



Social Media Marketing in Shaping Consumer's Purchasing Behaviour In Malaysia

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Abstract:

The aim of this study is to analyse the ways in which social media marketing impacts consumer purchase decisions in a nation like Malaysia, where the number of individuals utilising social media and the availability of internet technology are both growing. Some of the elements of social media marketing that will be examined in this paper include tailored ads, sponsorships from powerful people, user-generated content, brand interaction, and interactive campaigns. This paper aims to investigate how the above described traits affect consumer intention to buy and decision-making. In view of Malaysian consumers, this paper emphasises the need of using several strategies to raise involvement and conversion rates. One approach that may be used to find these techniques is the analysis of user comments published on several websites. Among the sites falling under this category are Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and TikHub. Moreover, especially among very younger age groups, it has been shown that buying behaviour is much influenced by trust, social proof, and emotional ties developed via the usage of social media. Apart from this, the research clarifies the demographic and cultural factors influencing the degree of success different marketing campaigns reach. The fast acceptance of social media by Malaysian companies might have several possible results. These results could affect consumer awareness, brand loyalty, and purchase behaviour, but they are not restricted to these. This is the case as social media is still being used in every part of the world in line with mobile shopping and online buying. Organisations, digital strategists, and marketers trying to maximise the impact of their social media operations in the Malaysian market might find great help in the understanding of the results of this study. Furthermore emphasised in the paper is the increasing importance of internet connectivity for influencing modern customers' conduct.

1. Introduction

In today's economy, which is driven by digital technology, social media marketing has emerged as a big impact in determining the purchasing decisions of customers. This is especially true in countries like Malaysia, which are rapidly developing and have a high degree of connection. Malaysians are among

the most active users of social media in that area of Southeast Asia[11]. This is due to the fact that more than 30 million people utilise the internet, and the country also has a social media penetration rate that is more than 85 percent. The social media platforms Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter have evolved into powerful marketing channels that enable businesses to engage customers through the

use of tailored adverts, influencer alliances, live product demonstrations, and user-generated content. The initial objective of these platforms was to serve merely as communication tools; however, they have now expanded much farther. This move is a reflection of a bigger trend in which traditional marketing strategies are being replaced by approaches that are more relationship-based and participatory. This move is a reflection of this larger trend. Consumers in Malaysia, particularly members of the millennial and Gen Z generations, are greatly influenced by online reviews, recommendations from peers, and digital information that is provided by reputable sources such as micro-celebrities and influencers within the social media community. Individuals in this generation are particularly susceptible to the effects of these factors. As the number of instances in which purchase decisions are made in digital settings continues to climb, a variety of factors, such as the authenticity of the brand, the emotional connection, and the engagement in real time, have become increasingly significant in shaping the behaviour of consumers. The capacity of companies to effectively integrate social media marketing strategies not only enables them to raise the visibility of their brand, but it also enables them to develop more intimate connections with the audiences that they are attempting to connect with. The goal of this research is to investigate the many ways in which the use of social media marketing might have an effect on the purchasing decisions made by customers in Malaysia. This study gave insights into the approaches that are most effective in translating digital engagement into actual consumer action, and the conclusions of this study was provided those insights[10].

1.1. Background of the Study

In recent years, the advent of social media as a dominant communication and marketing platform has radically revolutionised the way in which businesses engage with their consumers. This is especially true in countries that are strongly connected to the internet, such as Malaysia, where the internet is widely used. In Malaysia, where there are more than 30 million individuals utilising social media and a penetration rate that is greater than 89%, there has been a rapid movement away from traditional advertising approaches and towards digital engagement strategies. This transformation has occurred in a significant way. Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are examples of social media platforms that have emerged as essential instruments for influencing the perceptions and decisions of consumers regarding their purchases[5]. These platforms have achieved this by

utilising targeted advertising, influencer relationships, live content, and user-generated reviews. This transformation has had a particularly significant impact on members of Generation Z and Millennials because these generations are more susceptible to digital information that demonstrates authenticity, social proof, and peer influence. Before making purchases, customers in Malaysia utilise social media to conduct product research, connect with businesses, and seek validation from online communities. As a result, social media is becoming an increasingly essential resource for customers in Malaysia. A greater trend towards relationship-based marketing is evidenced by the growing reliance that consumers place in recommendations from peers and influencers rather than in messages from companies. This tendency is a manifestation of a bigger movement towards relationship-based marketing. Businesses in Malaysia are adjusting their marketing strategies in order to suit the behavioural alterations that are taking place as a result of the continued rise in the number of individuals who use digital devices. However, the extent to which these social media approaches are successful in influencing the purchasing behaviour of customers is still a subject of study that is still evolving. This is because the research is still in the process of developing. The objective of this research is to give a more comprehensive understanding of the manner in which social media marketing influences the behaviour of consumers in Malaysia. The results of this study gave companies with valuable insights that was assist them in making more effective use of digital platforms so that they can achieve their goals [4].

2. Purpose of the Research

This study specifically aims to assess how customer buying behaviour in Malaysia is influenced by audience targeting. This study was conducted inside the framework of marketing strategy with social media included. Particularly in view of the fact that digital platforms are progressively allowing companies to provide highly personalised information to users based on their demographics, interests, and activities performed online, it is impossible to overestimate the significance of knowing the ways in which targeted strategies influence consumer decision-making process. One cannot stress enough this something that is vital. The aim of this study is to find how much audience segmentation affects consumer behaviour about the purchase of products and services. Most of the studies was focused on Malaysian consumers who especially use social media sites such Facebook, Instagram, and TikHub. Above all, the investigation

was concentrate on these specific clients. This study aims to give a more complete knowledge of the efficacy of social media marketing in the Malaysian environment by means of an analysis of the ways in which targeted advertisements, influencer relationships, and personalised promotional messages influence confidence, engagement, and the intention to make a purchase. Specifically, this study aims to find how these components influence trust, involvement, and the want to buy. These results therefore are meant to help companies and marketers in creating more strategic efforts based on data, so supporting them all through the development process. These techniques should be able to build long-term brand loyalty, raise conversion rates, and fit customer expectations in the very competitive environment of the digital sphere. They ought to also meet consumer needs.

3. Literature Review

The findings of research that has been published in recent years have thrown light on the growing significance of social media marketing in terms of its capacity to impact the purchasing behaviour of customers, particularly in developing digital economies such as Malaysia. A significant number of studies have been conducted on the topic of the fact that social media platforms give businesses the potential to engage customers through the use of customised content, interactive campaigns, and influencer marketing strategies. Research conducted indicates that internet reviews, endorsements from influential individuals, and user-generated material are having an increasing impact on the purchasing decisions of Malaysian consumers. The formation of a sense of trust and social proof is facilitated by the presence of these contributing variables. It has been shown that these digital touchpoints have a more substantial psychological influence than traditional advertising, particularly among younger demographics such as millennials and Gen Z. This is especially true among younger generations. Further, Lim et al., 2020 found that when customers interact with businesses on social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram, their emotional connection with the company they do business with is significantly strengthened. This, in turn, results in an increase in the customers' intentions to make a purchase. It has been established that the utilisation of Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) and micro-influencers may successfully aid in bridging the gap between firms and customers, so rendering product marketing appear more real and relevant. This is

according to [7], who state that this has been demonstrated. The cultural diversity and high mobile usage that are present in the Malaysian context give an additional amplification of the reach and effectiveness of social media marketing. This is because of the diversity of cultures that are prevalent in Malaysia. According to the findings of a number of studies, the efficiency of social media tactics is contingent on their ability to generate interaction, to establish communities, and to provide content that establishes a connection with the audience that is being targeted. In general, the amount of data that is currently accessible gives validity to the idea that social media marketing is a significant influence in influencing the purchasing behaviour of customers in Malaysia. This is because the data is large enough to support the premise. On the other hand, in order to keep up with the progression of the ever-increasing consumer trends and platform algorithms, ongoing research is essential.

4. Research Questions

- What is the impact of audience targeting on consumer's purchasing behaviour in Malaysia?

5. Research Methodology

5.1. Research Design:

A study of quantitative data was conducted using SPSS version 25. To ascertain the strength and direction of the statistical link, the odds ratio and 95% confidence interval were used. A p-value less than 0.05 was set as the threshold for statistical significance by the researchers. To extract the most salient details from the data, a descriptive analysis was carried out. Data modified by computer tools for statistical analysis and data gathered by surveys, polls, and questionnaires are often evaluated using quantitative approaches.

5.2. Sampling:

In order to contribute to the research, participants were asked to fill out questionnaires. After determining that the research sample consisted of 530 individuals using the Rao-soft tool, 600 questionnaires were distributed. Researchers received 567 responses; however, 17 were eliminated owing to incompleteness, resulting in a sample size of 550.

5.3. Data and Measurement:

The primary method of collecting data for research was questionnaire surveys. In section A, participants were requested to provide fundamental demographic data; in section B, they were instructed to evaluate the significance of many channels, both online and offline, using a 5-point Likert scale. A diverse array of secondary sources, including online databases, was meticulously examined to get the necessary information.

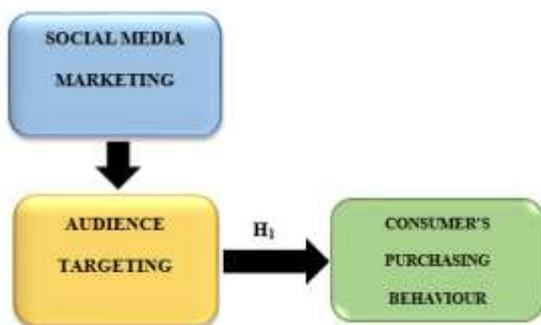
5.4. Statistical Software:

Statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS 25 and MS-Excel.

5.5. Statistical Tools:

Descriptive analysis was used to understand the data's essential nature. Using ANOVA, the researcher must examine the data.

Conceptual Framework



6. Result

6.1. Factor Analysis:

One typical use of Factor Analysis (FA) is to verify the existence of latent components in observable data. When there are not easily observable visual or diagnostic markers, it is common practice to utilise regression coefficients to produce ratings. In FA, models are essential for success. Finding mistakes, intrusions, and obvious connections are the aims of modelling. One way to assess datasets produced by multiple regression studies is with the use of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Test. They] verify that the model and sample variables are representative. According to the numbers, there is data duplication. When the proportions are less, the data is easier to understand. For KMO, the output is a number between zero and one. If the KMO value is between 0.8 and 1, then the sample size should be enough. These are the permissible boundaries, according to

Kaiser: The following are the acceptance criteria set by Kaiser:

A dismal 0.050 to 0.059, worse than the typical 0.60 to 0.69

The typical range for middle grades is between 0.70 and 0.79.

Having a quality point score between 0.80 and 0.89. The interval from 0.90 to 1.00 astounds them.

The KMO and Bartlett's Tests for Sampling Adequacy are shown in Table 1. Calculated using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin.930 metric

This is what Bartlett's sphericity test came up with: around 190 degrees of freedom, chi-square, sig.=.000

Claims made just for sampling purposes are therefore shown to be legitimate. Researchers used Bartlett's Test of Sphericity to verify that the correlation matrices were relevant. According to Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin, a sample size of 0.930 is considered sufficient. Results from Bartlett's sphericity test provide a p-value of 0.00. If the correlation matrix does not pass Bartlett's sphericity test, then it is not an identity matrix.

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.930
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3252.968
	df	190
	Sig.	.000

This substantiates that assertions on the execution of a sample are valid. Researchers used Bartlett's Test of Sphericity to evaluate the importance of the correlation matrices. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin metric deems the sample satisfactory when the value is 0.930. The p-value obtained from Bartlett's sphericity test is 0.00. The statistically significant findings of Bartlett's sphericity test indicate that the correlation matrix differs from an identity matrix.

6.2. Independent Variable

Social media marketing

"Social media marketing" is the strategic use of social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, TikHub, Twitter, and YouTube for the aim of promoting products, services, or brands by means of content, advertising, influencer partnerships, and real-time interactions, so engaging with target audiences. This is carried out to advertise brands, goods, or services. By means of platform-

specific technologies and user interactions, one may accomplish several goals, including brand awareness development, customer loyalty promotion, acceleration of consumer activities, most importantly the choice of buy alternatives. Unlike conventional marketing, social media marketing emphasises two-way contact, user-generated content, and customised communications precisely targeted to the interests and practices of the target audience. Unlike conventional marketing, which stresses one-way communication, this is not. It has become a necessary part of marketing plans in this era of digital growth as it can reach huge audiences categorised in a rapid and economical way. This is so because millions of people can benefit from it. Customer attitudes and intentions about their consumption of goods and services have been seen to be much influenced by the application of social media marketing. The enhancement of trust, relatability, and emotional connection helps to explain this impact. Especially in areas with significant social media penetration like Malaysia, the fast increase in mobile internet usage and digital influencers has further enhanced its influence[1].

6.3. Factor

7. Audience Targeting

Audience targeting is a strategic procedure whereby certain consumer groups are segmented depending on factors including demographics, interests, behaviour, geography, and purchase patterns. One refers to this approach under the label "audience targeting". This process aims to provide more relevant marketing messages especially for the audience that is being targeted. They reflect their situation. Businesses may optimise the results of their advertising campaigns by getting in touch with those most likely to connect with and react to the material they provide. This approach helps to make this achievable. Consequently, this increases the return on investment as well as the efficacy of marketing. Audience targeting in the context of digital and social media marketing mostly entails the use of algorithms, data analytics, and platform tools (such Facebook Ads Manager or Google Ads) in order to personalise content for particular audience segments in real time[2]. This is done so as to optimise the success of the marketing initiatives. In Recent research has made clear that good audience targeting improves the whole customer experience in addition to raising consumer engagement. Reducing the material that is irrelevant to the needs of the customer and encouraging a feeling of personal connection with businesses help one to accomplish this. As data-driven marketing keeps changing, the

concept of audience targeting has emerged as a necessary element of modern advertising approaches in all sectors[8].

7.1. DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Consumer's purchasing behaviour

The mental, emotional, and social experiences that a person has when selecting, acquiring, using, and ultimately disposing of a product or service are the factors that significantly influence the purchase behaviour of that individual. There is a vast range of issues that are covered, some of which include but are not limited to consumer behaviour, the timing of decision-making, and motivation. This umbrella encompasses a wide range of factors, including but not limited to objectives, viewpoints, preferences, cultural influences, social conventions, and marketing cues. The way in which a client perceives something is influenced by a number of different elements. The proliferation of online resources, such as peer reviews, content from social media platforms, and tailored marketing, has resulted in a change in the purchase patterns of consumers in the present digital age. In light of the fact that these aspects play a significant part in determining the path that contemporary decision-making takes, this is the case. The behaviour that is troublesome is not static but rather dynamic and interactive, and it is formed by a variety of touchpoints that are both real-world and virtual environments. In accordance with Chen & Lin, 2021, the emotions of emotional connection, confidence in digital platforms, and perceived value are among the most important factors that influence the decisions that consumers make. Research conducted in countries such as Malaysia has shown that cultural variety, technological literacy, and significant mobile penetration are characteristics that influence purchasing behaviour. This was proved through the use of multi-platform interactions and social validation prior to the purchase. It is because of the enormous influence that these elements have on the decision-making processes of customers that this is the case. The route that a buyer takes has gotten shorter as a result of the proliferation of e-commerce and marketing through social media. Because of this, customers may now get knowledge about a product and then purchase it in a matter of minutes as a result of this. Customers are especially susceptible to being affected by the suggestions of their peers and information that is tailored to their specific needs. If companies want to boost customer satisfaction, establish enduring brand loyalty, and craft successful marketing strategies, they cannot afford to ignore consumer buying behaviours in today's increasingly

competitive and digitally-driven sectors. This is because businesses cannot afford to ignore consumer purchasing patterns[9].

8. Relationship Between Audience Targeting and Consumer's Purchasing Behaviour

Regarding modern marketing, the interaction between consumer buying behaviour and audience targeting becomes even more important. This is especially valid considering the explosion of digital channels and data analytics. Audience targeting is the practice of grouping consumers into different groups based on certain criteria like demographics, interests, behaviour, and purchase past. This enables businesses to create products specifically for each unique client. Rising the degree of engagement, trust, and perceived value of a good or service was directly affected customer preferences for their purchases, according to study by Martin & Todorov, 2020. This personalisation helps the message to be more relevant and effective, which affects the decisions consumers make on their purchases. The researchers show that when advertising fits their own tastes and needs, consumers are more likely to have a positive response. As so, this raises brand loyalty as well as conversion rates. Actually, good targeting guarantees that consumers get marketing messages fit for their stage of life throughout the purchase process and helps to lower the volume of information they are exposed to. This especially works quite effectively in the framework of digital markets abound in information. Research indicates that the percentage of mobile-driven consumers in Malaysia who recall brands and make impulsive purchases using their mobile devices is much influenced by tailored advertisements on social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. Moreover, psychological elements such perceived relevance, personalisation, and emotional connection become more strong when consumers think that companies get them, therefore raising the possibility that they would buy[3]. Furthermore, ethical audience targeting aids in the development of consumer confidence—a necessary component for long-term behavioural influence in terms of customer targeting. This is the case given the always shifting standards of data privacy. Smart audience targeting not only improves the effectiveness of marketing but also significantly influences the way people assess, buy, and utilise products in a digital marketplace growing more personalised and competitive.

Based on the above discussion, the researcher generated the following hypothesis to examine the link between Audience targeting and Consumer's purchasing behaviour.

- ***“H₀: There is no significant relationship between Audience targeting and Consumer's purchasing behaviour.”***
- ***“H₁: There is a significant relationship between Audience targeting and Consumer's purchasing behaviour.”***

Table 2: H₁ ANOVA Test

ANOVA					
Sum					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	39588.620	219	5655.609	1082.413	.000
Within Groups	492.770	330	5.225		
Total	40081.390	549			

The results will be noteworthy in this research. With a p-value of .000 (less than the .05 alpha level), the value of F, which is 1082.413, approaches significance. Thus, it follows that, ***“H₁: There is a significant relationship between Audience targeting and Consumer's purchasing behaviour.”*** is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected.

9. Discussion

There are a number of results that have been created as a result of this research. One of these findings is evidence that the process of influencing the purchasing behaviour of consumers in Malaysia is significantly dependent on audience targeting within the framework of social media marketing. It is now possible for marketers to provide highly relevant and individualised content to specific target groups based on characteristics such as age, interests, geographic location, and online behaviour. This is made possible by the fact that social media platforms are becoming increasingly sophisticated in their capacity to collect user data. Increased engagement from the customer leads to a rise in the likelihood of favourable replies and activities, which in turn leads to an increase in the number of sales. All of this is done by employing this customised method, which gives the impression that advertising is more pertinent to the target audience. In particular, information that is pertinent to the personal values, interests, and social identity of Malaysian consumers is more likely to evoke a favourable response from them. This is because Malaysian customers are more likely to feel that the information is relevant to them. The younger generations are particularly susceptible to this phenomenon. Through the utilisation of targeted marketing, one may more effectively address these issues than through any other method. An additional component that helps to the establishment of trust and an emotional connection with the brand is the capability to modify the

message via the utilisation of influencers and campaigns that are platform-specific. As a consequence of this, there is an increase in one's intention to make a purchase. Customers who believe that the information they receive is both valuable and non-intrusive are more likely to have a favourable experience with the business, which in turn fosters customer loyalty and further visits. These conclusions are based on additional findings from the survey. Consequently, audience targeting not only boosts the effectiveness of marketing operations but also has a considerable impact on the method in which Malaysian customers pick what to purchase within the framework of the digital environment. When these findings are taken into consideration, it becomes abundantly evident that businesses who wish to preserve their competitive edge and concentrate on the needs of their consumers in the context of Malaysia's fast growing e-commerce industry should give priority to marketing strategies that are driven by data.

10. Conclusion

This study shows that audience targeting is a fundamental element of social media marketing, which significantly influences customer purchase behaviour in Malaysia. The results of this study help to affect both of these elements. All things considered, the results of this study show that audience targeting is really crucial. When companies employ user data to help to give an information that is both tailored and relevant to the customer, they have the capacity to more successfully interact with consumers, create trust, and increase the likelihood that they would make a purchase decision. This is especially true as the utilisation of user data helps to spread tailored and not merely relevant content. The high degree of social media usage and a consumer base comfortable with technology define the Malaysian market, which responds strongly to customised efforts considering both the preferences of people and the subtleties of cultural norms. One gets a positive reaction for these initiatives. Based on the results of the research, audience targeting that is carried out in a way that is both ethical and strategic—through the use of targeted messaging, influencer collaboration, and platform-specific content—not only enhances the whole experience of the consumer, but also increases the likelihood that the consumer was made a purchase and results in an increase in the long-term loyalty of the brand. These findings are especially important in a digital environment growingly competitive as they highlight the need of marketers developing consumer-centric, data-driven strategies. This is so because they show the wish of marketers to create

consumer-centric, data-driven strategies. In the framework of the social media ecosystem in Malaysia, audience targeting serves not only as a marketing tool but also as a strategic approach meant to influence consumer purchasing decisions.

Author Statements:

- **Ethical approval:** The conducted research is not related to either human or animal use.
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