

Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Consumers Purchase Behaviour Through Social Media

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Abstract

Social media refers to any digital tool that allows users to quickly create and share content with the public. The COVID-19 pandemic has indirectly changed consumers' purchasing habits, causing them to shift from traditional store purchases to online retail store purchases. Social media also changes the specialized strategies among sellers and purchasers. The main objective of this study is to investigate the factors affecting consumer purchase behaviour through social media during the COVID-19 outbreak. A set of the self-administered questionnaire has been distributed to 215 targeted young adults in three states of Malaysia which are Johor, Melaka and Selangor. The four independent variables are price, convenience, product variety and risk, are tested on their relationship towards the dependent variable, which is the purchase behaviour of consumers during the COVID-19 outbreak. The collected data were keyed into SPSS version 26 and followed by using Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM 3.3.3) to assess the hypothesis. The analysis result showed that all hypotheses are supported. Lastly, the result of this research will benefit the marketers for their information to understand the consumer purchase behaviour through social media during the COVID-19 pandemic

Keywords: Convenient; COVID-19; Price; Product variety; Purchase behaviour; Risk



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INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the Internet and public recognition have greatly changed the way organizations promote their services and products and the communication channels between them and customers. This can be seen in today's market and the spread of brands and products. This has become a challenging project. Marketing advertising and promotional activities performed better than consumers. In promotional activities, consumers' sensitivity to excitement gradually weakened, and consumers began to resist the efforts of certain companies in promotional activities. Basically, the promotion of certain organizations is focused on conventional mass media advertising styles, including commercial advertisements on television, radio advertisements, and advertisements in newspapers, magazines, and other printed formats, as well as billboard placement. Today, with the rapid development of the Internet in the global market, the effectiveness of traditional mass media is rapidly declining.

In countries that are affected by COVID-19, people isolate themselves from the crowd while storing food and other necessities. Some of the people will even worry that they will be contaminated with the bacteria if they go out. With this, the COVID-19 pandemic had affected most of the people in the part of going out to purchase something. Therefore, most people will change their purchase behaviour from

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traditional stores to online retail stores. Furthermore, we have seen that social websites are becoming more popular by the day. Companies regularly centre around three of the most generally utilized social media platforms for use in product promoting and branding, such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter (Putter, 2017). Younger, middle-aged, and even mature-aged consumers' perceptions are changing and shifting. Some customers believe it has a low cost, which implies that it is generally less expensive when compared to older methods. As a result, social media and other networking sites are gradually growing in popularity, and consumers are flocking to them. Many students, housewives, and ordinary labourers are shifting their perspectives from traditional to modern. It is now abundantly clear that the social networking sites that are in charge of promoting are aiming to change the mind and take into account a wide range of consumers. (Surenderkumar, 2016).

As a result, the primary goal of this research is to investigate the factors influencing consumer purchase behaviour via social media, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Purchase behaviour indicates the taste and possibility of buying the product. The purchase behaviour has been announced, which can be used as an option for estimating consumer's behaviour (Haque, Anwar, & Yasmin, 2015). Purchase behaviour includes a succession of choices framed by a consumer before deciding a purchase which begins once they have an eagerness to satisfy a need (Hanaysha, 2018). Normally, the purchase behaviour of consumers to settle on a choice is exceptionally unpredictable. Purchas behaviour possibly changes by the effect of lower price or unrivalled quality and value of those goods (Mirabi, Akbariyeh, & Tahmasebifard, 2015). Consumers frequently choose to purchase a product through numerous thought, for example, regardless of whether the stores had offered the better service for them or not, the products and services been given are that worth the price that been made by the stores, the products durable had met the consumers that expected or the store do give an incentives or promotion to the purchaser.

Price is the amount of money that customer is willing to pay for the product or service, or the total value of consumers exchanges for ownership of the product or service (Kotler & Armstrong, 2016). Consumers' decisions of shopping channels might be influenced by the apparent cost of the channel (Chiang & Dholakia, 2003). Reibstein (2002) indicated that online consumers generally are searching for price information from various retailers for a similar item so as to settle on the most positive monetary choice. Clemes, Gan, and Zhang (2014) discovered a positive relationship between price and purchasing behaviour. However, Lin et al. (2009) stated that price promotion would cause consumers to have doubts when evaluating the product.

Convenience has been related to the selection of non-store shopping situations, for example, social network sites (Darian, 1987). Convenience means that consumers can save time and effort during purchasing on social network sites. The general shopping convenience structure includes saving time and effort (y Monsuwé, Dellaert & De Ruyter, 2004). Online retailers need to guarantee social media platforms measure simple and basic and guarantee the greatest customization (Lohse, Bellman, & Johnson, 2000). Szymanski and Hise (2000) also conclude that purchaser impression of social network sites convenience, variety of products offerings and products data and financial related security assume a critical function in e-fulfilment.

Keeney (1999) stated that product variety is a wide choice of items prompts improved comparison, and in the end, will have a better purchase decision. Product design and manufacturing is to meet the consumers' perceived needs. Therefore, various of products is create to meet various of consumers' needs.

Most of the consumers are motivated by a scope of choices from sellers and brands available through social media. The researches revealed that online sellers with a wide variety of product categories would, in general, profit more to the online buyer (Mallapragada, Chandukala, & Liu, 2016).

Risk means consumers' impression of the vulnerability and unfavourable results of carrying out the activities (Mahliza, 2020). Risk also indicates the level of risk that consumers believe is related to purchasing a product from a specific seller (Mahliza, 2020). In an electronic shopping setting, risk can be portrayed into various components. The researchers distinguish five sub measurements of risk: economic, social, performance, performance, and privacy (Jarvenpaa & Todd, 1996). In the context of specific risks, the researchers found that risk identified with not getting what is expected and financial card issues may adversely influence consumers online purchase behaviour (Bhatnagar, Misra, & Rao, 2000).

The proposed hypotheses of this research are listed as follows:

H1: There is a significant relationship between price and consumers purchase behaviour through social media during COVID-19 pandemic.

H2: There is a significant relationship between convenience and consumer purchase behaviour through social media during COVID-19 pandemic.

H3: There is a significant relationship between product variety and consumers purchase behaviour through social media during COVID-19 pandemic.

H4: There is a significant relationship between risk and consumers purchase behaviour through social media during COVID-19 pandemic.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed convenience sampling in the data collection process. The minimum required sample size based on the G^* power calculation is 129 respondents. A set of the self-administered questionnaire has been distributed to 215 targeted respondents in three states of Malaysia which includes Johor, Melaka and Selangor. The completed 200 sets of questionnaires are used for data analysis purposes in this study, and this contributes to a successful response rate of 93.02%. There are three main sections in the set of self-administered questionnaires, which covered demographic variables, the measurement items for independent and dependent variables. All of the measurement items of independent and dependent variables are adopted from Clemes, Gan, & Zhang (2014). A five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) is applied in this study. Data are keyed into SPSS version 26 and followed by using Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM 3.3.3) to assess the hypothesis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There is a total of 200 respondents involved in this questionnaire, and 73 (36.5%) are male, and 127 (63.5%) are female. The majority of the respondents ages range from 25 to 31 years old. The average monthly salary of the respondents involved in this study is between RM2001 to RM3999.

The convergent validity measurement of all the measurement items have to be tested before the Structural Equation Modelling is applying. The analysis result showed that all the item loadings are range from 0.735 to 0.848. All item loadings have achieved the minimum requirement (Chin, 1998). Besides that, the composite reliability (CR), Rho_A, and average variance extracted (AVE) values for all the five variables were meeting the requirement too. A strong valid model should have covered the AVE values above 0.5, CR and Rho_A values above 0.7 (Hair et al., 2016). In conclusion, the analysis result of this study confirmed that the model constructs fulfilled the convergent validity and internal consistency. Furthermore, the discriminant validity was verified and proved where all the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) criteria were

lower than the required threshold value of HTMT 0.90 by Gold et al. (2001). Hence, this indicates that the proposed hypotheses are supported. The R2 value of the model is 0.525, which indicates that 52.5% of the total variation in purchase behaviour can be explained by the four independent variables.

For the hypotheses result, all of the four hypotheses are supported at the significance level of 0.05. The findings of this study are consistent with the majority of the past studies. Kotler and Armstrong (2016) showed that price has a significant relationship with purchase behaviour. Yoon et al. (2014) also declared that price is more effectively detectable than quality when price is a heuristic signal. Hence, there is a significant relationship between price and consumers purchase behaviour through social media. On the other hand, Meuter et al. (2000) and Akbar and James (2014) have concluded that convenience is positively related to consumers' online purchase behaviour. Moreover, convenience had a positive impact on consumers' online purchase behaviour and demonstrated that when social media platforms become more convenient and additional time-saver, the consumers' opposition will diminish (Beneke, Scheffer, & Du, 2010). Sin & Tse (2002) also mentioned that online consumers have a greater positive assessment of the product variety of online shopping rather than non-online shopping consumers. Product variety means a wide choice of items prompts improved comparison, and in the end, will have a better purchase decision (Keeney, 1999). Clemes, Gan and Zhang (2014) stated that there is a negative relationship between risk and consumers purchase behaviour through the social media platform. However, our result showed that risk has a significant relationship with consumer purchase behaviour through social media during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak.

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The purpose of conduct this research is to enhance the understanding of consumers purchase behaviour through social media, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, it also can identify the relationship between independent variables, which include price, convenience, product variety and risks and the dependent variables, which is consumers purchase behaviour through social media.

In conclusion, the main contribution of this research is contributing to the knowledge about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumers purchase behaviour through social media. This knowledge is for the seller on social media platforms can ultimate and understand the features and the advantage of social media marketing. Other than that, researchers can understand the purchase behaviour of consumers and the factors affecting consumer behaviour. Social media plays an important role in affecting consumers purchase behaviour. For future research, researchers are advised to study other variables in the questionnaire. This will benefit the others researchers or sellers who can understand more clearly the consumer's purchase behaviour. They can then come out with a better strategy to satisfy the consumers.

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