

FACTORS INFLUENCING BUYING BEHAVIOR OF FASHION CLOTHING BRANDS
IN JOHOR AND WILAYAH PERSEKUTUAN

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I would like to dedicate this thesis to my beloved parents and other family members for their endless support and encouragement.



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ABSTRACT

This study has focused on the issues in buying behavior of consumers toward the fashion clothing brands, as in Malaysian society, the fashion clothing brands are facing very hard time. Many fashion clothing brands have ended up their business and closed their shops. Hence, this study has emphasized on determining the right information, issues, gap of knowledge by evaluating the influence of social advertising, individual factors and brand image on the buying behavior of consumers along with the mediating role of brand image towards the fashion clothing brands based on the theory of reasoned action and technology of acceptance model. The theory of reasoned action and TAM model were selected due to the suitability of theoretical consideration. This study has collected data through questionnaires based survey from the consumers of fashion clothing brands in the State Johor and the Wilayah Persekutuan in Malaysia. This study has selected a sample size of 129 respondents based on G-Power and applied convenience-sampling technique to collect data through mall intercepts approach. Initially, a pilot study was conducted to ensure the accuracy and reliability of questionnaire and then progressed towards main study. The collected data have analyzed using SPSS and structural equation modeling through smart partial least square. The findings have revealed a positive significant relationship of social advertising, individual factors, and brand image with the buying behavior of consumers toward the fashion clothing brands in the State Johor and Wilayah Persekutuan at Malaysia. The findings have also revealed a positive significant relationship of social advertising and individual factors with the brand image among consumers. In addition, the results have shown that brand image mediates the relationship between social advertising, individual factors and the buying behavior of consumers. The results of this study have interesting implications for marketing research. Firm can better understand the market trend and consumers buying behavior by developing two ways communication. Firm can also stabilize their consumers and build the brand image using social advertising, and can enhance their marketing intelligence by using these factors.

ABSTRAK

Secara terperinci, kajian ini menumpukan kepada isu-isu tingkah laku pengguna dalam membeli jenama pakaian fesyen, kerana dalam masyarakat Malaysia, jenama pakaian fesyen menghadapi masa yang sangat sukar. Banyak jenama pakaian fesyen telah menamatkan perniagaan dan menutup kedai mereka. Oleh itu, kajian ini memberi penekanan kepada menentukan maklumat, isu, jurang pengetahuan yang tepat dengan menilai pengaruh pengiklanan sosial, faktor individu dan imej jenama terhadap tingkah laku pengguna dalam membeli serta peranan perantaraan imej jenama terhadap jenama pakaian fesyen berdasarkan Teori Tindakan Beralasan dan Model Penerimaan Teknologi. Teori Tindakan Beralasan dan Model Penerimaan Teknologi telah dipilih kerana kesesuaian pertimbangan teori. Data kajian telah diperoleh melalui pengedaran soal selidik kepada pengguna pakaian berjenama di negeri Johor dan Wilayah Persekutuan di Malaysia. Kajian ini mempunyai saiz sampel seramai 129 orang responden berdasarkan G-Power dan mengaplikasikan teknik persampelan mudah bagi mengumpulkan data menerusi pendekatan mall intercepts. Kajian rintis telah dilakukan bagi memastikan ketepatan dan kebolehpercayaan borang soal selidik sebelum kajian sebenar dijalankan. Data yang diperoleh telah dianalisis menggunakan SPSS dan model persamaan struktur melalui Smart Partial Least Square. Dapatan menunjukkan hubungan yang signifikan dan positif di antara pengiklanan sosial dan faktor individu dengan imej jenama dalam kalangan pengguna. Selain itu, dapatan juga menunjukkan bahawa imej jenama mengantarakan hubungan di antara pengiklanan sosial, faktor individu, dan tingkah laku membeli pengguna. Dapatan menunjukkan implikasi yang menarik bagi kajian pemasaran. Firma dapat memahami trend pasaran dan tingkah laku membeli pengguna dengan mewujudkan komunikasi dua hala. Firma juga dapat memantapkan pengguna mereka dan membina imej jenama menggunakan pengiklanan sosial, dan dapat meningkatkan kebolehan pemasaran mereka menggunakan faktor-faktor tersebut.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

MDA	-	Malaysian Digital Association
SMEs	-	Small & Medium Enterprises
RSS	-	Really Simple Syndication
USA	-	United State of America
UK	-	United Kingdom
B2B	-	Business-to-Business
BPC	-	Brand Personality Congruity
GM	-	General Manager
H&M	-	Hennes & Mauritz
PR	-	Personal Relation
TAM	-	Technology Acceptance Model
SMS	-	Short Message Services
ROI	-	Return on Investment
TCS	-	Tata Consultancy Services Limited
HCL	-	Hindustan Computer Limited
PLS	-	Partial Least Square
SNS	-	Social Networking Sites
CRM	-	Customer Relationship Marketing
DMO	-	Destination Marketing Organization
IMC	-	Integrated Marketing Communication
AMA	-	American Marketing Association
SEM	-	Structure Equation Modelling
SPSS	-	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
MVA	-	Missing Values Analysis
RM	-	Malaysian Ringgit
LCE	-	Lower Certificate of Education
SRP	-	Sijil Rendah Pelajaran
MCE	-	Malaysian Certificate of Education
SPM	-	Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia
HSC	-	Higher School Certificate
STPM	-	Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia
CR	-	Composite Reliability
AVE	-	Average Variance Extracted
HTMT	-	Heterotrait-Monotrait
SA	-	Social Advertising
IF	-	Individual Factors
BI	-	Brand Image
CB	-	Consumer Behavior

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The way of communication and interaction among people has immensely changed due to advancement in information and communication technology around the world. Social media is the technological revolution that has created new challenges and opportunities for businesses. Social media has altered the contemporary marketing approaches as advertisement specialists have adopted social networking sites for promoting their businesses and draw attention of consumers toward their brands (Dehghani & Tumer, 2015). Social media is the rapidly growing technological innovation and the powerful marketing communication tool around the world (Duffett, 2015), has gained a wide popularity and acceptance among communities that causing many advertisers to revise their marketing strategies (Vinerean, Cetina, Dumitrescu & Tichindelean, 2013). For example, Facebook is one of the well-known advertising platform (Elseminas, Wijanto & Halim, 2015), has caught researchers attention to understand consumers response and building brand strategies (Ertugan, 2016). Social media advertising has outstanding capabilities to understand the users' behavioral response, cognize individual characteristics and building brands (Boateng & Okoe, 2015). Therefore, this study examines the influence of social advertising, individual factors and brand image on the consumers buying behavior toward the fashion clothing brands along with the mediating

role of brand image. This chapter starts by shedding light on the background of the study along with problem identification and statement. It plainly explains the background of the study and the description of problem statement, which compels on the conduction of this study in order to fill up the gap of knowledge and unearth the answers of come up research questions. It explains the aim and objectives of this study followed by the raised research questions. It also addresses the scope of the study, significance, definitions of the concepts, and structure of the study. The last part of this episode explains a brief summary of the first chapter.

1.2 Background of the study

The understanding in inner motives and buying behavior of consumers is important for advertisers to formulate better marketing and promotional strategies. Pelau (2011) presumed that advertisers have keen interest in understanding the buying behavior of consumers to execute a valuable marketing and promotional campaign. Consumer buying behavior is the set of actions that consists searching, purchasing, using, evaluating and consuming products to get solved their problems, and satisfying their wants (Belch & Belch, 2008). Consumer buying behavior is the “totality of consumer decision with respect to the acquisition, consumption and disposition off goods, services, time and ideas by (human) decision making units” (Hoyer & Macinnis, 2008). However, previous literature has described various steps in the buying decision of consumers. Like, Belch and Belch (2008) have assumed that the inner motives, thinking and gained perceptions, formulated attitude, integration, collecting information to get learn as the important factors of the consumers buying behavior and psychological process of purchasing. This process of consumers buying behavior is known as problem solving process. However, Howard and Sheth (1969) have defined three major steps in the buying decision of consumers that are; a set of inner psychological motives, alternative sources of action and the decision mediators. The study has also assumed the idea of pre-purchase behavior and post-purchase behavior of consumers that should be the part

of consumers' decision process. Pre-purchase behavior consists of recognizing a problem, collect and evaluate information, getting change in the buying behavior, whereas post-purchase behavior of consumers include satisfaction, repeat purchasing and develop positive thoughts about the product (Mitchell & Boustani, 1994). However, the existence of cultural diversity among various ethnic groups in Malaysian society may creating complexity for the fashion clothing brands to understand the buying behavior of consumers, preferences in their buying decision, and the style of their buying process. Many fashion clothing brands have ended up their business due to the lack of knowledge in the buying behavior of Malaysian consumers. In the same manner, many fashion clothing brands have merged with non-fashion clothing brands due to unstructured buying behavior of consumers. Therefore, the rapid changes and complexity in the buying behavior of Malaysian consumers have become a real issue for the survival and growth of the fashion clothing brands. It has observed that changes occur very rapidly in the buying behavior of Malaysian consumers toward the fashion clothing brands and the sellers are seriously thinking to understand the consumers buying process, preferences and style in efficient way to formulate better marketing strategies.

Precisely, the revolution of social advertising has drastically changed the pattern of marketing communication and brought businesses to a new era. Now many businesses have utilized social media as an advertising platform. It has become a best advertising platform to attract customers and exploit new marketing opportunities. Specially, advertising communities have started investment in this popular channel to advertise their products and services. For example, Facebook has become one of the famous advertising platform around the world, where a leading company Unilever had started a campaign to promote its product of deodorant stressed like "open conversational, and 'always on' nature" for more personal interactions with consumers. It has noted that this campaign strategy was highly successful in influencing consumers' behavior (Chan, 2012). Whiting and Williams (2013) have noted that 88 percent marketers are using social media for advertising purposes and spending \$60 billion in social advertising on annual basis. It has considered as a revolution in marketing channel, to get change in people thinking, and build relations. It has gathered people of interest on a single

platform around the world to communicate via wikis, forums, blogs, etc. (Zaki & Ross, 2014). Therefore, the social media has created a new profile for consumers to remain in touch and influence their behavior in societies.

Factually, due to wide acceptance and attractive features, social media has become an advertising platform that is accessible via internet for every one (Bajpai, Pandey & Shriwas, 2012), and the concept of social advertising has emerged as a new trend of marketing and its growth is going on around the world. Millions people visit social networking sites on daily basis and advertisement communities enjoying promoting their brands via these interesting platforms in cheaper cost (Chan, 2012). It is an inexpensive advertisement platform for businesses to effectively execute advertising and marketing campaign (Esther, Emmanuel & Okey, 2015). Social advertising is the process of gaining traffic toward social networking sites via contents to attract audience attention (Esther *et al.*, 2015). Social advertising is the newest internet based digital advertising system and has gained popularity around the globe due to the development of social networking sites like Facebook, LinkedIn and other (Hadija, Croatia & Barnes, 2012). Therefore, advertising through social networking site is known as social advertising and the paid form planned promotion of a business (Bakshy, Eckles, Yan & Rosenn, 2012). These social networking sites are the internet base applications that help consumers to share opinions, insights, experience, prospective and consist of collaborative projects, blogs and content communities (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009). Social networking sites have started as a social phenomenon and now became an ever-growing platform for advertising around the world (Soares & Pinho, 2014). It emphasizes to create contents for the attraction of viewers and encourage sharing with others. Social advertising is the customer centric communication to get a cheerful response from the targeted consumers (Jothi, Neelamalar & Prasad, 2011).

In addition, the appreciation of social advertising and acceptance has continued around the world. Such as, Thornhill, Xie and Lee (2017) have praised social media as an interesting marketing tool to spread eyes catching information about a brand amid targeted consumers. Social advertising has the capabilities to share interactive features, to have fun and entertainment with targeted audience (DeVries, Gensler & Leeflang,

2012). Soares and Pinho (2014) have appreciated it as an interesting source of entertainment, to share fun and the advantages to get relief from a stressful life. Likewise, Yaakop, Anuar and Omar (2013) have defended the privacy issue in social advertising among users while sharing their personal information's, images, and statuses with others and acclaimed that social networking sites provide access to its users to hide their personal information's from public. Ragan (2009) has argued that Facebook offers an access to its users to get setting in their personal profile in order to overcome the issues of privacy. Cana and Kaya (2016) have acclaimed that social networking sites are easy to operate, interact with other, clear and understandable, and flexible mechanism to use. The users need very little effort to operate the social networking sites (Fotiadis & Stylos, 2016).

The academic researchers and business practitioners have shed light on the credibility of social advertising, as consumers are more conscious toward the facts (Logan, Bright & Gangadharbatla, 2012). Similarly, Boateng and Okoe (2015) have emphasized on the credibility of social advertising for providing reliable information to improve the business services. Credibility of social advertising has increased the trust of audience and enhanced the consumer's response (Clinton *et al.*, 2008). Social advertising shares informative and attractive content with targeted audience to keep them bind with a business (Ohajionu & Mathews, 2015), and researchers are increasingly assessing the popularity of contents for marketing purposes to get understanding in the users behavior. In addition, Cha, Kwak, Podriguez, Ahn and Moon (2007) have presumed that social media allow the users to generate and share contents to advertise new ideas and explore new business opportunities. Shao (2009) has admired the importance of social media as an interesting mechanism that allow users to get valuable information, get entertainment, self-expression and other via creating and sharing contents.

Concisely, over the past one and half decade, social media has emerged as a new trend of advertising and received inclusive acceptance among its users (Boateng & Okoe, 2015). Many companies are now revising their marketing strategies and investing energies in the development of social media as advertising channel (Chi, 2011). Millions

people visit social networking sites on daily basis and advertising communities are enjoying promoting their brands via these interesting platforms in cheaper cost (Chan, 2012). In 2015, there were 2.04 billion users of social media around the world and was expected to grow up to 2.72 billion in 2019 (Jung, 2017). The outstanding capabilities of social advertising are to track users' behavioral response, making dialog and building brand among the targeted communities (Boateng & Okoe, 2015).

In addition, numerous studies have shown interest to determine the consumer's behavioral response towards social advertising (Chu, Kamal & Kim, 2013; Boateng & Okoe, 2015), and its acceptance in various societies. Such as, Celebi (2015) has examined the Turkish consumers' behavioral response towards Facebook advertising. Duffett (2017) has determined the influence of interactive social media marketing communication on young consumers cognitive, affective and behavioral attitude components in South Africa. Specifically, the usage of social media has become a part of life in Malaysian society as more than 90 percent internet users consume time in social networking site on daily basis (Muniandy & Muniandy, 2013; Ohajionu & Mathews, 2015). It has assumed that social media is an interesting platform to stay connected with Malaysian society and may be a helpful mechanism to understand their buying behavior. The Malaysian Digital Association (2016) has highlighted the popularity of social media, its role in advertising at Malaysian society and considered as a good source of brand recognition, to enhance reputation, to retain customers, to sell products and to improve customer's services in Malaysia. It has noted that Malaysian spend 2.8 hours per day in social networking sites and the growth has continued in the tradition of social advertising and getting revenue from digital media. It has estimated that the revenue through social advertising will reach up to RM 2086.29 million in 2020. MDA has noted Facebook, Wordpress.com, Blogger, LinkedIn and Twitter as the main and important platforms of social advertising while, WhatsApp, WeChat, Facebook Messenger, line and Viber as the top communication applications in Malaysia. The Malaysian Digital Association has also renowned the growing trend of social advertising in Malaysian society. Concisely, the usage of social advertising is skyrocketing and has changed the Malaysian sphere in all aspects of life. It was noted that Malaysia has the leading social media users in the world (Muniandy *et al.*, 2013). However, the progress

in social advertising has continued in Malaysian society and more than one third of the internet traffic is due to social media usage in the country. It has estimated that Malaysian citizen watching social networking sites 14 billion times in every month, where YouTube has noted 67 percent for watching videos (Burson-Marsteller, 2012). It has observed that 90 percent internet users have open access to social media, more than 50 percent have profiles in social networking sites, 70 percent users discuss social activities and 80 percent users stay active in social media (Zaki & Ross, 2014).

Social media has become an interesting advertising platform for Malaysian companies. Such as, Parveen (2012) has investigated the websites of 860 companies in Malaysia and noted that 817 Malaysian companies of various sectors are using social media. Out of these companies, 347 companies have adopted Facebook pages for advertising purposes, 42 companies have presence on Twitter, 81 companies have posted corporate videos on YouTube, 10 companies have posted advertising pictures on Fliker, 34 companies had their own blogs and 70 companies have developed RSS feed on their websites. Therefore, this is the evidence of growing usage of social advertising among Malaysian companies (Surin & Wahab, 2013). Exactly, H & M, Fiber-Castle, Rare Clothing, Idotshirt, Abstrax, Tarik Jeans, The Garments, Attack Apparel, Horsky, Gifted Clothing, The Swagger Salon, and Pestle & Mortar etc. are the famous fashion clothing brands at Malaysia that using social media for marketing and advertising purposes.

Likewise, the mind catching characteristics of consumers that influence the business success is the topic of interest among researchers and practitioners. Agago, Nittala and Tirfe (2015) have shown interest to assess the influence of personal factors such as age, education, income, occupation in the buying decision of consumers. Whereas, Kumar (2014) has assessed various personal factors of consumers that affect the buying decision and enhance the market shares of a business. The study has noted that the age, gender, marital status, income, family background, education, occupation, family size, geographic factors and psychological factors are the sources to change the buying decision of consumers. Muniady, Al-Mamunl, Permarupan and Zainol (2014) have examined the influence of personal factors such as lifestyle, personality and

economic situations on the Malaysian consumers buying behavior. The study noted that lifestyle and personality of consumers have positive effects on the buying behavior of Malaysian consumers. Yakup and Jablonsk (2012) presumed that personal characteristics such as; age, occupation, economic situations, lifestyle, personality and self-concept have considerable influence on the buying behavior of consumers. Omar, Nazri, Osman and Ahmad (2016) have empirically investigated the effects of demographic factors such as gender, age, level of income, level of education and presence of children on Malaysian consumers purchase intention toward organic products. The study noted that gender, age and level of income have significant effects on the buying behavior of Malaysian consumers towards organic products.

Prior studies have highlighted various factors in regard of consumers characteristics such as, Gendel-Guterman and Levy (2013) have evaluated the influence of market maven and stability, personal involvement like functional, economics and symbolic on the store brand products purchase intention among Israeli consumers. Roy, Sethuraman and Saran (2016) have noted that demographic and personal characteristics can influence the fashion shopping proneness at Indian cloth market. The study has noted a positive correlation between agreeable, extroverted, open minded, and stability with the fashion shopping at Indian cloth market. Rehman, Yusoff, Zabri and Ismail (2017) have measured the influence of personal factors on the buying behavior of Pakistani consumers in sales promotional activities toward the fashion clothing goods. The study noted that market maven, stability, open minded and agreeable have positive effects towards the buying behavior of Pakistani consumers in the fashion clothing industry. Rasool, Kiyani, Khattak, Ahmed and Ahmed (2012) have shown interest to assess the impacts of materialism on the compulsive consumption of consumers. The study noted that materialism has a direct impact on the compulsive consumption and consumers' consumption behavior. Likewise, Hudders and Pandelaere (2012) have noted materialistic consumers as more conscious toward luxury goods that can enhance their behavior in positive manner.

The influence of brand image on the buying behavior of consumers is also a debatable topic among researchers and practitioners. The conception of brand image has

drawn considerable attention due to its important role in advertising and marketing activities (Zhang, 2015). The study has defined brand image as the “consumer’s perception of a product’s total attributes or consumers general perception and impression of a brand”. Zeb, Rashid and Javed (2011) have explored the influence of brand (status branding, brand attitude, paying premium for branded clothing, self-concept and reference groups) on the female consumers buying behavior in the fashion clothing industry of Pakistan. The study has noted a positive association between the constructs of the study. Likewise, Durrani, Godil, Baig and Sajad (2015) have assessed the impacts of brand image on the buying behavior of teenagers in Pakistan. Bian and Moutinho (2011) have investigated the effects of perceived brand image, direct and indirect effects of product involvement and products knowledge on the consumers purchase intention of counterfeits in UK. In addition, Kumar, Kim and Pelton (2009) have assessed the direct and indirect effects of individual self-concept, product orientation variables, and brand-specific variables on the purchase intention of Indian consumers towards foreign and local brands. Horvath and Birgelen (2015) have investigated the role of brand on the behavior and purchase decisions among Netherland compulsive and non-compulsive buyers. Lim, Kim and Cheong (2016) have investigated the factors that affect the consumers buying behavior towards luxury sportswear brands, and highlighted the brand image among consumers.

1.3 Problem Statement

1.3.1 Practical Gap

In the fashion market, the consumer’s individual characteristics, knowledge of fashion goods and buying behavior are the important factors, which influence the motivational level to make purchase decision (Park, Kim & Forney, 2006). Fashion is a “style (e.g. clothing, shoes, handbags etc.) that widely accepted by a group of consumers at a given time” (Joung, 2014), and has assumed that some external (e.g. display) and internal factors (e.g. satisfaction, pleasure etc.) can cause of motivation to buy fashion goods

(Fionda & Moore, 2009; Tsai, 2005). However, the fashion clothing brands in Malaysia are facing a very hard time to survive. According to the news of Malaysian Times (2017), the fashion clothing brands have significantly affected due to intense competition and many fashion clothing brands have diverged into other industries like food and cosmetics. The Major (Rtd) Mohd Ameir Rydhuan, who is the founder of GM ideology business center, has assured that many local fashion brands of Malaysia have ended up their businesses and closed their shops due to the lack of knowledge in consumers buying behavior (Pressreader, 2017). The Major (Rtd) Mohd Ameir Rydhuan has claimed that the knowledge of brands owners is not in line with the market requirements and nor fit with the buying behavior of consumers. Likewise, Euromonitor International (2017) has presumed that various luxury brands at Malaysia in 2016 teamed up with non-luxury brands due to the unstructured buying pattern of consumers. For example, H&M partnered with Balmain and Kenzo to launch new apparel ranges, while Faber-Castell used Karl Lagerfeld designs for the boxes of some of its writing instruments. This trend reflected a consumer switch away from high-priced luxury brands to a more affordable mix of luxury and non-luxury brands. According to Abby Wee (2018), who is the communication manager of H&M fashion clothing brand for Malaysia, has claimed that 2018 is one of the challenging year for our fashion brand as we faced a significant decline in sales at Malaysia. In the same way, Kong (2018) claimed that the sale and operating profit of H&M fashion clothing brand have significantly dropped in Malaysia.

Likewise, according to Chew (2016), the Malaysian retail brands and shopping malls are facing very hard time due to a confluence of factors like; consumers' preferences and their buying behavior. Chew has mentioned the retail consultant's view that they never observed such a challenging period for Malaysian shopping malls like now. Crinis (2012) has noted that the garments and fashion clothing brands of Malaysia are not in a good position to survive with global competitors for a long time. However, very limited research has conducted to understand the Malaysian consumers buying behavior toward the fashion clothing brands. According to Fadzilah Mamat who is the founder of Benang Hijau Boutique, had faced a decline in sales and realized that some new knowledge, and marketing strategies are required (Pressreader, 2017). Therefore, it

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