

## A Conceptual Analysis of Tech-Savvy Trait, Emotional Intelligence and Customer-Oriented Behaviour among Malaysian Nursing Students

Aervina Mison, Ong Choon Hee

Azman Hashim International Business School, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Johor, Malaysia.

Email: aervina64@gmail.com

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### Abstract

Today, the delivery of care is undergoing drastic shifts, everything from where we deliver care to how we provide care. Emerging technologies and innovations are being positioned to disrupt not only healthcare, but also nursing practice. A new generation of nursing students, Generation Z, are entering undergraduate educational programs and are starting to move into the nursing profession. Generation Z or Gen Z are known as digitally tech-savvy individuals born from 1992 onwards. Generation Z is comfortable with technologies and they are also referred as the "digital natives". Researchers reported the new generation of nursing graduates enter the nursing profession feeling unprepared to address the demands of patient care proficiently. Customer-oriented behaviour has been validated as the primary approach to achieve higher quality of care and improving patients' satisfaction with the healthcare service delivered. Meanwhile, emotional intelligence is a crucial concept for nurses to understand the patients' perspectives and demands. Extensive researches have empirically supported that emotional intelligence is related to behaviour. Owing to that fact, this paper aims to impart a conceptual analysis of the relationship between tech-savvy trait and customer-oriented behaviour among Malaysian nursing students and mediates by emotional intelligence. This conceptual paper is guided by trait theory and emotional intelligence theory in establishing the proposed theoretical framework. Our conceptual analysis suggests that emotional intelligence significantly mediates the relationship between tech-savvy trait and customer-oriented behaviour. In addition, this study provides an avenue for researchers to examine customer-oriented behaviour in the healthcare context of nursing students population, expansion of trait theory by including a new construct of tech-savvy trait as well as the inclusion of emotional intelligence as a mediator.

**Keywords:** Tech-Savvy, Emotional Intelligence, Customer-Oriented Behaviour, Nursing Students, Healthcare.

**Introduction**

Technologies are often developed with the best intentions to boost performance, increase efficiencies or reduce the cost of a care (Clipper *et al.*, 2018). At the same time, accelerating technological advancements are also opening up enormous opportunities for developing innovative services (Menor, Tatikonda and Sampson, 2002; Roberts, 2000). It is clear that conventional service delivery is experiencing significant transformations due to the infusion of technology into service encounters (Bitner, Brown and Meuter, 2000). Emerging innovations and technologies are being positioned to disrupt not only healthcare, but also nursing practice. The nature of nursing work is rapidly changing in all settings across the continuum. The role of a nurse is highly information intensive. The healthcare personnel are required to become smart and agile change agents in order to integrate the new technologies into care models. Thus, healthcare personnel need to leverage the opportunities for the innovation adoption, which means that it is crucial to fill the knowledge gaps, become more tech-savvy and aware of conflict, at the same time, seek the right opportunities for disruption (Davidson, Thompson and Harris, 2017).

The significance of technology adoption in health science and nursing education is directed by the era of 21st century or Industrial Revolution (IR) 4.0 (Diño and Ong, 2019). In recent years, the intensification of portable technologies such as laptops, tablets and smart-phones has put technology in the hands of students (Incerti, 2013). Nursing students are identified as a novice, a stage classified by being inexperienced and rigidly practicing skills according to textbook guidelines (Butts and Rich, 2015). A new generation of nursing students, Generation Z, also known as iGeneration, iGen, Homelanders or postMillennials (Chicca, 2019; Dimock, 2019) are entering undergraduate educational programs and are beginning to move into the nursing profession (Hampton and Keys, 2016). Generation Z or Gen Z are attributed to digitally tech-savvy individuals who are born from 1992 onwards. Generation Z is familiar and comfortable with technologies which also lead them to be known as the "digital natives". They are the first generation in which digital technologies play a key role in providing them with opportunities. The birth of the digital era has definitely changed the classrooms and the students who were coined as digital natives, which are individuals born after the advent of digital technology (Prensky, 2001). Students born after the advent of the digital era are used to living surrounded by electronics, which provide assistance with daily tasks, connection with peers and entertainment (Prensky, 2001). Hence, contemporary nursing students are expected to employ technology while multitasking and nurse educators need to develop ingenious methodologies that leverage the strengths of this tech-savvy generation (Campbell and Daley, 2013).

However, research indicated that new graduates are unprepared to address the demands of patient care proficiently in the nursing profession (Richardson and Claman, 2014). Studies showed that less than 36% of Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) graduates meet the entry-level requirements needed for critical thinking and safe care delivery skills (Richardson and Claman, 2014). This indicates that very few of the new generation of nursing graduates are ready to enter the workforce. In addition, nursing shortages, high student-to-faculty ratios and today's healthcare standards and demands require ingenious methodologies to promote clinical reasoning and clinical judgement (Campbell and Daley, 2013). These factors also affect the clinical experience of the students by substantially restricting their ability to practise nursing skills safely (Richardson and Claman, 2014). Reseachers also reported the new generation of nursing graduates were being criticized for their dissatisfactory attitudes

towards patients and deterioration in the standard service delivery performance (Barnett, Namasivayam and Narudin, 2010).

Owing to that fact, focus should be directed to the customer-oriented behaviour of the new nursing students generation as customer-oriented behaviour has been validated as an essential approach to achieve higher quality of care and improving patients' satisfaction with the healthcare service delivered. Customer-oriented behaviour is conceptualized base on customer orientation philosophy. Customer orientation is a key marketing perspective that prioritises the needs of the consumer, while not disregarding those of other stakeholders, in order to maintain an organization's long-term profitability (Hartline, Maxham and McKee, 2000). Since the behaviours of front-line personnel who frequently communicate and interact with customers contribute significantly to the overall perception of service quality by customers, customer orientation is also seen as the application of the marketing concept at front-line personnel level. Since highly customer-oriented service personnel often commit to behaviours that lead to customer satisfaction while preventing customer dissatisfaction behaviours (Dunlap *et al.*, 1988), customer-oriented behaviours have widely been recognized to produce long-term favourable organizational outcomes (Brady and Cronin, 2001; Deshpande, Farley and Webster, 1993).

Thus, customer-oriented behaviour is a sequel of the organizational customer orientation philosophy and marketing strategy (Brady and Cronin, 2001; Jeng, 2018; Kanten *et al.*, 2017; Leckie, Widing and Whitwell, 2017; Periatt, LeMay and Chakrabarty, 2004; Saxe and Weitz, 1982; Varghese *et al.*, 2017). In addition, customer-oriented behaviour contributes to better customer services (Sousa and Coelho, 2011), helps sustain long-term customer relationship (Kelley, 1992) and provides customers with better service quality (Brady and Cronin, 2001). The customer-oriented behaviour of employees serves as a key factor in the customers' overall positive experience. In fact, customer-oriented behaviour is often seen as the predisposition or propensity of employees to fulfil customer needs in the context of workplace (Donavan, Brown and Mowen, 2004). It is a primary determinant of customer overall satisfaction in order to build a long-term profitable organization. Scholars have specifically described customer-oriented behaviour as understanding customers' needs, assisting customers to achieve their goals and influencing customers by providing information and support (Stock and Hoyer, 2005). Moreover, Franke and Park (2006) described customer-oriented behaviour as a set of behaviours demonstrating a high concern for customers' interests and needs also ensuring long-term customer satisfaction. Therefore, this study intend to examine the customer-oriented behaviour among Malaysian nursing students. Since the new generation of nursing students are known as tech-savvy and digital natives, this study will also examine the relationship between tech-savvy trait and customer-oriented behaviour.

In addition, researches showed emotional intelligence relates with behaviours (Jordan and Troth, 2004; Ramachandran *et al.*, 2011; Robbins *et al.*, 2010; Shih and Susanto, 2010). According to Singh (2006), Dr. Robert Cooper has explains emotional intelligence as the capacity to sense, understand and constructively apply the power of emotions as a source of information, creativity, influence, trust and human energy. Emotional intelligence is a predominant principle for nurses to consider patients' thoughts and demands in healthcare (McQueen, 2004). Kong *et al.* (2016) indicated that emotional intelligence was positively associated with clinical ability, this is because nursing students with high emotional intelligence may be able to understand the patient's perspective better and they are also likely to experience empathy. Hence, emotional intelligence may have significant influence towards nursing students' customer-oriented behaviour. Therefore, the present study aims;

- To examine the effects of tech-savvy trait on customer-oriented behaviour
- To examine the effects of tech-savvy trait on emotional intelligence
- To examine the effects of emotional intelligence on customer-oriented behaviour
- To examine the mediating effects of emotional intelligence on the relationship between tech-savvy trait and customer-oriented behaviour

## **Literature Review**

### *Customer-Oriented Behaviour*

Customer-oriented behaviour is conceptualized from customer orientation. Customer orientation is defined as a “set of beliefs that puts the customer's interest first, but it does not exclude stakeholders such as owners, managers and employees in order to develop a long-term profitable enterprise” (Deshpande *et al.*, 1993). Susskind, Kacmar and Borchgrevink (2003) defined customer orientation as “the importance that service providers place on their customers' needs relating to service offerings and the extent to which service providers are willing to put forth time and effort to satisfy their customers”. Customer orientation is an important facet of organizational agility (Kanten *et al.*, 2017). Customer orientation is marked as a key business strategy that helps understand its customers, source of competitive advantage and supports the management to achieve their business objectives (Zhang and Yang, 2018). Employees with customer orientation intentions have better learning, knowledge enhancement and superior understanding of the customers' requirements (Bagozzi *et al.*, 2012). Customer orientation enhances front line employees' creativity (Jeng, 2018) and improves the performance in buyer and seller relationship (Leckie, Widing and Whitwell, 2017). Moreover, deep rooted customer orientation among the employees leads to novel solution of customers' queries and better customer service (Babakus, Yavas and Karatepe, 2017).

In the healthcare context, customer-oriented behaviour plays a crucial role in the engagement and interaction of healthcare personnel and patients. Daniel and Darby (1997) clarified that the term customer-oriented behaviour refers to the caregivers' service behaviour and the capacity to adjust their service in order to reflect patient's reality. Darby and Daniel (1999) highlighted that the customer-oriented behaviour need to be accommodated into the aspects of caring processes to fulfil patient's needs in terms of intimate and complex services. In particular, customer-oriented behaviour is able to secure better interaction and relationship between nurses and patients since it is recognized as service behaviours committed to acquire patient information and realizing patient's expectations (Darby and Daniel, 1999). Therefore, customer-oriented behaviour is an essential interface element for nurses to meet the incremental patient's expectation. The present study focus on the customer-oriented behaviour among nursing students as it is believed to be a crucial antecedent for long-term healthcare issues in Malaysia (Johari and Ong, 2013) as they are the successors of nursing care in Malaysia healthcare sector and nurses form the largest group of healthcare providers (Price *et al.*, 2013).

### *Tech-Savvy Trait and Customer-Oriented Behaviour*

Technology such as mobile devices, has been absorbed in our daily lives and imparts unlimited access to information and communication. Madeira *et al.* (2009) reported that emerging technologies provide students the opportunity to visualise and interact with learning content by using animation, multimedia, rich graphics, simulation and virtual environments. Studies regarding the use of emerging technologies and mobile learning to improve student learning

are becoming more prolific in higher education (Bozalek *et al.*, 2015; Pimmer and Pachler, 2014; Veletsianos, 2010). In addition, the use of virtual worlds in nursing education and clinical practice is increasingly popular due to technological advancements and the current generation being more tech-savvy. The augmented reality and virtual simulation technologies are the examples of virtual reality technology that is expanding in nursing education (Foronda *et al.*, 2017).

Virtual simulations are capable to replicate the real-world aspects and thus offer safe learning environments for the students where they can practise through the provision of feedback and self-correction until they achieve competence (Aebersold, 2018; Jeffries, 2012). Virtual simulations have become an essential part of the nursing curricula (Aebersold, 2018), involving the use of patient simulators, trained persons, lifelike virtual environments and role-playing (Issenberg *et al.*, 2005). On the same note, virtual worlds can be an outstanding platform for nursing students to apply nursing concepts and enhance the clinical reasoning skills (DeGagne *et al.*, 2013). Over time, the simulation technology development has enhanced the realism and authenticity of simulated environments, resulting in increased responses, satisfaction, learning attitudes, cognitive and affective outcomes among nursing students (Kim, Park and Shin, 2016). According to Press and Prytula (2018), simulation activities are directly associated with student's ability to link theory to practice, improved clinical reasoning and development of professional communication skills in the healthcare arena. In addition, simulation activities able to extend the access of knowledge beyond the scope of technical skills related to patient care (Harris *et al.*, 2014).

Recently, nursing schools are encouraged by the nursing accreditation bodies to integrate nursing informatics and technology subjects in their curriculum in order to prepare nursing students to practice in technology-enabled clinical environments (Cao, Ajjan and Hong, 2013). Information technology in healthcare would provide clinicians with information and tools, such as clinical decision support, that presumably would improve the quality of care and reduce potential medical errors. Internet of Medical Thing (IoMT) is another technological example happening in healthcare sector. It is the next frontier in the digital revolution and it leverages Internet of Thing (IoT) in the healthcare domain (Kumar and Tripathi, 2021). It is targeting preventive care, advance patient care, improve patient satisfaction, enhance population health, patient care management and utilize data analytics constructively in overall health management (Newgensapp, 2018). Based on the aforementioned, technology in nursing education help students to improve their clinical skill competency, quality of care, patient satisfaction and reduce potential medical errors. These are likely to generate customer-oriented behaviour. Therefore, it is proposed that:

**Proposition 1:** Tech-savvy trait has a significant positive relationship with customer-oriented behaviour.

#### *Tech-Savvy Trait and Emotional Intelligence*

The global advancement in science and technology makes it impossible to remain oblivious to the presence of technology when people are singing the praises of the many technological devices that they are using on a daily basis. Beck and Libert (2017) suggested that people should welcome the transition in the industries which utilizing technology such as machine learning and artificial intelligence as these innovations have the potential to boost performance and reduce cost. In fact, people should work to make it fruitful and complementary (Beck and Libert, 2017). As this digital era is a very fast paced, it is wise to

examine own capabilities interacting with, motivating and assessing people by recognizing the strengths and limitations of emotional intelligence and investing in the growth of emotional intelligence (Beck and Libert, 2017). The simplest way is to change our mental model about what is important in our role and begin focusing on how we can better manage, influence and relate to others (Beck and Libert, 2017).

The role of the qualified nurse is constantly evolving and 'portable' skills are the main attributes required by a complex and intense healthcare system. These include the ability to work effectively in teams, the ability to recognize and respond appropriately to one's own and others' feelings and the ability to motivate oneself and others. They are collectively termed as 'emotional intelligence'. Goleman (1996) argues convincingly that emotional intelligence is the determining factor in achieving success and competence. The concepts of professional nursing practice comprise a combination of clinical competence, care and patients and clients engagement (Halldorsdottir, 1996). It is believed that current practice in healthcare education overemphasizes the importance of achieving outcomes related to the first of these aspects, thus failing to recognize the emerging body of evidence to suggest that care and engagement have equal importance in effective, high-quality patient care (Halldorsdottir, 1996).

Tech-savvy and emotional intelligence are two important factors for job requirements for today's organizations (Promsri, 2019). Nonetheless, technology advancement nowadays can enhance interpersonal communication and social interaction among individuals with both positive and negative outcomes (Adib, Yu, and Ismail, 2016). A new generation has sufficient knowledge of how to use technology and tends to spend more time on using digital technologies daily, which, on the one hand, can accommodate their life in a rapid way (Promsri, 2019). On the other hand, an increase of digital technologies usage can lead to a negative impact (Drago, 2015). An empirical evidence of using too much technology is the decrease of face-to-face communication, which is a critical part of social interaction. This is confirmed by a prior study, which revealed that the extension of time spent on technology and digital tools can distract individuals from a realistic moment and reduce face-to-face interaction leading to the decrease of emotional intelligence (Ramasubbu, 2015). A survey of 298 participants also indicated that the use of social media had a negative impact on individual well-being, self esteem and relationships (Indvik, 2012). Also, the recent study demonstrated a negative relationship between digital technology savvy and social interaction within a household (McGrath, 2012). Using too much technology tended not to allow individuals to pay much attention on their emotions especially self-awareness considered as a fundamental of social awareness and relationship management skills (Simples, 2018).

The tech-digital savvy natives generation need to harmonize the use of digital technology, which is based on digital literacy and face-to-face social interaction and should invest more time in building long-term relationship in a non-digital platform (Promsri, 2019; Smith, 2017). This is beneficial for them to increase their emotional and social intelligence as they can improve their understanding of own and other's feelings and behaviours (Promsri, 2019). McGrath (2012) explored the connection between digital technologies within the household and social interaction between individuals. This qualitative study was conducted from four different cases of household using participant observation and semi-structured interviews methods. Results demonstrated that digital technologies were negatively associated with social interaction between individuals within the household. Furthermore, findings of this study showed the high level of digital technologies usage could reduce communication within family members (McGrath, 2012).

Technology had a negative impact on both quality and quantity of face-to-face interaction (Drago, 2015). Moreover, more than 90% of respondents demonstrated their realization on the negative effect of technology on face-to-face interpersonal communication (Drago, 2015). The latest work of Twenge *et al.* (2018) found that adolescents who spent more time on social media and electronic devices were more likely to have mental health problems, which included depression and suicide, than those who spent less time. The study also found that teenagers increased their time on media screen activities more than non-screen activities since 2010, which may, on the one hand, affect their emotional stability. The study demonstrated the relationship between usage of social media and electronic device, which is part of digital literacy level and emotional stability (Twenge *et al.*, 2018). Based on these findings, digital technology apparently had a direct negative impact on emotional intelligence. Seemingly, using too much digital technology may lead to a shorter attention to the way individuals communicate and connect with others in social interaction. Carlson (2017) noted that “less focus means less listening, less understanding, and more superficiality in how we interact.” This implied to the deterioration of emotional intelligence. Therefore, it is proposed that:

**Proposition 2:** Tech-savvy trait has a significant negative relationship with emotional intelligence.

#### *Emotional Intelligence and Customer-Oriented Behaviour*

Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to competently process and use emotion-laden information to guide cognitive tasks like problem-solving and to channel energy on required behaviours (Salovey, Mayer and Caruso, 2002). People high in emotional intelligence are good at regulating and controlling the emotions of themselves and others (Côté, Miners and Moon, 2006; George, 2000; Law, Wong and Song, 2004). Emotional intelligence is also automatically infused into decision making and behaviour (Fiori, 2009). Although emotional intelligence and customer-oriented behaviour are highly important variables for both individual and organizational level, however, the literature on the relationship between emotional intelligence and customer-oriented behaviour are still scarce especially in Malaysia healthcare context. Prior work has tended to present emotions as intimate expressions of self, trustworthy manifestations of inner attitudes and credible sources of information about interpersonal exchanges (Ashkanasy and Daus, 2002; Dasborough and Ashkanasy, 2002). Previous studies have affirmed the predictive power of emotional intelligence on behaviour such as conflict resolution (Jordan and Troth, 2004; Shih and Susanto, 2010). Consistently, emotional intelligence is generally regarded as adeptness at recognizing and managing emotional experiences and responses in self and others and then integrating these to enhance thinking and consequent behaviours (Serrat, 2017). People high in emotional intelligence regulate their emotions to excel at work and in life and perform empathic prosocial behaviours (Miao, Humphrey and Qian, 2017).

Goleman (2001) has conceptualized emotional intelligence into a construct encompassing five competencies; self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy and social skills (Pettijohn, Rozell and Newman, 2010). Each of the five competencies is proposed to have an impact on the way an individual perceives and reacts to all types of events (Pettijohn, Rozell and Newman, 2010). For instance, self-regulation has a strong link to behaviour choice because it encompasses self-control, adaptability and self-monitoring within a situational context. In addition, components such as empathy and motivation are said to shape the way

individuals perceive events and indirectly influence a responsive behaviour choice (Pettijohn, Rozell and Newman, 2010). Goleman's set of competencies has fuelled the interest in the adoption and implementation of emotionally intelligent policies within organizations (Pettijohn, Rozell and Newman, 2010). Thus, the concept discussed by Goleman (2001) seems to be highly related to the behaviours and predispositions of a customer-oriented behaviour. Therefore, it is proposed that:

**Proposition 3:** Emotional intelligence has a significant positive relationship with customer-oriented behaviour.

#### *Mediating Effects of Emotional Intelligence*

The number of empirical studies conducted in the subject of emotional intelligence on nursing students is limited. In fact, study on the mediating effect of emotional intelligence on customer-oriented behaviour among Malaysian nursing students has not yet been done. Thus, a study of mediating effect of emotional intelligence on the relationship between tech-savvy trait and customer-oriented behaviour among Malaysian nursing students is indispensable to fill up the gap. Previous works studied the mediating effects of emotional intelligence on the relationship between independent and dependent variables to define the nature of its relationship. Noh, Park and Im (2016) studied the mediating effect of emotional intelligence and emphasized that emotional intelligence was a significant variable reducing burnout, as it also had a reverse buffering effect on the relationship between self-oriented perfectionism and burnout. In addition, researchers also highlighted the mediating effect of emotional intelligence to capture the indirect effects of personality on earnings (De Haro, Castejon and Gilar, 2018). On the same note, emotional intelligence had a mediating effect in the relationship between job stress and performance (Soran, Balkan and Serin, 2014). Moreover, clinical nurses' emotional intelligence showed mediating effects between the emotional labor and psychological well-being (Kang and Bae, 2015). Research conducted by Saklofske *et al.* (2007) indicated that emotional intelligence significantly mediated the relationship between personality and exercise behaviour. Emotional intelligence partially mediated the neuroticism-perfectionistic concerns link (Smith, Saklofske and Nordstokke, 2014). Emotional intelligence has mediation effect between emotional labour and burnout, also it is suggested that increasing emotional intelligence might critically decrease nurses' turnover intention by reducing the effect of emotional labour on burnout (Hong and Lee, 2016).

In addition, Promsri (2019) in his study highlighted the importance of emotional intelligence in this advanced technology era. He suggested that, to have a great life, individuals need to harmonize the use of digital technology, which is based on digital literacy and face-to-face social interaction (Promsri, 2019). His study also recommended the respondents who were tech-digital savvy natives generation to invest more time in building long-term relationship in a non-digital platform (Promsri, 2019; Smith, 2017). This is beneficial for them to increase their emotional and social intelligence as they can improve their understanding of own and other's feelings and behaviours. Using too much technology tended not to allow individuals to pay much attention on their emotions especially self-awareness considered as a fundamental of social awareness and relationship management skills (Simples, 2018). This view suggests that emotional intelligence would be an important variable predicting the relationship between tech-savvy trait and customer-oriented behaviour. This gives an implication that studying emotional intelligence as a mediator is valid

and thus, guaranteed that the present study is likely to achieve its objectives by viewing emotional intelligence as a mediator between tech-savvy trait and customer-oriented behaviour. Hence, it is proposed that:

**Proposition 4:** Emotional intelligence significantly mediates the relationship between tech-savvy trait and customer-oriented behaviour.

### Theoretical Framework

There are limited empirical studies and scholars focus on the topic of customer-oriented behaviour among nursing students. As for this study, trait theory and emotional intelligence theory are integrated in designing the research framework. The framework of this study presents its newness by investigating these variables together simultaneously which never been tested previously especially in the context of Malaysia healthcare as shown in Figure 1. The relationship between tech-savvy trait and customer-oriented behaviour and the mediating role of emotional intelligence on the relationship between tech-savvy trait and customer-oriented behaviour among Malaysian nursing students will be tested.

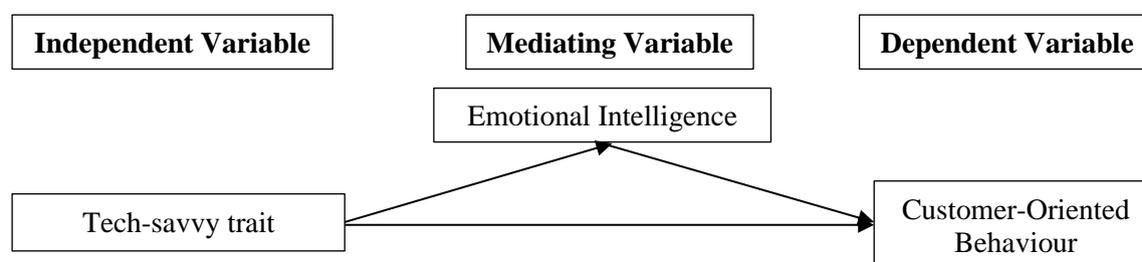


Figure 1: Proposed Theoretical Framework

### Research Implications

This study aims to show a better understanding of nursing students' customer-oriented behaviour and the mediating effects of emotional intelligence on the relationship between tech-savvy trait and customer-oriented behaviour. It further contributes to the extant research of customer-oriented behaviour in the healthcare context by introducing emotional intelligence as a mediator in the research model. Although in the past, few researchers studied the mediation effect of emotional intelligence between psychological processes and customer-oriented behaviour, however, the role of emotional intelligence is not yet been discussed between the relationships of tech-savvy trait and customer-oriented behaviour. The reason of this undiscovered mediating role of emotional intelligence might be the lack of consensus among researchers about conceptualization of emotional intelligence construct. As for this study, trait theory and emotional intelligence theory are integrated in designing the research framework. Furthermore, from the review of literature, empirical evidences on the relationship between tech-savvy trait and customer-oriented behaviour, tech-savvy trait and emotional intelligence and emotional intelligence are scarce especially among nursing students. Hence, the findings of this study will impart a significant contribution in the current empirical body of literature on customer-oriented behaviour in the healthcare context of nursing students population, expansion of trait theory by including a new construct of tech-savvy trait as well as the inclusion of emotional intelligence as a mediator. In terms of practical implications, this study is highly important for Malaysian healthcare sector particularly nursing students. The findings of this study will offer a new insight regarding the customer-

oriented behaviour level among Malaysian nursing students. This study could be beneficial to improve the customer-oriented behaviour among healthcare personnel, especially nurses and nursing students. Consequently, it is also contribute towards better quality of patient care as well as the objective of Ministry of Health to become the best healthcare provider globally.

### **Conclusion**

This study builds upon the extant literature on customer-oriented behaviour, emotional intelligence and tech-savvy trait which leads to the proposed theoretical framework. Customer-oriented behaviour is a crucial antecedent in healthcare sector and as an important approach in addressing the issues and challenges of patient care among nursing students. Owing to the fact that the new graduates enter the nursing profession feeling unprepared to proficiently meet the challenges of patient care, therefore, better understanding on customer-oriented behaviour among nursing students is very crucial to resolve this matter. Through better understanding of the customer-oriented behaviour among nursing students, healthcare service performance could be improved and consequently enhance customer satisfaction and organizations' performance index.

This study is highly important from theoretical and practical aspects. It offers a new insight on the customer-oriented behaviour among Malaysian nursing students associated with tech-savvy trait and emotional intelligence. Besides, this study will also establish the mediating effect of emotional intelligence on the relationships between tech-savvy trait and customer-oriented behaviour among Malaysian nursing students. The population considered in this study is also very important from a theoretical aspect because nursing students are the successors of the main representations of healthcare services since nurses constitute the majority positions in any hospitals. In addition, this study also adds to the literature of customer-oriented behaviour especially in the area of healthcare services which may guide future empirical research in this context. In terms of practical contribution, the findings of this study are expected to impart a new insight of customer-oriented behaviour level among Malaysian nursing students and indirectly improve the quality of patient care.

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