# How brand trust and brand loyalty play the roles on social media marketing activities and customer purchase intention: A study on medical aesthetic industry in Klang Valley, Malaysia

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## ABSTRACT

Technology and its continuous advancement facilitate marketing activities to get rid of their critical and limitations. The revolution of social media has changed the ways of marketing being conducted in the modern business world that enable businesses and consumers to interact in innovative approaches where social media acts as communication intelligence to assist various businesses to reach their consumers. This study focused on the intention to purchase and consumer readiness through the sharing of social media contents among social media users in Klang Valley, Malaysia. To investigate these issues two renowned theories were underpinned – UTAUT theory and theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). A total of 208 respondents from targeted groups who are using social media among medical aesthetic treatments and services in Klang Valley have responded to this questionnaire. Social media marketing activities considering brand loyalty and brand trust were significant on intention to purchase. The final study showed that both brand loyalty and brand trust has positively mediated consumers' intention to purchase through social media marketing activities. This research is significant in understanding the usage of social media marketing activities that draws intention to purchase among social media users.

**Keywords:** Social Media Marketing Activities, Brand Trust, Brand Loyalty, Customer Purchase Intention.

## INTRODUCTION

Technology has reached every aspect of our lives, both individually and collectively, including the real world and virtual world. The proliferation of Social Media Marketing (SMM) is a direct result of the rapid development of digital technologies, such as smartphones, smart devices, the Internet of Things (loT), artificial intelligence (AI), and apps which has an impact on the revolution in consumer purchasing and the reshaping of future marketing strategy. compared to traditional or electronic commerce, mobile business offers additional value to customers, potentially influencing their online purchase intentions (Dastane et 1., 2020). As the global usage of internet and mobile devices continues to grow at exponential rate, businesses can reap the benefits from the advancement of digital technology by marketing their goods and services to a wide spectrum of global audience in an efficient, cost effective and stylish fashion to create brand awareness, attract new customers, and increase sales. The proliferation of internet and

smartphone penetration rate has contributed to the popularity of social media marketing as various content can be created online to increase the online consumption and interaction among a large pool of online community. The use of social media is arguably the most effective marketing tool in today's modern business (Kasemsap, 2018).

Today, social media has become an integral part of our daily lives (De Mooij, 2019). Our lives have been greatly influenced in many aspects and it reshapes communication channels (Bibietal.,2018). Social media marketing or commonly known as SMM, is a modern marketing strategy used by businesses around the world to promote their offerings in a fast and effective manner.Given that approximately 88% (28 million) of the Malaysian population are social media users (Bernama, 2022), it is increasingly important for businesses in Malaysia to integrate SMM into their marketing strategies. .Moslehpour et al. (2021) and Bilgin (2018), in their research on luxury brands, identified five dimensions of SMMA – entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and word-of-mouth – a model widely used by researchers due to its comprehensive explanations.Modern marketers use social media platforms like Facebook. YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Twitter and Pinterest to engage with their customers. This includes creating specific content about their brands, interacting and listening to their customers and fans on social media pages (Jain, 2021).This level of engagement was previously unattainable with traditional marketing mediums such as newspapers, television, radio, and billboards One example is people have become more open in sharing their consumption behavior such as brand preferences, product reviews, and their personal opinions and experiences about a brand with other social media users (Aji et al., 2020).

The fact that individuals and businesses can communicate on social media, and different companies can advertise and market their products and services to expand their market share makes social media important to businesses (Chaffey &

Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). It is a great instrument for economic growth since it allows for two-way communication and low-cost marketing to gather information, interact, and build relationships with the consumers (Irfan et al., 2019). Companies seeking to increase their customers' purchase intention and brand loyalty would embrace digital marketing which focuses on social media platforms to achieve the desired results (Safie et al., 2019). The medical aesthetic industry is overcrowded with many new non-core specialists entering the market offering non-surgical treatments (Deblasio, 2021). In today's competitive business environment, SMMA is crucial for gaining market share by enhancing brand equity, including brand awareness, brand image, and brand loyalty (Bilgin, 2018; Laksamana, 2018) Moslehpour et al. (2021) studied the effects of SMMA on buying intention and concluded that entertainment and word of mouth influence purchase intention, however, the influence on purchase intention can be amplified by trust and brand image. On the contrary, Kristina and Sugriato (2020) studied on how trust mediates in the effects of SMM and word-of-mouth in the electronic form on purchase intention found that SMMA has no direct positive impact on buying intention. However, they do have a major effect on trust which leads to substantial and positive impact on buying intention.

According to Statistics (2023), Malaysia had an active social network penetration rate of 91.7% and ranked second highest in the world as of January 2022 which was above the global average rate of 58 4%. Businesses risk losing out to competition if they fail to utilize SMM and create social ads on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tik Tok, YouTube etc to reach out to target audiences based on specific interest (Beqiri & Bello, 2021). There are variations in the relationship between the significance of social media and the perceived efficacy of SMM across business models. Certain business groups believe that social media is less effective overall as a channel and is less crucial for relationship-oriented usage than other businesses

(Lankova et al., 2019).Measuring the success, marketing performance, and financial returns of SMM is challenging because it is an interpersonal and interactive form of communication, unlike the linear nature of traditional marketing (Michaelidou et al., 2011), making SMM investment decisions difficult for businesses  Understanding how SMMA influences customer purchase intention and mediate brand trust and the effectiveness of each of the SMMA's dimensions is crucial for businesses to make the right marketing strategy and achieve positive results from their SMMA. In recent years more, aesthetic establishments are promoting their services on social media platforms but not everyone is successful because many are adopting a narrow focus on the usage of social media, mainly establishing it as a tool that businesses utilize for branding (Lee, 2019). The impact of SMM on consumer purchase intentions had been investigated in prior studies. There is some literature on the impact of SMM on consumer behavior and perception on beauty products and general medical treatment supports this claim.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Hanaysha (2022) discussed two relevant theories for understanding the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention: the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)  The main tenet of the UTAUT states that the acceptability and use of information technologies has sparked by the realization that the level of individual acceptance is a key factor in the success of information technology applications. Venkatesh et al. (2003) developed the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), which has become a widely used and applied theory for examining factors influencing customer acceptance and use of technology. Ariff et al. (2021) asserted that the UTAUT model effectively consolidates the literature on technology adoption. Customers are more inclined to purchase products from companies who promote on social media platforms when they have a high

degree of trust in them. This makes social media an important part of information technology for businesses. Brands can now readily connect with consumers through various social media platforms to market products and cultivate positive brand perceptions (Thaker et al., 2020). Social media knowledge typically spreads swiftly among users and reduces risks in purchase (Liao et al., 2019). Hence, the factors that probably increase the customers' brand trust and loyalty are as follows: this theory makes it clear that the more someone believes social media communication technologies are useful, the more likely they are to adopt them, which in turn increases the customers' brand loyalty and, eventually, their purchase intention.

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) links beliefs to behavior. Beside the technology acceptance factor, the behavioral factors are equally important for customer purchase intentions (Khadim et al., 2018). According to the theory, an individual's behavioral intentions are shaped by three fundamental factors: attitude. subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). This is because the degree to which behavioral intention and actual behavior are connected depends heavily on attitudes and subjective norms (Reuven & Robert, 2019). Based on their behavioral beliefs, an individual generates a favorable or unfavourable attitude towards a behavior, sees subjective norms about the behavior based on their normative beliefs, and measures perceived behavioral control based on their control beliefs. Attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control have an influence on behavioral intent. Since behavioral intent reflects how much effort a person is willing to put forth while executing a behavior, it is  used to predict actual behavior. The stronger the intention to conduct the behavior, the more likely it is to be carried out. Haris et al., (2022) reveals that the more peers are perceived to support the behavior (subjective norms), the greater the individual's perception of their freedom to engage or not to engage with the SMMA (perceived behavioural control), and the stronger the intent to engage with

SMMA (behavioral intent), increases the actual performance of the behavior to purchase among social media users.

Regardless of the hypotheses, various studies have been conducted, such as social media marketing (SMM) has proven that adequate information and social media trends' is a major reason for most successful businesses. One of the most widely used classifications of SMMA is none other than Kim & Ko's SMMA models. The five dimensions of the model used to characterize SMMA for businesses are entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and word-of-mouth (WOM). A prior study by Hollebeek et al. (2019) indicates that customers can dedicate operant (e.g., knowledge) and operand (e.g., equipment) resources while interacting with enterprises where customer-to-customer contacts are particularly important, especially for higher-level engagement behaviors (Fehrer et al. 2018) that allows consumer to reach their purchase' intention. Furthermore, with various platforms, which include blogs, microblogs, email, and social networking sites, social media is a vital part of an integrated marketing channel. It offers several advantages to both marketers and consumers in order to reach social goals for branding and marketing communication. Social media has evolved into a different form of communication that provides harmonious support to existing relationships and activities, which can improve the user experience.Bilgin (2018) highlighted two key reasons for the importance of social media to businesses: first, SMMA has a direct impact on users of products and brands, and the content they share significantly influences other consumers.Many businesses encourage customers to share and "like" their purchases and experiences through online interactions (So et al., 2017). However, Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2018) argued that businesses should make social media their core marketing strategy due to the popularity of social media in today's society. In addition, marketers should take to social media marketing activities to lower their marketing costs and monitor competitors activities.

The idea of brand trust is founded on the perspective of a brand-consumer interaction in the branding literature (Zehir et al., 2011). In the most recent branding literature, there are a number of notions for brand trust (Shin et al.. 2019). Garbarino and Johnson (1999) defined trust as a consumers' belief in the value and dependability of the products the seller is providing. Based on Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), brand trust is defined as the clients' willingness to rely on the brand's sense of propriety to achieve its stated aim. Similar to this, brand trust is an expression of faith, and connecting with a brand depends on having faith that it will remain dependable and please customers (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2003). According to Chinomona & Maziriri (2017) customers who have trust in a brand will engage in repetitive purchase behavior, which leads to commitment to the brand and the establishment of a relationship between the brand and the customer. This argument is supported by Puspaningrum (2020) who indicates that customers' loyalty to a brand is aided by a high level of brand trust. Moreover, customer trust in a brand (brand trust) is based on consumer confidence in the product's ability to deliver the promised value (brand intention), which is based on consumer confidence in the brand's ability to prioritize consumer interests. Therefore, customers that have trust in a brand will engage in repetitive purchase behavior, which leads to commitment to the brand and the establishment of a relationship between the brand and the customer. It is a very important element in the seller-buyer relationship because it has a positive significant effect on the basis for consumers to consider purchasing a product and service offered by the seller (Kristina & Sugiarto, 2020). Nevertheless, in some contradictory findings, for example, Manzoor et al. (2020) found that SMM exerts more influence than trust on customers' purchase intention. Kim et al. (2019) has argued that brand trust is a crucial element in defining a person's attitude towards an organization. Therefore, this must be viewed as a

key to company success by managers. Based on the study by Pop et al., (2022), brand trust has a favorable impact on purchasing decisions and it is a major factor in influencing consumer behavior. Moreover, trust to some extent helps to make the connection between dynamic involvement and engagement which lead to positive sentiments towards social commerce and in turn can influence the consumers' intention to make purchases (Vohra & Bhardwaj, 2019; Bianchi et al., 2017). Thus, the hypotheses related to brand trust for this study is as below:

*H1: SMMA has a significant positive impact on brand trust.*

*H4: Brand trust as a mediator has a positive significant relationship between SMMA*

The study by Afif et al, (2015) defined brand loyalty as a firm commitment to repurchase or popularise goods or services that are consistently liked in the future. In addition, Sutiksno et al. (2015) provided a similar definition, stating that brand loyalty refers to the likelihood that a customer may switch to a different brand, particularly if the brand undergoes a price or feature shift. Another study by Ceyhan (2019) discovered that brand loyalty has a big impact on consumers' purchasing intentions. In summary, the consumer exhibits specific behavioral patterns, including the intention to buy or repurchase the brand in the future, a decreased sensitivity to price changes, and brand identification, in addition to their contributions to the brand, such as their support and positive word-of-mouth.I AStudy by Machado et al. (2019) discovered social media has given brands numerous significant opportunities to add value, deliver engaging and timely information, ensure co-creation with customers, and inspire people to come up with new concepts. Furthermore, brand communities, made up of brand-loyal customers, provide new channels for interaction between companies and their clients. Thus, applications used by customers both online and offline have become more valuable

as firms seek to communicate with their devoted customers, change brand community members' impressions of the brand, share information, and collect information from them. Even though there are situational influences and marketing initiatives that have the potential to cause behavioral shifts in marketing activities.In addition a , study by Munnukka et al., (2019) discovered that social media involvement has a favorable impact on the brand experience of customers, which in turn can lead to brand loyalty. It is explained that benefits of social networks have a beneficial effect on customer social interaction and increase the awareness about the brand qualities and brand reliability towards the brands. Brand loyalty in the social media context is to provide enormous benefits to businesses to allow for value added, delivery engagement and timely information to ensure co-creation with their customers, which in turn can create consumer purchase intention towards their behavioral patterns, consumer loyalty and reduced sensitivity to price change and brand identification (Machado et al., 2019). This study has formulated the hypotheses for brand loyalty as below:

*H2: SMMA has a significant positive impact on brand loyalty.*

*H5: Brand loyalty as a mediator has a positive significant relationship between SMMA and customer purchase intention.*

Furthermore, this study discovered that the intention to buy is a combination of client interests and the ability to purchase . It is linked to customer behavior, beliefs, and attitudes that aid in accessing and assessing products (Baabdullah et al., 2019) . It can also be characterized as a combination of client interest and product purchase potential (Mirabi et. Al, 2015) where the consumer has an intention to purchase for a good or service, identifies the purchase effort (Diallo, 2012). One's intention to make a purchase is stimulated by an upbeat and positive attitude about a good or service. According to Das (2014), several factors, including the location of the store, the range of brands sold,

and also meeting some fundamental necessities in accordance with consumers' demands in a better method (Luo et L., 2010), contribute to the purchase intention. Purchase intentions, according to Kim and Ko (2010), depend on a number of variables, such as the cues that lead consumers to add a product or brand to their list of considerations. Lim et al, (2016) supported the argument that prior to making a purchasing decision, consumers will first identify the product they want to buy and then further research and analyze it. Even though numerous studies have been conducted, the conclusions of this link remain contentious in a different study. Prior to empirical studies, indicates that it might be challenging to pinpoint and monitor whether a specific activity (such a purchase or advice) occurred. Consumers would look for pertinent information prior to making purchases based on their personal experiences and the surrounding environment. Consumers begin to assess, think about, and compare products after gathering a given quantity of information, which leads to buying behavior. Buying intention is frequently used to gauge consumers' behavioral intentions because purchase intention reflects consumers' subjective preferences for a good. A study by Sheth and Kim (2017) noted that SMM significantly affects customer's intentions to make purchases and customer relationships have a large and advantageous impact on customers' buying intentions especially relates to brand equity. Thus, this study has the hypothesis as below:

H3: SMMA has a significant positive impact on purchase intention.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Procedure and participants*

Data is collected from the Malaysian medical Aesthetic treatment and services industry who are actively using social media to make an online purchase. Only registered medical aesthetic clinics in Klang valley are targeted. The list of licensed medical aesthetic clinics is compiled from social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram,

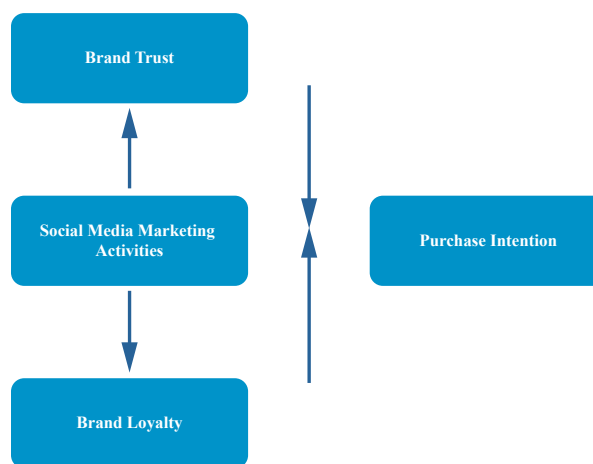TikTok, YouTube, and Twitter, where they publish advertisements.



*Figure 1 Conceptual Framework on SMMA and Purchase Intention*

In this study, an online survey as well as face to face questionnaire technique was used for data collection based on the cross-sectional approach. Purposive sampling was used to gather data from primary sources, such as a survey that was personally administered, in order to investigate the relationship between social media marketing activities and purchase intention. Brand loyalty and trust play a significant role in influencing consumers' intentions to buy goods or services. Data was collected from a targeted group of 208 respondents among Malaysians who are social media users and actively using medical aesthetic treatment and services in Klang Valley. The 5-point Likert scale questionnaires were used to examine the variables constructed in this study, including social media marketing activities, brand trust, brand loyalty, and purchase intention. This study utilized a structural model, in which the data was analyzed using SPSS statistical software. Following a screening process, the final sample for this study consisted of users who are active users of medical aesthetics treatments and services industry who are also actively using social media to make a purchase on medical aesthetic services.Descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis, and non-parametric correlation analysis were conducted to evaluate the relationship between social media marketing activities and purchase intention.

### Results and Discussion

A total of 120 responses were gathered for this research (Table 1), whereby 57.7% of respondents were female and 42.3% were male. The majority of the respondents were aged 20 to 30 years at 44%, and 34% were 31 to 40 years, representing Gen-Zs and millennials age bracket. It is noteworthy that most respondents categorized under marital status were single at 46.2% ,39.4% respondents were married and 14.4% were divorced. Roughly 43.8% of the respondents were self-employed and 39.4% were full-time employed. Most respondent's experience using aesthetics is 63.9% for 1-2 times a month, 31.3% is using about 3 to 4 times a month and only 3.8% is using aesthetics 5 to 8 times a month. The usage of the aesthetic has led to the purchase whereby 58.2% has bought the aesthetic in less than a month , 30.8% bought within 1 to 3 months, 9.1% have bought aesthetics within 4 to 6 months, and only 1.9% bought more than 6 months ago. Overall 77.4% of the respondents were using social media at all times, 12.5% were using social media for 1 to 3 times per week, and 10.1% of the respondents were using social media more than 4 to 6 times per week.

Table 1. Demographics Analysis (N=208).

| Variable | Category | Frequency | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 88 | 42.3 | 42.3 |
| | Female | 120 | 57.7 | 100.0 |
| Age | 20-30 | 91 | 43.8 | 43.8 |
| | 31-40 | 70 | 33.7 | 77.4 |
| | 41-50 | 27 | 13.0 | 90.4 |
| | Above 50 | 20 | 9.6 | 100.0 |
| Marital Status | Single | 96 | 46.2 | 46.2 |
| | Married | 82 | 39.4 | 85.6 |
| | Divorced | 30 | 14.4 | 100.0 |
| Employment Status | Self-employed | 91 | 43.8 | 43.8 |
| | Employed (Fulltime) | 82 | 39.4 | 83.2 |
| | Employed (Part-time) | 25 | 12.0 | 95.2 |
| | Unemployed | 10 | 4.8 | 100.0 |
| Frequency of Aesthetic Use | 1-2 times | 133 | 63.9 | 63.9 |
| (in a month) | 3-4 times | 65 | 31.3 | 95.2 |
| | 5-6 times | 8 | 3.8 | 99.0 |
| | More than 6 times | 2 | 1.0 | 100.0 |
| Last Aesthetic Purchase | Less than a month ago | 121 | 58.2 | 58.2 |
| | Within 1-3 months | 64 | 30.8 | 89.0 |
| | Within 4-6 months | 19 | 9.1 | 98.1 |
| | More than 6 months ago | 4 | 1.9 | 100.0 |
| Social Media Use | All the time | 161 | 77.4 | 77.4 |
| | 1-3 times per week | 26 | 12.5 | 89.9 |
| | 4-6 times per week | 21 | 10.1 | 100.0 |
| | Rarely | 0 | 0.0 | |
| | Never | 0 | 0.0 | |

Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics of the mean for each construct in the proposed research model. It can be observed that the means for each variable scored above 5.0, implying that most participants responded favourably to the questionnaire provided. Among all four variables, brand loyalty (BL) is proved to be the greatest influence on purchase intention (PI) with the highest mean of 4.32, followed by purchase intention (PI) with an average 4.26, brand trust (BT) with a mean of 4.23 and lastly, the lowest mean out of the variables is social media marketing activity (SMMA) at 4.20. The average dispersion between each item and the mean is measured by the standard deviation, and it indicates how data are scattered around the mean. While a high standard deviation suggests that the data points are dispersed throughout a larger range of values, a low standard deviation suggests that the data points tend to be close to the data set mean. According to Table 2, the standard deviation values of each variable scored 0.5 and above. The values are closer to zero, demonstrates that it is near the mean, meaning that the data set is closely distributed.

Table 2. Descriptive statistical analysis

| items | mean | Std. Deviation | Variance | Skewness | | Kurtosis | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Statistics | Std. Error | Statistics | Std. Error |
| SMMA | 4.196 | 0.510 | 0.354 | -0.595 | 0.169 | -0.757 | 0.336 |
| BT | 4.231 | 0.648 | 0.374 | -0.807 | 0.169 | -0.677 | 0.336 |
| BL | 4.322 | 0.504 | 0.372 | -0.479 | 0.169 | -0.638 | 0.336 |
| PI | 4.260 | 0.5248 | 0.439 | -0.589 | 0.169 | -0.520 | 0.336 |

Another measure of variability is the variance. Variance includes all the data points in its computations by comparing each value to the mean, as opposed to standard deviation. Variance illustrates the amount of variation that exists among the data set. The larger the variance, the higher the probability distribution will be. However, if the variance score is zero, it means that there is no variability in the sample. In Table 2, the variance for SMMA is the lowest at 0.354, followed by BT at 0.374, BL at 0.372, and the highest is PI at 0.439. The variance is quite close to zero which means that there is little variability but is expected for a questionnaire data set. The degree of symmetry in a variable's distribution is measured by skewness. A distribution is said to be skewed if the answers for a given variable go towards the right or left tails of the distribution. A higher proportion of bigger values is indicated by a negative skewness, and a

higher proportion of smaller values is indicated by a positive skewness. A skewness value between -1 and +1 is often regarded as desirable, while a number between -2 and +2 is generally seen as considerably adequate. Values between -2 and +2 are regarded as signs of significant nonnormality (Hair Jr et al., 2021). As observed from Table 2, the skewness for all variables are negative, which indicates that there are a lot of bigger values in the data set. Most respondents' answers are favourable as there are more high values recorded in the Likert scale answers, such as 2 and above, which would explain the negative skewness. The skewness also falls desirably between -1 and +1, the highest being BL at -0.479, followed by PI at -0.589, SMMA at -0.595, and the lowest by BT at -0.807. Kurtosis is a metric used to determine whether data are heavy-tailed or light-tailed concerning a normal distribution. A distribution that is more peaked than the standard implies a positive value for the kurtosis. On the other hand, a form that is flatter than usual suggests a negative kurtosis. Similar to the skewness, the general rule is that the distribution is excessively peaked if the kurtosis is more than +2. A too-flat distribution is also indicated by a kurtosis of less than 2. When skewness and kurtosis are both relatively low, the response pattern is regarded as having a normal distribution (George and Mallery, 2019). Referring to Table 2, it can be noted that the kurtosis values fall between -1 and +1, with the highest being PI at -0.520, followed by BL -0.638, BT at 0.677, and the lowest being SMMA at -0.757. The negative kurtosis values suggest that the distribution is flat and not excessively peaked. Overall, the skewness and kurtosis of the data set in this research are considered to have a normal distribution due to their low values.

A reliability test is used to gauge how much confidence may be placed in the test outcomes. If the results are consistent over several measurements of the same topic, and the variables being measured on the subject have not changed, the results can be accepted (Matondang, 2009). The Cronbach's

Alpha value is used to determine whether or not the respondent's responses are dependable. The reliability of the respondent's response is determined by the consistency of the scores and Cronbach's Alpha value, which must be more than 0.70. Otherwise, if Cronbach's Alpha value is less than 0.70, the respondents' responses are not considered to be credible (Ghozali, 2013). The test of reliability is computed to assess the degree of stability and consistency of the measurement outcomes. This research applies Cronbach's Alpha to evaluate the data's internal consistency. From Table 3, it is noted that all variables scored above 0.6, the lowest being brand loyalty (BL) at 0.648, then brand trust (BT) at 0.681, followed by purchase intention (PI) at 0.786, and the most is social media marketing (SMMA) at 0.795 (Table 3). Cronbach's Alpha scores require the measurement outcome to be above 0.6 is acceptable, the closer to 1 it is the better the internal consistency. This research thus found that all variables showed acceptable internal consistency.

Table 3. Reliability test.

| Variables | Cronbach's Alpha |
|-----------|------------------|
| SMMA | 0·795 |
| BT | 0·681 |
| BL | 0·648 |
| PI | 0·786 |

To assess the discriminant validity of the presented constructs, correlation analysis was conducted. According to Table 4, the correlation coefficients for each construct varied from 0.032 to 0.344 and were all determined to be positively correlated. Discriminant validity is corroborated by the correlation coefficient, and judging by the positive correlation between the variables, it suggests that the research sample's discriminant validity is appropriate. Pearson's correlation gauges how strongly two variables are correlated linearly with each other. Its range of values is from

-1 to 1, with -1 denoting a completely inverse linear correlation, 0 denoting no correlation, and 1 denoting a completely positive correlation (Williams et al., 2020). PI was found to have the highest correlation with SMMA at 0.592, followed by BT at 0.582 and lastly BL at 0.512. SMMA correlates highly with PI at 0.350, followed by BT at 0.338 and lastly with BL at 0.262. Although it indicates a positive correlation as it scored more than 0, thus, this research has shown a medium strength positive correlation. On the other hand, the highest correlation coefficient of 0.350 indicates moderate strength of positive association between the constructs of SMMA and PI. This proves that performance expectancy highly affects consumers' purchase intention.

Table 4. Correlation coefficient analysis

|  | SMMA | BT | BL | PI |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| SMMA | 1 | 0·338 | 0·262 | 0·350 |
| BT | 0·582 | 1 | - | - |
| BL | 0·512 | - | 1 | - |
| PI | 0·592 | - | - | 1 |

Multiple linear regression analysis is adopted in this study to determine the impacts of independent constructs on dependent constructs. From Table 5, the three independent variables (SMMA, BT, BL) are regressed against the independent variable of purchase intention (PI), and the results show that SMMA, BT, BL and PI have a positive coefficient respectively. To elaborate further, purchase intention (PI) will have a constant value of 2.089 if SMMA, BT, and BL remain constant. BT has a slope (B) value of 0.031, which is a positive regression coefficient. It indicates that if BT drops by a certain amount while the other independent variables remain the same, PI will rise by 0.031. In contrast, SMMA has a slope (B) value of 0.432, indicating a positive regression coefficient. Accordingly, SMMA will increase by 0.432 if SMMA rises by one point if other independent variables remain. Similarly, BL specifies a positive regression coefficient with a slope (B) value of 0.189, meaning that one rise in a point will increase

PI by 0.189, provided that other independent variables remain constant. The influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable is inferred by the independent variable's beta value. SMMA imposes the highest impact on PI with a beta value of 0.354, followed by BL with 0.172, and lastly, BT with 0.084.

Table 5. Multiple regression analysis

| Model | | Unstandardized coefficients | | Standard coefficient | t | Sig. | Collinearity statistic | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | b | std· error |  |  |  | tolerance | vif |
| 1 | constant | 2.089 | 0.717 | - | 2.913 | 0.004 | - |  |
|  | SMMA | 0.432 | 0.121 | 0.354 | 3.563 | 0.779 | 0.836 | 1.196 |
|  | BT | 0.031 | 0.112 | 0.084 | 0.871 | 0.386 | 0.931 | 1.075 |
|  | BL | 0.189. | 0.115 | 0.172 | 1.862 | 0.065 | 0.962 | 1.137 |

*Notes: a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention (PI); b. Coefficients.*

Table 6 measured the mediation effect analysis linear of brand trust (BT) and brand loyalty (BL) as the mediator variable against the independent variable of social media marketing (SMMA) and dependent variable of purchase intention (PI). The results indicate that brand trust (BT) has a positive coefficient which partially mediates the relationship between social media marketing (SMMA) and purchase intention (PI). It can be observed from the table that the indirect effect value is 0.2531. It is also noted that with the t-value of 4.536 it shows that it has a positive regression coefficient. It also means that if PI rises by one point, then SMMA will increase by 0.2531 in a similar fashion. On the other hand, the result also indicates that brand loyalty (BL) has a positive coefficient which partially mediates the relationship between social media marketing (SMMA) and purchase intention (PI). The results showed an indirect effect value of 0.1673 with the t-value of 3.421. It is noted that it has a positive regression coefficient whereby, if PI rises by one point, then SMMA will increase by 0.1673 in the same pathway Additionally, BT and BL's total effect of 0.6089 implies the positive impact as a mediating variable has on between social media marketing (SMMA) as an independent variable and purchase intention (PI) as the dependent variable. To summarise, the data

in this research were analysed using SPSS software to determine the descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. Firstly, the descriptive statistics found that the average scores are above 5.0, with the highest score of 4.320 for BL. The skewness and kurtosis were found to have a normal distribution across the data set. Cronbach's Alpha deduced that all variables are consistent and acceptable because it resulted at greater than 0.7, with the highest on SMMA at 0.795. Next, the correlation coefficients were computed, and all variables resulted in a positive correlation. The highest correlation of 0.350 is the relationship between SMMA and PI, while the lowest is between SMMA and BL at 0.262. Furthermore, the first regression analysis found that SMMA, BT and BL have a positive regression against PI at 0.354, 0.172 and 0.084 respectively. Additionally, the mediation effect analysis found that BT and BL mediates partially the relationship against SMMA and PI at 0.2531 and 0.1673 respectively.

Table 6. Mediation effect analysis

| Model | | Total Effect | Direct Effect | confidence level | | t-value | result |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | lower bound | upper bound | | |
| 1 | SMMA-->BT-->PI | 0.6089 | 0.3558 | 0.1493 | 0.3695 | 4.536 | Supported with Partial Mediates |
| 2 | SMMA-->BL-->PI | 0.6089 | 0.4416 | 0.800 | 0.2735 | 3.421 | Supported with Partial Mediates |

## CONCLUSION

To conclude, the majority of the constructs were revealed to be statistically significant for the relationship between SMMA, BT, BL and PI. The positive impact also occurs in the relationship that partially mediates between SMMA-->BT-->PI and SMMA--> BL-->PI which are aligned with evidence put forth by Alkhwadi et al., (2022). One explanation might be that customers are growing conscious about how to utilise social media marketing services and apps as the technology gets more user-friendly. Consequently, the consumers will primarily use those marketing apps and services based on their taste and preferences which later will give the impact to their purchasing behaviors. Therefore, it is advised that the medical aesthetics provider may create more approachable social marketing interfaces to entice those with lower technologies abilities in embracing and utilising social media in their daily transactions. Remarkably, this research found BL to be a significant predictor with lower intentions towards purchasing behavior. Most of the previous research by various authors discovered that BL has a strong influence on PI. An explanation for this could be the low rate of technological awareness in social media marketing in Malaysia. The potentials of medical aesthetics have yet to reach the general public, hence the BL has little influence on PI. It is advised that service providers make it mandatory for early customers of medical aesthetics to help spread awareness of technology to generate more purchasing through social media.

Positive word of mouth from friends, family, co-workers, and peers may also give an impact for the medical aesthetics purchases. Aesthetics industry should also advertise their medical services to draw in more customers. Consequently, this will affect people's decision to adopt the medical aesthetics' marketing into their daily social media usage. On the other hand, one of the significant predictors within the suggested model is purchase intention (PI). The results of this study are in line with previous studies that also reached a similar conclusion (Al-Okaily et al., 2022). It is more likely that medical aesthetics patients would perceive and intend to employ technology favourable when they experience its benefits. To encourage more users and their requirements and expectations, medical aesthetics providers must improve their quality according to user ideas and recommendations. They should also think about improving current medical services to provide consumers with advanced technology. Previous research has also revealed that BT has a big impact

on how people behave when it comes to purchasing the medical services (Yohanes et al., 2020). As a result, medical aesthetics service providers must make more investments in technological infrastructure and are encouraged to provide all user-friendly circumstances, such as support service centres that may help the consumer's to get more information and knowledge proficiency and their ability to utilise marketing services apps. People are more likely to have favourable attitudes towards accepting and using online marketing if this is readily available.

Additionally, BT and BL's positive significance on SMMA and PI indicates that users who intend to adopt online marketing will continue using it in the future. Building a loyal consumer base is essential for medical aesthetics service providers to continue to flourish. This is because if their users are loyal, they are more likely to use one application or service even if substitute applications are offered. Hence, service providers must respond to consumers' purchase intention to create a loyal fanbase, so that they can keep using the services going forward. This study identifies important variables that account for consumers' inclinations to embrace online marketing and develop loyalty to such services. However, there are several limitations to the research that was done. First, there may have been a selection bias because most of the respondents had expertise with internet technology such as online shopping. Thus, data from individuals with various backgrounds and experiences might be gathered for future studies. Second, future research may focus on demographics and other environmental factors, such as the effect of governmental restrictions on the adoption and usage of online purchasing. Also, this research solely included data from Malaysia. To better understand the effects of cultural variations and determine if the same variables would affect online marketing and purchasing adoption, it is advised that participants be selected from other nations.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors confirm that there is no conflict of interest involved with any parties in this research study.

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