



The Impact of Brand trust, Self-image Congruence and Usage Satisfaction toward Smartphone Repurchase Intention

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the subjective factors; brand trust, self-image congruence and usage satisfaction toward repeat purchase intention of smartphones among the Gen-Y consumers in Malaysia. A total of 182 respondents participated in this research. Most of the respondents purchased a smartphone within the last 12 months and a large number of the respondents are active users of text messaging and smartphone applications. Results indicate that self-image congruence is the main antecedents for repeat purchase of smartphones. This is followed by usage satisfaction as the second predictor and lastly would be brand trust. This paper provides some discussion and recommendations for practitioners.

Keywords: Brand Trust, Self-image, Satisfaction, Smartphones, Malaysia

JEL Classifications: M310, M370

1. INTRODUCTION

In the recent decade, consumers are becoming more technology savvy with the growth of the digital era. The use of smartphone has grown over the years which enabled consumers to be constantly connected with the rest of the world through their smartphone device(s). The invention of smartphone applications, user-friendly websites and social network sites have helped push the demand of smartphones to a higher level. Mothar et al. (2013) highlighted that the amount of people purchasing smartphones in Malaysia has increased to 7.7 million in 2013. The competition in the smartphone industry has also surged over the years where old players such as Apple, Samsung, HTC and Sony are competing with newer brands such as Oppo, Xiaomi and Huawei.

Globally, the smartphone industry is extremely competitive especially with the emergence of new competitors. Hence, all players are enhancing their strategies in retaliation to their competitors to preserve their market share via the act of repurchasing. Marketers around the world have invested substantial amount of capital in research and development to determine the factors in ensuring consumers' loyalty to a brand. There have been some studies which emphasize on enhancing internal management process that would result positive external

outcomes. However, limited studies have been conducted to further address repurchase intention in the context of smartphone industry (Su and Huang, 2010; Hsiung, 2011). One key driver to encourage repeat-purchase intention is to increase customer usage satisfaction. According to Dimitriadis (2006), it is vital for marketers to implement consumer-oriented business model these days in order to survive in this highly competitive business environment. Sit et al. (2009) further support this assertion by stating that only companies that use consumer-oriented approach can attain customer retention and gain competitive advantage.

Past studies have also focused on the characteristics and attributes of the product to predict repeat purchase intention, and less on the consumers themselves. For instance, Tsai and Ho (2013) focused on the design of the smartphones toward usage behaviour. In addition, many other researchers have also reported that price, ease of use, product features and brand image influences smartphones purchase intention (Tsai and Ho, 2013), find more articles to support. There are very few researches that actually focus on the subjective perspective of consumers in the smartphone repeat purchasesuch as the prior usage satisfaction, trust in the smartphone brands and self-image congruence with the brand. Therefore, this paper seeks to examine to what extent do brand trust, self-image congruence and usage satisfaction influence

smartphone repeat purchase intention. More specifically, this paper will focus on young adults as they are more tech savvy.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Repeat Purchase Intention

Past research has indicated that repeat-purchase intention is a behaviour when customers are willing to buy the same brand products or services in recurrence sequence. It is an anticipated, simple, and objective predictor of buying behavior (Jones and Sasser, 1995; Seiders et al., 2005; Lin and Liang, 2011; Kuo et al., 2013). The behaviour of repeat purchase occurs when the product meets with the consumer's expectation and approval, which signifies as a high indication that they will buy and utilize it again in larger quantities (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2004). Reichheld and Sasser (1990) described consumer repeat-purchase intention as a vital and significant driver in retaining high profitability. It is found in their study that a 5% enhancement in customer's retention could translate to an increment of ones' profits by 25-85%. Moreover, the cost of attaining new customers is five times higher than the cost of retaining repeat-purchase customers, which is a different aspect why retaining them is highly beneficial (Kuo et al., 2013). Thus, products or service providers could reduce cost, while increasing their profits at the same time as long as they can successfully retain their customers and encourage repeat-purchase behaviour. Another study conducted by Mainspring and Bain & Company (2000) signified that a customer has to make purchases four times at an online store before the store could actually gain profits from that respective customer. Therefore, the importance of understanding the specific factors why consumers have the tendency to repeat-purchase a product or service is immensely substantial. In addition, the competition in the global market is getting fierce and the cost of acquiring new customers is increasing substantially yearly. Most product and service providers are concerned in determining the most effective ways to retain their customers.

2.2. Brand Trust

Brand trust is defined as "the willingness of the average consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function" (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001, p. 82). The component of trust is said to be a vital antecedents for purchase behaviour (Vlachos et al., 2009). More specifically, brand trust helps to lower the ambiguity and it frequently affects buying behaviour (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). This phenomenon happened because the element of trust rises one's belief about the performance of the brand. Past studies also supported the idea that the more consumers place their trust towards a brand, the higher the purchase intention will be (Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán, 2001). Brand trust is said to be to have influence on customer commitment and hence resulted in repeat purchase (Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Gremler and Brown, 1999). Similarly, Garbarino and Johnson (1999) argued that trust mediates the relationship between attitude and intentional behaviour. In other words, trust is a more vital antecedent as compared to attitude. Furthermore, in a recent publication, Hegner and Jevons (2016) found that brand trust has a strong influence over purchase and repurchase behaviour. Based on the literature discussion, we proposed the following hypothesis:

H₁: Brand trust is positively related to repeat purchase intention.

2.3. Customer Usage Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is highly fundamental to the success of a company especially in this era of fiercely competitive business environment (Fang et al., 2011). It functions as one of the key driver of post-purchase behavior, such as repeat-purchase intention. Moreover, Pappas et al. (2014) proposed that previous purchase experience with satisfaction plays an important role as it helps to shape up customer's future purchasing behavior especially in a case when the strategy effort are minimized. A comparable definition has been noted by Gerpott et al. (2001) where satisfaction is proposed to be based on consumer's expected experience of the product to the extent which service providers fulfill the said expectations. Furthermore, Kuo et al. (2013) suggested that there are two indicators of the customer satisfaction evaluation. One study proposed that customer satisfaction is an evaluation based on the most recent purchase experience (cited in Boulding et al., 1993). Another study suggested that customer satisfaction is an evaluation based on all of the customer's experience from past to present (Johnson and Fornell, 1991). With strong literature support in relation to customer satisfaction, this variable will be included into the conceptual model to test its relationship with repeat purchase intention of Malaysian consumers. As such, we hypothesised the following:

H₂: Customer usage satisfaction is positively related to repeat purchase intention.

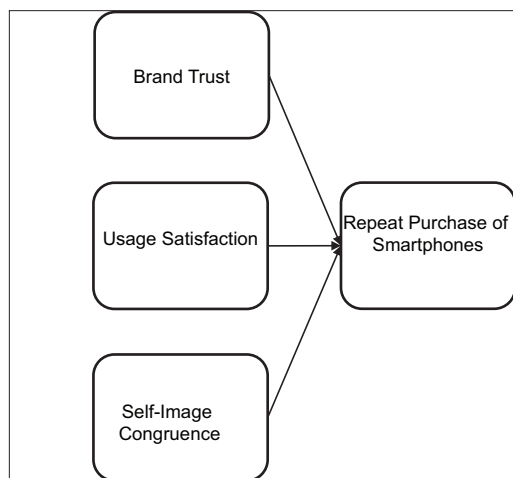
2.4. Self-image Congruence

There are two main broad research streams on self-image congruence. Earlier research mostly focuses on the relationship between self-image congruence and consumer's pre-purchase evaluations, such as purchase intentions (Landon, 1974), product preferences (Dolich, 1969) and product choice (Malhotra, 1988). However, some researchers highlight the benefits of extending self-image congruence conceptualizations to model post-consumption evaluations (e.g. Sirgy et al., 1997). Recent consumer behavior studies investigate the role of self-image congruence on various post-consumption variables such as satisfaction (Ekinici et al., 2008; Jamal and Goode, 2001; Jamal and Al-Marri, 2007; Sirgy et al., 1997), loyalty (He and Mukherjee, 2007; Kressmann et al., 2006), perceived quality (Kwak and Kang, 2009); and attitudes (Ibrahim and Najjar, 2008). Consumers buy products and brands they believe to possess symbolic images similar and/or complementary to their self-image, that is, to achieve image congruence (Heath and Scott, 1998). Strong supporting evidence show self-image congruence explains and predicts different aspects of consumer behavior (He and Mukherjee, 2007).

Recent conceptualizations construe self-concept as a multi-dimensional construct (Sirgy and Su, 2000; Todd, 2001). The marketing literature identifies four-dimensions of self-concept to explain and predict behavior: (1) Actual self-concept ("me as I am"), how a person sees himself or herself; (2) ideal-self-concept ("the good me"), how a person would like to see himself or herself; (3) social self-concept, how consumers think others see them; (4) ideal social self-concept, how a person would

like to be perceived by other people (Belch and Landon, 1977; Dolich, 1969; Hughes and Guerrero, 1971; Sirgy, 1982). User image is a stereotyped perception of a generalized user of a particular product/brand (Sirgy, 1986). In this study, self-image congruence refers to the cognitive match between consumers' self-concept (e.g., actual self, ideal self, social self and ideal social self) and a perceived image of smartphone. In the context of tourism, Chon (1992) was the first to empirically apply self-image congruence. He found that tourist satisfaction significantly correlates with self-image/destination image congruity. Tourists perceiving a low discrepancy between a destination's image and self-image tend to be more satisfied with the trip experience. Most research states self-congruence as a determinant of purchase behavior, but there are few studies which address the impact of self-congruence on relation between perceived luxury value and consumer satisfaction.

H₃: Self-image congruence is positively related to repeat purchase intention.



3. METHODOLOGY

An online survey was conducted to obtain information from the Gen-Y respondents in Malaysia. A total of 182 respondents participated from four major private universities in Klang Valley. The participants are between the age of 18 and 36 years old. There is a good distribution between male (51%) and female (49%). Around 54% of the respondents purchased a smartphone within the last 12 months and a majority of the respondents are active users of text messaging.

3.1. Measurement

The items for the constructs were adapted from past studies and measured on a 7-point Likert scale; ranging from 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 5 = slightly agree, 6 = agree, and 7 = strongly agree. In Table 1 shows all the constructs, sources and number of items used.

3.2. Content Validity and Reliability

A Cronbach coefficient alpha test was conducted on all four factors to test the reliability of all of the item variables. This was to determine the internal consistency of the scale used. The values

of Cronbach Alpha coefficient are depicted in Table 2. All of the factors were found to have alpha coefficient values of >0.7, which is an acceptable level of reliability (Hair et al., 2006).

The Kaiser-Mayer Olkin's (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy test and Bartlett's test of sphericity were conducted to assess the suitability of the survey data for factor analysis (Hair et al., 2006). Factor analysis was also useful to determine construct validity: Convergent and discriminant validity. The results of the KMO measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test show that the data meet the fundamental requirements for factor analysis. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy is 0.818 and the Bartlett test is significant. Factor analysis with principal component analysis and Direct-Oblimin rotation was then used to group all of the variables into several common factors. The results are reported in Table 3. To control the number of factors extracted, a minimum Eigenvalue of one was used in the factor analysis. Factors with Eigenvalues less than one were considered insignificant and were excluded. The factor analysis generated a four-factor solution with a total cumulative percentage of variance of 74.69%. They were found to have meaningful relationships and were therefore, retained. The factors that retained are interpreted as follows:

- F1: Repeat Purchase of Smartphone (RPS);
- F2: Brand Trust (BT);
- F3: Usage Satisfaction (US);
- F4: Self-Image Congruence (SIC).

Table 1: Constructs and items

Construct	Items	Source
SIC	2	Cowart et al. (2008)
BT	3	Lee et al. (2015)
US	2	Lee et al. (2015)
RPS	4	Lee et al. (2015)

SIC: Self-image congruence, BT: Brand trust, US: Usage satisfaction, RPS: Repeat purchase of smartphone

Table 2: Validity and reliability

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
SIC	0.700
BT	0.708
US	0.839
RPS	0.887

SIC: Self-image congruence, BT: Brand trust, US: Usage satisfaction, RPS: Repeat purchase of smartphone

Table 3: Principal component analysis

Item	Component			
	F1	F2	F3	F4
RPS4	0.836			
RPS2	0.769			
RPS3	0.697			
RPS1	0.685			
BT2		0.840		
BT1		0.788		
BT3		0.577		
US1			0.827	
US2			0.820	
SIC2				0.816
SIC1				0.771

SIC: Self-image congruence, BT: Brand trust, US: Usage satisfaction, RPS: Repeat purchase of smartphone

3.3. Correlation Analysis

Table 4 below illustrates the correlations for all four variables. The results indicate that SIC, BT and US are positively correlated to RPS with $r = 0.562$, $r = 0.528$, and $r = 0.539$ respectively. All correlations are significant at $P < 0.01$. This shows that self-image congruence, brand trust and usage satisfaction affect repeat purchase of smartphone among the Gen-Y segment.

3.4. Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was adopted to test the effect of a set predictors (US, BT, and SCI) on repeat purchase intention. The result of the regression analysis is shown in Table 5. To test for multicollinearity, variance inflation factor (VIF) values were examined and all were found to be below 2.5, which means there is low multicollinearity among the independent variables and the stability of the regression was not affected (Hair et al., 2006). All three independent variables had significant positive influence on retail prices index. As such all hypotheses were supported. The Adjusted R^2 is 0.521 showed that 52% of the variation in RPS is explained by US, BT and SIC. A close examination of the regression results reveals that SIC had the highest impact on RPS (Beta = 0.422, $P < 0.01$) followed by US (Beta = 0.336, $P < 0.01$).

4. DISCUSSION AND LIMITATIONS

The main intention of this paper is to study the influence of brand trust, self-image congruence and usage satisfaction toward repeat purchase of smartphones. The overall proposed model showed a good fit to the data and all hypotheses were supported. As hypothesized, brand trust is found to have a positive significant impact towards repeat purchase of smartphones. This is in line with previous studies conducted by (Hegner and Jevons, 2016; Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán, 2001). Management and practitioners should emphasize on building brand trust. For instance, there are so many brand of smartphones in the market and the results indicate that consumer will choose the smartphone brand that they trust. Therefore, building the element of trust towards the brand would ease consumer decision making process in selecting a brand. In addition brand trust provides consumer a sense of security and subsequently consumers will believe that the

brand would be able to achieve their needs or want. If a company wants to build a long term relationship with their customers, it is crucial from them to enhance the marketing initiatives by fostering brand trust. Managers should also focus on truthful communication of message, values and character of the company’s brand as this helps to increase brand trust and loyalty towards the brand.

In addition, this study found that there is a direct positive relationship between usage satisfaction and repeat purchase intention. This is supported by Hellier et al. (2003) who found in their study that “the overall customer satisfaction with a service is strongly associated with the behavioural intention to return to the same service provider.” It also concurs with Patterson and Spreng (1997) study on customer satisfaction being a significant predictor of repeat purchase intention. However, it must be kept in mind that the direct positive relationship of satisfaction upon repurchase intention is a simplification of the matter. While customer satisfaction is one major factor, it is only one of the many variables that can influence customer repurchase intention (Sharma and Patterson, 2000). It can be concluded that once a customer is confident and satisfied with the product, it leads to product dependency. This would lead to customers to repeat purchase behavior based on their past experience with the product that provides them the confidence and satisfaction. Satisfaction then leads to trust and it can be assumed that a satisfied customer would continue to purchase the same brand in future as well, which demonstrated the brand loyalty of customers towards their smartphone brand. Additionally, Serkan and Gökhan (2009) found that customer satisfaction is due to the overall satisfaction with a product or brand. Moreover, they also found that customer satisfaction is result of pre purchase expectations and post purchase expectations.

Furthermore, the research results imply that self-congruence between consumer self-image and perceived image of their smartphone positively influence consumer repeat purchase intention. The greater congruity between consumer self-concept and his/her image of their smartphone has a positive impact on consumer’s repeat purchase intention and a large discrepancy between consumer self-concept and perceived image of their smartphone has a weak impact on repeat purchase intention. This finding is consistent with previous studies stating that consumers purchase products and brands they believe to possess symbolic images similar and/or complementary to their self-image, that is, to achieve image congruence (Heath and Scott, 1998; Ibrahim and Najjar, 2008; Kwak and Kang, 2009). However, self-image congruence may not play a significant role to explain and predict different aspects of consumer behavior. Self-congruence represent

Table 4: Correlation analysis

Variable	US	BT	SIC	RPS
BT	0.538**			
SIC	0.213**	0.326**		
RPS	0.539**	0.528**	0.562**	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed). SIC: Self-image congruence, BT: Brand trust, US: Usage satisfaction, RPS: Repeat purchase of smartphone

Table 5: Result of regression analysis

Variable	Dependent variable: RPS				
	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	ANOVA/R ²
	B	Beta			
(Constant)	-0.796			-1.818	F=66.586**
US	0.448**	0.336		5.497	R ² =0.529
BT	0.267**	0.209		3.315	Adjusted R ² =0.521
SIC	0.398**	0.422		7.750	

** $P < 0.01$ (N=182). US: Usage satisfaction, BT: Brand trust, SIC: Self-Image congruence, RPS: Repeat purchase of smartphone, VIF: Variance inflation factor

the discrepancy between consumer self-concept and his/her image of the smartphone, while the image of the smartphone is reflected on above objective phenomenon (e.g., technology, design, functions, etc.). Therefore, in order to closely match the image of their product and self-perception of their consumers, smartphone marketers should develop distinctive features of products to reinforce the perceived image/personality and also have a proper understanding of their consumers. However, although smartphone marketers may allocate more efforts into research, technology development and product innovation, how consumer view himself/herself is pretty much out of the scope that the smartphone marketers can reach. In other words, self-congruence is pretty situational and difficult to be benchmark as self-congruence is always involved into a process of keeping changing as time goes.

The main limitation of this study is the focus on young consumers. Therefore, the findings of this research must be interpreted with distinct parameters and considerations as the respondents were from the age group of 18-35. In order to increase the generalizability of the findings, future research could involve more respondents from other age groups. Future studies should also examine whether personal and demographic factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, income level and mobile phone usage will moderate the effects of these factors on consumer's behavior towards repeat purchase of smartphone.

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