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THE IMPLICATION OF ONLINE MARKETING STRATEGIES ON CONSUMERS' DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IN MALAYSIA

Ahmad Daniel Haiqal Ahmad Saifuddin[1]
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Abstract

Marketing can be considered crucial in today's modern world due to increased competition in technological advancements. Online platforms have permitted the evolution of online marketing strategies. Everything is now available online, with applications and websites allowing consumers to shop at their leisure and in their time zone. With both advancements in technology between online marketing and online purchasing, and thus the objective of this paper is to find the relationship between online marketing strategies and consumers' decision-making process in Malaysia. The focus of this study is to 1) to identify consumers' perspectives on existing strategies of online marketing, 2) to investigate the relationship between online marketing strategies and consumers' decision-making process in Malaysia and 3) to examine the most significant online marketing strategies in influencing consumers' decision-making process in Malaysia. The target respondents of this study were Malaysian youth who have had engaged in purchasing or buying through an online medium to understand what kind of marketing is being used to make that decision. Online questionnaires have been distributed to Malaysians, specifically those who had experience purchasing online. The quantitative data were then analysed through descriptive, Pearson Correlation and Multiple Regression analysis using IBM SPSS. The Pearson results showed social media ($r = 0.369$, $p = 0.01$) and online advertisement ($r = 0.298$, $p = 0.01$) have a weak relationship towards consumers' decision-making process while electronic words of mouth have a moderate relationship with consumer's decision-making process with $r = 0.441$, $p = 0.01$. The Multiple Regression analysis also showed that electronic words of mouth ($p < 0.005$, $B = 0.322$) give the highest influence factor toward consumers' decision-making process. The research will help researchers and business operators to understand the youth decision-making process better. Online marketing provides customers with more information while helping lower prices and growing companies across the globe. This buying behaviour can benefit both business operators and researchers to further enhance their knowledge for better marketing strategies in the future.

Keywords: Online marketing; Decision-making process; Electronic words of mouth; Social media; Online advertisements

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Introduction

A business can expand when there are enough resources. This can be achieved by having more buyers. This is when marketing comes in handy. Although it is interchangeable, many have mistaken marketing with selling, but there is a huge difference between them. Selling is a mere changing of goods and services for cash, while marketing associates selling and satisfying customers' needs (Ravindran & Sathyamoorthi, 2019). The same concept can be said about the tourism industry. Therefore, marketing is important to promote and market a particular product and destination in tourism.

In this modern era, almost everything has shifted from conventional to digitalisation. Online methods ensure to reach the target audience constantly with consumers 24/7. According to Ravindran and Sathyamoorthi (2019), digital marketing acts as a medium to reach consumers and meet their satisfaction, achievable using diverse virtual distribution channels. In other words, there is more than one strategy in online marketing. Marketing is a set of processes and an organisational function for producing, conveying, and delivering value to customers and managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the firm and its stakeholders.

On top of that, online marketing will reduce costs and expand businesses while providing sufficient information to consumers around the globe (Yadav, 2019). Online marketing managed to produce intel and information to businesses operator in understanding the behaviour of consumers. These innovative online marketing strategies have countless open opportunities for businesses to prosper. Businesses are now prone to use social media platforms to engage with consumers, providing further information and assistance (Appel, Grewal, & Hadi, 2020). According to Toor, Husnain, and Hussain (2017), an online platform such as e-commerce and social media should be fully utilised to interact directly with users. If this potential is not fully utilised, business associates may be excluded from the industry and the overall market.

The information produced by online marketing has helped consumers' decision-making process (Rajan, 2010). Communication between business operators and consumers act as a driver of the decision-making process because engagement can result in consumer satisfaction (Toor *et al.,* 2017). The most substantial thing that needs to be considered in online media is its engagement. With online marketing, marketing experts considered consumers engagement as crucial. As highlighted by Marketing Science Institute (MSI) (2016), consumer engagement requires maintaining customer attention to a product (Toor *et al.,* 2017). Consumers nowadays rely heavily on the internet for their daily needs; with advancements in technology, they can even customise their needs. This reliability has caused exponential growth towards online-

based purchasing volume. Their trust in e-commerce is responsible for changing consumers' decision behaviour (Kumar *et al.,* 2018).

Significant of study

The research can guide the researcher to understand the current trends and marketing techniques consumers use. The current platform (which are abundant) are not being fully utilised due to a lack of awareness and skills, which could be beneficial for future studies. This research will further help them navigate how consumers choose better deals online. This will help them to understand how consumers decide.

Business operators and marketers can better understand how online marketing affects the decision-making process for the consumer in Malaysian. As a result, they can change and recreate a more functional and straightforward website content for the consumers' satisfaction (Jin, Rahim, Fong, & Cheng, 2018). Business operators can also benefit by understanding the needs and wants of users by adapting to their current behaviour. According to Marketing Interactive (2021), business owners can directly communicate with their technologically advanced consumers while also bolstering their digital presence through social media.

Literature Review

The dependent variable of this study is the consumers' decision-making process. The independent variables were the online marketing strategies, namely electronic words of mouth (eWOM), social media, and online advertising.

Decision-making process amongst Malaysian youth

Decision-making is when a consumer will consider all variables before coming up with a conclusion. It is a process when consumer display their behaviour in search to either purchase, use, evaluate and dispose of products or services that will satisfy them (Panwar, Anand, Ali, & Singal, 2019). According to Tang and Chan (2017), consumer decision-making refers to the effect of the goods and services being bought and used, and the buying process requires phases to achieve the final purchasing point. The behaviour of consumers may vary depending on the intention. The intention is the determining factor for a person to act in certain behaviour, a motivational element that drives consumers to purchase a product or service (Jin *et al*., 2020).

The research can see the determinants that drive the process of decision-making. Consumers' behaviour is closely related to how they conclude to purchase a product and service. What motivates their behaviour is the catalyst towards a decisive conclusion. Therefore, motivation drives their purchase, which can be influenced

through multiple reasoning. According to Stankevich (2017), trends in consumer behaviour have changed over the years. Nowadays, they are more active in searching for a more interactive offering that can provide them with more experience. The author further adds that purchase decision results from a long-detailed process that includes broadening the consumption of information, brand comparison, and evaluation. Khandare and Suryawanshi (2016), on the other hand, stated that customers are getting better, more educated and more mature, and research into current customer behaviour is becoming increasingly crucial for businesses.

Some studies suggest that there are stages in the decision-making process, most of which have a different consensus. Nevertheless, five common stages are being repeated. The five-stage model that defines five major consumer decision-making activities: need identification, knowledge quest, alternative assessment, purchasing decision, and post-purchase behaviour is considered the generally accepted consumer decision-making process mode. Despite that, the stages cannot be applied in sequential order because consumers tend to reverse or skip stages depending on what they are buying. Hence, understanding the stages can be beneficial to develop further designs that can sway consumers to make a decisive conclusion.

In this research, the case study chosen is Malaysian's consumers in making a decision. Malaysian consumers are chosen because they are the target market due to their ability to make their own purchasing decision and increase their spending power (Jin *et al*., 2020). Tang and Chan (2017) explained that Malaysians are keen researchers before buying. Before buying, 70 per cent of Malaysians research (whether online or offline), which is one of the highest rates in Southeast Asia. The same study also suggested that 85 per cent of online shoppers spend RM500 online or less in a month, comparing, finding and eventually being exclusive are the top three factors for shopping online. The Malaysian online population and online shopping pattern set the causal relationship with global online advertising spending. The online population will draw significant online advertising spending to reach the online target audience.

Online marketing on the decision-making process

Creative techniques for online marketing have opened endless opportunities for businesses to succeed. Online marketing provides consumers with more information while helping lower costs and broaden business globally (Yadav, 2019). Consumers today rely heavily on the internet for their everyday needs, and they can also choose to customise their needs with advances in technology. This reliability has triggered an unprecedented spike in the volume of online purchases. Their trust in relying on e-commerce is the guiding force responsible for shifting the decision-making behaviour of consumers (Kumar, Mangla, Luthra, Rana, & Dwivedi, 2018).

To understand the actions of consumers, online marketing has helped create intelligence and information for business operators. As a result, companies are more likely to use social media channels to communicate with clients, to provide additional information and assistants. One of the reasons for the full use of online channels such as e-commerce and social media is to communicate directly with users (Toor *et al.,* 2017).

Electronic words of mouth on the decision-making process

Shin, Chung, and Damhorst (2020) state that the effect of eWOM's valence on attitude and purchase intention was examined in the online shopping context. A negative eWOM had a more significant influence on consumers' attitudes and purchase intention than a positive eWOM. In consumer reviews of a product and subsequent decision-making, negative WOM is more prominent than positive WOM. This tendency is called the bias of negativity or the effect of negativity. In short, negativity bias had a more significant influence on buying decisions and was more compelling than optimistic eWOM. On the other hand, other researchers have proposed that positive confirmation bias, which arises when positive information validates a consumer's initial impressions or previous beliefs, is more convincing than negative information.

In the study proposed by Bahja *et al.* (2019), consumer reviews have a significant and beneficial impact on the tourism client's decision-making process. Online feedback is a factor affecting decision-making by visitors. In particular, the qualitative aspect of online reviews has a more significant effect on travellers' decisions, indicating that online reviews for the hospitality industry should be exposed as a summary showing the negative and positive rankings that affect consumers' buying intentions (Bahja *et al.,* 2019). Besides, it is imperative to deal with online feedback, as each reader may be a potential consumer.

Social media on the decision-making process

In terms of the consumer decision-making process, social media have their way of contributing to the massive amounts of shared data produced by the widespread adoption of social media methods. According to Vinerean (2017), marketers can analyse social media data using sentiment analysis to identify and uncover new information linked to brand awareness and behavioural trends. The author further adds that social media reviews, especially those based on post-purchase experiences, are more helpful than marketer-generated information. It can be said that businesses must also predict how feedback on social media networks can affect their marketing performance. Therefore, reviews on social media, especially those based on post-purchase interactions, are considered more helpful than information

provided by marketers as they provide insights for product marketing as online interactions between businesses and social media users occur (Vinerean, 2017).

Online advertisement on the decision-making process

Consumers are getting better, more educated and more mature, and research into current consumer's behaviour is becoming increasingly crucial for businesses. To enhance today's consumer experience, advertisement is necessary to attract consumers, offering a better atmosphere, goods, services, and policies (Khandare & Suryawanshi, 2016). In some cases, personalised online advertisement is prevalent as it delivers relevant data, thus preserving the user's privacy (Kamaruddin *et al.,* 2020). Advertising is intended to be capable of minimising irritation and helping consumers search for information before making any buying decisions. Personalisation provides a company's strategy for selling its goods by identifying the wants and needs of their clients for the company's products. Kamaruddin *et al*. (2020) stated that the factors affecting online ads are advertising features, user browsing mode and time, internet advertising or website viewpoints, including interest among those referenced with radical advertising methods. Internet production serves as a global communication infrastructure that has created a modern brand advertisement and marketing channel for marketers and organisations to provide advertisers with more cost-effective advertising messages to consumers.

Theoretical framework

Figure 1 illustrates the research framework model is formed that revolves around the independent variables in online marketing such as electronic words of mouth (eWOM), social media, and online advertising that will affect the dependant variable, consumers' decision-making process. Therefore, the focus of this study is to investigate the significant relationship between electronic words of mouth (eWOM), social media, online advertising and the consumer decision-making process.

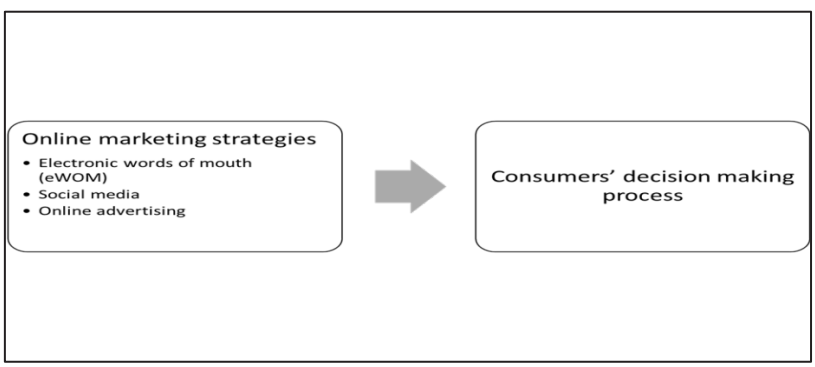

Figure 1: Framework Model for this Research

Methodology

This research adopts a quantitative method approach. A quantitative method is an approach that usually relates to positivism because it relies on structured data collection involving predetermined categories of response. Via questionnaires likely structured observations consisting of many respondents, researchers collect numeric, statistical and mathematical data (Jin *et al*., 2020). An online questionnaire was used for its simplistic way. This approach is easier to get to the target respondents.

This research uses a cross-sectional study. A cross-sectional study involves looking at data from a population at one specific point. The participants in this type of study are selected based on certain particular variables of interest in the research. The benefit of this is that it is inexpensive and fast.

The research selects the sample for the study from the total population of 32 million Malaysians. In this research, a simple random sampling method is used where any member of the population has an equal chance of being chosen in a non-random sample. The respondents in this study will focus on Malaysians, especially those using online platforms.

The research will be conducted throughout Malaysia, targeting Malaysian youth. As stated by Youth Policy (2014), Malaysian youth mentioned that the age of youth ranges from 15 – 40 years old. Therefore, youth age represents the target segment for this research (Jin *et al*., 2020). A rough estimate based on the most recent population data breakdown (as of mid-2018) available from the Department of Statistics reveals that out of Malaysia's 32.4 million population, around 14 million are between the ages of 15 and 40. In-depth, the research target is to conduct the questionnaire with Malaysian youth who have had engaged in purchasing or buying through an online medium to understand what kind of marketing is being used to make that decision.

The data collected was investigated and interpreted using IBM SPSS software version 20 in this report. This software is the best method to interpret and process the descriptive analysis, Pearson correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis. There is also a pre-test, pilot study and reliability test offered.

The research instrument is a data collection system designed to obtain the detailed information necessary for the specific topic of interest from the target participants (Jin *et al.,* 2020). In this research, a questionnaire was constructed to measure the implication of online marketing strategies on consumers' decision-making process amongst Malaysian youth. The questionnaire consists of several questions relating to the research subject that have been produced in print or electronic form and will then be sent to the target respondents with a request to answer the question in the

predetermined order (Jin *et al.,* 2020). Table 1 presents the items in the instrument used in this study.

Table 1:The Constructed Questionnaire based on Past Studies

Section	Name of item	Label	Indicator	Source
A: Socio-demographic profile	Gender	Gender	• Male • Female	(Jin *et al.*, 2020)
	Age	Age	• Below 18 years old • 18 - 22 years old • 23 - 27 years old • 28 - 32 years old • 33 - 37 years old • 38 - 40 years old • Above 40 years old	(Jin *et al.*, 2020)
	Marital status	Marital status	• Single • Married • Divorced • Widowed	(Jin *et al.*, 2020)
	Education level	Education	• UPSR • PT3/PMR/SPM/O Level • STPM/ A Level • Diploma • Undergraduate • Postgraduate • Professional Certificates	(Jin *et al.*, 2020)
	Occupation	Occupation	• Unemployed • Student • Freelancer • Protective Services • Healthcare Support • Sale and Related Occupation • Engineering and Related Technical	(Jin *et al.*, 2020)

Table 1 (continues)

Section	Name of item	Label	Indicator	Source
			• Legal Support • Business and Financial Operation • Management • Office and Administrative • Education and Training • Computer/Information technology • Farming, Fishing and Forestry • Art and Design • Community and Social Services • Personal Care and Service	
	Personal monthly level income	Income	• RM 1000 and below • RM 1001 – RM 2000 • RM 2001 – RM 3000 • RM 3001 – RM 4000 • RM 4001 – RM 5000 • Above RM 5000	(Jin *et al.*, 2020)
B: Consumer decision-making process	B1	Experience in purchasing online	• Yes • No	(Jin e*t al.*, 2020)
	B2	Intention to purchase online	• Yes • No	(Jin *et al.,* 2020)
	B3	Last online purchase made	• Less than 3 Months • 3 - 7 Months • 8 - 12 Months	(Jin *et al.*, 2020)

Table 1 (continues)

Section	Name of item	Label	Indicator	Source
	B4	Type of item purchase	• Flight • Accommodation • Car Rental • Travel Accessories	(Jin *et al.*, 2020)
	B5	Frequency of purchase on the last 12 months	• 1 - 2 times • 3 - 4 times • 5 - 6 times • 7 times and above	(Jin *et al.*, 2020)
	B6	Favor of using online purchasing method	• Yes • No	(Panagiota, 2017)
	B7	Confidence in decision-making	• Not at all confident • Not Sure • Sure • Confident • Very Confident	(Shin *et al.*, 2020)
	B8	Save time with online shopping	• Yes • No	(Omar & Atteya, 2020)
	B9	Preference on home delivery	• Not at all • Not Sure • Sure • Very Sure	(Moore, Smallman, Wilson, & Simmons, 2012)
	B10	Confidence in initial intention.	• Not at all confident • Not Sure • Sure • Confident • Very Confident	(Moore *et al.*, 2012)
Electronic words of mouth on the decision-making process				
C: Online marketing strategies on consumers' decision-making process	C1A	Trust of reviews	• Not at all • Little • Enough • Much • Very much	(Panagiota, 2017)

Table 1 (continues)

Section	Name of item	Label	Indicator	Source
	C2A	Effect of reviews from other consumers'	• Not at all • Little • Enough • Much • Very much	(Panagiota, 2017)
	C3A	Effect of fake reviews on the intention	• Not at all • Little • Enough • Much • Very much	(Panagiota, 2017)
	C4A	Participation in making review/leave comment	• Not at all • Little • Enough • Much • Very much	(Panagiota, 2017)
	C5A	Awareness of fake reviews	• Not at all • Little • Enough • Much • Very much	(Panagiota, 2017)
	C6A	Information about the product/service	• Not at all • Little • Enough • Much • Very much	(Panagiota, 2017)
	C7A	Perception on the quality	• Not at all • Little • Enough • Much • Very much	(Panagiota, 2017)
	C8A	Online review before making a decision	• Not at all • Little • Enough • Much • Very much	(Panagiota, 2017)

Table 1 (continues)

Section	Name of item	Label	Indicator	Source
Social media on the decision-making process				
C: Online marketing strategies on consumers' decision-making process	C1B	Effect of social media on consumers' decision-making process	• Not at all • Little • Enough • Much • Very much	(Panagiota, 2017)
	C2B	Type of social media used	• Facebook • Twitter • YouTube • Instagram • Flickr • Foursquare • Pinterest • LinkedIn • Blogs • Others	(Panagiota, 2017)
	C3B	Frequentness on being on social media (in a week)	• 1-2 times • 3-4 times • 5- 6 times • Everyday	(Tang & Chan, 2017)
	C4B	Duration of being online	• Less than 1 hour • 1-3 hours • 4-6 hours • 7-9 hours • 10 hours and above	(Tang & Chan, 2017)
	C5B	Purpose of being on social media	• News and Information • Socialisation • Relaxing • Education purpose • Entertainment • Other, please specify	(Tang & Chan, 2017)

Table 1 (continues)

Section	Name of item	Label	Indicator	Source
	C6B	Picture based social media	• Instagram • Pinterest • Tumblr	(Jin *et al.*, 2020)
	C7B	Written based social media	• Twitter • Facebook • Blogspot	(Jin *et al.*, 2020)
	C8B	Video based social media	• YouTube • TikTok	(Jin *et al.*, 2020)
Online advertisement on the decision-making process				
C: Online marketing strategies on consumers' decision-making process	C1C	Influence of online advertisement to search more info of product/service	• Strongly disagree • Disagree • Slightly disagree • Slightly agree • Agree • Strongly agree	(Tang & Chan, 2017)
	C2C	Online advertisement influences me to compare the product to other alternatives.	• Strongly disagree • Disagree • Slightly disagree • Slightly agree • Agree • Strongly agree	(Tang & Chan, 2017)
	C3C	Influence perception of the product/service	• Strongly disagree • Disagree • Slightly disagree • Slightly agree • Agree • Strongly agree	(Tang & Chan, 2017)

Table 1 (continues)

Section	Name of item	Label	Indicator	Source
	C4C	Influence decision-making process	• Strongly disagree • Disagree • Slightly disagree • Slightly agree • Agree • Strongly agree	(Tang & Chan, 2017)
	C5C	Influence to try the product/brand	• Strongly disagree • Disagree • Slightly disagree • Slightly agree • Agree • Strongly agree	(Tang & Chan, 2017)
	C6C	Interest to click on the advertisement	• Strongly disagree • Disagree • Slightly disagree • Slightly agree • Agree • Strongly agree	(Tang & Chan, 2017)
	C7C	Remember the online advertisement if the online advertisement is offbeat and attractive.	• Strongly disagree • Disagree • Slightly disagree • Slightly agree • Agree • Strongly agree	(Tang & Chan, 2017)
	C8C	Information of product is credible and attractive	• Strongly disagree • Disagree • Slightly disagree • Slightly agree • Agree • Strongly agree	(Tang & Chan, 2017)

Findings

This study collected the survey questionnaire via social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Twitter. The questionnaires were made using google form and were distributed through the online method. The respondents reached 307 before the form was closed to the public. The questionnaire was supposed to get a sample size of 385, making the response rate approximately 79.8%.

Descriptive analysis

Table 2 show the descriptive analysis of all variables in this study. To identify consumers' perspectives on the existing strategies of online marketing, each item will be ranked according to the mean value. First, the mean value and standard deviation for each item under online marketing strategies, namely electronic words of mouth (WOM), social media (SM) and online advertisement (OA), are stated. Next, a summary of the computed means of all items according to variables is shown in Table 2 below. According to the summary, electronic words of mouth (WOM) have the highest mean of 5.049. It is then followed by social media (SM) with an average mean of 5.019, decision-making process with a mean of 4.829 and online advertisement (OA) with a mean of 4.642. This means that majority of the respondent agreed with most of the question items listed in each variable.

Table 2: Descriptive analysis

	Decision-making Process	Electronic Words of Mouth	Social Media	Online Advertisement
Mean	4.8296	5.0499	5.0195	4.6425
Std. Deviation	0.55354	0.51099	0.55399	0.74491

Note: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree, 6 = Strongly Agree

Pearson correlation

Table 3 illustrate the result of the Pearson Correlation. There is a significant relationship between consumers' decision-making with all three of the independent variables, namely electronic words of mouth (WOM), social media (SM) and online advertisement (OA).

Table 3: Pearson Correlation analysis

Correlations					
		DM	WOM	SM	OA
DM	Pearson Correlation	1	.441**	.369**	.298**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	307	307	307	307

The result in Table 3 indicates that there is a correlation between consumers' decision-making process and three of the online marketing strategies, namely electronic words of mouth (WOM), social media (SM) and online advertisement (OA). However, the strength in correlation in the independent variables varies between weak and moderate. For example, social media and online advertisement have a

weak relationship with consumers' decision-making process with an R-value of 0.369 and R-value of 0.298, respectively. At the same time, electronic words of mouth have a moderate relationship with the consumer's decision-making process, with an R-value of 0.441.

Multiple regression analysis

Multiple linear regression was used to calculate the variance explained in the decision-making process amongst youths. A significant regression equation was found (F(3,303) = 31.590, p < .000), with an R^2 of .238. Thus, the beta coefficient between consumers' decision-making process with online marketing strategies (electronic words of mouth, social media and online advertisement) has produced an R-square of 0.238 or 23.8%. Table 4 show the model summary, and Table 5 the ANOVA statistics.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model Summary[b]				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.488[a]	.238	.231	.48550

The ANOVA statistics show a significant value of 0.000, less than 0.5 (p <0.05). Thus, this indicates that there is significant linear regression between the independent variables and dependent variables.

Table 5: ANOVA Statistics

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	22.339	3	7.446	31.590	.000[b]
	Residual	71.421	303	.236		
	Total	93.760	306			

Based on the Coefficient statistics, it indicates that electronic words of mouth having p<0.005 (0.000) and social media with p<0.005 (0.004) significantly influence consumers' decision-making process. On the other hand, the online advertisement with p>0.005 (0.063) does not influence the consumers' decision-making.

The analysis indicates that electronic words of mouth (B = 0.322) give the highest influence factor toward consumers' decision-making process. This answered the third

research question about knowing the most effective online marketing strategies in Malaysian consumers' decision-making process.

Table 6: Coefficient statistics

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.823	.312		5.847	.000
	WOM	.349	.062	**.322**	5.596	**.000**
	SM	.175	.060	**.175**	2.929	**.004**
	OA	.079	.042	.106	1.864	.063

Discussion

From the findings, it can be found that most of the respondents agreed with most of the items posted on the questionnaire. However, with most of the multiple backgrounds of respondents received, there are some disagreements with some items. Hence, the respondents feel initiated to answer truthfully on the current marketing strategies and their decision-making process.

The items were relevantly accurate to their factors, consistent with the research questions been made. Marketers can now opt for online strategies to reach their consumers as the internet is more convenient and offers personalisation for their content (Micu *et al.,* 2017). The analysis from social media is in line with some past studies that suggest companies are more likely to use social media channels to communicate with clients and provide additional information and assistants (Toor *et al.*, 2017).

The findings of this study reveal that electronic Words of Mouth (WOM), social media and online advertisement have a significant relationship with consumers' decision-making in Malaysia. This is in line with Kumar (2018) research, which suggests that consumers today rely heavily on the internet for their everyday needs as they choose to customise their needs with advances in technology. This reliability has triggered an unprecedented spike in the volume of online purchases. Their trust in e-commerce is the guiding force responsible for shifting the decision-making behaviour of consumers.

The first variable in this study, the electronic Words of Mouth (eWOM), significantly affected Malaysian consumers' decision-making. This is supported by research from Bahja *et al.* (2019), which stated that online reviews play a crucial role in the decision-

making process when buying intangible goods. Therefore, electronic WOM is important and valuable as it influences consumers' choices.

The second variable is social media, which was also proved to have a significant relationship with Malaysian consumers' decision-making process. Thus, social media usage is booming, making it necessary for marketers to focus on reaching consumers (Micu *et al*., 2017).

The Pearson Correlation Analysis also confirmed that online advertising has a significant relationship with Malaysian consumers' decision-making. The findings show that the online advertisement made it more widespread and more significant in its influence and effects and act as a promotional technique involving the use of the internet as a tool for attracting traffic from the website and labelling and delivering marketing messages to the right consumers (Khandare & Suryawanshi, 2016). However, online advertising does not significantly affect decision-making in the regression model.

The multiple regression results revealed that electronic word of mouth and social media influence consumers' decision-making, while online advertisements do not. This study connects the studies on electronic words of mouth from Kamarudin *et al*. (2020), which stated that internet production serves as a global communication infrastructure. The internet has created a modern brand advertisement and marketing channel for marketers and marketing organisations to use and provide advertisers with more cost-effective advertising messages to consumers. According to Panagiota (2017), the study of social media is also acceptable, which stated that social media is an effective marketing tool for companies to generate a better consumer interaction process. On the other hand, the study proposed by Bahja *et al*. (2019) for online advertisement stated that consumer reviews have a significant and beneficial impact on the tourism client's decision-making process, which is irrelevant from this study.

Implication and Conclusion

Consumers today rely heavily on the internet for their everyday needs, and they can also choose to customise their needs with advances in technology. This reliability has triggered an unprecedented spike in the volume of online purchases. Their trust in relying on e-commerce is the guiding force responsible for shifting the decision-making behaviour of consumers (Kumar *et al.,* 2018). Online marketing provides consumers with more information while helping lower prices and growing companies across the globe. This buying behaviour can benefit both business operators and researchers to further enhance their knowledge for better marketing strategies in the future.

This study aimed to identify the implication of online marketing strategies on Malaysia's consumer decision-making process. The study distributed the questionnaire through Google form and used social media platforms to find the respondents. The respondents of this study only managed to reach 307 respondents out of a total of 384 respondents. The Pearson Correlation findings have confirmed a significant relationship between electronic words of mouth, social media, and online advertisement on Malaysian consumers' decision-making process. The Multiple Regression model also revealed that electronic word of mouth and social media influence consumers' decision-making, while online advertisement does not. On that note, it is seen that electronic words of mouth are the most influential. Since this study focused on online marketing strategies, it is recommended for marketers, researchers and other related authorities to eliminate all sorts of insecurities about online purchasing to convince the consumer.

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