

THE INNOVATIVE ROLES OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AS A MODERATOR IN CONSUMER PERSPECTIVE MODEL FOR MALAYSIA-ORIGIN FASHION BRANDS' BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY

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ABSTRACT – Community Engagement (CE) is investigated in this study as a moderator on whether it can innovatively strengthen the Consumer Perspective Model (CPM) or the opposite, in order to build Strong Brand Equity (SBE) for Malaysia-Origin Fashion Brands' (MOFBs) business sustainability. CE has been stated to have significant impacts especially through electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) on sustainable advantage. CPM is a strategic brand management model adapted from Consumer-based Brand Equity (CBBE) (Keller, 1993) with Independent Variables (IVs) of Brand Awareness (BA), Brand Image (BI) and Purchase Intention (PI) to predict Dependent Variable (DV) of SBE building for MOFBs like Padini, Vinci, Polo Haus, Variante and others that have low equity to win over international rivals (IRs) such as H&M, ZARA, Mango, Uniqlo and others, due to consumers switching their brand preferences. CE provides a good eWOM platform for consumer-brand relationship, thus, would turn commercial content moderation to financial outgrowth in its moderating effects together with Brand Loyalty (BL) as a mediating variable. The study employed a non-probability convenient sampling technique with the success response rate of 29.7% where 798 datasets were run through data screening procedures for further statistical analysis in SEM-PLS. A quantitative research method by using SPSS version 25 and SmartPLS version 3.2.8 on 6 constructs and 17 latent variables was employed too. The findings showed that Brand Loyalty has full mediating effects. CE was found to weaken the relationships between IVs and DV, thus, insignificantly affecting the innovative roles as a moderator variable. Overall, MOFBs are perceived of having low equity in the marketplace. Therefore, different consumers' perspectives to successfully build SBE are needed. Particularly, more comprehensive and innovative roles of CE in eWOM interactivities can contribute to business sustainability.

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INTRODUCTION

The sustainability of MOFBs in business is the current focal point of the study. Past studies showed that CE has significant impacts for sustainable advantage, especially through interactivities of consumers in eWOM (Carvalho & Fernandes, 2018; Srivastava & Sivaramakrishnan, 2020). Therefore, CE as a moderator variable is investigated in this study whether it can innovatively strengthen the causal relationships in CPM which is adapted from the CBBE model (Keller, 1993). CPM consists of exogenous variables of BA, BI, and PI to predict SBE building for the sustainable advantage of MOFBs like Padini, Vinci, Polo Haus, Variante, and others that have low equity in the Malaysian Fast Fashion Industry (MFFI). Low equity brands have been identified as facing difficulties in financial outgrowth and struggling to sustain (Aaker, 1996; Aaker & Biel, 2013; Keller, 1993, 2001). In addition, BL is investigated on the mediating effects in the causal relationships. CE is believed to provide a good platform for online social interactivities namely, eWOM, for business advantages (Tajuddin, Hashim & Zainol, 2018). Businesses would have turned commercial content moderation to financial outgrowth by managing the online communities effectively (Seering, Wang, Yoon & Kaufman, 2019). Besides, Carvalho and Fernandes (2018) identified CE as an effective moderator involving online determinants as such satisfaction, trust, and commitment in eWOM. Due to technological advancement, eWOM can give feedbacks related to post-purchase experiences to influence the purchase decision-making process (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2019). According to Srivastava and Sivaramakrishnan (2020), brands should not ignore the advantages of CE's innovative roles in the consumer-brand engagement of eWOM to achieve satisfaction and loyalty. Thus, conquering market share is attainable as brand equity is strengthened.

Problem statement

MFFI is expected to worth \$1.039 million in 2020 with a growing Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 8.4% in 2024 (Statistica, 2020). In reality, MOFBs face difficulties being the market leader as they struggle in surviving and sustaining their business. Particularly, they also struggle to fight with IRs such as H&M, ZARA, Mango, Uniqlo, and others (Nielsen, 2017). A report from The EdgeProp highlighted MOFBs faced intense competition where a big player like PADINI Holdings that holds several brands under its belts has experienced decreasing in sales by 42.5% due to

brand-switching behaviour (TheEdge, 2018). The situation is in favour of IRs as they hold outstanding global image and recognition which managed to attract young generations in their preferences (TheEdge, 2018; Valaei & Nikhashemi, 2017; Mohamed, Mohamad, Borhan, Osman & Kamaralzaman, 2019). Hence, the factor of country-of-origin (CoO) image and recognition are the strong determinants in influencing their purchase decisions (Valaei & Nikhashemi, 2017; Mohamed et. al., 2019).

IRs are current the market leader as they have high equity perceived, thus, conquering the market share is attainable. On the contrary, MOFBs being resilient is questionable. Hence, CE as a moderator variable is investigated whether it can innovatively strengthen the causal relationships in CPM. Past studies found that low equity brands would experience financial instability due to consumer perspective behaviour (Aaker, 1991, 1996; Keller, 1993, 2001). Past literature had foreseen CPM as a strategic brand management tool to assist in predicting SBE building for sustainable advantage (Keller, 1993, 2001; Su & Chang, 2018; Yeap, Thurasamy & Yapp, 2018; Carvalho & Fernandes, 2018; Seering et. al., 2019; Srivastava & Sivaramakrishnan, 2020).

Research objectives

The main objective of the study is to investigate the innovative roles of CE as a moderator in CPM whether it can strengthen or weaken the causal relationships together with three (3) specific objectives which are formulated as below:

1. To investigate the mediator effects of BL in the relationships between IVs and DV
 - a. To investigate the moderator roles of CE whether it can innovatively strengthen or weaken the relationships between IVs and DV
2. To investigate the significant direct impacts of CPM in the relationships between IVs and DV

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical framework aligned in underpinning theories

The study adapted the CBBE of Keller (1993) that consists of consumers' differential responses towards brand knowledge that are cognitively instilled in minds through marketing-mix activities over time. Themixedx marketing activities comprise of consumers' perceptions on ten (10) marketing elements as suggested by Chattopadhyay, Shivani, and Krishnan (2010) which are price, store image, distribution intensity, advertising frequency, celebrity endorsement, price promotion, non-price promotions, event sponsorship, country-of-origin, and word-of-mouth (WOM).

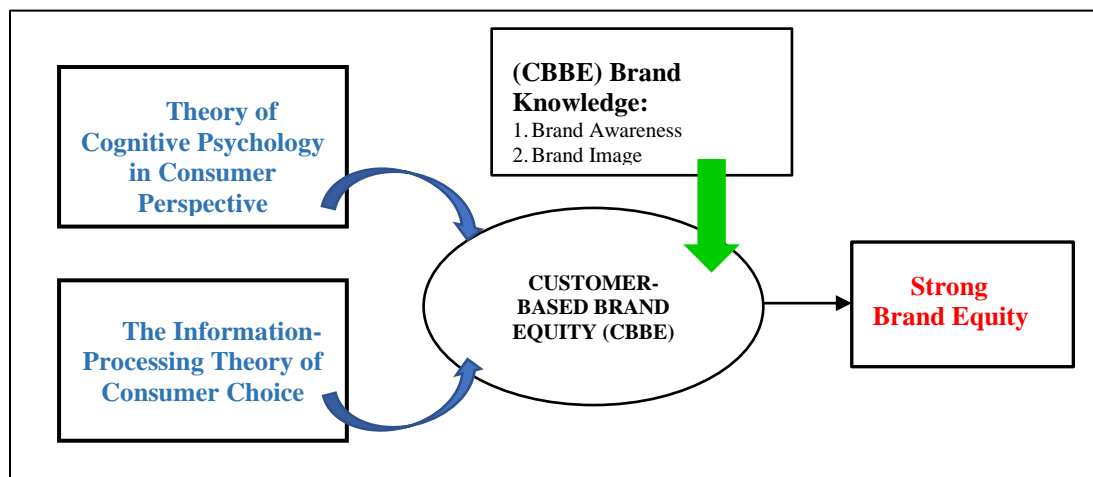


Figure 1. Theoretical framework

Based on CBBE, a theoretical framework is general directions for the relationships identified which are crucial to the issue being investigated. The underpinning theories adapted from the Theory of Cognitive Psychology in Consumer Perspective (Fischer, 1980) and Information-Processing Theory of Consumer Choice (Bettman, 1970, 1979) are integrated with CBBE which incorporates Brand Knowledge leveraging in BA and BI (Keller, 1993). Figure 1 illustrates the theoretical framework of the study.

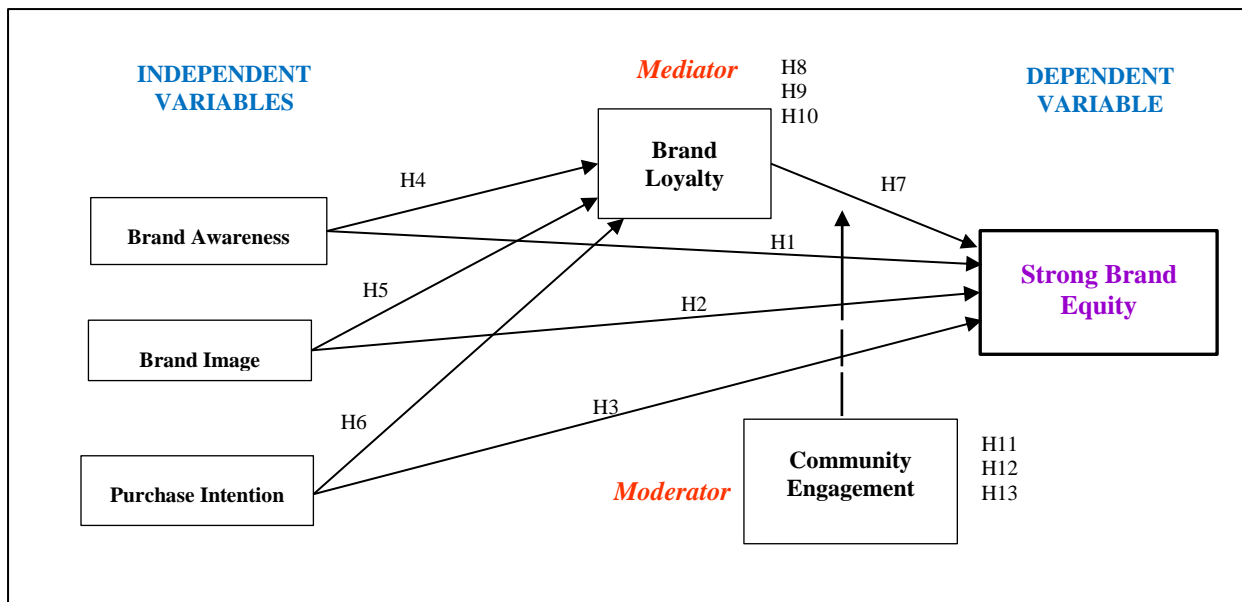


Figure 2. Conceptual framework of consumer perspective model (CPM)

Conceptual framework and hypotheses development

CPM is established in BA, BI and PI construct to predict SBE building in the causal relationships as a specific direction to the study. Moreover, BL and CE are examined as the mediator and moderator variables in the causal relationships. Figure 2 illustrates the conceptual framework and hypotheses development that was elaborated further.

Direct impacts of CPM on SBE building

CPM is elaborated in brand knowledge which is cognitively instilled in consumers' minds that motivates consumers' various responses towards mix-marketing activities over time. It comprises of BA, BI, and PI determinants that have been identified for SBE building (Aaker, 1996; Aaker & Biel, 2013; Acar & Erkan, 2018; Keller, 1993, 2001, Keller & Brexendorf, 2016). The familiarization of a brand indicates high BA due to consumers' ability to recall and recognize the brand against other rivals, as it has distinguished product cues to influence purchase decision-making, contributing to SBE building (Keller & Brexendorf, 2016; Foroudi, 2019). In addition, image differentiation has positive impacts on consumer behaviour developed in brand associations of product and non-product attributes congruently. It also enhances trust and satisfaction levels to further strengthen brand equity (Keller, 2016; Foroudi, 2019). Furthermore, PI is also identified as a contributor to SBE establishment via post-purchase evaluation, leading to positive buying patterns in purchase repetitions and recommendations, which lead to SBE building (Foroudi et. al., 2018). Thus, the study proposed the following hypotheses as below;

H1: BA has a significant direct impact on SBE Building

H2: BI has a significant direct impact on SBE Building

H3: PI has a significant direct impact on SBE Building

CPM towards brand loyalty development

CPM is believed to develop BL, leveraging from BA, BI, and PI determinants where a pool of loyal consumers is advantageous for business growth (Keller, 1993; Aaker, 1996; Foroudi et. al., 2018). BA is seen as a prerequisite to BL development which benefited from recognition and recalls characteristics in the communicating process to develop familiarity and popularity of a brand (Aaker, 1996; Foroudi et. al., 2018). Meanwhile, BI is reflected in brand associations held in consumer's mind to create meanings attributed in different circumstances and experiences which develop into BL establishment (Keller, 1993; Aaker, 1996; Foroudi et. al., 2018; Ahn, 2019). Furthermore, BL is established once consumers show a positive attitude and behaviour in their purchase intention based on satisfaction and trust (Keller, 1993; Aaker, 1996; Aminu & Ahmad, 2018; Ahn, 2019). Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed;

H4: BA has significant effects on BL Development

H5: BI has significant effects on BL Development

H6: PI has significant effects on BL Development

Brand loyalty predicts the SBE building

Past studies agreed that loyalty can predict SBE building established in consumers' satisfaction and trust in the consumer-brand relationship (Aaker, 1991, 1996; Aaker & Beil, 2013; Keller, 1993, 2016; Foroudi et. al., 2018). Recruiting new consumers is expensive, hence, retaining loyal consumers is the best alternative. Intangible brand strength can be seen in loyalty magnitudes through the willingness to pay a price premium, insensitive towards price-change, and positive attitude towards repurchase and advocacy commitments (Braun, 2018; Gómez, Martín-Consuegra, Díaz & Molina, 2018). Thus, another hypothesis is proposed;

H7: BL has significant effects on SBE building

Brand loyalty as a mediator in the causal relationships

Past studies recommended BL as a mediator variable leveraging brand knowledge with determinants of BA, BI, and PI for SBE building (Keller, 1993; Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2016; Keller & Brexendorf, 2016; Acar & Erkan, 2018). Loyalty directly affects consumers' brand of choice which comes from familiarization in recalls and recognitions, indicating SBE existence (Keller, 1993; Aaker, 1996). Besides, the premise of BI is discovered in functional and symbolic attributes, mediated by BL for SBE building. Past studies indicated a significant relationship between BI and SBE in differentiation which needed supports from the loyalty of retained consumers who congruently perceive brand-concept and value-added attributes (Nguyen, Wu & Chen, 2017; Zhu, Teng, Foti & Yuan, 2019). Moreover, consumers' attitudinal and behavioural intentions are commitments triggered by high loyalty to enhance SBE building. This situation indicates that the motivation of PI highly contributes to SBE establishment through loyal consumer-brand relationships (Khan, Rahmani, Hoe & Chen, 2015; Rather & Sharma, 2017). Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed;

H8: BL has a mediator effect on the relationship between BA and SBE building

H9: BL has a mediator effect on the relationship between BI and SBE building

H10: BL has a mediator effect on the relationship between PI and SBE building

CE as a moderator variable in the causal relationships

CE provides a platform for a closed-knit bonding through eWOM interactivities for SBE building which is constructed in BA, BI, and PI dimensions. Past studies highlighted that CE interactivities were identified as a strategic driver to strengthen causal relationships (Carvalho & Fernandes, 2018; Ahn, 2019; Srivastava & Sivaramakrishnan, 2020). Thus, the utilization of consumer-brand and consumer-consumer relationships has become CE's major innovative role to strategically establish sustainable advantage for SBE building (Chan, Boksem & Smidts, 2018). The optimization of CE interactivities is to create high BA in familiarization criteria (Zhang, Shabbir, Pitsaphol & Hassan, 2015; Islam & Rahman, 2016). On the contrary, brand associations develop positive attitudes towards a product and non-product dimensions in functional, performance-related, and imagery-related retrieved in the image perceived (Keller, 1993, 2001). Through the intrinsic and extrinsic properties, CE contributes to brand performance in quality and value, thus, supporting SBE building (Camilleri & Rather, 2019). Therefore, valuable insights in consumers' perception can critically give feedbacks through intentional commitments to further strengthen the causal relationships in the purchase decision-making process (Keller, 1993, 2016; Aaker, 1996; Chan et. al., 2018). Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed;

H11: CE moderates the relationship between BA and SBE building

H12: CE moderates the relationship between BI and SBE building

H13: CE moderates the relationship between PI and SBE building

METHODOLOGY

Quantitative research method

The quantitative research method was the most appropriate for this study as it focused on consumers' perceptions by adopting an integrated research model to guide specifically in questionnaires design, data collection procedures, and selection of statistical analysis (Corner, 2002). For questionnaire design, the study was aligned in three (3) levels starting from the adaptation of literature reviews, reviewing questionnaire draft in pre-testing, and conducting a pilot test (Chen & Paulraj, 2004). The questions were formed in closed-ended structured using multiple-choice questions which are suitable for a self-administered survey. The questionnaire was divided into six (6) different parts. Part A has fourteen (14) questions focusing on the consumer demography profiles. Meanwhile, Part B until Part F used a 7-point Likert scale categorized under interval level in measuring attitudinal scales for character and personality traits of the respondents. Those parts have ninety-nine (99) items in total with the range of (1) for 'Strongly Disagree' to (7) for 'Strongly Agree' (Joshi, Kale, Chandel & Pal, 2015; Aini, Zuliana & Santoso, 2018).

Pre-testing

Pre-testing was conducted to improve the readability, ambiguity, and validity of the questionnaire before proceeding to the actual data collection. Two (2) pre-testing sessions were conducted (Dillman, 2000; Howard, 2018). The first session consisted of thirty (30) participants from the sample population. They had to give comments and recommendations

on the questionnaire (Perneger, Courvoisier, Hudelson & Gayet-Ageron, 2015). On the contrary, the second session involved two (2) experts in the field of study to assess and evaluate the questionnaires to avoid any discrepancy in reaching content and face validity goals (Perneger et. al., 2015).

Pilot study

A small-scale study with the aim to assess the credibility of research instruments and feasibility to run an actual-large scale survey was conducted before the actual data collection (Nardi, 2018). Two (2) groups of twenty-five (25) individuals each from the sample population were involved in this pilot test (Hertzog, 2008). The questionnaires were distributed by using Google Form through social network platforms such as emails, Facebook, Messenger, and WhatsApp. The participants gave their constructive comments and feedbacks in which the study utilized to increase the rigor and trustworthiness of the results. In addition, the data collected were analyzed and tabulated by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Software version 25 (Wagner III, 2019) in reliability testing for internal consistency between scales using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient scores (Taber, 2018).

Quantitative research technique for data collection

The sample population represented the entire population through the generalizability of MOFBs' consumers who stayed in Klang Valley areas. The power analysis was utilized in detecting the true effect by employing G*Power software version 3.1.9.2 to determine the sample size (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang & Buchner, 2007; Tehseen, Sajilan, Gadar & Ramayah, 2017; Ramayah, Cheah, Chuah, Ting & Memon, 2018). Cohen's (1988) f^2 of 0.2, 0.5, and 0.8 for small, medium, and large effect sizes respectively were followed in this research. With the involvement of three (3) predictors, the study determined that a minimum sample size of sixty-eight (68) was needed to create a power of 0.95 with medium effect size $f^2 = 0.2$ under a two-tailed test. A non-probability convenient sampling technique was utilized for data collection where both non-conventional and conventional approaches were applied in online web-based and paper-based survey tools respectively (Mutepfa & Tapera, 2019). Based on a study by Candrljic, Katić, and Dlab (2014) which was conducted on 1231 observed courses found that the median values of the results achieved during online and paper-based tests showed no significant differences.

Thus, the study employed the non-conventional approach of the online web-based questionnaire using Google Form linked to Facebooks, WhatsApp, Messenger, and emails. 2050 sets of questionnaires were distributed with a 31.5% success response rate in return (Mutepfa & Tapera, 2019). Meanwhile, the conventional approach used a paper-based survey tool to distribute 800 sets of questionnaires with a 28.9% success response rate. This is due to the questionnaire being distributed in high-density areas which provide feasibility and practicality for easy accessibility, proximity, availability of respondents to participate. These high-density areas include shopping malls, higher institutions, and other crowded places (Speak, Escobedo, Russo & Zerbe, 2018; Mutepfa & Tapera, 2019). On average, 29.7% of response rate successfully returned eight hundred forty-six (846) sets of questionnaires in both survey tools. Hence, a study by Candrljic et al., (2014) proved that only a slight difference occurred in both applications, indicating that the approaches were reliable to be employed for data collection in this study. However, after data screening procedures, only seven hundred ninety-eight (798) datasets were utilized for further statistical analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents characteristics

The gender characteristics showed 35% of respondents are male and 65% are female. 65.8% of the total respondents aged between 18 and 24 years old with monthly income status in the range of less than RM2000 to RM5000 monthly with 35.1% of them working full time. Malay respondents contribute to 80.6% of the total respondents where 71% are single young adults who stay in Klang Valley areas, with the highest residing in Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur. The results show that respondents are actively buying goods online and offline. However, only 45.1% are members of MOFBs with 92.7% of them spending in the range of less than RM100 to RM300 in a single receipt, with the frequency of buying from one (1) to three (3) times in six months. They spend mostly on clothes and shawl/headscarf.

Assessment of normality

The results showed that the p -value ≤ 0.001 , indicating all variables are normally distributed. On the contrary, z -values for skewness and kurtosis showed that Price Premium has approximate normality in skewness at -1.488, whereas, the rest of the constructs are non-normally skewed ranging from -6.348 to -2.465 indicating z -skewness are deviated from normality and not symmetrical in the data distribution. On the contrary, the values of z -kurtosis are normally distributed in the range of -1.912 to 1.228. Overall, the results exhibited that the datasets are approximately non-normally distributed.

Descriptive data analysis

Descriptive data analysis measures the central tendency and dispersion, showing the central tendency at the range between 4.80 and 5.19. Standard Deviation's highest value is $(\sigma) = 1.31622$ (BEPP), indicating the data points spread wider compared to other variables. In addition, Variance measures the average of the squared distances from the Mean to estimate the population of the study in the range between 0.986 (BIA) and 1.732 (BEPP).

Assessment of measurement model of low-order and high-order constructs

A Reflective Measurement Model of Reflective-Formative Type II HOC ‘Mode A’ was analyzed to assess the Convergent and Discriminant Validity on variables and the corresponding items of Low-order construct (LOC). Figure 3 exhibits the model generated in 6 parameters of BA, BI, PI, BL, CE and to determine Convergent Validity in Factor Loading coefficients, Composite Reliability (CR), and Cronbach’s alpha coefficient (α). Based on the results for the reflective LOC measurement model, all factor loading coefficients exceed the threshold value of 0.70 which indicates high reliability (Tehseen et. al., 2017; Hair, Risher, Sarstedt & Ringle, 2019).

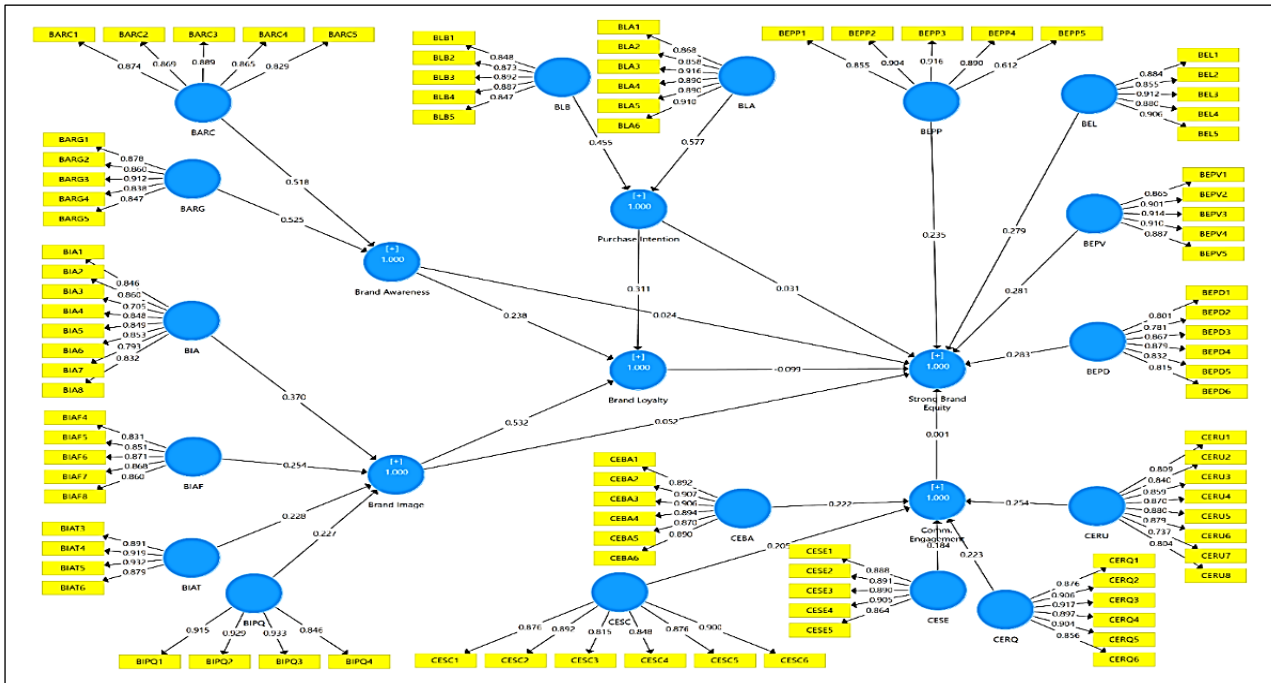


Figure 3. Evaluation of Reflective Measurement Model - A Reflective-Formative Type II HOC ‘Mode A’ in PLS Algorithm Regression Analysis

Furthermore, high internal consistency exceeds 0.90 in both CR and Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient (α). Therefore, it suggested that the model fit exists in the reflective measurement model of LOC. On the other hand, Discriminant Validity validates latent variables to be distinctive from each other to avoid multicollinearity issues (Ab Hamid, Sami & Sidek, 2017; Hair et. al., 2019). The study employed Fornell-Larcker criteria for cross-loadings assessment (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The results showed that all indicators are loaded strongly on intended constructs compared to others in the model to denote high discriminant validity. However, the constructs of BIAF and BIA showed a slight difference ($0.839 - 0.825 = 0.014$). According to Ab Hamid et. al., (2017), the small dispute can be ignored. The path modeling of HOC in second-order and third-order constructs is treated as measurement model and structural model simultaneously, evaluated in Blindfolding Algorithm Analysis in SmartPLS version 3.2.8 (Ringle, Wende & Becker, 2015) as Formative Measurement Model of Reflective-Formative Type II HOC ‘Mode A’ (Wong, 2013). The model fit was obtained by assessing collinearity issues in predictor variables through VIF values (Hair et. al., 2019) where the second-order constructs exhibit VIF values in the range between 3.362 and 6.236. Meanwhile, the third-order constructs exhibit the VIF values in the range between 2.102 and 5.087. Following the threshold, VIF values in the range between 1 and 10 indicate no collinearity issue in the HOC formative indicators. Figure 4 exhibits the model.

Assessment of structural model

In the Structural Model, the assessment on collinearity issues was conducted to avoid bias in the regression analysis where the results show that VIF values of predictor variables are in the range of $1 \geq x < 10$ with no collinearity issue. The significance of path coefficients showed all path coefficient values are within the range of ± 1 , thus, all paths are significant in the structural model. In addition, T statistics showed that all paths are statistically highly significant where t -value > 3.30 based on a two-tailed test with p -value ≤ 0.001 . Figure 5 exhibits the model.

Hypothesis testing using bootstrapping of direct effect results

Statistical significance of each path coefficient for hypotheses testing was found in standardized beta β -value, p -value, and T statistics together with a confidence interval (CI) consisting of parameter estimates where CI level = $1 - \alpha$ level (α), where the significant level is at 2.5% when the CI level is 97.5%. There are insignificances of the direct effect of IVs to DV with p -value > 0.05 . Thus, hypotheses (H1), (H2), and (H3) are not supported. In addition, BL also indicates an

insignificant direct effect to predict SBE with p -value > 0.05 . Therefore, hypothesis (H7) is not supported. On the contrary, there are significant indirect effects of exogenous variables to predict BL with p -value ≤ 0.05 , thus, hypotheses (H4), (H5), and (H6) are supported.

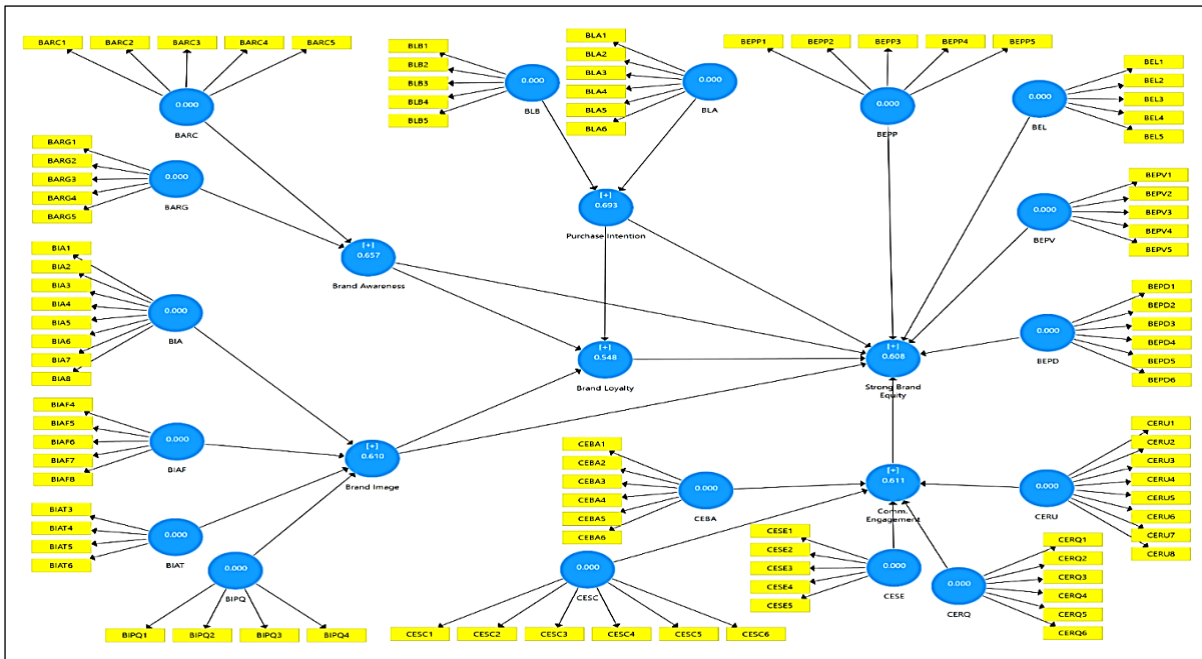


Figure 4. Evaluation of Formative Measurement Model - A Reflective-Formative Type II HOC ‘Mode A’ in Blindfolding Algorithm Analysis

Mediating effects in the path analysis

Table 1. Mediating effects of predictor and outcome variables involving brand loyalty

Path Relationships	Indirect Effect		Direct Effect		Decision
	β	p -value	β	p -value	
H8 Brand Awareness -> Strong Brand Equity (path c')	-	-	0.015	0.191	Supported – Full Mediation
	<i>(Insignificance)</i>				
Brand Awareness -> Brand Loyalty (path a)	0.238	0.001***	-	-	Supported
Brand Loyalty -> Strong Brand Equity (path b)	-0.063	0.194	-	-	Not Supported
	<i>(Significance)</i>				
H9 Brand Image -> Strong Brand Equity (path c')	-	-	0.033	0.194	Supported – Full Mediation
	<i>(Insignificance)</i>				
Brand Image -> Brand Loyalty (path a)	0.531	0.001***	-	-	Supported
Brand Loyalty -> Strong Brand Equity (path b)	-0.063	0.194	-	-	Not Supported
	<i>(Significance)</i>				
H10 Purchase Intention -> Strong Brand Equity (path c')	-	-	-0.020	0.194	Supported – Full Mediation
	<i>(Insignificance)</i>				
Purchase Intention -> Brand Loyalty (path a)	0.312	0.001***	-	-	Supported
Brand Loyalty -> Strong Brand Equity (path b)	-0.063	0.194	-	-	Not Supported
	<i>(Significance)</i>				

Note: p -value Sig. ≤ 0.001 ***, 0.01 ** , 0.05 *

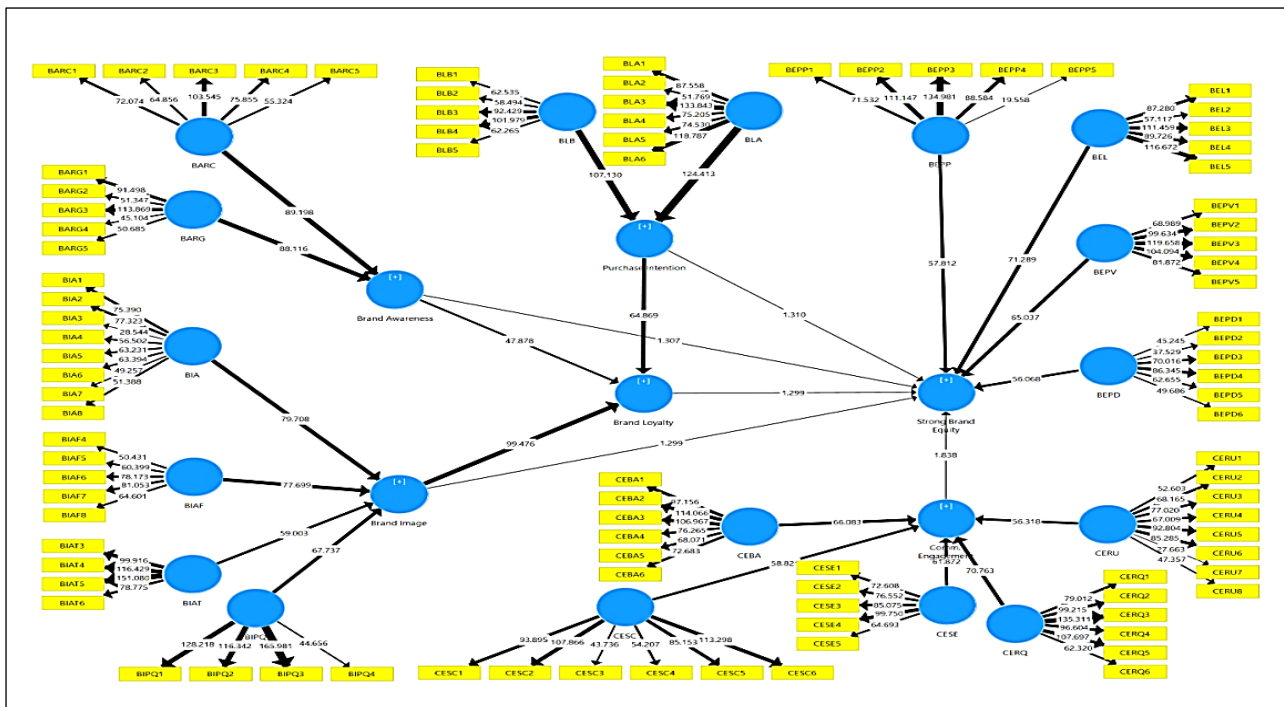


Figure 5. Evaluation of structural model in bootstrapping analysis

Following Baron and Kenny's approach (1986), the regression analysis involves IVs, mediator variables, and DV in Bootstrapping using SmartPLS version 3.2.8 (Ringle et. al., 2015). The results of the analysis are exhibited in Table 1, which exhibits the causal relationships that are fully mediated by BL as there are significant indirect effects whenever one or both of the pathways (a) or (b) found insignificant (Hayes, 2017). Therefore, the results showed evidence to support the hypotheses (H8), (H9), and (H10).

Moderating effects in the path analysis

The study employed Baron and Kenney (1986) suggestion on moderating effect by adding the multiplicative interactions which were analyzed using SmartPLS version 3.2.8 (Ringle et. al., 2015) in the multigroup analysis as the study has three (3) IVs of BA, BI, and PI in product-indicator approach (Chin, 1998). The results are shown in Table 2, indicating the moderating variable affects only on path relationship between BA and SBE where (β -value = 0.001, t -value = 2.058) significant with p -value ≤ 0.05 with a very low effect at $f^2 = 0.146$. Thus, hypothesis (H11) is supported. On the contrary, there are no moderating effect of CE on path relationships of BI \rightarrow SBE and PI \rightarrow SBE with insignificant p -value > 0.05 together with critically low effect size at $f^2 = 0.129$ and $f^2 = 0.077$ respectively. Therefore, the hypotheses (H17) and (H18) are rejected and not supported.

Table 2. Moderating effects of community engagement between IVs (predictor) and DV (outcome)

	Relationship	β -value	t -value	p -value	f^2	Decision
H11	Comm. Engagement \rightarrow Strong Brand Equity	0.002	2.330	0.020*	0.165	Supported
	Brand Awareness \rightarrow Strong Brand Equity	0.018	1.412	0.159	0.100	Not Supported
	(Brand Awareness x Comm Engagement) \rightarrow Strong Brand Equity	0.001	2.058	0.040*	0.146	Supported
H12	Comm. Engagement \rightarrow Strong Brand Equity	0.002	2.294	0.022*	0.163	Supported
	Brand Image \rightarrow Strong Brand Equity	0.039	1.308	0.192	0.093	Not Supported
	(Brand Image x Comm Engagement) \rightarrow Strong Brand Equity	0.001	1.821	0.070	0.129	Not Supported
H13	Comm. Engagement \rightarrow Strong Brand Equity	0.001	1.777	0.077	0.126	Not Supported
	Purchase Intention \rightarrow Strong Brand Equity	0.023	1.305	0.193	0.093	Not Supported
	(Purchase Intention x Comm Engagement) \rightarrow Strong Brand Equity	0.001	1.092	0.276	0.077	Not Supported

Note: p -value Sig. $\leq 0.001^{***}$, 0.01^{**} , 0.05^*

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, MOFBs has a low level of equity perceived which subsequently would affect business sustainability. Particularly, with the insignificance of direct effects found in the relationships between IVs and DV, it indicated that in the Malaysian context, the results showed opposite outcomes compared to previous studies (Aaker, 1991, 1996; Aaker & Biel, 2013; Keller, 1993, 2001, 2003a, 2003b, 2016; Keller & Brexendorf, 2016). Meanwhile, BL is concluded to have full mediating effects in the causal relationships. Therefore, MOFBs have to elevate CPM to the next level in achieving sustainable advantages in the loyalty dimension to give positive impacts on SBE building for business competitiveness in the marketplace.

In addition, CE is concluded of having low to no moderating effects on the causal relationships which are jeopardizing its innovative roles as a moderator in CPM for MOFBs' business sustainability. Even though past studies indicated that the significant roles of CE as an innovative moderator would turn commercial content moderation into financial success in the dimensions of satisfaction, trust, and commitment in eWOM, the results indicated otherwise in the Malaysian context, which is outrageous to MOFBs' business sustainability (Carvalho & Fernandes, 2018; Seering et al., 2019).

Therefore, MOFBs must interactively utilize technology advancement through the internet of things (IoT) platform in activating robust eWOM to build SBE for their business sustainability. IoT is the latest paradigm shift with the main goal is to connect the digital world to the ground of field application. In the era of IoT, many industries have aggressively started and utilized the internet and communication technology advancement in their daily operation to optimize sales and operation. Many international fashion brands have embraced IoT to give a better shopping experience for customers to develop co-creation values in service orientation through their interactions with IoT retail technology (Rese, Schlee & Baier, 2019; Latif, Alghazo, Maheswar, Jayarajan & Sampathkumar, 2020). A study by Balaji and Roy (2017) found that ease of use, superior functionality, aesthetic appeal, and presence are key determinants of value co-creation for IoT retail technology. The study also indicated that the co-creation values could influence customers to continuously hold purchase intention in repurchase and advocacy commitments, particularly in eWOM engagement in SNs community members. The findings gave further implications for MOFBs to progressively advance in their deliverables to enhance superior customer experience employed in CE, in order to rejuvenate the innovative roles as a moderator variable in CPM which can strengthen the causal relationships for business sustainability.

Limitations and directions for future study

Limitations occur in the study were merely constraints in time, costs, and environmental factors. As CPM is conceptualized based on the environmental factors of the study, future studies should look into other models with different determinants of CE to innovatively strengthen the level of MOFBs equity in the marketplace. If time and costs are not the constraints, future study should also focus on different sampling procedures in different population samplings and regions of MFFI as well as other industries like Food and Beverages, Automobile, Healthcare, Fast-moving Consumer Goods, Telecommunication, and others. These opportunities would provide new referral frameworks to test CPM by industry, region, as well as by country aspects.

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