which consists of Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) (Ab Hamid et al., 2017; Henseler, Ringle and Sarstedt, 2015; Hair et al., 2017). The studies conducted by Hair et al. (2017); Gold, Malhotra and Segars (2001); Teo, Srivastava and Jiang (2008) has indicated that the HTMT ratio should be below than the value 0.9 for determining the discriminant validity of the variables. Table 2 represents the results of Discriminatory Validity that is computed through the HTMT ratio. While referring to the table, all the variables have below 0.9; except for the variable trendiness which has a value of 1.053 with interaction and 0.959 with word of mouth. This indicates that the variable trendiness is not discriminate and presents a strong similarity with interaction and word of mouth. Hence, the variable trendiness is excluded from the path analysis.

Table 2: HTMT Ratio for Discriminatory Validity

	Brand Equity	Brand Loyalty	Brand Preference	Customization	Entertainment	Interaction	Trendiness	Willingness to Pay Premium Price
Brand Loyalty	0.523							
Brand Preference	0.419	0.506						
Customization	0.572	0.476	0.488					
Entertainment	0.670	0.460	0.181	0.710				
Interaction	0.732	0.562	0.247	0.573	0.860			
Trendiness	0.868	0.414	0.331	0.715	0.750	1.053		
Willingness to Pay Premium Price	0.488	0.788	0.823	0.516	0.384	0.386	0.340	
Word of Mouth	0.679	0.655	0.522	0.854	0.662	0.701	0.959	0.596

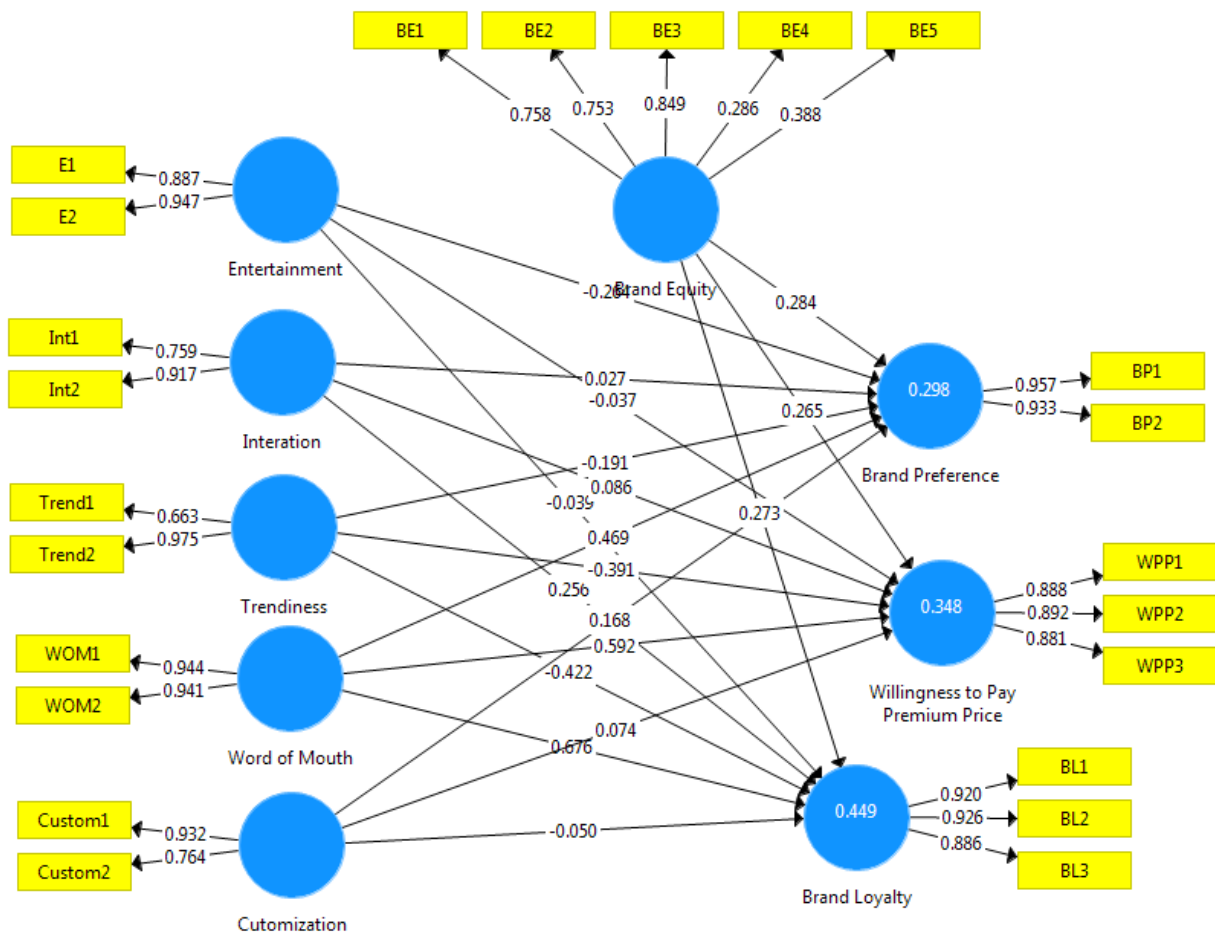


Figure 4: Initial Measurement Model

Path Analysis

After establishing the discriminatory and convergent validity on the set of variable, the path analysis is performed on the dataset. The results of the path analysis are provided in table 3 in which it considers of the direct effect of the variables along with the moderation effect of brand equity. The impact of the variables is commonly measured through the p-value in which the significance threshold is 5% or 0.05 (Piza, 2012; Motulsky, 2015; McGue et al., 2013). With respect to the analysis of the path model, the moderating effect of brand equity on entertainment with the willingness to pay premium price (0.046) and brand loyalty (0.014) is found to be significant that can be reflected by the P-value is less than 0.05.

While referring to the direct effect on path analysis, brand equity is found to have a significant effect on brand loyalty, brand preference and willingness to pay a premium price. Thus, brand equity affects all the determinants of consumer behaviour. While referring to the elements of social media marketing, customization has a significant effect on brand preference due to the p-value being 0.38. With every change on customization will result in bringing a change of 0.176 on brand preference. Entertainment is also affecting the brand preference but is causing an adverse effect due to the coefficient value being -0.215. While referring to the variable interaction, it is significantly affecting brand loyalty as the p-value is computed as 0.026. Lastly, the determinant WoM is significantly affecting all the three components of the consumer behaviour which are brand loyalty, brand preferences and willingness to pay a premium price. With every change of WoM will bring a change of 0.381, 0.421 and 0.392 on brand loyalty, brand preference and willingness to pay a premium price, respectively.

Table 3: Path Analysis of the model

Path	Path Coefficient	T Statistics	P Values
BE*Custom -> Willingness to Pay Premium Price	0.088	0.844	0.399
BE*Custom -> Brand Preference	0.057	0.626	0.532
BE*Custom -> Brand Loyalty	-0.046	0.527	0.599
BE*Ent -> Brand Preference	0.085	1.076	0.283
BE*Ent -> Willingness to Pay Premium Price	0.189	2.000	0.046
BE*Ent -> Brand Loyalty	0.198	2.459	0.014
BE*Int -> Brand Preference	-0.072	0.849	0.396
BE*Int -> Willingness to Pay Premium Price	-0.117	1.245	0.214
BE*Int -> Brand Loyalty	-0.037	0.423	0.673
BE*WoM -> Brand Preference	0.131	1.256	0.210
BE*WoM -> Brand Loyalty	-0.137	1.275	0.203
BE*WoM -> Willingness to Pay Premium Price	-0.003	0.023	0.982
Brand Equity -> Brand Loyalty	0.238	3.595	0.000
Brand Equity -> Brand Preference	0.183	2.299	0.022
Brand Equity -> Willingness to Pay Premium Price	0.159	2.366	0.018
Customization -> Brand Loyalty	-0.030	0.404	0.686
Customization -> Brand Preference	0.176	2.079	0.038
Customization -> Willingness to Pay Premium Price	0.094	1.021	0.308
Entertainment -> Brand Loyalty	0.006	0.086	0.931
Entertainment -> Brand Preference	-0.215	2.791	0.005
Entertainment -> Willingness to Pay Premium Price	0.034	0.457	0.648
Interaction -> Brand Loyalty	0.141	2.227	0.026
Interaction -> Brand Preference	-0.037	0.445	0.657
Interaction -> Willingness to Pay Premium Price	-0.050	0.636	0.525
Word of Mouth -> Brand Loyalty	0.381	5.670	0.000

Word of Mouth -> Brand Preference	0.421	4.726	0.000
Word of Mouth -> Willingness to Pay Premium Price	0.392	4.821	0.000

The quality of the models is assessed through the R-square and adjusted r-square in which the explanation of the variance is evaluated. The R² mainly explain the variances that are captured under the dependent variable through the variance of the experimental variables in the study (Hanneman, Kposowa & Riddle, 2012). The R-square for brand loyalty, brand preference and willingness to pay a premium price is computed as 41.5%, 31.6% and 33.1%. This indicates that the variance of the variables is explained or interpreted by the experimental variable through the identified %. However, following the adjustments of errors, the values are reduced to 39.6%, 29.4% and 31.0% respectively of brand loyalty, brand preference and willingness to pay premium price.

Table 4: Assessing the Quality of Model

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Brand Loyalty	41.5%	39.6%
Brand Preference	31.6%	29.4%
Willingness to Pay Premium Price	33.1%	31.0%

V. Result of Hypothesis

After presenting all the results regarding the relationships that have been hypothesized earlier, the following table shows a summarized version of the main relationships as well as moderating relationships.

S. No.	Hypothesis Statement	Significance value	Result
H1	There is a significant impact of social media marketing on brand preference	Customization=0.038 Entertainment= 0.005 WOM=0.00	Partially Accepted
H2	There is a significant impact of social media marketing on brand loyalty	Interaction = 0.026 WOM=0.00	Partially Accepted
H3	There is a significant impact of social media marketing on willingness to pay a premium price	WOM=0.00	Partially Accepted
H4	Brand equity moderates the relationship between social media marketing and brand preference		Rejected
H5	Brand equity moderates the relationship between social media marketing and brand loyalty	BE*Enter= 0.014	Partially Accepted
H6	Brand equity moderates the relationship of social media marketing and willingness to pay a premium price	BE*Enter= 0.046	Partially Accepted

Table 5: Hypothesis Assessment Table

Source: Author (2020)

VI. Recommendations

Based on the results that have been explained with great detail in the preceding sections of the research paper, following are certain recommended strategies and steps that can be undertaken in order to design and implement entertaining and engaging social media campaigns in Malaysia such that the youth can be influenced positively:

- Companies and brand should pay special attention to the content of their campaigns such that it is entertaining and uniquely customized.
- The social media marketing strategies should be designed in such a manner that they are engaging and interactive, considering the fact that youth looks for having two-way communication with the brands.
- Brands should refrain from only considering social media marketing as a means of reaching consumers but consider it as a tool with the help of which they can build their image and brand.
- Considering the rapidly developing digital technology, Malaysian brands and companies should make use of innovative, interactive, and sophisticated marketing programs to grab the attention of youth.

VII. Limitations

The major limitation of this research can be considered its generalizability beyond the Malaysian consumers. Considering the entire sample constitutes of Malaysian consumers only, the results cannot necessarily be applicable to consumers belonging to other regions. Thus, these findings need to be confirmed in other geographic regions. In this research, brand equity has been measured with the help of brand awareness and brand image, however, other constructs such as quality and associations could have been used. Lastly, the results of this research are limited to the youth of Malaysia, hence it cannot be generalized for other demographic cohorts. Keeping into consideration the limitations of this research paper, future researches are required for the purpose of filling the gaps and contributing to the existing body of literature.

VIII. Conclusions

Social media marketing in today's world can be considered as an effective medium by which the brands and companies are not only reaching their customers but also using it for maintaining their image in a cost-effective manner. An increasing number of researches can cover this domain as evidence for stating that effective and interactive social media marketing strategies can influence consumer buying behaviour in a positive manner. The findings of this paper have suggested that there are certain elements which are found to be useful while assessing the suitability of social media marketing such as entertainment, interaction, word of mouth and customization. Considering a large amount of empirical evidence found, it can be said that brand equity has a significant role in moderating the relationship between social media marketing and consumer behaviour. The brands need to focus on ensuring that they entice and engage the youth via social media marketing because the digital platform is well-received and widely used currently by the youth. Lastly, further research is required in this domain for the purpose of strengthening the empirical evidence.

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Appendix

Part A: Social Media Marketing

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Entertainment					
Using and interacting with brands on social media is fun					
The content of social media handles of brands is fun					
Interaction					
Opinion can be provided through social media handles and campaigns					
Opinions can be exchanged via social media handles					
Trendiness					
Through content marketing on social media, new information is reached to customers					
Having social media accounts and handles by brands is trending these days					
Word of Mouth					
It is easy to pass information regarding a product or service on social media					
Consumers visit social media accounts of brands when they want to					

require any information regarding a product or service					
Customization					
Option of customized search is helpful					
Social media handles provide customized information					

Part B: Brand Equity

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am aware of my favorite brands					
I am aware of brands that I constantly see through adverts					
I can quickly recall the symbols, colors, and music associated to some brands					
Brand image is important for me while making a purchase decisions					
My repurchase decision is reliant upon brand awareness and recall					

Part C: Consumer Behaviour

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Brand Preference					
I tend to prefer a specified brand even if the competitor offers the same features and quality					
Even though some brands are better than the brand I buy, I still prefer it over others					
Willingness to pay a premium price					
The price of the preferred brand has to increase a lot for me to switch to another brand for same product or service					
I am willing to pay a higher price for my preferred brand					
I am willing to pay a lot more for my preferred brand even if other brands have discount offers					
Brand Loyalty					

I suggest my preferred brand to my friends and family					
I regularly buy my preferred brand					
I always intent to buy from the same preferred brand due to satisfaction					