

INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON YOUNG ADULTS' BUYING BEHAVIOUR

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Abstract

This study aimed to identify social media's influence on buying behavior among young adult consumers. 200 young adults in Kuantan, Pahang, were selected through a simple random sampling method. Data were collected using a set of survey questionnaires and a five-point Likert scale to measure the independent variables (attitude, source of information, credibility, and interactivity) and dependent variable (consumer buying behavior). The results showed that young adults in Kuantan obtained high mean scores for social media buying behavior (mean = 3.87), attitude (mean = 3.91), source of information (mean = 3.87), credibility (mean = 3.86) and interactivity (mean = 3.86). Besides that, Pearson correlation analysis showed that attitude ($r = 0.946$, $p = .000$), source of information ($r = 0.970$, $p = .000$), credibility ($r = 0.980$, $p = .000$), and interactivity ($r = 0.973$, $p = .000$) were significantly and positively associated with buying behavior through social media. Furthermore, the results of multiple linear regression showed that the three predictors could explain as much as 94.7% of the variation in respondents' social media buying behavior, with the source of information as the most significant predictor (Beta = 0.721; $p = 0.001$). The study concluded that social media had been found to influence consumer purchasing behavior significantly. Therefore, consumers should be able to use social media as best as possible to make their purchasing decisions wisely and carefully. There may even be misleading advertisements based solely on testimonials. Marketers or businesses should also ensure that the products they advertise are accompanied by clear product information and endorsed by a clean image opinion leader to meet the needs of consumers.

Keywords: Social media buying behaviour; Attitude; Source of information; Credibility; Interactivity

Abstrak

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti pengaruh media sosial terhadap tingkah laku pembelian dalam kalangan pengguna dewasa muda. Seramai 200 orang

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dewasa muda di Kuantan, Pahang telah dipilih melalui kaedah persampelan rawak mudah. Data dikumpul menggunakan satu set soal selidik tinjauan dan skala Likert lima mata telah diaplikasikan untuk mengukur pembolehubah tidak bersandar (sikap, sumber maklumat, kredibiliti, dan interaktiviti) dan pembolehubah bersandar (tingkah laku pembelian pengguna). Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa golongan dewasa muda di Kuantan memperoleh skor purata yang tinggi bagi tingkah laku pembelian di media sosial (purata = 3.87), sikap (purata = 3.91), sumber maklumat (purata = 3.87), kredibiliti (purata = 3.86) dan interaktiviti (purata = 3.86). Selain itu, analisis korelasi Pearson menunjukkan sikap ($r = 0.946$, $p = .000$), sumber maklumat ($r = 0.970$, $p = .000$), kredibiliti ($r = 0.980$, $p = .000$) dan interaktiviti ($r = 0.973$, $p = .000$) dikaitkan secara signifikan dan positif dengan tingkah laku pembelian pengguna melalui media sosial. Tambahan pula, keputusan regresi linear berganda menunjukkan ketiga-tiga peramal tersebut dapat menjelaskan sebanyak 94.7% variasi tingkah laku pembelian media sosial responden dengan sumber maklumat sebagai peramal yang paling ketara (Beta = 0.721; $p = 0.001$). Kajian itu merumuskan bahawa media sosial didapati mempunyai pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap tingkah laku pembelian pengguna. Oleh itu, pengguna harus dapat menggunakan media sosial sebaik mungkin agar keputusan pembelian mereka dibuat dengan bijak dan berhati-hati kerana kemungkinan terdapatnya iklan yang mengelirukan dan hanya berdasarkan testimoni semata-mata. Pemasar atau perniagaan juga harus memastikan bahawa produk yang mereka iklankan disertakan dengan maklumat produk yang jelas dan disokong oleh imej pemimpin pendapat yang bersih untuk memenuhi keperluan pengguna.

Kata kunci: *Tingkah laku pembelian di media sosial; Sikap; Sumber maklumat; Kredibiliti; Interaktiviti*

Introduction

Social media is become a normal consumption for consumers in today's era. Based on a survey conducted in Malaysia between the end of January and the beginning of February 2021, 88% of respondents admitted that they acquire their news online, including through social media (Hirschmann, 2021). In contrast, only 24% of those respondents acquire news from print media. Based on Statista's (2022) report, the number of Internet users is increasing from year to year, i.e., from 27.97 million in 2020, increased to 28.28 million in 2021 and 29.49 in 2022. The number also has been anticipated to rise to 30.77 in 2025. This shows that the use of social media is increasing year by year.

People and society utilize social media to share, co-create, discuss, and change browser content (Li & Suh, 2015; Singh, 2020). Despite these reasons, how people shop has tremendously changed, especially boosted due to the COVID-19 issue and technological advancement (Jahwari et al., 2020). Jacinto et al. (2020) also quoted

that social media sites are critical in determining consumer buying behavior today. Social media refers to web-based apps that allow individuals to communicate and share information and resources (Chopra et al., 2020; Lindsay, 2011). Blogs, discussion forums, YouTube Channels, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter are examples of social media. In this study, social media refer to a form of internet-based application such as Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok, Telegram, etc., that can connect users with various purposes such as communicating, advertising/marketing, updating personal activities, exchanging information, ideas, photographs, videos, and other materials.

Referring to the (MCMC) 2020's survey, in terms of the age distribution category of internet users, the age group of 25 to 29 recorded a percentage in 2020 of 11.8%. In addition, this age group of 25 to 29 recorded the highest percentage for 2018 and 2020; in 2018, the percentage was 15.6%, and in 2020, at 34.1%. These data indicate that social media users are more composed of young adults. In this study, young adult refers to those aged between 15 to 40 years old, following the range still used in Malaysia (Institute for Youth Research Malaysia (IYRES), 2021).

It is undeniable that there are a lot of factors in social media that can affect consumer purchase behavior. However, under-research factors still interest this current study to explore more, and most past study outcomes needed to be more cohesive and clear (Li & Suh, 2015). The selected factors in this study are attitude, source of information, credibility, and interactivity, which are closely related to social media usage purposes (Chopra et al., 2020). Therefore, the objectives of this study are two-fold which are to examine the influence of social media on consumer buying behavior by determining the level of social media buying behavior and investigating the relationship between the social media factors (attitude, source of information, credibility, interactivity) and consumer buying behavior as well as to further determining the most influential factor of social media on consumer buying behavior in Kuantan.

Literature Review

According to a Deloitte survey, consumers who use social media during their buying journey are four times more likely to spend more than those who do not (Lobaugh et al., 2015). Consumers are now 29 percent more likely to make a buy the next day, whether they use social media to help them shop before or after a shopping trip. The study also revealed which product groups perform well on social media, with 32% of customers favoring health and fitness products and 32% selecting automobile products (Lobaugh et al., 2015). As social media becomes more widely used as a source of information, it is critical to determine which social media platforms are being used to meet various types of information needs and what steps are being taken to analyze the information obtained from them. The potential benefits of social media

rely on the type and quality of information that users voluntarily share and on their perception of the content produced in this medium (Hausmann et al., 2017).

For some consumers, the excitement of browsing social media is undeniable because they have a positive attitude. According to Varghese and Agrawal (2021), due to the greater connection that consumers own with technology, many of them have adopted new attitudes, habits, needs, wants, and desires, resulting in considerable lifestyle changes which, at the same time, social media provides a strong impact on consumer purchasing behavior. Consumers tend to build a favorable attitude toward social media because it has the potential to persuade users via peripheral cues (Osman & Lim, 2022). Referring to Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) proposed by Petty and Cacioppo (1984), peripheral cues, i.e., related to hedonistic stimulations, are important and can easily grab consumers' attention and interest. The images, videos, information as well as endorsements made by social media famous' opinion leaders contributed to the peripheral cues will support the consumers' initial attitude, which eventually makes them more concerned about the products' popularity and, at the same time, lowers their search costs (Osman & Lim, 2022). In addition, Zhong et al. (2018) also supported a similar vein, where they found that consumers' attitudes can be reflected in the reviews that they have written products and services. Online reviews, including comments on social media, could influence consumers' purchase intentions and behaviour (Osman & Lim, 2022). Thus, this study hypothesized that:

H₁: A significant relationship exists between social media attitude and consumer buying behavior among young adults in Kuantan.

In terms of source of information, a previous study has revealed that consumers are compelled to search for new techniques to evaluate credible information, and in doing so, consumers will always assess the credibility of information in traditional media or on the internet (Li & Suh, 2015). Reyes-Menendez et al. (2019) found that consumers highly appreciate the online reviews they found on social media and the internet, which eventually regarded the platforms and mediums as their important sources of information. Consumers will be aware of certain products, brands, etc., while browsing social media. They might also analyze the gap between their needs, wants, and the information they received (Lee et al., 2016). This, in turn, influences consumers' purchasing intention which can lead to social media buying behavior. Kim et al. (2014) found that students will increasingly embrace social media as a source of information because social media is just as accessible as other online resources and as convenient and user-friendly as humans. In line with the literature discussed above, the following hypothesis is constructed:

H₂: There is a significant relationship between social media's source of information and consumer buying behavior among young adults in Kuantan.

Previous research has focused on the quality of information and source credibility (Chang, 2018; Osman & Lim, 2022). According to Wen (2009), the supply of data is a crucial element which designing a website successfully due to the fact while the information is not always credible, wrong, and incomplete may result in a significant impact on the client's self-belief over the net and influence their selection to buy. Furthermore, Yoo and MacInnis (2005) proposed that delicate or passive feeling closer to a net-primarily based shopping enhances creditability or delivers a terrible buying assessment.

According to Lang (2000), people have limited cognitive capacities, and therefore, it is sometimes hard to analyze the information they receive, particularly when the complexity of the qualities to be considered rises. Data introduced by a dependable source, for example, online media influencers, can influence customers' convictions, suppositions, mentalities, and practices (Wang et al., 2017). Dependability addresses an endorser's respect, credibility, and trustworthiness (Erdogan, 1999). Data dominance can be deciphered as how purchasers see the wellspring of information, abilities, or relevant experience and how it provides to others decently and unbiasedly (Kautsar et al., 2012). In other words, it can be concluded that consumers tend to believe the messages if the source is deemed to be credible (Hsieh & Li, 2020). Credibility can also help consumers determine and guide their purchasing decisions based on adopting the message provided (Anna & Hanna, 2016.) Previous studies have found that consumers' intention is also the subjects of the credibility they can detect (Osman & Lim, 2022; Weismueller et al., 2020). When the source credibility of online consumer reviews was perceived as accurate and truthful by the respondents, the more the individual was likely to incur the purchase intention (Osman & Lim, 2022). Therefore, this study hypothesized that:

H₃: There is a significant relationship between social media's credibility and consumer buying behavior among young adults in Kuantan.

According to previous research findings, individual users tend to believe information when they perceive a higher level of interactivity in a social networking site (Scoble & Israel, 2006). Social media commonly provide new information, including trendy products and services and consumption patterns. The constant sharing made social media users and advertisers making it possible for consumers to interact with others (Lambrecht et al., 2018). Cao et al. (2021) concluded that interactivity also happened through the receptivity behaviors from the newsfeed in social media. Receptivity is a precondition influencing consumer attitudes, intention, and purchasing behavior. The following hypothesis was constructed related to these previous findings is:

H₄: A significant relationship exists between social media's interactivity and consumer buying behavior among young adults in Kuantan.

Finally, to answer the objective regarding the most influential factor of social media on consumer buying behavior, the hypothesis was constructed as follows:

H₅: Social media's attitude, source of information, credibility or interactivity is the most dominant factor influencing consumer buying behavior among young adults in Kuantan.

Methodology

This study applied a survey research design, and the location selected was Kuantan, Pahang. According to United Nations World Population Prospects (2019), as the capital of Pahang, Kuantan has occupied the most percentage of the population, estimated at 513,477 in the year 2021. There were also consumers with diverse cultures and backgrounds in Kuantan. A total of 200 young adults living in the housing area of Kampung Sri Damai, Taman Tas, Jaya Gading, and Sungai Isap in Kuantan, Pahang, and the social media users were involved in the data collection. The housing areas were randomly selected from the list of the housing area in Kuantan, as referred to by the Kuantan City Council (MBK). To select the respondents, simple random sampling was adopted by following the n^{th} number of residents passing by spotted locations determined as the common visited by the majority of the residents in these neighborhood areas (Freund, 2018).

A self-administered questionnaire was used as the main instrument to collect the needed data. It was divided into a few sections i.e. to measure the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics and social media usage patterns and assess the four independent variables and one dependent variable, respectively (with 5 Likert-scale items each). The measurement of each variable was adopted and adapted from the combination of a few established measurements from the previous research based on compatibleness with the current study. Social media's credibility has the highest Cronbach's alpha value among all the variables, which is 0.820. It is followed by social media's interactivity and buying behaviour, which are 0.787 and 0.775, respectively. For attitude towards social media, its Cronbach's alpha value is 0.754, which is also considered a moderate strength of association and the source of information towards social media is 0.730

Using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) to analyze the data, descriptive analysis was used to describe the respondents' profile and social media usage patterns. Meanwhile, Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression were performed to examine the relationship between the variables and determine the most influential social media factor on consumer buying behavior, respectively.

Findings and Discussions

Descriptive analysis of respondents' background and social media usage patterns

Two tables below presented the background of survey respondents in this study which comprised of gender, age, ethnicity, education, occupation, marital, and income (Table 1) and social media usage patterns (Table 2) that include types of social media, time, experience, purpose and type of product respondents have ever bought.

Table 1: Background of Respondents (N=200)

Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	113	56.5
Female	87	43.5
Age (years old)		
Below than 20 years	28	14.0
21-30 years old	94	47.0
31-40 years old	78	39.0
Ethnicity		
Malay	125	62.5
Chinese	41	20.5
Indian	27	13.5
Other	7	3.5
Education		
Primary School	2	1.0
Secondary School	51	25.5
Pre-University	44	22.0
University/College	103	51.5
Occupation		
Government Employee	34	17.0
Private Employees	91	45.5
Self-employed	37	18.5
Student	37	18.5
Unemployment	1	0.5
Marital Status		
Single	98	49.0
Married	96	48.0
Divorced	6	3.0
Personal Monthly Income		
Less than RM 1,000	37	18.5
RM 1,001-RM 4,000	119	59.5
RM 4,001-RM 6,000	38	19.0
RM 6,001-RM 10,000	6	3.0

There were a total of 200 respondents involved in the study which, 56.5 percent are male and the remaining 43.5 percent are female. Most respondents belong to the age category of 21-30 years old, which is 47.0 percent, from the Malay ethnic (62.5%), graduated from university/college (51.5%), and working in private sector (45.5%). In addition, regarding marital status, the highest percentage of respondents are single (49.0%), followed closely by those who are married or divorced (48.0%). More than half of them (59.5%) have earned income in the range of at RM1,001-RM4,000 monthly.

Meanwhile, Table 2 shows the respondents' social media usage patterns. Concerning social media accounts respondents used which they can choose more than 1 answer, not surprisingly, all of them (100.0%) are reported to own Whatsapp. The other social media that are popular among the respondents, in the sequence of percentage obtained, are Instagram (75.5%), Facebook (71.0%), Youtube (56.5%), Telegram (51.5%), Twitter (28.0%) and others (15.5%). Regarding how much time respondents spent on social media on average per day, most of them spent at 3-5 hours (41.5%), followed by others 6-8 hours (39.0%). When asked about the time of the day, respondents usually surf social media; mostly they spend at night (43.5%), followed by others indicating inconsistency in the time slot (35.5%). In addition, for the category of products bought on social media, most of the respondents had buying experience. Slightly less than half of them use social media for shopping activities (47.5%), besides for having entertainment (25.0%). Lastly, for the category of what products respondents often buy on social media, clothes (26.5%) and gadgets (26.0%) are the top two answers.

Table 2: Respondents' Social Media Usage Patterns (N= 200)

Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Type of social media used		
Whatsapp	200	100.0
Telegram	103	51.5
Instagram	151	75.5
Facebook	142	71.0
Youtube	113	56.5
Twitter	56	28.0
Others	31	15.0
Frequency of using social media per day		
Less than 1 hour	2	1.0
1-2 hour	17	8.5
3-5 hour	83	41.5
6-8 hour	78	39.0
More than 8 hours	20	10.0

Table 2 (continues)

Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Time of the day respondents usually surfing social media		
Day	5	2.5
Afternoon	4	2.0
Evening	14	7.0
Night	87	43.5
Midnight	19	9.5
Inconsistent	71	35.5
Respondents bought on social media		
Yes	193	96.5
No	7	3.5
Purpose in using social media		
Shopping	95	47.5
Learning	29	14.5
Entertainment	50	25.0
Others	26	13.0
Products often buy on social media		
Clothes	53	26.5
Skincare products	29	14.5
Gadget	52	26.0
Household appliances	34	17.0
Others	32	16.0

Level of social media buying behavior

Five statements were asked using continuous scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to gauge information about this behavior. The descriptions obtained from these five items statements were then transformed into three categories portraying the respondents’ social media buying behaviour levels. The results are displayed in Table 3 below containing the mean score and standard deviation (SD) of each item and the three categories mentioned below (Table 4). The ranges of groups were determined by the deduction of maximum and minimum total scores and divided into three equal ranges. The three equal ranges were named low, medium and high-range groups.

The results specify that the respondents were more likely to buy on social media when they get recommendations from a person they trust, they often buy things without thinking on social media, and they usually visit several social media to search for information and compare prices of a product they like before making the buying decision, they tend to control their buying impulses better when there are shipping and refund costs, and social media influence their buying decisions have a

higher mean score which was 3.88 (SD = 1.286), 3.87 (SD = 1.283), 3.82 (SD = 1.277), 3.87 (SD = 1.281) and 3.92 (SD = 1.310) respectively. The overall mean score was 3.87, which is considered as high.

Table 3: Descriptive Analysis for Social Media Buying Behavior

No.	Statement	Mean	SD
1.	Social media influence my buying decisions	3.92	1.310
2.	I often buy things without thinking on social media.	3.87	1.283
3.	I usually visit several social media to search for information and compare prices of a product I like before making the buying decision.	3.82	1.277
4.	I tend to control my buying impulses better when there are shipping and refund costs.	3.87	1.281
5.	I are more likely to buy in social media when I get recommendations from a person I trust.	3.88	1.286

Table 4: Level of Social Media Buying Behavior

Levels of Social Media Buying Behavior	Score	n	%
Low	≤ 2.33	38	19.0
Moderate	2.33 – 3.66	21	10.5
High	≥ 3.67	141	70.5

Given the respondents' level of social media buying behavior (Table 4), the results indicated that a high proportion (70.5%) reported a relatively high level of buying behavior. Meanwhile, 19.0 percent of them was categorized as having a low level of buying behavior and 10.5 percent as a moderate level of buying behavior. Overall, the mean score for the dimension of openness to experience is 3.87, which higher than the midpoint (3), and resides in the range towards high level as well. Hence, the respondents participated in the study were assumed having high level of social media buying behavior.

Hypotheses testing

Five hypotheses were developed at the beginning stage of this research after the objectives were established. Table 5 illustrates the results of Pearson correlation coefficient analysis for the first four hypotheses (H₁-H₄) and the results of multiple regression analysis for the last hypothesis, i.e., H₅, respectively.

Table 5: Results of Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	Analysis Method	Result	Decision
H ₁ : There is a significant relationship between the social media’s attitude and consumer buying behaviour among young adults in Kuantan.	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	r=.946 p=.000	H ₁ is supported
H ₂ : There is a significant relationship between the social media’s source of information and consumer buying behaviour among young adults in Kuantan.	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	r=.970 p=.000	H ₂ is supported
H ₃ : There is a significant relationship between the social media’s credibility and consumer buying behaviour among young adults in Kuantan.	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	r=.980 p=.000	H ₃ is supported
H ₄ : There is a significant relationship between the social media’s interactivity and consumer buying behaviour among young adults in Kuantan.	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	r= .973 p=.000	H ₄ is supported
H ₅ : Social media’s attitude, source of information, credibility or interactivity is the most dominant factor influencing consumer buying behaviour among young adults in Kuantan.	Multiple Linear Regression	F=1773.790, p=.000, R ² =0.947, Adjusted R ² =0.947 Attitude (β=.262; t=5.076; p=.000) Source of information (β=.721; t=13.941; p=.000)	H ₅ is partially supported (Social media’s credibility and interactivity were dropped from the analysis)

The results for Pearson correlation coefficient analysis showed that attitude (r=.946; p=.000), source of information (r=.970; p=.000), credibility (r=.980; p=.000), and interactivity (r=.973; p=.000) were significantly and positively associated with consumer buying behavior. In terms of the nature of their relationships, interestingly, all social media factors were almost identical in their strength in influencing the consumer buying behavior, showing a strong relationship. All the results obtained in this analysis showed H1-H4 are supported, indicating that the more positive social media’s attitudes, more sources of information, and more favorable towards perceived credibility and perceived interactivity, the more the respondents tend to be

involved in social media buying behavior. In addition, the current findings also found to be consistent with previous studies which discovered that social media's attitude (Osman & Lim, 2022; Varghese & Agrawal, 2021; Zhong et al., 2018), source of information (Kim et al., 2014; Li & Suh, 201; Reyes-Menendez et al., 2019), credibility (Anna & Hanna, 2016; Hsieh & Li, 2020; Osman & Lim, 2022; Weismueller et al., 2020) and interactivity (Cao et al., 2021; Lambrecht et al., 2018; Li & Wang, 2014) were significantly influenced consumer buying behavior.

Multiple linear regression was then used to analyze selected predictors' contribution to test hypothesis 5. However, before conducting this analysis, testing is done to determine whether the assumptions before using multiple regression are met. Based on the tolerance level and variance inflation factors (VIF) statistics, it was found that there were multicollinearity issues involving social media credibility and interactivity variables. Therefore, these two measures were dropped from this multiple regression analysis.

Subsequently, the results from multiple linear regression analysis showed that the F-ratio value of 1773.790, with a significant level of 0.000, which is less than 0.01, indicated that the regression model was statistically significant. This implied that the dependent variable (consumer buying behavior) and predictors (social media's attitude and source of information) had statistically significant associations. As a result, the overall model is significant, and the model's accuracy was very high. The result also indicated that the four social media factors' proportional contribution to consumer buying behavior was also high ($R^2=.947$). Then, referring to the results of Adjusted R square of 0.947, it was indicated that the two factors could predict up to 94.7% of the factors influencing consumer buying behavior through social media.

Since two factors were dropped from the analysis, it can only be concluded that H_5 was partially supported. In addition, to determine the strongest or dominant predictor for social media's factors influencing consumer buying behavior, the beta-value statistics indicated that it turned to be the influence of social media's source of information ($\beta =.721$; $p=.000$). This result was also consistent with the results of Pearson coefficient analysis which shown that between these two factors, source of information was found to be the greater in influencing factor towards consumer buying behavior ($r=.970$).

Conclusion and Implications

This study was designed to understand better social media buying behavior by considering the influence of selected social media factors, i.e., attitude, source of information, credibility, dan interactivity. In this way, the study provided an exploratory examination on gauging the level of social media buying behavior, testing the relationship between each social media factor and the dependent variable, i.e.,

consumer buying behavior, as well as determining the contributions of the factors. Finally, the strongest or dominant social media factor was also identified. Subsequently, from Pearson coefficient analysis, significant, positive, and strong relationships between social media factors and buying behavior were found. However, multicollinearity issues dropped social media's credibility and interactivity in the multiple linear regression. Finally, social media's source of information was found to be the most dominant predictors in influencing consumer buying behavior.

The findings of this study are seen to have implications for several parties. Among them are social media users, the government, and marketers. Social media has been found to influence consumer purchasing behavior significantly. This can be seen through descriptive findings that show that consumer purchasing behavior is at a high level. The same is true of the inferential analysis results, which found that each social media factor has a significant relationship to this buying behavior. Each of them also shows the presence of positive and strong influences that illustrate the strength of these factors. Therefore, consumers should be able to use social media as best as possible so that their purchasing decisions are made wisely and carefully because only some things displayed on social media are clear, and there may even be advertisements, for example, that are misleading and based solely on testimonials. The possibility of making impulse buying decisions will easily happen even when browsing the internet, including social media (Adnan & Osman, 2022; Pradhan, 2018). Social media can provide an interesting experience to consumers, ultimately creating a positive attitude toward social media (Varghese & Agrawal, 2021).

Moreover, the present study also found that social media's source of information significantly contributed to consumer buying behavior. This is to imply that consumers also like to search for information and purchase guidance by referring to other consumers' online reviews as they are relatively easy to access (Ismagilova et al., 2020). Consumers' reviews describing their experiences can be regarded as testimonials that can influence other consumers (Cui et al., 2012). Referring to the ELM theory, as briefly mentioned at the beginning of the previous discussion, peripheral cues can incur the purchase intention of consumers who rely on simple cues in purchasing. The results of a study by Osman and Lim (2022) found that review valence is the most significant factor influencing consumer buying behavior.

In addition, social media's source of information was determined as the most influential social media factor on consumer buying behavior. Social media is also used for product and service reviews and recommendations in business and marketing. As discussed above, it is very common for consumers to read reviews and comments before buying a product or using a service (Casado-Díaz et al., 2020). Social media provides first-hand data, but a pressing problem is distinguishing true information from misinformation and rumors. Besides review, social media influences also play a role as important sources of information to many consumers. In this case,

they are playing a role as opinion leaders (Lin et al., 2018; Pilgrim & Bohnet-Joschko, 2019), and they can provide a huge influence on product marketing since they are viewed as persuasive testimonies that assist followers in creating trust (Oueslati et al., 2020). Therefore, marketers or businesses should ensure that the products they advertise are accompanied by clear product information and are endorsed by a clean image opinion leader to meet the needs of consumers to identify honest online merchants by displaying important details about the merchant himself. Along the same vein, the government also needs to make periodic monitoring so that unethical traders are not allowed to operate through the internet, including on social media.

Lastly, this study can also help consumers to understand their social media buying behavior. As referred to analysis (i.e., based on the adjusted R-square of 0.947), it can be stated that the factors studied have a very large influence on the purchasing behavior of consumers. Therefore, consumers are advised to refer to certain factors, especially from the aspect of information, before they make a purchase decision so that the money they spend is worth it, and they can also implement self-protection.

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ISSN 1511-998X

