The effects of digital marketing implementation on online consumer in Selangor during COVID-19 pandemic

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CHRONICLE	ABSTRACT
	The COVID-19 pandemic caused significant changes in many aspects especially towards small medium entrepreneurs (SMEs) as many of SMEs need to shut down their business due to movement control order (MCO) conducted by Malaysia government as SMEs cannot reach their customers. Previous studies show that having an effective digital marketing strategy in place might leave businesses vulnerable to severe setbacks towards SMEs. This research proposal aims to carry out and prove the possible potential effects and factors that influence digital marketing implementation towards online consumers in Selangor during COVID-19 pandemic. The methodology of this paper uses a descriptive qualitative approach by analyzing various previous literature on digital marketing scope of study. The sample size of the study is 235 respondents who were selected based on convenience sampling. The finding has discovered that there is a significant relationship between customer loyalty with implementation of digital marketing towards online consumers in Selangor during COVID-19 pandemic and there is a significance relationship between brand awareness and the implementation of digital marketing towards online consumer in Selangor during COVID-19 pandemic.

1. Introduction

The global epidemic of the Coronavirus is causing changes in business and consumer behavior. The virus is driving many enterprises to close and reduce spending, while customers tend to tighten their budgets (Lillyman, 2020). In this pandemic era, digital marketing has an important role in the business transaction between business and customers because digital marketing suits with the current situation which in COVID-19 pandemic, the business can interact with the consumer through many platforms on digital marketing. According to Azmi et al., (2020) pointed out that COVID-19's growth in Malaysia has had a major effect on SMEs' operations of business, affecting nearly 87% of business owners, and 76% of business owners was impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak because to the necessity of shutting down their businesses. The problem that small businesses encounter which they do not have the ability to trust on the effect of digital marketing even though the statistic shows there is a massive increasing number of online consumers during COVID-19 which according to Deborah (2019), small business owners often assume they would not have the time and resources to compete online, and they assume they can do just handle a great amount obstacles in one time of period as they're still experiencing the details and challenges of running the business. In response to the problem, this research study investigated the potential effects and factors that influence digital marketing implementation towards online consumers in Selangor during COVID-19 pandemic.

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According to Henry (2020), the worldwide COVID-19 disease outbreak has completely changed consumers', workers', residents', and humans' perspectives, as well as their beliefs and practices. As an outcome, the crisis is transforming what and how customers purchase, as well as speeding up massive structural shifts in the consumer goods sector. The objective in this study to analyze the relationship between customer loyalty, brand awareness, purchase decision and intention and customer engagement with implementation of digital marketing towards online consumers at Selangor during COVID-19 and to determine how are the behavior of online consumers towards brand awareness and the most common digital channels access in Selangor during COVID-19 pandemic. The importance and contribution of this research can be used by the business owners or any small medium enterprise because it helps the entrepreneur to realize the effectiveness of digital marketing that can reach their potential customers and it has an effect towards their business in engaging with customers. Furthermore, the business owners can get the information on the customer's behavior through the analysis and questionnaire that will be conducted thus it directly helps business owners to set up their advertising in terms of content that suits with customer preferences due to changing of online customer behavior.

2. Literature Review

Digital marketing, according to Diyana and Dolah (2018), is a goods or services that uses digital channels to contact consumers with the goal of promoting companies through various types of digital medium. Marketing strategies carried out through digital platforms allowed advertisers to engage directly to potential customers irrespective of geographical location, which was considered as a breakthrough kind of marketing that allowed businesses fresh ideas to try to conduct business (Omar & Atteya, 2020).
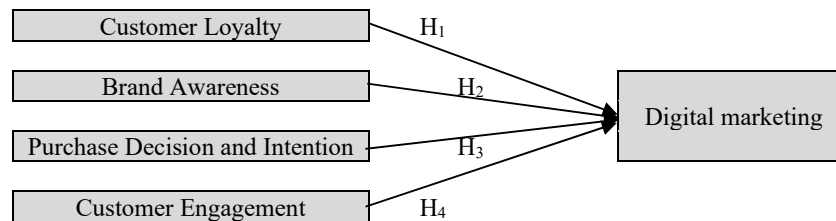

Fig. 1. Research Framework

2.1 Digital Marketing and Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty is among the most important current tactics, as it helps to assure not just the company's financial success and the advantages of its loyal clients, but also that both parties' profit (Margarita, 2016). This indicates that consumer awareness is simply the first step toward online successful business in Malaysia, because success is determined by how well e-business ventures adapt to establishing and operating long-term, sustainable relationships with devoted customers. The services that included in business that enhanced the customer loyalty by using digital marketing strategy which can collect all the data from the customers which according to Charles (2019) stated that if the online business have integrated Google Analytics which can help business to track down the best customer loyalty strategy and ensure how customers generally find the business itself by search for marketing data. Therefore, the present study proposes that customer loyalty with a high degree of impact generates a direct relationship with digital marketing platforms. This present study proposes the following hypothesis:

H_1: *There is a relationship between customer loyalty and implementation of digital marketing towards online consumers at Selangor during COVID-19*

2.2 Digital Marketing & Brand Awareness

According to Berman (2017), brand awareness is a critical element in marketing activities because consumers who are overburdened by the volume of marketing campaigns, they have seen utilize mental shortcuts to make decisions, establishing the business brand in the brains of customers. Besides, brand awareness may also be interpreted as the capability of consumers to continue with the purchase of products because of both online and offline marketing efforts (Ghazie & Dolah, 2018). In brand awareness, the digital marketing that will be involved can be social media marketing and search engine optimization because both strategy advertising campaigns can lead to success of brand awareness in online business. Lin and Chang (2003) stated that their research investigated the importance of brand awareness in customers' decision-making behaviors, and discovered that brand awareness was a significant factor, whereas Jiang (2004) discovered that brand recognition affects purchasers' decisions in his study. As a result, this research suggests that brand awareness with a high degree of effect generates a direct relationship with digital marketing platforms. This present study proposes the following hypothesis:

H₂: *There is a relationship between brand awareness and implementation of digital marketing towards online consumers at Selangor during COVID-19*

2.3 Digital Marketing & Purchase Decision Intention

According to Laksamana (2018), customers perceive social media as more genuine because it expresses what the brand is rather than attempting to manage its image. This form of connection improves brand perceptions, increases commitment, and influences the buying decision-making process (Hutter et al., 2013). Individuals are more likely to carry out the behavioral aim as the experience grows stronger (Ajzen, 1991). The specified buying intentions of consumers are one of the key inputs used by marketing managers to predict future sales and decide how the actions they take can influence the purchasing behavior of consumers, so consumers often have every intention of buying a product in a given time interval (Morwitz, 2012). Based on previous study, other elements impacting consumer desire to buy decisions, according to Shamsudin & Dang (2016), include attitudes about online buying, information processing skills of web pages, and hedonistic appeal. Therefore, this study suggests that customer purchase decision and intention with a high degree of interactivity generates a direct relationship with digital marketing platforms. This present study the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₃: *There is a relationship between purchase decision and intention and implementation of digital marketing towards online consumers at Selangor during COVID-19*

2.4 Digital Marketing & Customer Engagement

Customer engagement can be described as a three-dimensional term, representing a psychosocial condition that arises in service relationships due to interactive customer encounters with focused objects (Brodie et al., 2011). Online customer engagement involves the customer experience with the online business in terms of interacting directly or indirectly because social interaction in digital marketing has built a foundation between online customer and online business because the ways of social interaction can occur when live chat welcome messages towards the online customers. Moreover, the customer engagement also can occur when the online customers interact with the posting of online business by like, share and comment thus according to Luarn et al., (2015) stated that consumers can observe not just to information about products from images but also product descriptions from content on brand pages, which are shared in the form of postings and displayed in the central portion of the site called as the timeline. As a result, this study claimed that high-interactivity client involvement leads to a direct relationship with digital marketing platforms like social media. This present study the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₄: *There is a relationship between customers engagement and implementation of digital marketing towards online consumers at Selangor during COVID-19*

2.5 Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation in this study is drawn upon from theory of reasoned action (TRA) and social cognitive theory (SCT). According to the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), a person's behavior is determined by their purpose to do the performance, which is a function of their perceived behavior control and subjective criteria (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). This present study has choose the theory of reasoned action (TRA) involved with purchase decision and intention which this theory will giving the depth understanding on online customers behavior when the have ability to strive to self-control and the behavior of customers purchase intention which the products or services that customers interested is related with the personal value, brand trust, subjective norms, words of mouth and others factors that can influence the purchase decision and intention. Social cognitive theory is a part of the action of online consumers in engaging with the businesses because according to Wayne (2010), the focus on social impact and the focus on external and internal positive reinforcement are the distinguishing features of Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) thus this theory would explain the effect of individual reinforcements, perceptions and expectations on past experiences, all of which affect whether a person engages in a particular behavior and why a person engages in that behavior. Social cognitive theory can be related with customer engagement when the online customers have communication processes with the online business such as if the online business posting on social media and the social cognitive will succeed when the online customers interact with the posting which leads to online customers to comment, like and share the online business posting.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Research design

This present study is considered a descriptive study on the basis of data collection method. The purpose of using descriptive research design is to discover new meaning, describing what exists between the relationship in hypothesis, determining the frequency with which something occurs on categorizing information.

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3.2 Population and Sampling

In this study, the populations is the consumers who lived in Selangor, the population in Selangor is 6.57 million approximately (Statista, 2020) and the sample size is 235 of online consumers living in Selangor area who answer the questionnaire, n=235.

3.3 Sampling method

The sampling method that was implemented in this present study is convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is the simplest sampling for the researcher that has a huge amount of population and limited time to find the sample thus by using the convenience sampling because convenience sampling takes the sample randomly. This sampling method allows the researcher to take any person in the sample which is among online consumers in the Selangor area that are free to answer the questionnaire and who are volunteer to answer it thus it also can get the respondent answer quick as the respondent can answer the questionnaire online and submit directly on that time.

3.4 Questionnaire

The measurement of variables in this present research using a questionnaire which the questionnaire that used in this present study has adapted from a previous research journal which each of the sections in this questionnaire involve the variables used in this present study. The reason the measurement of variables in the questionnaire is required to adapt and modify from previous study is because the validation procedure measures the accuracy of the research study thus it increases the credibility of scope of study that is related in each section. In this present study, the measurement of variables applied are nominal, ordinal and interval. The total item in this questionnaire is 41 items and the questionnaire has been conducted by distributing the questionnaire to the online consumers randomly through Google Form.

4. Results and Discussion

The frequency gender respondents show female respondents, the percentage is 70% while for male respondents is 30%. The highest frequency is the respondents who come from Gombak with 61 respondents. Results show Instagram is the most common digital channel respondents associate with a percentage value of 42.13%. The respondents browsing internet time which the pie chart results show the percentage of the browsing internet time on 4am until 8am is 1.28%, for percentage respondents browsing time on 11 pm until 4 am is 2.98%, for percentage of respondents browsing internet time on 6 pm - 11 pm is 56.60% while for percentage of respondents browsing internet time on 1 pm - 6 pm is 8.51%.

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

Table 1
The mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum for each variable

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Digital Marketing	4.0272	.57818	2.00	5.00
Customer Loyalty	4.0074	.60465	2.00	5.00
Brand Awareness	4.6247	.46177	2.80	5.00
Purchase Decision & Intention	4.0461	.41467	2.83	5.00
Customer Engagement	4.1851	.47255	2.83	5.00

A large standard deviation indicates that the data is dispersed and therefore less dependable, while a low standard deviation indicates that the data is concentrated closely around the mean and so more dependable (Narkhede, 2019). The results show purchase decision intention variables have the lowest standard deviation which indicates the variable is the most reliable in this analysis as the data are clustered closely around mean.

4.2 Reliability Analysis

Table 2
The reliability test

Variable	Number of Items	Pilot Test (35) Cronbach's Alpha	Actual Test (235) Cronbach's Alpha
Digital Marketing	5	0.445	0.906
Customer Loyalty	4	0.469	0.904
Brand Awareness	5	0.522	0.872
Purchase Decision & Intention	12	0.557	0.764
Customer Engagement	6	0.572	0.828

Based on Table 2 shows the reliability results and all the Cronbach's Alpha value is more than 0.7 which indicates all accepted. The digital marketing variable has value 0.906 similarly for customer loyalty while Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.904 which indicates excellent range. For brand awareness Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.872 while customer engagement is 0.828 which both variables indicate a good range because the results are between 0.80 - 0.89. Cronbach's Alpha value for purchase decision and intention is 0.764 which indicates acceptable range.

4.3 Correlation Coefficient Analysis

Table 3
The correlation results

Variable	No. Of Item	Digital Marketing	Customer Loyalty	Brand Awareness	Purchase Decision & Intention	Customer Engagement
Digital Marketing	5	1				
Customer Loyalty	4	.968**	1			
Brand Awareness	5	.165*	.205**	1		
Purchase Decision & Intention	12	.882**	.913**	.225**	1	
Customer Engagement	6	.901**	.927**	.245**	.893**	1

According to IBM (2020), reliability analysis enables researchers to investigate the features of measuring scales as well as the items that make up the scales. Based on Table 3 shows the results for correlation analysis. For the customer loyalty and digital marketing has r-value 0.968** which the value is above 0.90 and the result is the relationship between digital marketing and customer loyalty is very strong positive correlation. For the brand awareness and digital marketing have no correlation between variable because the r-value is .165* which indicated that the r-value is below 0.30. While for the purchase decision intention and digital marketing variable which the r-value is 0.882**, the degree of relationship between purchase decision intention and digital marketing is strong positive correlation. The degree of relationship of the variable customer engagement is in the range of 0.90 - 1.00 and this is clearly shows that there is very strong positive correlation exist between the variable of customer engagement and digital marketing.

4.4 Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 4
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	.968ᵃ	.938	.937

A. Predictors : (Constant), Customer Engagement, Brand Awareness, Purchase Decision Intention, Customer Loyalty

Based on Table 4 the results in this research study, the R value is .968 which indicates a strong degree of relationship, and this suggests the model of summary is relatively a strong predictor of the outcome. Based on the result of R square in Fig. 3 shows the R Square value is .938 which in this result can indicate that variabilities of the predictors is 93.8%. This concluded that the relationship between the predictors is 93.8% and the remaining 6.2% is unidentified thus an r-squared of 93.8% reveals that 93.8% of the data fit the regression model.

Table 5
The results of ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	73.352	4	18.338	865.353	.000ᵇ
	Residual	4.874	230	.021		
	Total	78.226	234			

a. Dependent Variable: Digital Marketing
b. Predictors: (Constant), Customer Engagement, Brand Awareness, Purchase Decision Intention, Customer Loyalty

The result on the Anova table shows that the F ratio value is 865.353 which indicates that the value is good for the efficient model of study. This shows that F value is highly significant, and this indicates that the predictor variable reliably predicts the digital marketing as a dependent variable. The results indicated that the model was a statistically significant predictor of digital marketing, $F_{(4,230)} = 865.353$, $p = .000$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis. The results of the regression indicated that the model explained 93.8% of the variance and that the model was a statistically significant predictor of digital marketing, $F_{(4,230)} = 865.353$, $p = .000$. While customer loyalty contributed significantly to the model which ($B = .897$, $p < 0.05$) and for brand awareness contributed negatively significantly to the model which ($B = -.047$, $p < 0.05$). For the next predictor variable which is purchase decision intention not contributed significantly to the model which ($B = -.013$, $p > 0.05$) while customer engagement also not contributed significantly to the model which ($B = .060$, $p > 0.05$).

Table 6

Coefficients Results

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	B	Std. Error	Beta	3.317	.001
	Customer Loyalty	.452	.136		18.460	.000
	Brand Awareness	.897	.049	.938	-2.227	.027
	Purchase Decision Intention	-.047	.021	-.038	1.057	.292
	Customer Engagement	.060	.057	.049	t	Sig.

4.5 Cross Tabulation Analysis

In this cross-tabulation analysis that will be conducted in this present study will analyze the most common digital channels that respondent's access with the brand awareness variable item among the online consumer in Selangor which this cross tabulation will involve item 19 until item 23. The results from cross tabulation analysis have discovered that 57 respondents who access Instagram the most digital channels stated they strongly agree on the familiarity of the appearance of brand or products such as logo and packaging. Similarly, people would react differently to an advertisement promoted by a known brand versus an uncommon one when it is repeated (Campbell & Keller, 2003). This clearly shows that in this familiarity of the brand will exist in the consumers mind if the repetition of advertisement applies in the context of digital marketing which if the online consumers can view the brand or product on online advertising many times in one day which help the online consumer to remember and feel familiar with the packaging or logo of the product. The results on item 21 cross tabulation between most common digital channels that the respondents associate with the familiarity with some products or brands that are displayed in the online advertising. The results show that Instagram users are the highest frequency with 68 respondents stating that they strongly agree on the familiarity. This familiarity of the products displayed on online advertising allows the respondents to know the existence of the brand itself which will lead to brand awareness among online consumers in Selangor towards some product or brand on Instagram advertising.

4.6 Hypothesis Testing

Table 7

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Pearson Correlation	Significant Value	Hypotheses Status
H₁: Customer Loyalty → Digital Marketing	.968**	.000	Accepted
H₂: Brand Awareness → Digital Marketing	.165*	.027	Accepted
H₃: Purchase Decision Intention → Digital Marketing	.882**	.830	Rejected
H₄: Customer Engagement → Digital Marketing	.901**	.292	Rejected

For hypothesis 1 testing results the null hypothesis is rejected (0.000 < 0.05), it can be concluded that there is enough statistical evidence to infer that the alternative hypothesis is true. Therefore, the results for hypothesis status are accepted as the p-value is 0.000 < 0.05 and there is strong positive correlation between variables. For hypothesis 2, the null hypothesis is rejected (0.027 < 0.05), it can be concluded that there is enough statistical evidence to infer that the alternative hypothesis is true. Therefore, the hypothesis status is accepted due to the p value being less than 0.05. For hypothesis 3, the null hypothesis is not rejected (0.830 > 0.05), it can be concluded that there is not enough statistical evidence to infer that the alternative hypothesis is true. Therefore, the hypothesis status is rejected because the significance value is higher than 0.05 however the correlation between purchase decision intention and digital marketing has a strong positive correlation. For hypothesis 4. There is a very strong positive correlation between the variable of customer engagement and digital marketing as the value is in between the range of 0.90 - 1.00. Therefore, the hypothesis status is rejected because the significance value is higher than 0.05, (0.292 > 0.05).

5. Conclusion

The results of this study reveals that the frequency of online consumers at Selangor who participate in this research study stated that they are familiar with the concept of digital marketing in spite of their difference in age. The findings have two hypotheses accepted which are hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2 and two other hypotheses rejected which are hypothesis 3 and hypothesis 4. Even though there is a hypothesis that is rejected, based on the analysis of correlation coefficient shows there is a high degree of relationship between independent variable and dependent variable. This study demonstrated how theoretical models would be applied in a practical way in a small business to improve performance and demonstrate the theory. The theory of social cognitive theory can help in the practical implementation. The finding shows that 54.5% of the respondents agree with the item on "I love an online retailer that offers a medium for customers to share their opinions". Therefore, the practical contribution towards small medium entrepreneur is to ensure that the page of business that they run on need to have a space that allow the customers to share their opinions which allow for them to post on the products or tag on their Instagram

page so that other online consumer know the product that SME sell is good or not and this indirectly can increase the marketing of the SME as the online consumer give reviews and opinion on the products they buy.

This research study has potential limitations such as the small scope of respondents and sample size. For the limitation that has occurred in this research study is a limitation in terms of the scope of respondents. The limitation of respondents which in this research study only focused on the respondents who stayed at Selangor state only and it makes the scope of respondents small and limited for those who stayed at Selangor only can answer the survey conducted.

Therefore, the recommendation that could be make towards the future researcher which in this present study the scope and sample size of respondents is too small which is 235 respondents and this recommend for future researcher to conduct the next study towards a large sample size and the future researcher can conduct the study towards the online consumers around Malaysia and every states of Malaysia that allows the future researcher discover new data and behavior of the online consumers in Malaysia country.

Lastly, the recommendation that could be made in this study is that the future researcher can conduct a variety of analysis which could lead for the future researcher discovering new data and the variety of the analysis could lead the future researcher to identify solutions towards the problems that occurred. This recommendation towards future researchers to conduct a variety of analysis because the limitation of this present study shows there is only limited analysis that can be conducted due to time constraints faced by the researcher.

Acknowledgement

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