

A Proposed Model of Purchase Decisions by Young Adults in Malaysia's Beauty, Health and Wellness Industry

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Abstract

The beauty, health, and wellness industry have been expanding quickly in both developed and developing countries. The market seems to be one of the fastest growing markets. Research on beauty, health, and wellness has received a lot of attention from the practitioners such as authorities and marketers and also researchers. The aim of this paper is to propose a model of purchase decisions model by young adults' consumers in Malaysia. Some of the variables consist of brand image, electronic words of mouth (eWOM), perceived quality and marketing cues. Also, research hypothesis is developed based on the previous studies have been reviewed. Finally, a conceptual model of the study is proposed and the conclusion is provided.

Keywords: Purchase Decisions, Brand Image, Electronic Words of Mouth (EWOM), Perceived Quality, Marketing Cues.

Introduction

In Malaysia, young adult consumers are increasingly concerned to look radiant and beautiful. This may due to their greater exposure to health and beauty information as well as trends which lead to raising sales value of health and beauty specialist retailers amounting to RM8,742.8 million in 2016, which approximately growing about 2.89% as compared to the previous year (Euromonitor International, 2016a). Global beauty retail product categories consist of skincare, haircare, color, fragrances, toiletries and others (Łopaciuk & Łoboda, 2013). On top of that, young consumers make up the largest population of consumers, have a high level of spending power and make informed decisions on their purchases (Asian Institute of Finance, 2015).

In fact, the hectic lifestyles and rising number of young adults suffering from health issues such as obesity, high cholesterol, heart-related diseases and others diseases have caused this market become more profitable for business (Euromonitor International, 2016a). Therefore,

this causes them to take supplements, such as multivitamins and collagen, to ensure they get all nutritional needed to sustain a good health because health is wealth. Demand for health and wellness products upsurge due to increasing health awareness among Malaysians. Consequently, the sales value of health and wellness segment a total of RM9,552.2 million in 2015, which increased by 6.4% as compared to the previous year (Euromonitor International, 2016a). Driven by a variety of socio-economic demographic characteristics, lifestyle and changes in health consumption patterns, the number of consumers demanding healthy, nutritious, convenient and safe products is steadily rising.

The current total of the young population in Malaysia, aged between 15 to 29 alone is 7,293,991 as of 2010 (Department of Statistic Malaysia, 2016). This segment of the population is the largest group compared to other groups and subsequently high spending power. This segment deserved close attention from both the marketing practitioners and empirical researchers (Branchik, 2010). They are unique in its own way. This category has different values, characteristics, and behavior compared with previous generations (Eastman & Liu, 2012; Gurau, 2012). They are much likely to spend their cash as quickly as they get it (Akturan, Tezcan, & Vignolles, 2011), and they tend to influence each other in take up specific trends (Makgosa, 2010). This segment requires a different marketing approach than previous generations because of external influence such as media, variety choices of products (Neuborne & Kerwin, 1999). In fact, teenagers spend a lot of their parents' money (Fikry A., 2012).

Consumer behavior is huge and complex in nature, especially in consumer purchase decisions. Whether it is affected by buyer's characteristics or the environment of the customers that resulted in an actual purchase. The fact that consumers choose a certain products/services by a certain firms and disregard others has an important implication to a firm especially the marketing team; it is critical to understand the uniqueness of young adult consumers, marketers should be able not only producing unique products/services but also consider their needs, wants and preferences by strategizing the appropriate marketing plan for the firm in order to attract new and existing consumer to purchase. Early decision-making studies concentrated on the purchase action (Loudon & Della Bitta, 1993). It was only after the 1950's that modern concept of marketing were incorporated into studies of consumer decision making, including a wider range of activities (Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 1995). One of the fundamental issues in consumer purchase decisions is the way consumers develop, adapt and use decision-making strategies (Moon, 2004). There are factors shape consumers purchase decisions (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Consumers are highly influenced by both internal and external factors in buying goods and services (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). In fact, they make purchase decisions based on their values, concerns, lifestyles and socio-demographic features (Bernués, Olaizola, & Corcoran, 2003; Grunert, Bredahl, & Brunsø, 2004).

Despite this, very few studies have investigated on factors influencing young adult purchase decisions in beauty, health, and wellness in Malaysia. Hence, this area of research deserved to be studied. The main objective of the paper is to review the literature on brand image, eWOM, perceived quality, marketing cues, consumer innovativeness and CEO perceived image, as well as the development, propose hypotheses are also provided. Finally, a conceptual model of the study is proposed.

The organisation of the paper is as follows: Section 2 describes an overview of beauty, health, and wellness industry. Then, a review of the relevant literature consisting of a brand image, eWOM, perceived quality, marketing cues, consumer innovativeness and CEO perceived image as well as the development of the proposed hypotheses. Section 3 gives a description of the methodology. Section 4 presents the proposed conceptual model and finally in Section 5 provides conclusion and future research is discussed.

Literature Review

Factors Influencing Consumer Purchase Decisions

According to (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010), purchase behavior is the stage prior to purchasing decisions in the purchase decision process. Many researchers use the terms “Customers’ preferences” or “consumer buying behaviour,” or “consumer decision making process” interchangeably to state the positive indicators of consumer purchase decision. This current research will use the term “consumer purchase decision” to represent actual consumer purchases rather than just a propensity to buy. The study of actual consumer purchases will enhance the positive results of strategic implementations due to a better understanding of the real customers, not only the prospective customers.

Literature in this area analyzes decision-making processes. Based on the definition, one might assume that understanding decision making is equivalent to analysis of subsequent actions to evaluate the consequences of alternatives that lead to a choice. The behaviors a consumer performed to meet his/her needs, including the seeking, purchasing, using, reviewing and handling of products, services, and concepts, were called purchase behaviors (Schiffman, L.G. and Kanuk, 2000). (Kotler, 2003) thought that the way individuals, groups, and organizations selected, purchased, used and handled products, services, concepts or experience was called purchase behavior. This study defined actual purchase behaviors as the consumption behaviors of actual purchase and use of products, such as purchase and the determination to possess, and took them as indicators to measure actual purchase behaviors. However, the behavioral intention of the customer is an indication of the purchase decision and need to be monitored (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1996). Assael (2004) defines purchase behavior as the tendency to act on the object. Consumer decision making could be defined as the “behaviour patterns of consumers, that precede, determine and follow the decision process for the acquisition of need satisfying products, ideas or services” (Du Plessis, J., Rousseau, & Blem, 1991).

Purchase behavior has recently gained much attention from marketers and researchers because of the significant role it plays in anticipating operational success and achieving sustainable competitive advantage (Brady, Cronin, & Brand, 2002; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985; V. A. Zeithaml, 1988). Purchase decision can be defined as a continuous process, which refers to thoughtful, consistent action undertaken to bring about need satisfaction. Generally, customers are quite rational and make use of the existing information to them (Christodoulides, Michaelidou, & Argyriou, 2012).

The past studies have explained the various factors influencing consumer purchase decisions in the several industries settings. It is debated that if the main objective is to analyze purchasing behavior, an actual purchase should be much more accurate than the willingness to purchase. Intention does not represent a serious shortcoming because there is substantial

evidence supporting the existence of a causal link between intention and behavior (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). Additionally, (Choo, Chung, & Pysarchik, 2004) confirms that intention to buy is a predictor of actual purchase behavior, but only for highly innovative consumers.

The contemporary research indicates that more activities are involved than the purchase itself such as evaluating alternatives of products or services. In general, young adult consumers also tend to be careful in terms of choosing healthy products/services by comparing brands, ingredient content and also labelling which clearly states any organic certification on packaging (Euromonitor International, 2016b). Furthermore, human health, safety, and environmental concerns, along with other characteristics such as nutrition, taste, freshness and appearance influence consumer preferences for products (Kvakkestad, Refsgaard, & Berglann, 2011).

2.1.1. Brand Image

The brand image refers to the framing of memory about a brand, which contains the results of interpretation by the consumer to the messages, attributes, benefits and advantages of the product (Wijaya, 2013). The brand image represents what consumers think and feel about a brand identity. Thus, the image of a brand represents the perception that can reflect objective or subjective reality. Brand image impacts consumers' perceptions of product attributes (Hossain, 2013) that are, the evaluation of a product's attributes can be influenced by the consumer's impression of the brand's image (Alif Fianto, Hadiwidjojo, Aisjah, & Solimun, 2014). As a result, a strong and favorable brand image can positively bias consumers' impression of product attributes.

Consumers often buy products that have a famous brand because they feel more comfortable with things that are already known (Aaker, 1991). The assumption that the well-known brand is more reliable, always available and easy to find, and has a quality that no doubt, make a familiar brand is more potential to be chosen by consumers than a brand that is not familiar. It can contain words, numbers or letters. A short crisp brand name is usually preferred over longer more complex names. It should suggest benefits or qualities associated with the product. A good brand name should be easy to spell, pronounce, and remember. It should also be distinctive and free of any negative connotations. In short, the brand name should contain some important information about the brand. Although there has been a lot of argument on how to measure a brand through its name (Huang & Sarigöllü, 2014), one general accepted view is that, consistent with an associative network memory model, brand name can be defined as a name linked to the perceptions about a brand that is reflected by the cluster of associations by the consumers as the name of the brand takes a permanent place in their memory.

Numerous research studies established that brand image as a predictor for purchase decisions (Alif Fianto et al., 2014; Joghee & Dube, 2016; Krishnan, Amira, Atilla, Syafawani, & Hafiz, 2017; Malik, Ghafoor, & Iqbal, 2013; Oladepo & Abimbola, 2015; Taghavi & Seyedsalehi, 2015) A recent evidence reported that there is a strong relationship between brand image and consumer's purchase decisions since consumers rely on branded products and mostly prefer to buy products with well-known brand names (Almutlaq, 2016) (Malik et al., 2013). On another note, it claimed that there is a relationship between branding of cosmetic and the effect on cosmetic usage in Malaysia. Consumer perception of a product/service can be

reflected through branding. In addition, the brand gives a huge influence in the decision making whether to buy the product or not (Krishnan et al., 2017). In automobiles setting, brand image is an important indicator for a customer in making a choice. Customers especially in UAE prefer branded cars instead of experimenting with a new unknown brand (Joghee & Dube, 2016). In another study that targeted on children, a brand of a chocolate product did not have any significant effect on children's decision to buy that product but children's purchasing decision significantly impacts parents' purchasing decision. In other words, parents take account of their children's purchasing decision when shopping for chocolate. Moreover, parents prefer to buy products which they know their children have a liking for (Taghavi & Seyedsalehi, 2015). Additionally, an empirical study on youngsters the age below 20 in food and beverages industry, proved that perception of a brand image is capable of influencing young consumers buying decision on a sustainable basis. There is a significant and positive relationship between brand image and consumer buying decisions (Oladepo & Abimbola, 2015). However, the results obtained are inconclusive or even contradictory. Contrary to the previous studies, there is no indirect relationship between brand image and consumer buying decisions through satisfaction (Hanzaee & Farsani, 2011).

H1: Brand image is significantly and positively associated with purchase decisions.

2.1.2. Electronic Words of Mouth (eWOM)

Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) refers to any attempt by a former, potential, or actual customer to highlight the positive or negative attributes of a product or company in an online platform (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004).

Over the past years, development of Web 2.0 has changed the landscape of the online method more than ever. The new generation of online tools and applications, such as blogs, wikis, online communities and virtual words has changed the role of the internet from a solely medium for information transfer to a merging of platforms for technology-mediated social sharing (Chua & Banerjee, 2015). The internet has become an interactive platform, promoting customer eWOM and hence serving as a major source of customer information and empowerment (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008). Researches show that consumers consider eWOM to be a credible source of information about products or services. One study concludes that marketing practitioners in Botswana should both promote brand-related eWOM among university students and incorporate it into their marketing tools (Themba & Mulala, 2013).

In online holidays setting, the research explores the consumers' process of investigating holiday-related offerings information online in three corresponding stages: information search, evaluation, and purchase. The research finds that consumers purchasing high-involvement products such as holidays are more likely to be influenced by eWOM than previously examined. Moreover, the researchers find that eWOM importance is greater for first-time purchases than for repeat purchases (Chen & Chen, 2015). They also find that the effects of positive reviews are greater and are more likely to impact the purchase decision than those of negative reviews. However, negative reviews are read in more depth than positive reviews and are also perceived to be more credible.

Therefore, in the pursuit of the above discussions and arguments, this study hypothesizes that quality that eWOM highly impacts on consumer purchase decision. Hence, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2: EWOM is significantly and positively associated with the purchase decision.

2.1.3. Perceived Quality

By definition, perceived quality is “perception of the customer” (Mitra & Golder, 2006). Perceived quality as the subjective consumer judgment regarding overall product superiority, different from objective quality. (Lieb, Quattelbaum, & Schmitt, 2008; V. A. Zeithaml, 1988) presented a strong conservative review on the evolution of the perceived quality definition and influences on purchase behavior. Therefore, Lieb et al. proposed to see perceived quality as “a scalable input factor for company’s product development”. Such an opinion is aggressive to the usual view that perceived quality is dissimilar to objective quality or cannot be measured (V. A. Zeithaml, 1988). A marketing oriented view of perceived quality is supported by a number of researchers. (Aaker, 2009) recommends a definition of perceived quality as “the customers’ perception of the overall quality or control of a product or service with respect to its intended purpose, relative to alternatives”. Perceived quality differs from several related concepts, such as (Ahmad, Noor, Aniza, & Wel, 2014):

- Actual or objective quality: the extent to which the product or service delivers superior service
- Product-based quality: the nature and quantity of ingredients, features, or services included
- Manufacturing quality: conformance to specification, the "zero defect" goal”

It was observed that, in most past studies and recent ones, quality attribute is among one of the most important determinants that influence consumers’ buying behavior in most industries such as fast food (Namin, 2017), luxury fashion (Wu et al., 2015), tourism (Kuo et al., 2011; Yulianda & Handayani, 2015) retail stores (M. & Naidu, 2014), and banking (Culiberg & Rojsek, 2010). Both product and service quality are some of the indicators that drive a consumer to purchase products or services. In some studies, product quality has been found to have a positive direct effect on purchase decisions (Aziz, Amlus, & Jusoh, 2015; Kianpour, Jusoh, & Asghari, 2014; J. Shaharudin, Angely, Anita, & Khin, 2012; M. R. Shaharudin, Mansor, Hassan, Omar, & Harun, 2011; Yulianda & Handayani, 2015) whereas others report only an indirect effect through satisfaction (Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Sweeney *et al.*, 1999). A reputable and well-known theoretical multidimensional construct describing product quality has been defined by (Garvin, 1984, 1987). In his model, product quality consist of eight dimensions: (1) durability, (2) performance, (3) aesthetics, (4) features, (5) serviceability (repair service), (6) conformance, (7) reliability and (8) perceived quality. Not all the dimensions are necessarily important for all products or customers or in all contexts. Each dimension is related to customer perception, (Sebastianelli & Tamimi, 2002) argues that that it is subjective when it comes to assessing the level of quality.

On the other hand, the model construct developed by Grönroos for service quality originally had two dimensions: technical (the outcome of service) and functional (how the outcome is produced). It was later developed into a three-dimensional model that also included an image of the service provider. (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988) stated that service quality should be evaluated when providing the service, and that service

quality is the level of enjoyment the customer experiences during the consumption process. They further argued that consumers evaluate service quality using similar criteria, which can be grouped into five dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. These five dimensions, along with 22 service items, yield the SERVQUAL scale for measuring service quality, and many previous studies on service quality have been developed around this scale (Yee, Yeung, & Edwin Cheng, 2010). All the above mentioned models have served as a basis for subsequent research.

Thus, couching the concept of perceived or subjective quality considered as a very important to consumers, hence the notion that perceived quality influences purchase decisions. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Perceived quality is positively associated with the purchase decision.

2.1.4. Marketing Cues

In order to cope with uncertainty and make interpretations about quality, consumers are looking and process available cues, which can be extrinsic cues or in other words marketing controlled (e.g., branding, price, advertising) (Bhuiyan, 1997), or intrinsic cues also known as non-marketing controlled (e.g., third-party information) (Liu, 2005). Current literature most often presents the rare effects of a select set of individual marketing cues, such as price, availability, and warranty (Rao & Monroe, 1989), advertising, and such cues have all been researched to a great extent. However, these results are often equivocal as most prior research fails to consider the simultaneous effects of multiple cues in the environment (Purohit & Srivastava, 2001). For this paper, marketing cues consist of price, promotion, and place not including product because this study covers perceived product quality in the previous section and it may cause redundancy.

(Nagle & Holden, 2002) indicated the role of price as a monetary value, using by the consumers in order to trade with the sellers for the products or service. Price has been a concerning issue for many researchers. Price is seen to be a most direct influence on purchase decision (Kumar et al., 2017, Nguyen, Phan, & Vu, 2015, Ahmad, Noor, Aniza, & Wel, 2014, Nelson, 2012). Most of the literature suggest that consumers' evaluation of the value of a good or service is based on their perceptions that what they actually receive and what they expected of having it (Monroe, 2003). In other words, the price seems to be the priority for the customer to judge in the market offering (Hossain, 2013; Page & Fearn, 2005). In details, the price has a dual effect on consumer buying decision making (Hossain, 2013). First, the price is an extrinsic cue to perceived quality (Rao and Monroe 1988) and its strength may be reduced by non-price cues (V. A. Zeithaml, 1988). Second, the price is an indicator of the amount of financial sacrifice (to be paid) needed to purchase a product or service (Parvin & Chowdhury, 2006). Price influences the prospective buyers' expectations of product/service levels. A too low price, for a product, may suggest inferior quality and thus high risk (Yoon, Oh, Song, Kim, & Kim, 2014; V. Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996). The consumers might consider the price at a fair deal and willing to pay a higher price if they could be deserved with the quality of products or services (Monroe, 2003). Instead of a single price, consumers usually have a range of prices that are acceptable for an intended purchase. Price also plays a medium to counter the market, either in attracting or in retaining a customer or as a competitive advantage (Patton, 2002).

The purpose of promotion is making sure that customers are aware of the brands and as a mean of communicating to customers regardless the firm's product offerings. Moreover, the channels used as promotional tools include advertising, direct marketing, public relations and publicity, personal selling, sponsorship, samples, price discounts, buy-one-get-one-free, Coupons, in-pack premiums, price offs and so and sales promotion (Dunne, Lusch, & Carver, 2010). The success of a product cannot be determined from the awareness of a product/service, but by how much of customers feel that they will actually buy the product/service. Therefore, a brand's success is influenced by its capability to push consumers from rational purchase behavior. Furthermore, it is important to integrate the advertising with different promotional activities to expand the growth of sales of a product/service because sales volume is responsible for escalating market share along with profit maximization (Chakraborty, Hossain, Farhad, & Islam, 2013). Of all the types of promotions, only advertising and sales promotion be used since these types of promotion are popular in beauty, health, and wellness industry. In fact, these promotions have a strong influence on purchase decisions (Shamout, 2016; Oladepo & Abimbola, 2015; Sagala, Destriani, Putri, & Kumar, 2014; Chakraborty et al., 2013).

The relevance of place (proximity) was well defined in the academic literature (Kozinets et al., 2002; Moore and Doherty, 2007, 2010; Nobbs et al., 2012; Manlow and Nobbs, 2013). However, research studies in the field of proximity often focus on niche market demand (BeyzaGültekin, Juan-Vigaray, & Seguí, 2013); availability (Gottschalk & Leistner, 2013); evaluation of retail types and business location (Burnaz & Topcu, 2006; Furaiji, Łatuszyńska, & Wawrzyniak, 2012; Ngobo, 2011; Nguyen et al., 2015; Wongleedee, 2015). Having a strategic location can be a competitive advantage for retailers by providing physical access to target customers. Most researchers agree that a convenient location increase store patronage via reduced transaction costs (Berry, Seiders, & Grewal, 2002; Huddleston, Whipple, & VanAuken, 2004; Jabir et al., 2010). In fact, Craig et al. (1984) assert that good locations allow ready access and attract large numbers of customers to a store. Store variables include, location, size, store image and service levels are elements that are critical to ensuring the success of the retailer. The perk of having retail stores in a location that have largest customers' attention is then lead to better retail stores performance (Izogo, Ogba, & Nwekpa, 2016). In regards to the place elements of the market, it was found that the consumers considered right market's location is one of the preferences of purchase decisions (Wongleedee, 2015). This indicates that distance will delay customers from patronizing some retail outlets. Similar insights were presented by Hawkins et al. (1998) and (Loudon & Della Bitta, 1993). Contradict with (Pujari, 2012), the researcher found that in terms of selecting purchasing location, the location of the retail shops is one of the least important factors while purchasing. Therefore, as observed in the literature presented in this sub-section, it is evident that there are indications suggested in the relationship between marketing cues and purchase decision:

H4: Marketing cues is significantly and positively associated with the purchase decision.

2.1.5. Perceived CEO Image

The literature, as well as the popular press, often use the terms 'CEO image,' 'CEO reputation' and 'CEO brand' interchangeably and unsystematically. However, these are distinct concepts

and the goal of this part is to provide some clarification. The terms 'CEO image' and 'CEO reputation' are two distinct but complementary concepts, although 'image' and 'reputation' are both interrelated. 'Image' is the overall mental picture one has about a person (what comes to mind when one sees or hears the name) whereas 'reputation' is a comparative judgment and evolves often over time as a result of how the individual performs. (Coombs, 2001) indicates that the terms image and reputation have been used synonymously in the public relations literature. In the previous literature, several attempts has been made to explore the CEO related areas such as CEO personality and characteristics influence on firm performance and effectiveness (McDonald, Khanna, & Cavich, 2015; Nana, Jackson, & Burch, 2013; Purkayastha & Gupta, 2015; Resick, Whitman, Weingarden, & Hiller, 2009), CEO appearance predict firm profit (Rule & Ambady, 2008), CEO as a brand (Fetscherin, 2015, 2016), CEO media coverage (Lee, 2012; Park & Berger, 2004), influence of company's brand on consumer's buying decisions (Rosenfeld, Giacalone, & Riordan, 1995). Most of the types of the article in this area are commentary or conceptual paper instead of empirical research (Bruijns, 2002; Fetscherin, 2015). Although limited researchers suggest that the CEO's image plays a significant role in determining consumer purchase decisions, does not mean it is a not crucial area of research.

However, a good overview is provided by (Brønn & Vrioni, 2001), and the general conclusion of such work is that "the potential [of corporate behavior] to affect buying behaviour does exist and is credited to the value it can add to the brand and thus brand equity." Such conclusions seem to have been widely accepted by ceos. Additionally, it has become accepted wisdom that consumers are both interested in the behavior of the companies' brand they buy, and that their opinions are matters when it comes to buying decisions (Rosenfeld et al., 1995). According to a research by Research International (2001), which suggests that CEO's whose companies engage in cause-related marketing believe it to enhance corporate and brand perceptions. (Page & Fearn, 2005) reported that reputation does matter to the consumer but not on top of their priority when shopping. Interestingly, of all the three dimensions, leadership and success have the highest correlation. It seems that consumers are directly affected by firm's behavior on them or their families. In other words, most consumers concern more about fairness to customer workers or the environment, good products/services. This is also supported by (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997), indicates that the potential to affect buying behaviour does exist and is credited to: (1) the value it can add to the brand and thus brand equity, (2) the ability to strengthen relationships with internal and external stakeholders, whose support is vital to brand equity and ultimately affects the company's bottom line, and (3) the ability to make the message believable, less confusing and misleading, and thus lessen negative effects of customer skepticism. Giving due recognition, examining the relationship and identifying the impact of perceived CEO image on purchase decisions is needed before it becomes serious. Based on these arguments, it is hypothesized that:

H5: Perceived CEO image has a significant and positive moderating effect on the association between brand image, eWOM, perceived quality and marketing cues toward customer purchase decisions.

Methodology

The main aims of this study are to propose and suggest model about the relationship between brand image, eWOM, perceived quality, marketing cues and perceived CEO image in

Malaysia's beauty, health and wellness industry. Thus, secondary data was used to achieve these aims. The data have been composed of academic journals, government reports, industry reports, and books. By implementing this study for future research, a quantitative method is suggested.

Quantitative is applied to assessed factors influencing purchase decisions which the self-administered questionnaire designed is adapted from previous studies who studied in public and some reputable private universities in Klang Valley based from the list from the Ministry of Higher Education official website. Prior to distribution of the questionnaire, a pre-test will be carried out in order to detect any necessary changes in the wording of the items and the range to be used in order to evaluate these. Subsequently, the primary data will be analysed the descriptive analysis of the sample such as means, standard deviations, and frequencies. Later, other analyses are planning to perform such as exploratory factor analysis, reliability analysis, and confirmatory factor analysis to test for construct validity, reliability, and measurements loading. Having analyzed the measurement model, the structural model then later be tested and confirmed. This approach is expected to support the quantitative outcome.

Proposed research model

In previous literature, there are numbers of determinants tested in relation to factors influencing purchase decisions. However, in this study, four determinants are proposed due to lack of effort in assessing the determinants as well as the industries, especially in local context. Figure 1 exhibits the proposed conceptual research model.

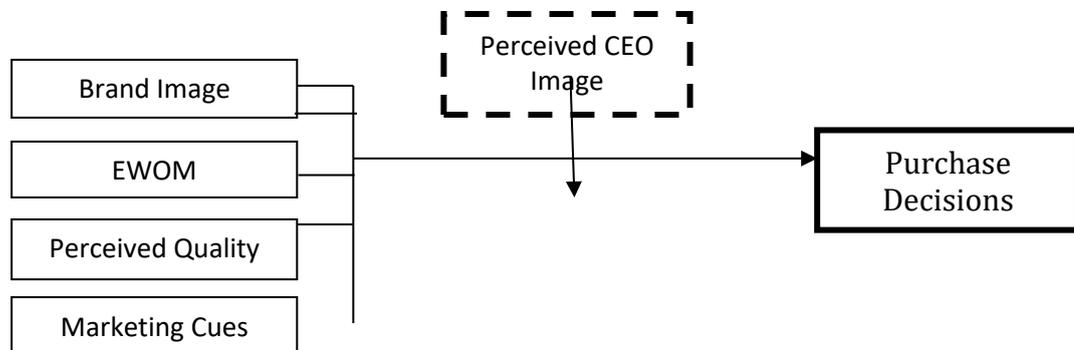


Figure 1: Proposed conceptual framework of the study

Conclusion and future research

Much of the previous study of purchasing decisions are available, but there is a lack of study to integrate all the factors brand image, eWOM, perceived quality, marketing cues and perceived CEO image on Gen Y purchase decisions in Malaysia's beauty, health and wellness industry. Thus, this paper has made an attempt to review the relationship of all the factors that influence purchase decisions. Based on the observation and reviewed, it has found that all the factors can potentially support and their potential effects on Gen Y purchase decisions. Next, the agenda for the future research, the authors are interested in studying the structural relationship between consumer innovativeness and young adult purchase decisions in the Malaysia's beauty, health and wellness industry. However, there is limited empirical evidence on the relationship between consumer innovativeness and Gen Y purchase decisions. In

addition, by exploring the all the factors, it will benefit marketing managers as well as firm by providing details significant factors influencing purchase decisions either potential or/and existing young adult consumers. On top of that, the contribution for academic researchers and practitioners is to give essential guidelines for the marketers to implement a proper marketing plan in order to successfully strive in a competitive market and later contribute to the growth of Malaysia's economy.

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