

# The Influence of Social Media Richness on the Consumer Intention to Purchase

<sup>[1]</sup>Muhamad Shahrin, <sup>[2]</sup>Ami Suhana Menon, <sup>[3]</sup>Rosni Ab. Wahid,

<sup>[4]</sup>Muhammad Asyraf Hasim, <sup>[5]</sup>Norwani Mohd Nazari

<sup>[1]</sup> Lecturer, Marketing & International Business Department, UniKL Business School, Malaysia

<sup>[2]</sup> Senior Lecturer, Head of Section Marketing & International Business Department, UniKL Business School, Malaysia

<sup>[3]</sup> Senior Lecturer, Management & Entrepreneurship Department, UniKL Business School, Malaysia

<sup>[4]</sup> Senior Lecturer, Marketing & International Business Department, UniKL Business School, Malaysia

<sup>[5]</sup> Lecturer, Tourism Planning & Development Department, UniKL Business School, Malaysia

## Article Info

**Volume 82**

**Page Number: 4287 - 4291**

**Publication Issue:**

**January-February 2020**

## Abstract:

Many companies are increasing their investment in social media marketing amid the projection of contribution to the companies' profitability. However, few studies have looked at the empirical link between the richness of the social media posting and the intention to purchase. This paper is an attempt to study the dimensions of social media and its influence on purchase intention in undergraduate students at Kuala Lumpur. Questionnaires distributed to undergraduate students as respondents in short experimental sessions in a classroom whereby the respondents will be exposed to Instagram postings. The response from the questionnaires will be used to measure the constructs of this research. The implication of this research will give marketers a clearer picture of the Social Media richness; being the key dimensions of social media posting that elicit intention to purchase. The result of this research will also provide a method to marketers in measuring the potential return of investment for their social media marketing. The main limitation of this study is the limited number of respondents. Future studies should use nationwide random samples to validate the relationship between social media influence and brand attitude. Future studies also may include other constructs such as the intention to engage with the brand's social media.

## Article History

**Article Received:** 18 May 2019

**Revised:** 14 July 2019

**Accepted:** 22 December 2019

**Publication:** 21 January 2020

**Keywords:** Social Media, Consumer Behaviour, Intention to Purchase, Theory of Reasoned Action, Brand Loyalty, Brand Equity.

## 1. Introduction

The proliferation of Social Media is due to its accessibility to consumers for free, which enables consumers to connect and communicate with each other. The real-time communication making Social Media an ideal platform to start a conversation and feedback from the consumers.

Few previous studies had discussed how to effectively measure the social media content richness in influencing the Purchase Intention but this research will

give marketers a method to measure the potential return of investment in social media marketing. This research is using the Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1973). For primary data, the researchers had distributed questionnaires to 250 undergraduates' in Universiti Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia to measure consumer purchase intention.

## 2. Literature Review

Purchase intention is the behavioural inclination of the consumer in planning the future purchase (Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991). Previous studies show a positive relationship between the use of social media and purchase intention. A product that is available online would influence consumer purchase decisions (Ayuningthyas, Prihatiningsih, & Laura, 2018). However, advertising in social media needs to be interactive to attract the attention of the consumers (Tan., Kwek, & Li., 2012).

Social media is not the end but rather one of the marketing tools as it needs to be engaging to have an impact on the user intentions to purchase. Study shows that advertising value, flow experience, web design quality, and brand awareness have a positive influence on consumers purchase intention (Martins, Oliveira, Goncalves, & Branco, 2018).

Unlike the normal brick-and-mortar store, an online store may have little human contact on the purchase transaction. Hence, online stores depend on the media richness to create consumer intention to purchase their product. In previous studies, an empirical and conceptual framework has been developed to explain consumers' intentions to use online stores in their purchase process (Brunell, 2009). This research found that consumers would prefer social media that offer valuable information before making a purchase decision.

Media richness refers to the ability of social media to pass the message to the consumers and its ability to spur response (Lengel, & Daft, 1988). Brunell (2009) indicated that the best way to engender consumer interest and response is by enhancing the social media interface. In another study on Mobile Instant Messaging users, Media Richness such as multiple cues, immediate feedback, personal focus, and language variety have a positive impact to consumer loyalty (Tseng, Cheng., Li, & Teng, 2016).

It is not sufficient that the information is relevant. The information must also be accurate, up to date, interesting, and

simple enough to be understood by the consumer (Aydogan, Aktan, & Aysuna, 2016). Apart from being informative, another study also shows that the quality of the image of the social media posting can influence the perception of the quality of the product and increase the purchase intention (Teo, Leng, & Pua, 2019).

There is a saying that says a picture is worth a thousand words. A brand should consider creating an advertisement that can incite emotions (Martins, et al., 2018). This is true for Social Media especially on Instagram which is all about the attractive visual and engaging caption. A picture or images represent a direct way of communicating human relations experience and reporting events. These advantages that text-based communication is lacking (Valentini, Romenti, Murtarelli, & Pizzeria, 2018).

Brand Equity is about consumer perception and valuation of the brand; the emotional connection between the customer and the brand. The consumers may not make any purchase then but the emotional connection created by the brand equity will make the brand glued in the consumer's mind (Forbes, 2017).

The emotional connection with the brand can make the consumer loyal to the brand. Brand loyalty can be determined from the purchase pattern of the consumers which makes the consumer purchase and repurchase the brand (Parida, 2016). A brand that successfully generates word-of-mouth is more likely to capture consumer loyalty (Atsmon, Kuentz, & Seong, 2012). Brand loyalty is measured by purchase intention (Rundle-Thiele & Mackay, 2001).

## 3. Methodology

This research is using a quantitative method. A set of questionnaires were distributed to 250 respondents who are undergraduate students age between 19 to 30 years old. The main reason for choosing this segment of the respondent is because this segment contributes the most social media user in Malaysia.

The respondents are grouped in a closed room where they were exposed to a local brand Instagram post. The information

such as how many "likes" for the Instagram posting was hidden from the Respondents to avoid biases. Then the Respondent will be asked to answer a set of questions regarding their perception of social media richness and purchase intention of the brand.

#### 4. Proposed Theoretical Model

Based on the above discussions on four constructs namely Social Media Richness, Brand Equity, Brand Loyalty, and Intention to Purchase, the researchers had come out with the following Figure 1 that sums up the research model that is being used in this research.



Figure 1: Proposed Theoretical Model

#### 5. Analysis

Demographic profiles of the respondents were gathered and the summary as shown in Table 1.

Item	Categories	N	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	82	32.8
	Female	168	67.2
Age	19 – 24	239	95.6
	25 – 30	11	0.44
Ethnic	Malay	243	97.2
	Chinese	2	0.8
	Indian	1	0.4
	Others	4	1.6
Education	High School	7	2.8
	Diploma	23	9.2
	Bachelor Degree	220	88

Table 1: Demographics of the Samples

Factor analysis computed by SPSS 24 assesses the measurement model. The factor loadings of the indicator all are above 0.7 and significant ( $p < 0.01$ ), ranging from 0.83 to 0.91, which reveals the presence of construct validity (Jabarullah & Hussain, 2018). Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability are acceptable when compared to the threshold of 0.7, ranging from 0.86 to 0.93. Social Media is positively related to consumer intention i.e.  $\beta=0.520$ . Social

media explains 27.1% of the variance of consumer intention based on the regression analysis run by SPSS 24 software. The results indicate that a moderate degree of social media is the best approach is to promote consumer intention. It is also suggested that future research should pay more attention to other possible variables, in particular also considering of applying structural equation modeling (SEM) as an analysis tool.

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Social Media Richness	250	1.87	4.29	3.3204	0.617

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Social Media Richness

Determinants	$\beta$	Tolerance	VIF	Cronbach's Alpha
Social Media Richness	0.520	1.000	1.000	0.835

**Table 3: Analysis Results for Social Media Richness**

Preacher & Hayes (2004) has developed an observed variable Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression path analysis modeling tool Brand Equity and Brand Loyalty on the relationship between Social Media and Consumer Purchase Intention. The inclusion of Brand Equity, the coefficient value decreases from 0.4479 to 0.1870. This suggests that there is a partial mediation effect of Brand Equity on the

relationship between Social Media and Consumer Purchase Intention. Another test is with the inclusion of Brand Loyalty, the coefficient value decreases from 0.5101 to 0.1259. This suggests that there is a partial mediation effect of Brand Loyalty on the relationship between Social Media and Consumer Purchase Intention. Table 4 shows a summary of the mediation test for Brand Equity and Brand Loyalty.

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Mediator	Std. Beta without Mediator	Std. Beta with Mediator	Result
Customer Intention	Social Media Richness	Brand Equity	0.4479	0.1870	Partial Mediation
Customer Intention	Social Media Richness	Brand Loyalty	0.5101	0.1259	Partial Mediation

**Table 4: Mediating Effect of Brand Equity and Brand Loyalty**

## 6. Discussion

This research has confirmed the significant positive relationships between Social Media richness and customer purchase intention. This research shows that Social Media richness explains a medium percent of the variation in customer purchase intention. Social Media richness has a medium explanatory power to predict customer purchase intention which explains 27.1% of the variance. This means that when customers have a positive influence on social media richness (in terms of attractiveness, contents, and the user interface) they have the high potential to make the purchase. For mediation effect, both brand equity and brand loyalty partially mediate the relationship between social media richness and customer purchase intention.

In conclusion, it is not enough for brands to have a presence in Social Media. In addition to the social media presence, marketers should pay attention to Social Media richness as it plays a vital role in influencing the purchase intention. This

research shows that the richness of the contents can arouse the consumer's intention to purchase.

## 7. Challenges and Future Research

The main limitation of this research is the number of respondents. This research is restricted in Kuala Lumpur. Future research should embark on nationwide to further validate the relationship between social media richness and purchase intentions.

Another limitation of this research is the limited number of Brands use in this research. Future research should replicate the same model but to include more brands. Future research also should include Intention to Engage with the Brand's Social Media.

## References

1. Atsmon, Y., Kuentz, Jean Frederic, J.F., & Seong, J. (2012) Building brands in emerging markets, <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our->

- [insights/building-brands-in-emerging-markets](#) accessed on 13.12.2018
2. Azjen, I., & Fishbein, M., (1973) Attitudinal and normative variables as predictor of specific behavior, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 27(1), pp 41-57
  3. Aydogan, S., Aktan, M., Universitesi, M., & Aysuna, C., (2016) Web advertising value and students' attitude towards web advertising, *European Journal of Business and Management*, Vol 8(9), pp
  4. Ayuningthiyas, F., Prihatiningsih, W & Laura, R (2018) The pattern of online purchase behaviour by millennial family, *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, Vol. 3, Issue 5, November, pp 10-16
  5. Balakrishnan, B, KPD., Dahnil, M.I., & Yi, W.J., (2014) The impact of social media marketing towards purchase intention and brand loyalty among generation Y, *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, pp 177-185
  6. Brunell, E., (2009) Introducing media richness into integrated model of consumers' intentions to use online stores in their purchase process, *Journal of Internet Commerce*, 8, pp 222-245
  7. Cousaris, C.K., Osch, W.V., & Balogh, B.A., (2016) Do Facebook like lead to share or sales? Exploring the empirical links between social media content, brand equity, purchase intention, and engagement, 49<sup>th</sup> Hawaii International Conference on System Science, pp 3456 – 3555.
  8. Dodds, W.D., Monroe, K.B., & Grewal, D., (1991) Effect of price, brand, and store information on buyers' product evaluation, *Journal of Marketing Research*. PP 307-319
  9. Forbes (2017) <https://www.forbes.com/sites/propointgrahics/2017/07/08/building-brand-equity/#4cb0fb216e8f> accessed on 14.12.2018
  10. Jabarullah, N. and Iqbal Hussain, H. (2019), "The effectiveness of problem-based learning in technical and vocational education in Malaysia", *Education + Training*, Vol. 61 No. 5, pp. 552-567
  11. Lengel & Daft (1988) Organizational information requirements, media richness and structural design, *Management Science*, Vol 32(5), pp 554-571
  12. Martins, J.L.B.R., Oliveira, T., Goncalves, R., & Branco, F., (2018) How smartphone advertising influence consumers' purchase intentions, *Journal of Business Research*, pp 1-10
  13. Martin-Consuegra, D., Diaz,E., Gomez, M., & Molina, A., (2019) Examining consumer luxury brand-related behaviour intentions in a social media context; the moderating role of hedonic and utilitarian motivations. *Physiology & Behaviour*, 200, pp 104-110
  14. Parida, R.R. (2016) An esoteric view on brand loyalty, *International Journal of Research in Management and Business* (ISSN: 2395-4329): Volume 2 Issue 1, pp 19-24
  15. Preacher, K. J., & Hayes, A. F. (2004). SPSS and SAS procedures for estimating indirect effects in simple mediation models. *Behavior Research Methods, Instruments, & Computers*, 36, 717-731.
  16. Rundle-Thiele, S., & Mackay, M.M. (2001) Assessing the performance of brand loyalty measures, *Journal of Services Marketing*, 15(7), pp 529-546
  17. Tan, W.J., Kwek, C.K., & Li, Z., (2012) The antecedent of effectiveness interactive advertising in the social media, *International Business Research*, Vol 6 No. 3, pp 88-99.
  18. Tseng, F.C., Cheng, T.C.E., Li, K., & Teng, C.I (2016) How does media richness contribute to customer loyalty, *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 213, pp 88-99
  19. Valentini, C., Romenti, S., Murtareli, G., & Pizetti, M., (2018) Digital visual engagement: influencing purchase intentions on Instagram, *Journal of Communication Management*, Vol 22, No. 4, pp 362 - 381