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STUDY OF FACTORS AFFECTING CONSUMERS' PURCHASING BEHAVIOR VIA ONLINE NETWORKS IN BANGKOK

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the factors that affects the consumers' purchasing behaviour via the online networks in Bangkok, where the theoretical framework was derived based on previous researchers. The proposed hypotheses were tested and analysed using the Structural Equation Modelling in order to measure the latent variables.

The five main hypotheses were that the individual variables (exogenous) significantly affects the dependent variable (endogenous). The 10 sub-hypotheses were to understand whether any correlation between the independent variables exists. The various analytical tests and goodness-of-fit measurement resulted in significant p-values for two main hypotheses out of five. The p-values for 9 sub-hypotheses out of 10 were significant. The results, the contradictions and affirmations with previous researchers is explained further in this research, along with implications and recommendations for further researchers and businesses to better understand the factors that significantly affects the consumers' purchasing behaviour via the online networks.

Keywords: *Brand Relationship, Brand Trust, Online Engagement Community, Perceived Product's Performance, Purchasing Behavior, Website Quality.*

JEL Codes: *MI50, M160, M300.*

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Research Article

1. INTRODUCTION

The digital age has consequently led consumers' perception of brands to evolve considerably (Fraile, 2018), with about 82% of the customers researching products on their phones when making an in-store purchase (Spitfire, 2019). According to Suchit Leesa-Nguansuk (2020), a new study conducted by US-based consultancy Bain & Company and Facebook shows that in Asean, after Indonesia, Thailand is the second-largest online shopping market, whose online spending in 2018 totalled to $4.4 billion and by 2025 could jump to $21.4 billion, a rise of almost 5 times from 2018. Moreover, in 2018, 60% of the country's digital consumer population increased almost twice with 34 million from 21 million in 2017. Usually, strong negative emotions publicly expressed by the consumers spread in a highly dynamic way within and across the social media (Stephen, 2018).

Customer participation in social media brand communities, aids customers to (co)create rational value, functional value, entitativity value and emotional value, which in turn affects the brand relationship performance (Payne, Storbacka, & Frow, 2008)**.**The continuous growth of the online networks such as the coupon sites or the mobile web or the various social networks, have managed to successfully transform consumers from just taking information from marketers to actively become distributors and creators of product opinion and information (BrandReport, 2011).Furthermore, consumer experience and expertise is immediately facilitated by the availability of the smartphones and online networks (BrandReport, 2011). The significant changes in information exchange, information search behaviour and interaction between consumers, users and companies, example (Hennig-Thurau, Thorsten, Hofacker, & Bloching, 2013) is led by the structure of the social network. As consumers are becoming more well-informed, the traditional path to purchase has been transformed due to the rise of the internet (Spitfire, 2019).

Most previous researches have focused on customer shopping online related to attitude (Cheawkamolpat, 2009), for example, Thananuraksakul (2007), who studied about the behaviour intention of Thai consumers affected by trust or even subjective norm, or other researches on the quality perceived of a virtual community, or various internet community forums, factors that encourages or discourages consumers from purchasing online (Changchit, Cutshall, Lonkani, Pholwan, & Pongwiritthon, 2018), or the uses for the internet, etc. Since there is a lack of research conducted using the SEM methodology investigating the various factors that affects the consumers' purchasing behaviour online, especially in Bangkok, it is an interesting and important section of the population to study.

Therefore, this research intends to explore the factors such as the online engagement community, website quality, perceived product's performance, brand relationship and brand trust that contributes or how it influences the consumers' purchasing behaviour and the effects of the social networks on consumers' purchasing behaviour specifically in Bangkok, Thailand. For this study, an attempt has been made to propose a research model that explains how each of those factors of online networking sites affect consumers' purchasing behavior. Moreover, these factors will further by analyzed to further understand the significant effects or if there is any significant correlation among the variables itself.

Research Objectıves:

1. To investigate the effect of the online engagement community and website quality on the purchasing behavior of the consumers.

2. To examine how the consumers' perception of the product's performance affects their purchasing behavior.

3. To determine how brand relationship and brand trust affects consumers' purchasing behavior.

4. To investigate the correlation of online engagement community, website quality and how consumers perceive a product's performance.

5. To examine the correlation between the consumers' perception of the product's performance, brand relationship and brand trust.

Scope of Research:

Scope of Variables: Five major independent variables (exogenous variables): Online Engagement community (OEC), Website Quality (WQ), Perceived Product's Performance (PPP), Brand Relationship (BR) and Brand Trust (BT) and one dependent variable (endogenous variable): Purchasing Behaviour (PB), were used in this research.

Scope of Population: This research will focus on the responses from a target group of 400 individuals that purchase online on a daily basis, related to or intend to integrate online shopping in the near future in Bangkok, Thailand.

Scope of Data Analysis and interpretation for Hypothesis Testing: Spanning over the course of two months between May 2020 to June 2020, the data was collected, analysed and tested for hypothesis.

Scope of Applied Research Methodology: This research focused primarily on Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) as well as Quantitative research technique.

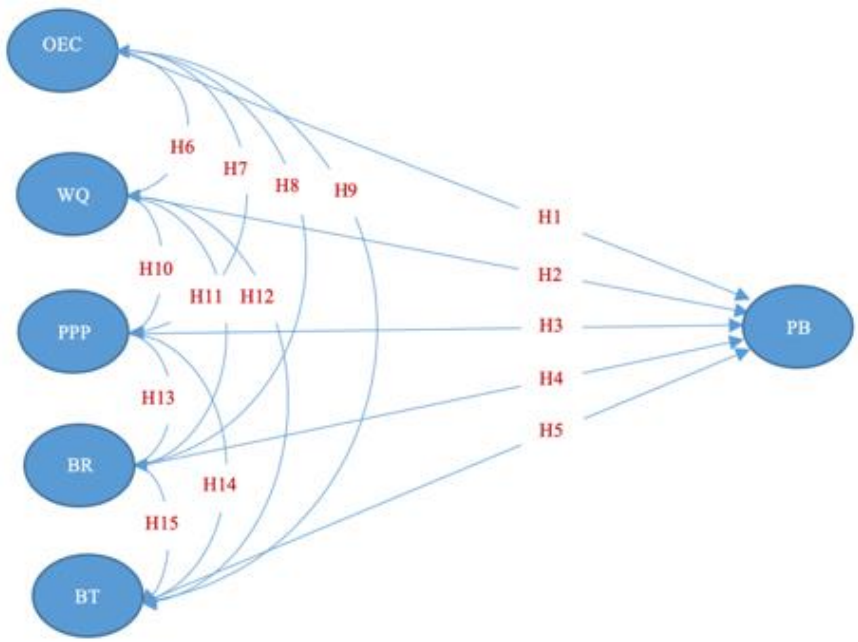
2. LITERATURE REVIEW

As both the online and the offline worlds become interlaced, making it easier by increasing mobile technologies such as smartphones and tablets (Adams, 2012), social media is regarded as a social revolution (Tiago and Verissimo, 2014). Hibah Khalil (2017) explained that in the World Wide Web, website quality is considered an indispensable concept which serves as an entry to contact loyal customers (in the context of e-loyalty). According to Parasuraman et al (1985)**;** with the users' expectations, perceived quality varies. Based on the findings of the various researchers such as Grose et al (1998)**,** Vora (1998)**,** Ranganathan and Ganapathy (2002)**,** Moustakis et al. (2004)**,** and various others, the concept of perceived quality of a website is multidimensional. According to Aaker (2011)**,** the customer's perception of the overall quality of a service or the quality of a product thereof, is defined as perceived quality, and thus is an intangible and general sense (Othmani and Bouslama, 2015).

The expectations consumers have related to a particular type of brand or product is dependent on the information received from a variety of different sources (Rolph and Joseph, 1972). According to Vantamay (2007)**,** because consumers want to buy the best possible products available, they usually rely on the perceived quality of the brand. The consumers purchasing process is influenced by their view (quality, style, price) and preferences, and factors such as literary, individual, psychological and social factors impact their purchasing behavior (Saleem, Ghafar, Ibrahim, Yousuf, & Ahmed, 2015) and since companies can have a level of control over the quality of their products, Llusar et al. (2001) suggested that perceived quality is considered as the source of satisfaction. As satisfaction is believed to be the most vital constructs in marketing (Erevelles and Leavitt, 1992), it is a good indicator of purchase behavior (switching behavior, purchase intention, repurchase and brand choice) (Oliver, 1993; McQuitty, Finn, and Wiley, 2000).

Based on previous researchers and related literature, the following conceptual framework was developed to study the factors that affects the consumers' purchasing behavior via the online networks.

Figure 1. Hypothesized Conceptual Model



Note: The round shapes represent latent (observed) variables.

Table 1. List of Main Hypotheses

Main Hypotheses
Hypothesis1 (OEC→PB): $H1_0$: Customer participation in the online community does not affect the consumers' purchasing behavior $H1_a$: Customer participation in the online community significantly affects the consumers' purchasing behavior
Hypothesis2 (WQ→PB): $H2_0$: The quality of the website does not affect the purchasing behavior of the consumers $H2_a$: The quality of the website significantly affects the purchasing behavior of the consumers
Hypothesis3 (PPP→PB): $H3_0$: A positive perception of the product's performance does not affect the consumers' purchasing behavior $H3_a$: A positive perception of the product's performance significantly affects the consumers' purchasing behavior
Hypothesis4 (BR→PB): $H4_0$: A positive brand relationship does not affect the consumers' decision behavior to purchase $H4_a$: A positive brand relationship significantly affects the consumers' decision behavior to purchase
Hypothesis5 (BT→PB): $H5_0$: A consumer's trust in a brand does not affect their decision behavior to purchase $H5_a$: A consumer's trust in a brand significantly affects their decision behavior to purchase

Table 2. List of Sub-Hypothesis

Sub-Hypotheses (Correlation)
Hypothesis6 (OEC ↔WQ): $H6_0$:There is no correlation between online engagement community and the quality of the website $H6_a$: There exists a significant correlation between online engagement community and the quality of the website
Hypothesis7 (OEC ↔PPP): $H7_0$: There is no correlation between the online engagement community and how consumers perceive a product's performance $H7_a$: There exists a significant correlation between the online engagement community and how consumers perceive a product's performance
Hypothesis8 (OEC ↔BR): $H8_0$: There is no correlation between the online engagement community and the relationship the customer has with a brand $H8_a$: There exists a significant correlation between the online engagement community and the relationship the customer has with a brand
Hypothesis9 (OEC ↔BT): $H9_0$: There is no correlation between the online engagement community and the trust the customer has in a brand $H9_a$: There exists a significant correlation between the online engagement community and the trust the customer has in a brand
Hypothesis10 (WQ ↔PPP): $H10_0$: There is no correlation between website quality and how consumers perceive a products' performance $H10_a$: There exists a significant correlation between website quality and how consumers perceive a product's performance
Hypothesis11 (WQ ↔BR): $H11_0$: There is no correlation between website quality and the relationship the consumers have with a brand $H11_a$: There is a significant correlation between website quality and the relationship the consumers have with a brand
Hypothesis12 (WQ ↔BT): $H12_0$: There is no correlation between website quality and consumers' trust in a brand $H12_a$: There exists a significant correlation between website quality and consumers' trust in a brand
Hypothesis13 (PPP ↔BR): $H13_0$: There is no correlation between consumers' perception of a product's performance and their relationship with the brand $H13_a$: There exist a significant correlation between consumers' perception of a product's performance and their relationship with the brand
Hypothesis14 (PPP ↔BT): $H14_0$: There is no correlation between consumers' perception of a product's performance and their trust in a brand $H14_a$: There exists a significant correlation between consumers' perception of a product's performance and their trust in a brand
Hypothesis15 (BT ↔BT): $H15_0$: There is no correlation between the relationship the consumers have with a brand and their trust in a brand $H15_a$: There exist a significant correlation between the relationship the consumers have with a brand and their trust in a brand

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to attain the purpose of this study, a quantitative research technique along with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) or often called Linear Structural Relations (LISREL) models is applied in this research to analyze the hypotheses and the relationships or correlations among the variables (Shadfar and Malekmohammadi, 2013), as it enables the researcher to understand which observed variables are a good indicator (significant) of the latent variables as well as test the overall theory which are usually formulated by path diagrams using arrows and linear regression equations.

In order to analyse the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, Structural Equation Model (SEM) technique and quantitative research technique was used. Approved by the expertise, all the related theories were applied in order to construct the questionnaire which was used as the research instrument. The respondents in Bangkok included people who had a well understanding of or the direct experiences of using online networks specified by this study. Furthermore, the samples online were selected at random in order to avoid biased opinion.

In SEM, latent variables usually correspond to factors or hypothetical constructs, which are explanatory variable to consider a sequence that is not directly observable (Kline, 2001). Since, the factors OEC, WQ, PPP, BR, BT and PB related to this study are all observable and cannot be directly measured, they can be classified as latent variables.

As referred to by Jackson (2003) as well, concerning the relation between the model complexity and the sample size, as the N:q rule, and is applicable when maximum likelihood (ML) is used as the estimation method. ML is the most often used method in SEM, and as suggested by Jackson (2003), *"researchers think about minimum sample size in terms of the ratio cases (N) to the number of model parameter that require statistical estimates (q). An ideal sample size-to-parameters ratio would be 20:1. For example, if a total of q= 10 model parameter require statistical estimates, then an ideal minimum sample size would be 20 x 10, or N= 200. Less ideal would an N:q ratio of 10:, which for the example just given for q= 10 would be a minimal sample size of 10 x 10, or N= 100. As the N:q ratio decreases below 10:1 (e.g., N= 50, for a 5:1 ratio), so does the trustworthiness of the results."*

Based on the above suggestions, the researcher computes the size of the sample as follows:

For latent variables, there are 24 measured variables in this research.

24 (measured variables) x 10 (respondents per measured variables) = 240 respondents

As the researcher is testing sub-hypotheses to explore the correlations among individual variables, to make up for missing data or additional parameters or complexity, as trial and error, 10 additional individuals per hypothesis are used:

15 (hypotheses) x 10 (respondents per hypothesis) = 150, which resulted in a total of 390 respondents. Therefore, as its sample size, the researcher rounded the number to 400 respondents.

Since a sample size of 400 usually gives the statistical accuracy of ±5% and is often considered as the most effective, a sample size of 400 individuals who purchase products online, who are located in Bangkok, was carried out for this research. SEM was used to assign the samples of 400 respondents, all of which is calculated from the research population derived from the number of people, all of whom have had a well understanding of or the direct experience of using the stratified/convenience/ quota/ purposive sampling method(s).

Each part of the questionnaire had accepted value of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient as illustrated in Table 3. As indicated by the results, the questionnaire had an acceptable reliability value which was equal to or more than 0.7 (Cronbach, 1951; Olorunniwo, Hsu, and Udo, 2006) for the pre-test sample of 30 respondents, and as suggested by Craig and Moores (2006), all the values of the actual sample size (n=400) is above 0.65, and is therefore, considered consistent and reliable.

Table 3. The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient Reliability Value for Each Factor

Statements of each part	Alpha coefficient (N=30)	Alpha coefficient (N=400)	Accepted/ Not accepted
Online Engagement Community	0.808	0.732	Accepted
Website Quality	0.898	0.873	Accepted
Perceived Product's Performance	0.726	0.706	Accepted
Brand Relationship	0.912	0.837	Accepted
Brand Trust	0.783	0.744	Accepted
Consumers' Purchasing Behavior	0.845	0.764	Accepted
Total value	0.907	0.901	Accepted

Statistical Method for Data Analysis: Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

In order to analyze the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, Structural Equation Model (SEM) technique was used. Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) further mentioned that SEM can test the theoretical relationship among or between the observed variables and/ or latent variables, can estimate as well as combine the factor and regression analysis.

According to Shadfar and Malekmohammadi (2013), SEM is built upon two steps: fitting the structural model and validating the measurement model, where the former is attained essentially through path analysis with latent variables and the latter is attained essentially through confirmatory factor analysis. Moreover, SEM, which in proposition permits the structural relationship between observed

(latent) variables to be correctly evaluated by generally stating a corresponding model and clearly capturing unreliability of measurement in the model by using data collected to estimate the value of free parameters and build variables that cannot be measured directly (observed/latent variables), with the initial theoretical model (Shadfar and Malekmohammadi, 2013).

Additionally, the researchers Shadfar and Malekmohammadi (2013), further explained the advantages of SEM that it allows for more flexible assumptions, rather than testing the individual coefficients, it allows the overall testing of the model, the ability to model error terms, to reduce the error of measurement by having multiple indicators per latent variable by using confirmatory factor analysis. The strategy of comparing alternative models to assess relative model fit by SEM makes it more powerful (Garson, 2011).

In this study, such relationship was further proposed in each hypothesis. The Structural Equation Model (SEM) helps analyze the relationship between variables, while at the same time analyzing relationships in the inner model and the outer model. Since SEM is also a path analytical method that shows the path links among the variables in the conceptual model, the estimates of the parameters as well as estimates a series of casual relationships, it also assesses the relationships and handles the multiple relationships (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black, 1995).

4. METHODOLOGY

The validity of the overall model and the hypothesized relationships among the variables can be analysed by using the SEM method (Shadfar and Malekmohammadi, 2013). By using the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), the validity of the measurement model can analysed to be satisfactory (Paswan, 2009) as it helps to evaluate the construct validity and reliability of the specified measurement model (Ibid) and examines the Goodness-Of-Fit (GOF). To assess a model, in reference to model fit, numerous researchers use several goodness-of-fit indicators (Shadfar and Malekmohammadi, 2013). For one-time analysis, generally, TLI, CFI, and RMSEA are preferred (Schreiber, A., F. K., E. A., & J., 2006). The chi-square test may be misleading by four ways as discussed by Garson (2011), which is why other fit tests, such as IFI, TLI, CFI, RMSEA, and a reasonable sample size (>200), should also be considered in order to avoid modifying the model or accepting it blindly. However, for this research, some common fit indices are as follows: chi-square of df ratio (CMIN/DF), AGFI (Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit statistic), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA):

Table 4. Measurement Findings of Model Fit Analysis Summary

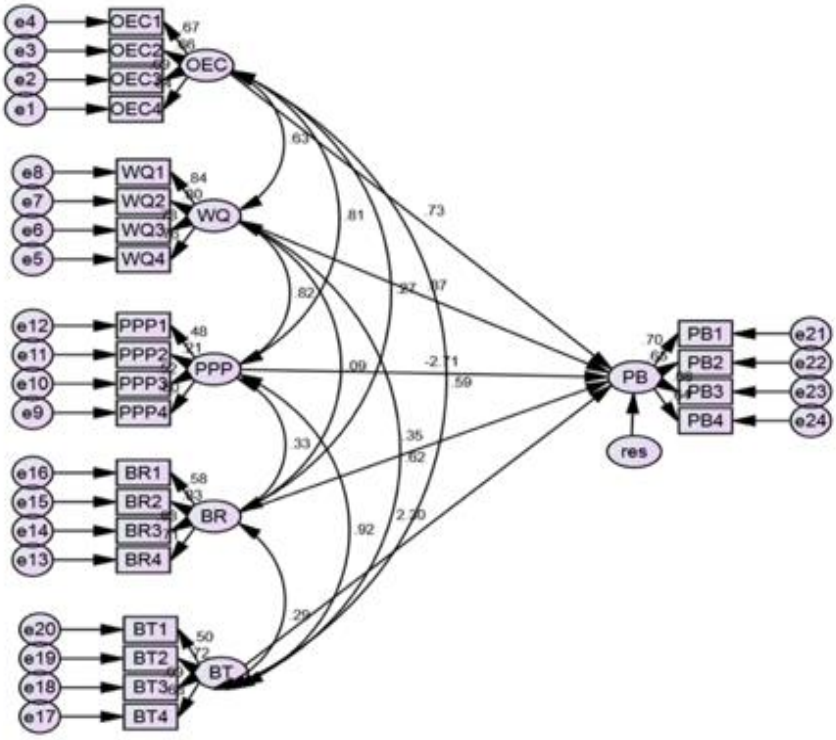
Fit Indices					
Fit Measures	CMIN/DF	AGFI	IFI	CFI	RMSEA
Scale for good Model fit	2-5	≥ 0.80	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90	≤ 0.08
Derived Default Model Values	2.554	0.856	0.902	0.901	0.062
Interpretation	Adequate Fit	Good Fit	Good Fit	Good Fit	Good Fit

As seen from Table 4., the ranges of values and the interpretation, the model for this research is considered a good fitting model.

The Systematic Results For Hypothesis Testing

This part of the research findings presents the effects between the independent (exogenous variables) and dependent variable (endogenous variable) In order to analyse the effects of these variables, SEM analysis is used. The unstandardized estimates model shows regression weights and covariance:

Figure II. Path Diagram of SEM Model with Parameter Estimates (Regression Weights)



Note: The round shapes represent latent variables (factors, constructs, etc.).
The square shapes represent observed variables (also called manifest variables).
Single direct arrow represents direct path which indicates that the variable at the origin of the arrow has some influence or significance on the target variable.
Curved double headed arrows (bidirectional) represents co-variation path or indicates a correlation linking the two variables where the modelling process estimates the value.
"e" represents measurement of error (random).
The numbers represent the regression coefficients.

Table 5. Hypothesies Testing for SEM Model

Structural Path (Main Hypotheses)	SEM Output Model				Result
	Estimate	S.E	C.R.	P	
OEC → PB	1.000				Insignificant
WQ → PB	.861	.486	1.772	.076	Insignificant
PPP → PB	-4.154	1.587	-2.618	.009	Significant
BR → PB	.306	.180	1.695	.090	Insignificant
BT → PB	2.404	.742	3.241	.001	Significant
Structural Path (Sub Hypotheses)	SEM Output Model				Result
	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	
OEC ↔ WQ	.204	.029	6.912	***	Significant
OEC ↔ PPP	.234	.031	7.426	***	Significant
OEC ↔ BR	.108	.027	4.005	***	Significant
OEC ↔ BT	.138	.032	4.350	***	Significant
WQ ↔ PPP	.169	.027	6.317	***	Significant
WQ ↔ BR	.248	.033	7.428	***	Significant
WQ ↔ BT	.101	.025	3.963	***	Significant
PPP ↔ BR	.179	.028	6.330	***	Significant
PPP ↔ BT	.045	.029	1.526	.127	Insignificant
BR ↔ BT	.259	.033	7.751	***	Significant

Note: S.E.= Standard Error; C.R.= Critical Ratio (Estimate/S.E.); P= Probability value associated with the null hypothesis; ***= p-value < 0.001

5. CONCLUSION

In hypothesis testing, it is crucial to find the likelihood of the sample result of a probability called the p-value, where a high p-value means that the sample result will lead to the retention of null hypothesis, and a low p-value (≤ 0.05) means that the sample result will lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis (statistically significant), and the criteria in null hypothesis is called α (alpha) where a p-value of 0.05 is almost always set (Paul, Jhangiani, and I-Chant, 2013). The results of the hypotheses analysis as summarised below:

A total of 15 hypotheses were proposed in this research: 5 main hypotheses with the null hypotheses as proposed of "does not affect". Using SEM methodology allowed the researcher to explore the correlation between the latent independent variables proposing 10 hypotheses, with the null hypotheses proposed as having "no correlation" with the factors studied in this research. The statistical test for the proposed main hypothesis resulted in an insignificant p-values for three hypotheses, and therefore, the researcher cannot reject the null hypothesis for OEC → PB (H1), which contradicts with the previous research conducted by Wang et. al. (2012) who concluded that purchase decision is effected both directly and indirectly by peer communication through online consumer socialization; WQ → PB (H2), which is not consistent with the research conducted by Semerádová and Weinlich (2020) who concluded that out of the 24 hypothetical relationships portrayed, only four were rejected: "go back" button, search bar, information detail and language quality had no significant impact on user experience

with a website and BR → PB (H4) which also contradicts with research conducted by Arisman and Risana (2019) who concluded that brand preference had a significant influence on the formation of millennial shopping styles. However, the statistical p-values for two main hypotheses resulted in a significant p-value, which is above the cut-off value ($p \leq 0.05$), and therefore, the researcher rejects the null hypotheses and accepts the alternative hypotheses: PPP → PB (H3), which is not consistent with the research conducted by Behjati et al (2012), where their results indicated that attitude, trust and faithfulness and perceived behavioural control had no significant relationship on online purchasing behaviour while perceived reliability and subjective norm had significant relationship on online purchasing behaviour, but the results of BT → PB (H5) is consistent with researchers Effendi et al (2019), whose results indicated that while brand awareness and perceived value had a significant influence on trust it also had a significant influence on purchasing decisions.

Sub-Hypotheses

The statistical results of 9 out of 10 hypotheses resulted in a p-value of <0.01 resulting in statistically significant value and strong evidence against the null hypotheses. Therefore, the researcher rejects all the null hypotheses and accepts the alternate hypotheses that there exists a significant correlation between the latent independent variables as proposed in H6, H7, H8, H9, H10, H12, H13, H14 and H15 except for one hypothesis H11 which resulted in a p-value of 0.127. For H6, it proved that there exists a significant correlation between online engagement community and the quality of the website, which is consistent with research conducted by Ray, Kim & Morris (2014) which concluded that from a sense of engagement, members essentially contribute to and revisit an online community. For H7, it proved that there exists a significant correlation between the online engagement community and how consumers perceive a product's performance which is consistent with research conducted in China by researchers Chen, Sun, Yan and Wen (2020) whose results indicated that perceived sustainability affects rational and emotional customer engagement. A research conducted in South Korea and United States by researcher Gong (2018) which resulted in empirical evidence that cultural value orientations influence customer brand engagement behaviour is consistent with the result of the proposed hypothesis H8 in this research which proved that there exists a significant correlation between the online engagement community and the relationship the customer has with a brand. Another research conducted in Thailand for automobile by researchers Limpasirisuwan and Donkwa (2017), whose results concluded that a high degree of satisfaction with online brand communities resulted in a greater trust in the communities is also consistent with the result of the proposed hypothesis H9 in this research which proved that there exists a significant correlation between the online engagement community and the trust the customer has in a brand. For H10, it proved that there exists a significant correlation between website

quality and how consumers perceive a product's performance which is also consistent with research conducted by Hsu, Chang and Chen (2012), whose results confirmed that website quality affects perceived flow and customers' perceived playfulness which in turn would influence their purchase intention and satisfaction. However, for H11, the statistical test resulted in an insignificant p-value, and therefore, the null hypothesis could not be rejected that there is no correlation between website quality and the relationship the consumers have with a brand, which is not in line with previous researches conducted by researchers Gummerus, Liljander, Pura, and Riel (2004) that consumers with higher content gratification believe that the information that is provided by a shopping website is reliable and as recognized by numerous studies, in large firms, interactivity aids to build a good relationship with customers (Ghose and Wenyu, 1998). For H12, it proved there exists a significant correlation between website quality and consumers' trust in a brand which is consistent with research conducted in Taiwan by researchers Chang, Kuo, Hsu and Cheng (2014) where the results indicated that perceived trust is positively influenced by website quality. A research conducted on mobile phone users by researchers Snoj, Pisnik and Mumel (2004), whose research resulted in significant relationships among the concepts researched on perceived product quality and perceived risk as well as the relationships among perceived quality, perceived risk and perceived value is somewhat similar to the results of H13, which proved that there exists a significant correlation between consumers' perception of a product's performance and their relationship with the brand. For H14, it proved that there exists a significant correlation between consumers' perception of a product's performance and their trust in a brand which is similar to previous research conducted on electronics in Thailand by researchers Marakanon and Panjakajornsak (2017) whose research resulted that perceived quality had an indirect effect on customer loyalty via customer trust. Another research conducted in Beijing by researchers Zhang et al. (2020), that concluded that a meaningful brand relationship significantly predicts brand trust and brand loyalty is consistent with the final hypothesis H15 which proved that there exists a significant correlation between the relationship the consumers have with a brand and their trust in a brand.

Summary of Questionnaire

The overall summary of the questionnaire is that the distribution of the majority of 400 respondents had more females who were single between the age of 16-23 with at least a bachelor's degree and were still students and therefore, only had a monthly income of less than and equal to 15,000 baht. Moreover, the majority of 400 respondents were interested in taking part in a group or page in the future (if they are not already a part of it), purchase products because of promotion/sale, at least 2-3 times a month by choosing Lazada as their purchasing channel, has been less than a month since they have been purchasing and usually buy clothes or accessories. Since majority of the respondents are still

students, they spend less than or equal to 1,000 baht per month, even though they spend 4-6 hours a day using their social networking sites, and their view on a product or brand is influenced by the feedbacks or comments of the group they are part of or the quality of the website that helps them to understand the reliability of a new product or brand, and their main reason to purchase online or to continue purchasing online is because it is easily available online. Finally, majority of 400 respondents slightly agree that they get influenced by the comments and the feedbacks of the online community that they are part of while a good quality website helps them to understand the performance of a product/brand as its price influences their perception of the product's performance and they tend to purchase the products or brands they trust and if the price of good product or brand is affordable.

Limitations

The limitations within an SEM is that even though fit indices are a useful guide, with respect to substantive theory, a structural model should also be examined. The limitations within a quantitative study relies on numerical descriptions and generalizes the results by measuring the responses and the views of the sample population to explain a phenomena (Leedy, 1993), and the limitations are therefore, assumed to be:

1. **Contextual detail:** Since it is able to test hypothesis, it provides less detail on motivation, attitude and behavior.

2. **False representation:** Based on the responses of the participating subjects, the results of the data collected might reflect the view of the researcher instead of the participants.

3. **Language barriers:** Not being a native speaker of Thai, this may cause problems with misunderstandings during interviews or the respondents might not be able to interpret certain words in the questionnaire correctly or as per their understanding.

4. **Knowledge of culture:** As a complete non-Thai researcher, the perceptions of the researcher may be different from the participants. This could lead to bias opinions or misunderstandings during interviews.

Recommendations

According to Jöreskog & Sörbom (1988), parts of the model may fit poorly even though the fit indices may point to a good-fitting model. Past literatures have not identified the exact studied concepts of interest in this research. Even though this model fits the data well, researchers should try to test and rule out like alternative models (non-equivalent and equivalent models).

The major significance of the study is to understand how brands influence consumers in their purchasing behavior through the use of the online networks, therefore, although the results of this study contradicts with some of the results of the previous researchers, it can be assumed that the reason for this may be due to different sample sizes or the population studied is different. Moreover, it can also be due to different studied variables for this particular research compared to previous researchers. Future researchers could possibly yield different results as well if different variables are studied or if a mediate variable is added, or more observed variables are included in the latent variable. Different methods can be further used to analyze the data or different statistical analysis within the same methodology could further be tested. Further research would benefit to extend the evaluation and to further test the theory developed in this research with in-depth exploration and more methodological work to capture the impact and outcomes of the factors in this research. It may also be beneficial for further research if other social networks not covered in this research could be explored to understand if it has any significant, positive or negative impact on the consumers' purchasing behavior.

This study will therefore be beneficial and help other service industries and shops to have a better understanding of how to deal with problems that can arise from different aspects such as new products to promotion campaigns to having a presence online in order to gain a competitive advantage. The research will also help retailing industries that are currently having similar issues regarding the efficiency by informing them of different strategies and steps that can be taken to deal with them. It will also help other businesses to understand that through different ways, specifically the social media, not only the performance of the company can increase but it can also be used as a tool to promote a positive brand image and motivate or encourage the consumers in actively putting in an effort to help achieve that.

Moreover, companies can improve their image online by aiding to both the negative and positive feedback of the consumers who are members of the online communities by taking advantage of the usefulness of web marketing and to be able to have a closer, more understanding relationship with their customers by observing the market trends which will give businesses an opportunity to develop and adapt to the constant demands and changes. Finally, the research will also inform customers that on-going strategies and promotions are used not only to increase companies' performance, but to also make customers more satisfied and enhance the customers' experience overall.

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