The Impact of Social Media on Consumer Behavior

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Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the case study is based on my original work except for quotations and citations that have been duly acknowledged. I also declare it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (UNIRAZAK) or other institutions.

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Abstract of the project paper submitted to the Senate of Universiti Tun Abdul Razak in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Business Administration

The Impact of Social Media on Consumer Behaviour

By

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In an era of boundless connectivity, social media wields unfathomable influence over consumer behaviors, specifically in a society of growing tech users in Malaysia. This research paper focuses on examining the impact of social media on consumer behavior within the Malaysian context, employing a quantitative research approach centered on descriptive statistics. By analyzing a substantial dataset collected from a representative sample of Malaysian consumers, we aim to unravel the multifaceted dimensions of social media impact, including factors such as purchasing decisions, brand loyalty, information-seeking behavior, and social influence. Through a rigorous examination of descriptive statistics, this study provides valuable insights into the distinctive dynamics of social media's role as an influential medium. The limitations of this research lie in its exclusive focus on quantitative analysis, which underscores the need for further exploration of qualitative aspects. Nonetheless, the findings offer practical implications for marketers, businesses, and policymakers, enabling them to craft effective strategies that leverage the potential of social media in Malaysia's swiftly evolving market landscape.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Advertising has been part of human history for thousands of years. From cave drawings to the huge and bright digital screen billboards we see today, businesses have always found ways to reach their target audience. In recent years, social media has become a powerful new tool for advertising.(G.Appel , 2020) Printed ads and billboards however have always involved rather high costs and the reach was limited as well. (Shelke,2023)

Social Media is effective for businesses that want to reach a wider audience and engage with existing and potential customers because it is cost-effective and flexible enough to fit their desired budget while they are able to easily measure the total number of clicks/views/shares of their advertisement. (Yk Diweli, 2021) This will enable businesses to track the performance of their ads and how it is impacting their efforts.

Social media platforms like Twitter, TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook have allowed large and small businesses to connect with a larger number of potential customers in a very targeted manner. They are also able to use social media to build relationships with customers and to provide them with valuable information about their company and what they have to offer.

Social media has etched itself to be an almost unmissable part of our lives. In 2022 for example, there were an estimated total of 4.62 billion social media users globally, and this number is expected to grow easily to about 5.3 billion social media users by 2025. Social media platforms like Twitter, TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook have become the preferred destinations for people to connect with friends and family, share news and information, and shop and make purchases. Let us not forget the popular shopping platforms such as Shopee and Lazada as well. These platforms surely transact millions of ringgits daily.

Businesses now realize the sheer power and influences of social media and are certainly sparing no expense in online advertising and media to reach their potential customers and promote their products and services. In 2021, businesses the world over had spent more than $150 billion on social media advertising and outreach efforts.

The findings of this study will provide much-needed valuable insight into how businesses can use social media to reach and influence their customers in Malaysia.

The study will be conducted using a survey method approach, which will involve collecting quantitative data. The quantitative data will be collected through a survey of social media users in Malaysia.

1.1 Background of study

The reason for my research paper is to investigate the impact of social media on consumer behaviour. By understanding how social media is used by consumers, businesses will be able to better tailor their marketing efforts to reach and engage their target audience.

The research paper is divided into three main parts. The first part provides an overview of the history of advertising and the evolution of social media. The second part discusses the different ways that social media can be used for advertising. The third part presents the findings of a study that was conducted to investigate why and how social media can impact consumer behaviour.

1.2 Research question

It is important to consider the role of targeted advertising algorithms employed by social media platforms. These algorithms analyze user data and behavior to deliver personalized advertisements that are highly relevant to individual users. This level of personalization increases the effectiveness of social media advertising, as it presents consumers with products or services that align with their interests, preferences, and needs. Consequently, the urge to try or buy something is intensified when consumers encounter advertisements that resonate with them on a personal level. Social media advertising exerts a significant influence on consumer behavior and the urge to try or buy things. Its ability to create personalized, visually appealing, and socially endorsed content has the power to shape consumer perceptions, motivations, and purchase decisions. This research aims to

look at and identify just how much consumers are impacted by what they see and hear through social media. The questions here are:

1. How does social media influence the way that consumers search for information about products and services?

2. How does social media influence the way that consumers make decisions about which products and services to purchase?

3. How does social media influence the way that consumers interact with businesses?

1.3 Objective

The primary objective of this study is to determine the impact of social media on consumer behaviour. The research examines how social media influences consumer perceptions, motivations, and purchase decisions. The research will explore various factors, such as the role of social media advertising in creating a desire to try or buy products, the influence of social connections and networks on consumer behavior, the visual and interactive nature of social media platforms, and the effectiveness of targeted advertising algorithms. Ultimately, the report aims to contribute to the understanding of the dynamic relationship between social media and buyer behaviour, providing valuable insights for businesses to effectively utilize social media as a tool for driving sales and building customer loyalty.

1.4 Significance of the study

The findings of this research will also let us uncover just how effective the usage of social media advertising is depending on several related factors such as the type of product or service that is being advertised, the targeted market segment, and the method of execution. Overall, the findings of this study will show us that social media is a powerful tool that can be used to reach and engage consumers. However, businesses need to understand how social media works and how to use it effectively to achieve their marketing goals.

The study can always stand to provide much-needed insights and information to the understanding of the impact of social media on customer behaviour in Malaysia. The findings of the study will add on to the data that will proof useful in addition to the data that have been derived prior to this from similar research done prior but will still be relevant as the social media landscape and consumer sentiments and behavior is constantly evolving and needs to be gauged from time to time to see if there are changes in trends and such.

CHAPTER 2: Diverse and Dynamic: The Multifaceted Landscape of Social Media Advertising

Social media platforms have evolved into versatile and dynamic spaces for advertising, offering a myriad of ways for businesses to reach and engage with their target audiences. These platforms enable advertisers to tailor their strategies to specific goals, demographics, and consumer behaviors. Here, we explore the diverse array of advertising avenues within the realm of social media.

A. *Native Advertising:*

Native advertising seamlessly blends promotional content with the user's feed, making it appear as an organic part of the platform. This approach enhances user engagement and can be found in sponsored posts, stories, and articles.

B. *Influencer Marketing:*

Influencers wield significant influence over their followers, and collaborating with them allows brands to tap into highly engaged and loyal audiences. Influencer partnerships range from sponsored posts to long-term brand ambassadorships.

C. *Social Media Ads:*

Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn offer paid advertising options that allow businesses to target specific demographics based on user data. These advertisements can take the form of image or video advertisements, carousels, or sponsored stories.

D. *User-Generated Content Campaigns:*

Brands encourage users to create and share content related to their products or services. This not only serves as authentic advertising but also fosters a sense of community and engagement among consumers.

E. *Hashtag Campaigns:*

Creating and promoting branded hashtags can encourage user participation and create a buzz around a product or campaign. This method is particularly effective on platforms like Twitter and Instagram.

F. *Social Commerce:*

Some platforms offer built-in shopping features, allowing users to purchase products directly from posts. This seamless integration of shopping into social media enhances the user experience and facilitates impulse buying.

G. *Retargeting:*

Social media retargeting involves showing advertisements to users who have previously interacted with a brand's website or content. This strategy helps in re-engaging potential customers who may not have completed a purchase during their initial visit. Certain businesses call these "dropped cart leads".

H. *Live Streaming:*

Live streaming on platforms like Facebook Live and Instagram Live enables real-time engagement with audiences. Brands use live events, product launches, and Questions and Answer (Q&A) sessions to connect with consumers.

I. Sponsored Filters and Lenses:

TikTok and Instagram offer *augmented reality* (AR) filters and lenses that can be sponsored by brands. These playful and interactive features enhance brand visibility and engagement.

J. Storytelling and Content Marketing:

Brands leverage social media to share compelling stories and informative content. This approach builds brand identity, fosters trust, and keeps audiences engaged over the long term. Facebookers have been known to create content that promotes a certain moral value in addition to the product/service of the advertiser as well.

The diversity of these advertising options within the social media landscape demonstrates the adaptability and reach of digital marketing. Advertisers can choose the methods that best align with their brand, target audience, and campaign objectives, enabling them to connect with consumers in increasingly meaningful ways.

2.1 Unleashing the Power of Social Media Advertising.

Social media advertising stands as the beacon of modern marketing, wielding an irresistible allure that captivates audiences and revolutionizes the advertising landscape.

First and foremost, the reach of social media platforms is unparalleled. With billions of active users worldwide, businesses can now connect with vast and diverse audiences, seizing the opportunity to target their ideal customers with laser precision. Imagine the power to connect with potential buyers on a global scale, all with a simple click.

Furthermore, social media advertising excels in delivering personalized experiences. By harnessing user data and insights, brands can now craft tailor-made advertisements that resonate deep within their audiences' desires and interests. This level of customization goes beyond visibility; it sparks an emotional connection that resonates and compels viewers to take action.

Beyond its immense reach and personalization, social media advertising equips businesses with powerful analytics tools. Real-time tracking and measurement provide advertisers with the means to optimize campaigns on the fly, ensuring every advertising dollar, or ringgit, is utilized efficiently. This data-driven approach delivers impressive results and a jaw-dropping return on investment.

The versatility of social media advertising knows no bounds. From eye-catching visuals to immersive video content, businesses have the freedom to unleash their creativity and push the boundaries of traditional advertising norms. In this digital battleground, brands have the opportunity to shine and make an indelible mark on their audiences' minds, leaving an unforgettable impression.

Moreover, social media advertising offers an unparalleled cost-effectiveness that levels the playing field for businesses of all sizes. Gone are the days of rigid and exorbitant traditional advertising methods. Now, even small enterprises can compete head-to-head with industry giants, reaching their target audience at a fraction of the cost. This affordability ensures that resources are maximized, allowing brands to leave an impactful footprint without draining their budgets.

Perhaps the most compelling aspect of social media advertising lies in its ability to foster genuine connections and build unwavering brand loyalty. By engaging directly with consumers through comments, shares, and messages, businesses create a thriving community and a sense of belonging. This personal touch transcends transactions, forging lasting relationships that transform customers into passionate advocates.

In conclusion, social media advertising reigns supreme, commanding unrivalled reach, personalization, potent analytics, limitless creativity, cost-effectiveness, and an unwavering emphasis on community-building. This is the era to embrace its immense power and seize unparalleled opportunities to thrive in a fast-paced, ever-evolving digital world.

CHAPTER 3: Literature Review - Impact of Social Media on Consumer Behavior

The ease of accessing social media content has made it an integral part of our daily lives. Over the past two decades, extensive research has been undertaken to understand the relationship between social media and various facets of consumer behavior. This literature review aims at summarizing the key findings from notable studies on social media.

A. *Social Media as a Source of Information:*

-Lee and Ma (2012) found that consumers commonly used social media primarily for pre-purchase information. Their study revealed that reviews and ratings on social media platforms strongly influenced purchase decisions.

- Goh, Heng, & Lin (2013) found that consumers relied on social media for insights on product quality, especially when traditional information sources are hard to come by or may be biased somehow.

B. *Social Proof and Peer Influence:*

- Cheung & Thadani (2012) argued in their landmark study that social media provides social proof, driving consumers to conform to peer opinions. This form of 'electronic word of mouth' can be more persuasive than traditional marketing channels.

- Ramanathan, Dhar, & Chen (2016) illustrated how peer actions, like endorsements and likes, can influence consumers to both adopt or reject products.

C. *Brand Engagement and Loyalty:*

- Hollebeek, Glynn, & Brodie (2014) explored how brands using social media can foster consumer engagement. They argued that effective engagement leads to heightened brand loyalty and advocacy.

- Gummerus, Liljander, Weman, & Pihlström (2012) further demonstrated that brand engagement on social media directly corresponds to purchase intentions.

D. The Dual Role of Social Media – Enhancing and Detracting from Purchase Intentions:

- While much research underscores the positive impact of social media on purchasing, Lu, Phang, & Peng (2017) highlighted the possibility of adverse effects. Negative reviews or unfavorable word-of-mouth can deter potential buyers.

- Zhu & Zhang (2010) explained that an overabundance of information on social media might cause choice overload, confusing consumers and potentially reducing purchase intentions.

E. Personalization and Consumer Behavior:

- Personalized advertisements on platforms like Facebook and Instagram have reshaped marketing strategies. Tam & Ho (2016) observed that personalized content increases advertisement relevance, boosting the likelihood of consumer purchases.

- De Keyzer, Dens, & De Pelsmacker (2015) warned of the "creepiness factor", noting that excessive personalization can be off-putting and deter consumers.

F. The FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) Phenomenon:

- A recent avenue of research has been the FOMO effect. Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan, & Gladwell (2013) posited that social media intensifies the FOMO feeling, making consumers more likely to buy, driven by a fear of missing out on trends.

Conclusion:

The role of social media in shaping consumer behavior is multifaceted. While it can be a tool for brands to engage with consumers, facilitate information discovery, and influence buying decisions, it also presents challenges like information overload and potential consumer scepticism. As social media continues to evolve, understanding its sometimes complex impact on consumer behavior remains to be of absolute importance.

CHAPTER 4: Research Methodology

A: Introduction:

In this research, the primary objective was to understand the impact of social media on the buying decisions of individuals living in Malaysia, aged 21 and above. The methodology outlines the survey's design, sampling methods, data collection procedure, tools and analysis strategy.

4.1 Survey Design:

A structured questionnaire was developed with both closed-ended and multiple-choice questions, aiming to capture the following data points:

Demographics:
Age group, gender, marital status, employment status, location (state in Malaysia), income bracket, highest level of education.

Social Media Usage:
Frequency, reasons for use, preferred platforms.

Buying Behavior:
Online shopping habits, kinds of purchases, the influence of social media on buying decisions, unplanned purchases due to social media exposure, platforms influencing purchases the most, brand loyalty factors, and use of social media for reviews.

Perception:
Opinion on the impact of social media on buying decisions.

4.2 Sampling:

The survey was distributed to a sample of 150 Malaysians aged 21 and above, ensuring representation from various demographics and locations within the country. The sample size was deemed appropriate to gather sufficient data while considering feasibility and time constraints.

4.3 Data Collection:

Data was collected using Google Forms. An online format was chosen for its convenience, accessibility, and its capability to reach a wide range of respondents across different states in Malaysia. Out of the 150 survey invitations, 136 responses were received, yielding a response rate of 90.67%.

4.4 Data Analysis tool:

Descriptive analytics was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysis included computing frequencies, percentages, and cross-tabulations to gain insights into respondents' behaviours and perceptions related to social media and its influence on their buying decisions.

4.5 Conclusion on Research Methodology:

The research methodology was designed to be robust and comprehensive, ensuring the data collected would provide meaningful insights into the relationship between social media usage and buying behaviors among Malaysians aged 21 and above. The findings will aid in understanding the evolving landscape of consumer behavior in this fleeting digital age.

B: Data Analysis

4.5 Demographic Breakdown Of The Respondents:

The majority of the respondents to my survey were female(60.3%). The highest number of respondents fell under the age group of 31-40 years of age (31.6%). Respondents who were married outnumbered those who were still single by 69.1%. Half of the respondents (50%) are currently working for the private sector. Respondents from Selangor were the highest in number at 37.5%. Looking at the income bracket, the highest number would be those earning between (RM) 3000-4999, making up for 34.6% of the respondents. Lastly, we look at the highest level of education from the pool of respondents to my survey. 43.7% of respondents were made of those who hold a Degree/Masters qualification.

CHAPTER 5: Habits of respondents when using social media.

5.1 Findings from the Survey

a) Frequency of Social Media Usage:

It is evident from the survey that the majority of respondents, 122 out of 136 (89.7%), indicated that they use social media every day. This gives us a high level of daily social media engagement among the participants.

A smaller portion, 11 respondents (8.1%), reported using social media every few days, while only 3 respondents (2.2%) claimed to only use it a few times a month. This suggests that most of the sample is actively engaged with social media daily. The outliers may likely be from the working classes who are not blessed with the privilege of having as much free time to engage in the activities on social media.
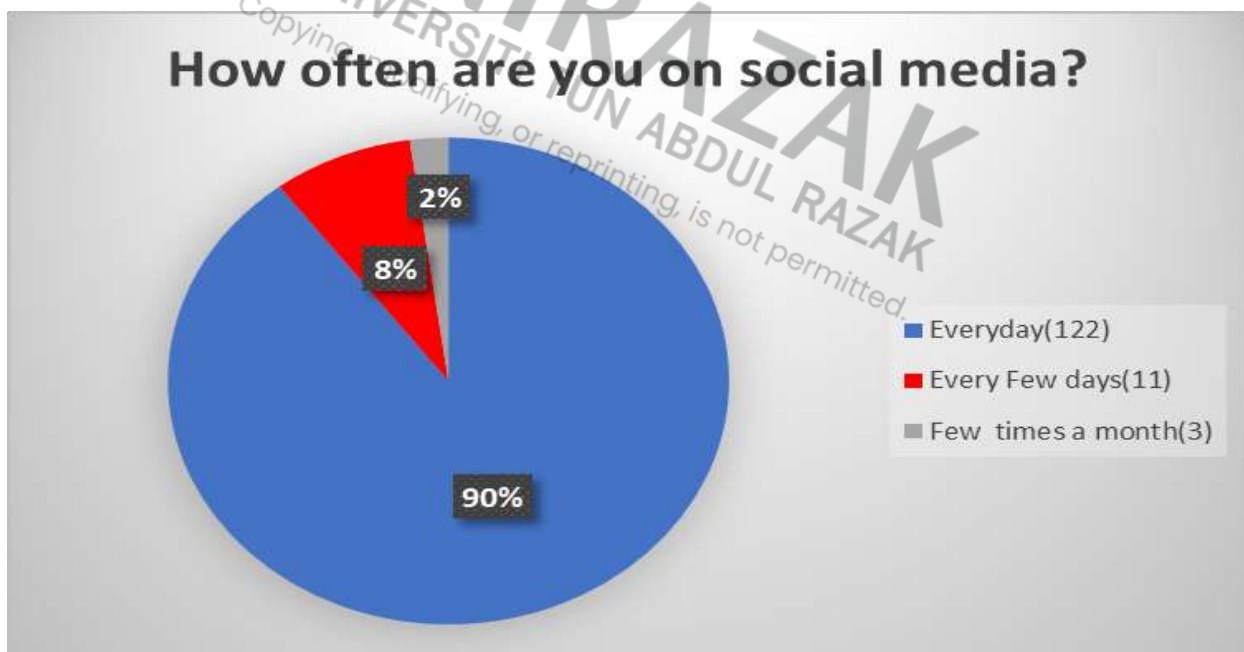
b) *Favourite Social Media Site:*

Among the 136 respondents, Facebook emerged as the most favoured social media platform with 49 individuals (36.8%) choosing it as their favourite.

YouTube followed closely with 31 respondents (22.8%) expressing a preference for this platform, while Instagram and TikTok garnered 25 and 26 supporters (19.1% each) respectively.

Twitter, however, had the lowest number of fans, with only 3 respondents (2.2%) choosing it as their favourite. This indicates a clear preference hierarchy among the social media platforms.
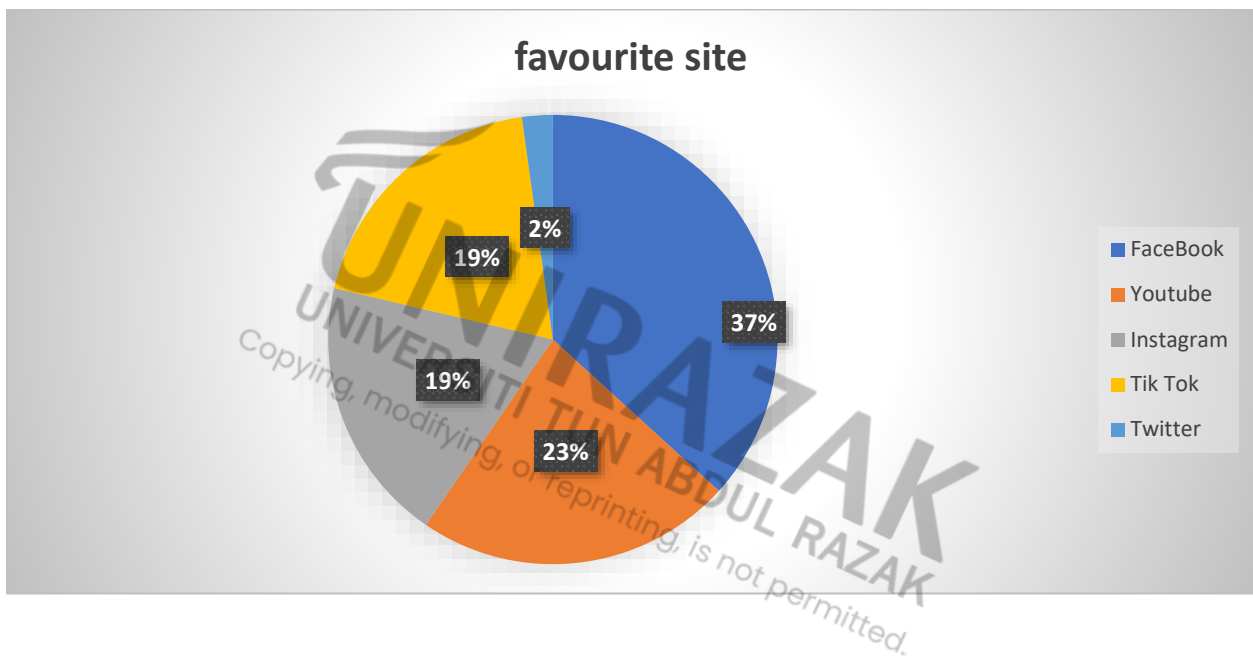
c) *Online Shopping Habits:*

A significant majority of the participants, 126 out of 136 (92.6%), responded that they shop online. This indicates a high level of online shopping adoption among the survey participants further signifying they preferred the convenience of having their goods delivered to them while they relax at home, free from traffic, searching for parking spots and jostling among other shoppers.

In contrast, 10 respondents (7.44%) indicated that they do not engage in online shopping, suggesting that a small minority prefers traditional brick-and-mortar stores. This may indicate many possible factors such as a lack of trust in electronic transactions, fear of data leaks (possibility of scams), and/or the preference of traditional exchange of cash for goods.

d) Types of Items Purchased Online:

When it comes to the items purchased online, respondents had multiple options to choose from.

The most commonly shopped category was "Food & Beverage," with 47 individuals making online purchases in this category.

"Clothing" and "Personal Care (Hair/Body)" products were also popular choices, with 39 respondents each.

"Electronic/Tech" items were purchased online by 36 respondents.

Additionally, a substantial number of respondents (46) indicated that they shop for "All the Above" categories online, suggesting a diverse range of online shopping preferences among participants.
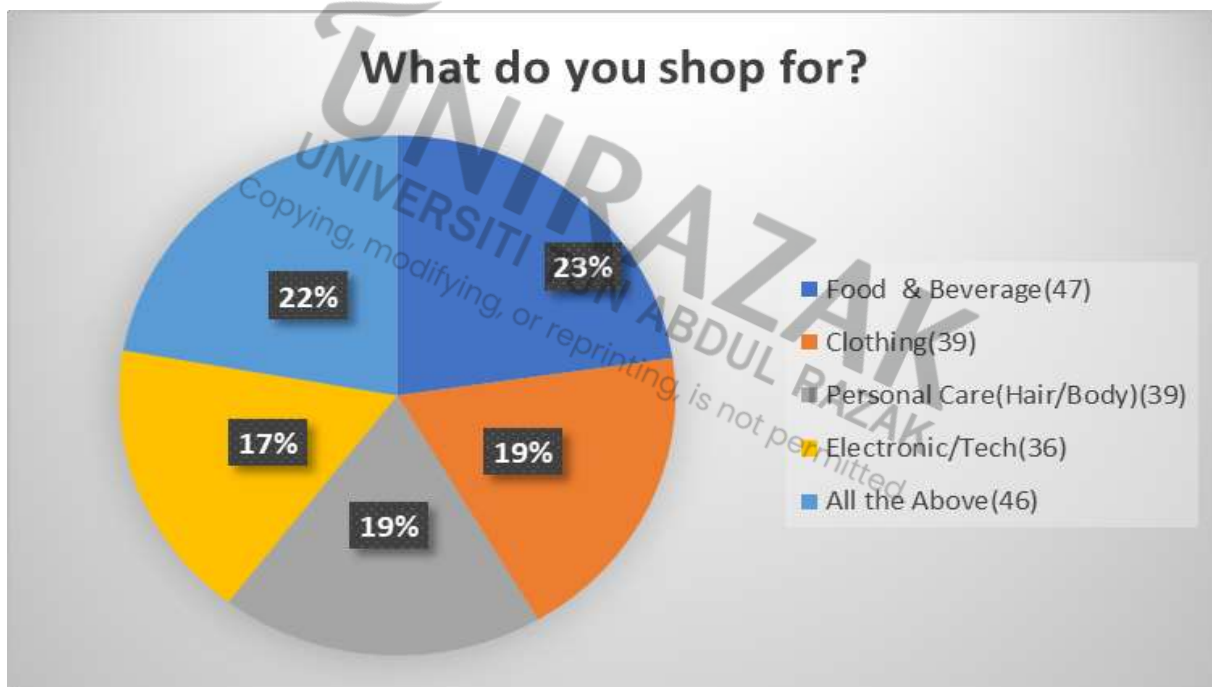
e) *Influence of social media on Purchases:*

A significant majority of respondents, 105 out of 136 (77.2%), admitted to making purchases influenced by social media.

On the other hand, 31 respondents (22.8%) reported that they had not made purchases due to social media influence. Again, this signifies a possible fear of data leakage, lack of access to e-commerce facilities, or preference for traditional cash-for-goods transactions.
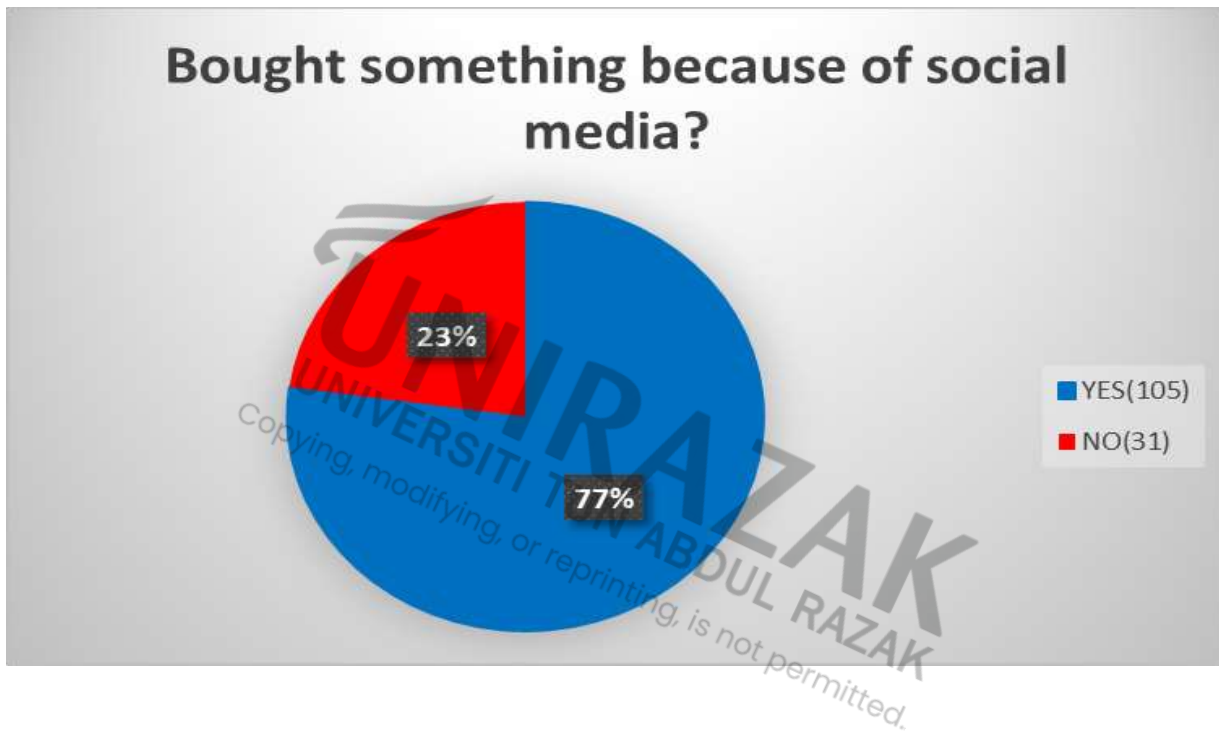
f) What influences them to try or buy something:

When asked this question, 51.5% or 70 respondents believed that it was better to research on their own if a product was worth buying/trying. This was followed by 20.6% (28) of respondents who relied on friends/ family recommendations of the best vendors for their product. 10.3% (14) respondents actually depended on YouTube user/influencer recommendations for them to buy their products. While there were an equal number of 12 respondents each (8.8%) that chose the option that they were either buying based on how effective an advertisement was or went ahead with the purchase as long as it is cheap.
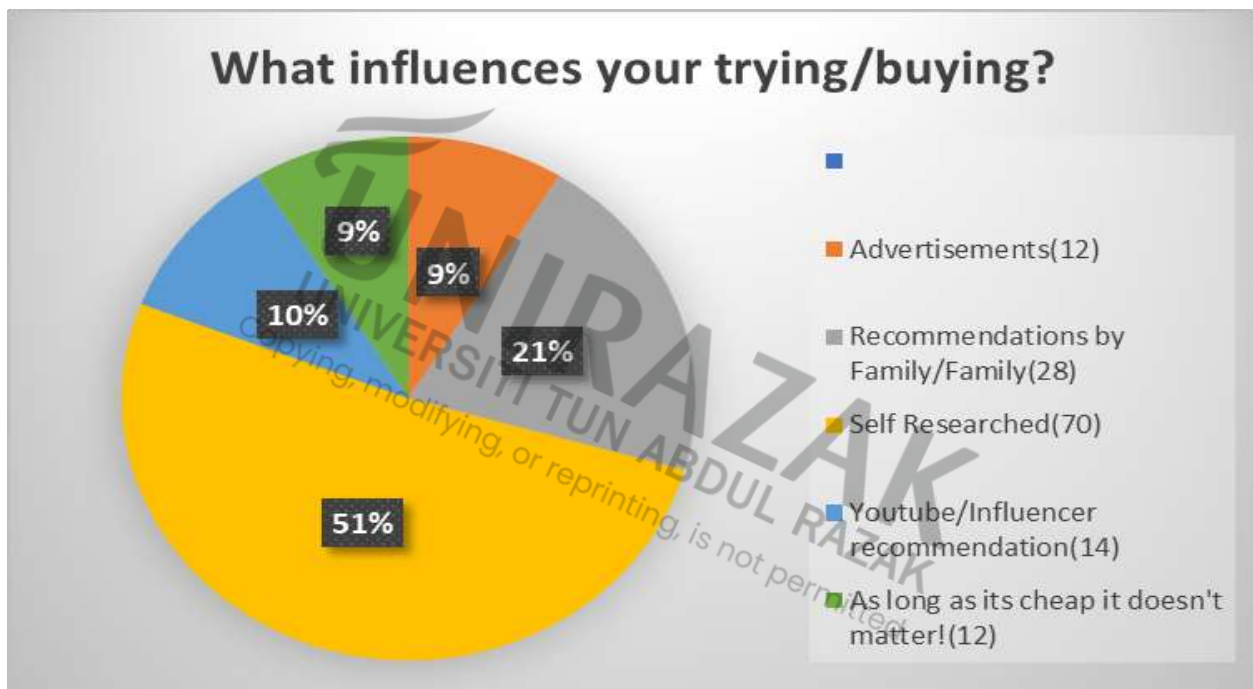
g) *Made any unplanned purchases due to exposure to social media?*

This question was included in my survey question to gauge whether we are influenced to 'impulse buy'.

Meaning, we had no prior intention to search for or make a purchase of a particular product, but was simply sucked in and made that purchase merely by seeing, reading or watching something while using social media.

It was rather surprising, that out of the total 136 respondents, 48.5% or a total of 66 respondents have made unplanned purchases due to social media exposure while 51.5% or 70 respondents stuck firm and did not see the need to make such purchases as there was no need for the product.
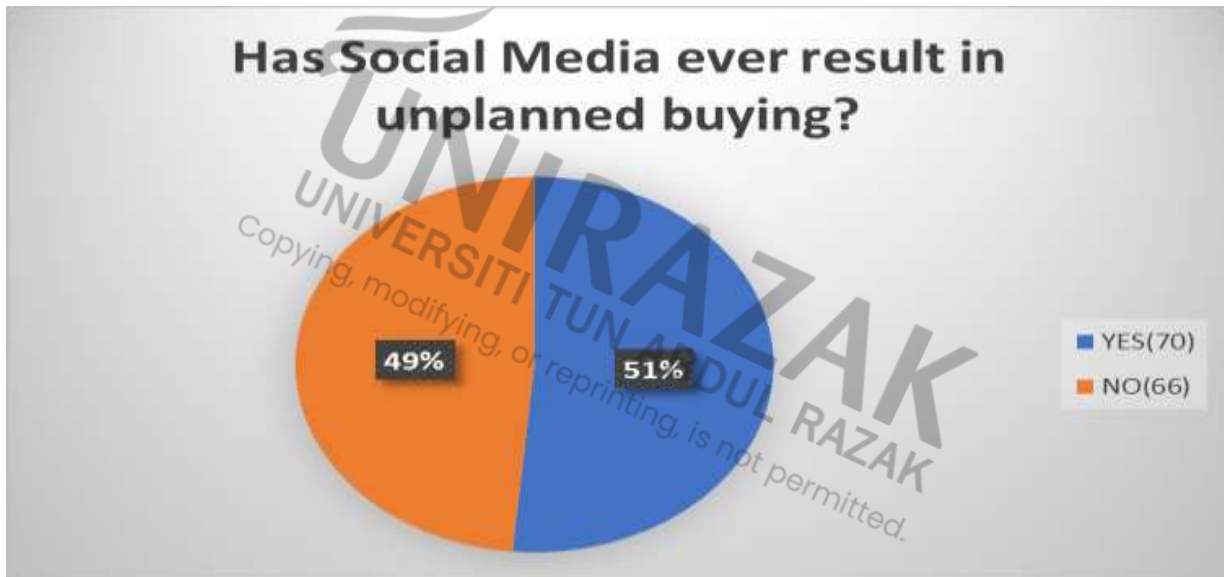
h) *Which social media platform has influenced your purchases the most?*

Shopee/Lazada emerged as the platforms that influenced purchases the most, with 45.6% or 62 out of the 136 respondents indicating its strong influence. Afterall these are social platforms who have also joined the fray in ensuring LIVE sessions and chats were available for potential buyers and returning customers to be able to reach out to vendors .

Other platforms like Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube also had varying degrees of influence on purchase decisions. (16.2% (22) ,16.9% (23), 9.6% (13) respectively).
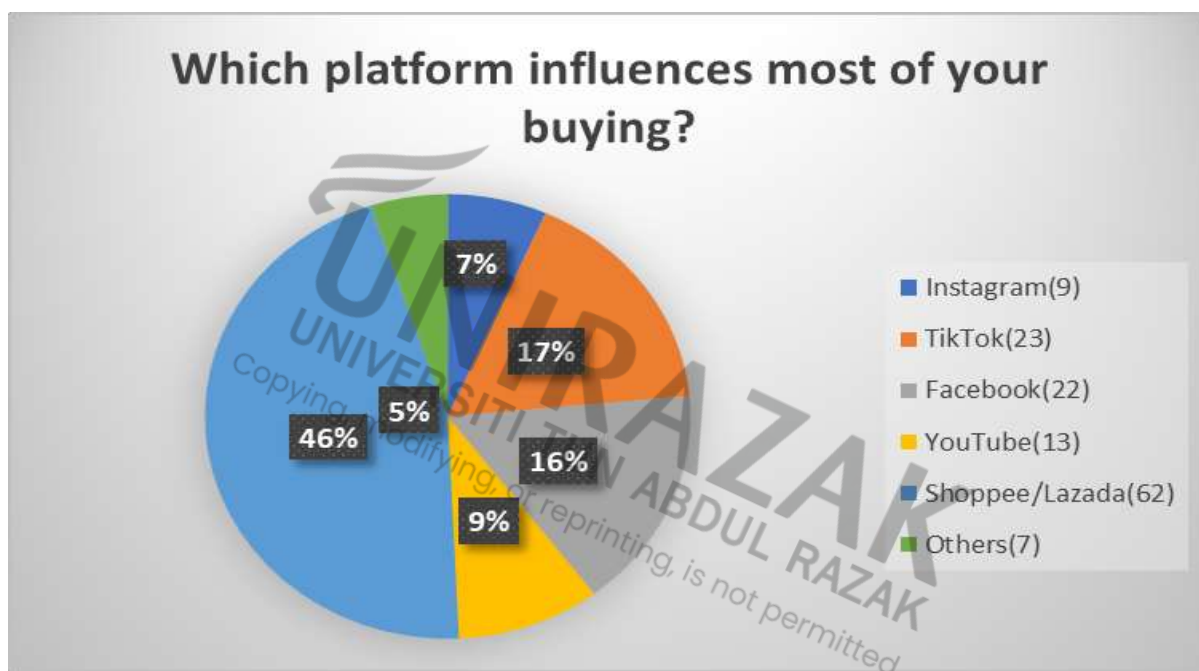
i) *What makes you loyal to a brand?*

This was a multiple-choice question, in which a majority of 31.6% or 43 out of the 136 respondents believed that regardless of the brand or whatever influences be it from social media or their peers said about it, they would need to first look at the quality of the product. The price of the product and 'the brand itself' were also important factors contributing to brand loyalty. A small number of respondents were also influenced by their friends and family, conforming to peer pressure. This indicates that a significant portion of the survey participants has been influenced by social media when making purchasing decisions.

In summary, the data analysis reveals a strong presence of daily social media usage, a clear preference for certain social media platforms, a high level of engagement in online shopping, and a notable influence of social media on participants' purchasing decisions. These findings provide valuable insights into the online behaviors and preferences of the surveyed population.

What makes you loyal to a particular brand?

- The Brand (50)
- Product/Service Quality(115)
- Price matters(73)
- Friends and Family ((e)WOM/Conformity(25)
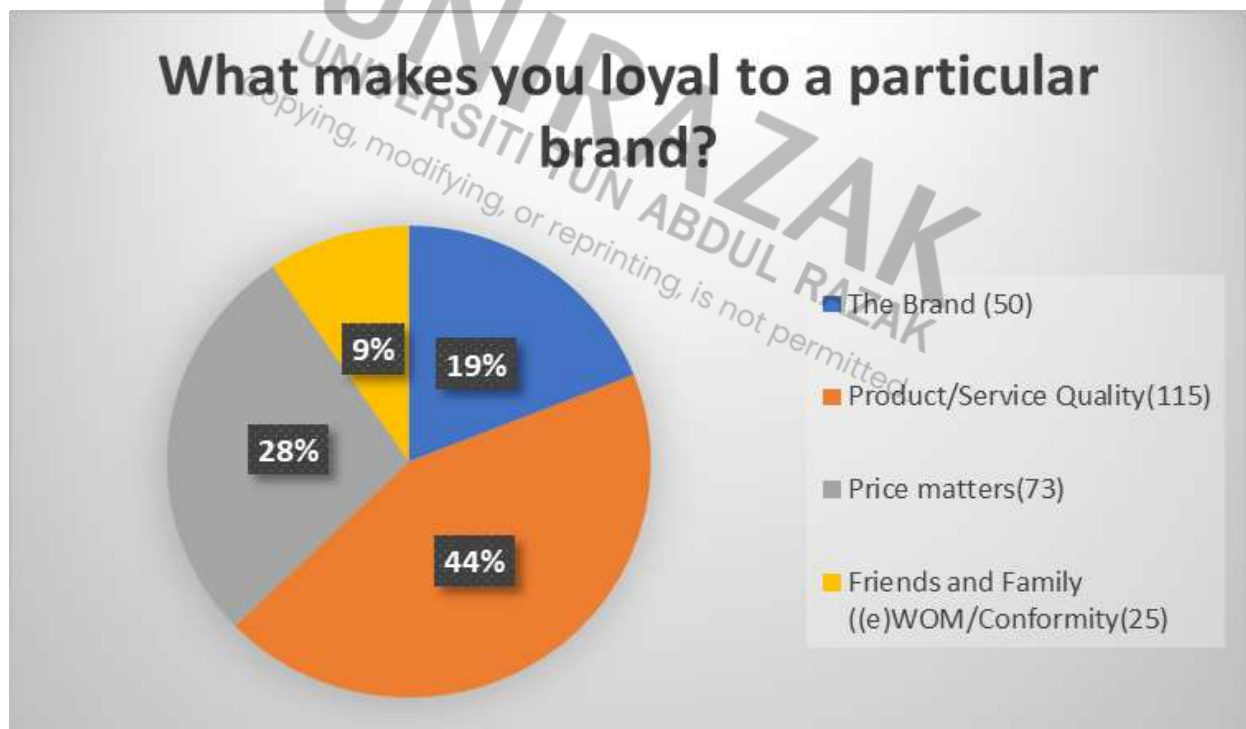
j) *Taking to social media to express their opinion on a product.*

In my study, I had sought to explore the possibility of individuals utilizing social media platforms to express their sentiments regarding products or services. Out of a total of the 136 respondents surveyed, the results revealed rather intriguing insights. A substantial 59.6% of respondents (81) acknowledged their use of social media for product or service reviews, giving us the glaring significance of online platforms being used as avenues for consumer expression. On the other hand, 40.4% or 55 respondents reported not engaging in such activities. This data presents to us the expanding role of social media as a dynamic channel for consumer feedback, emphasizing the need for businesses to monitor and engage with online consumer sentiment to ensure constantly improved product and service quality.
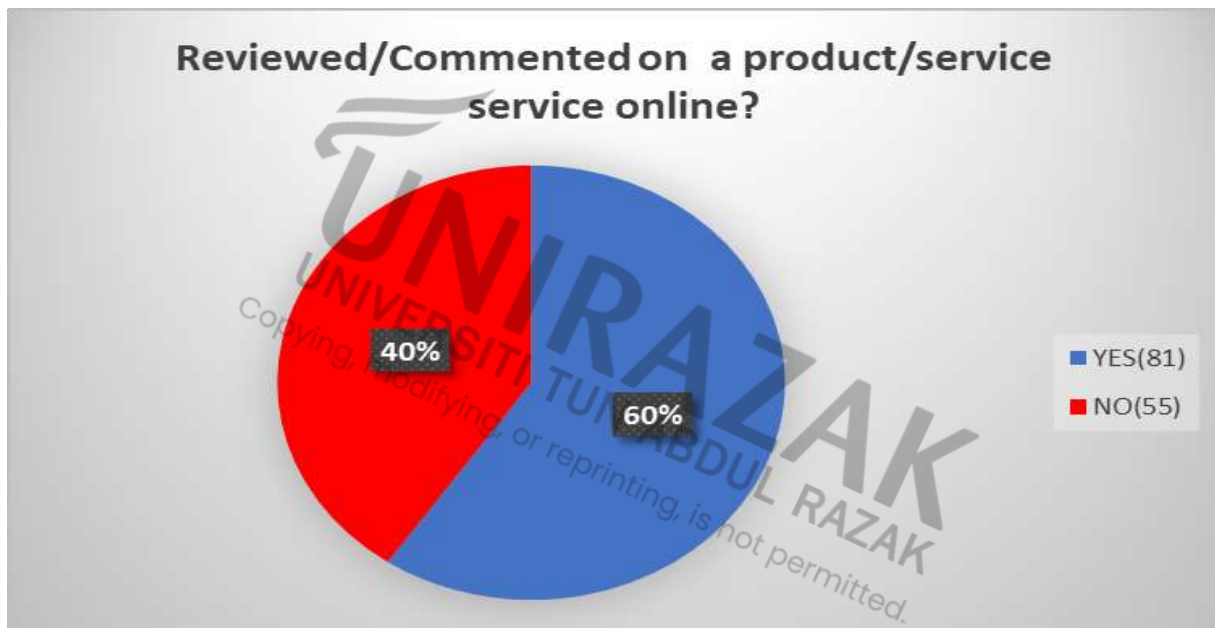
k) *Overall. Do you believe that social media can impact our buying decisions?*

The final query in my Google form survey was aimed at uncovering the extent to which individuals perceive social media's influence on their purchasing choices. The results unveiled a compelling consensus, with a resounding 89% of respondents (121 out of 136) concurring that they agreed social media held a significant sway over their buying decisions. In contrast, a minority of 11% (15 out of 136) expressed scepticism regarding the impact of social media on their consumer choices.

The overwhelming affirmation of social media's influence proves to us all, its pivotal role as a potent tool in shaping consumer behaviour. In today's digitally connected world, social media platforms have evolved into bustling marketplaces where consumers seek information, recommendations, and reviews about products and services. The power of user-generated content, influencer endorsements, and targeted advertisements cannot be understated.
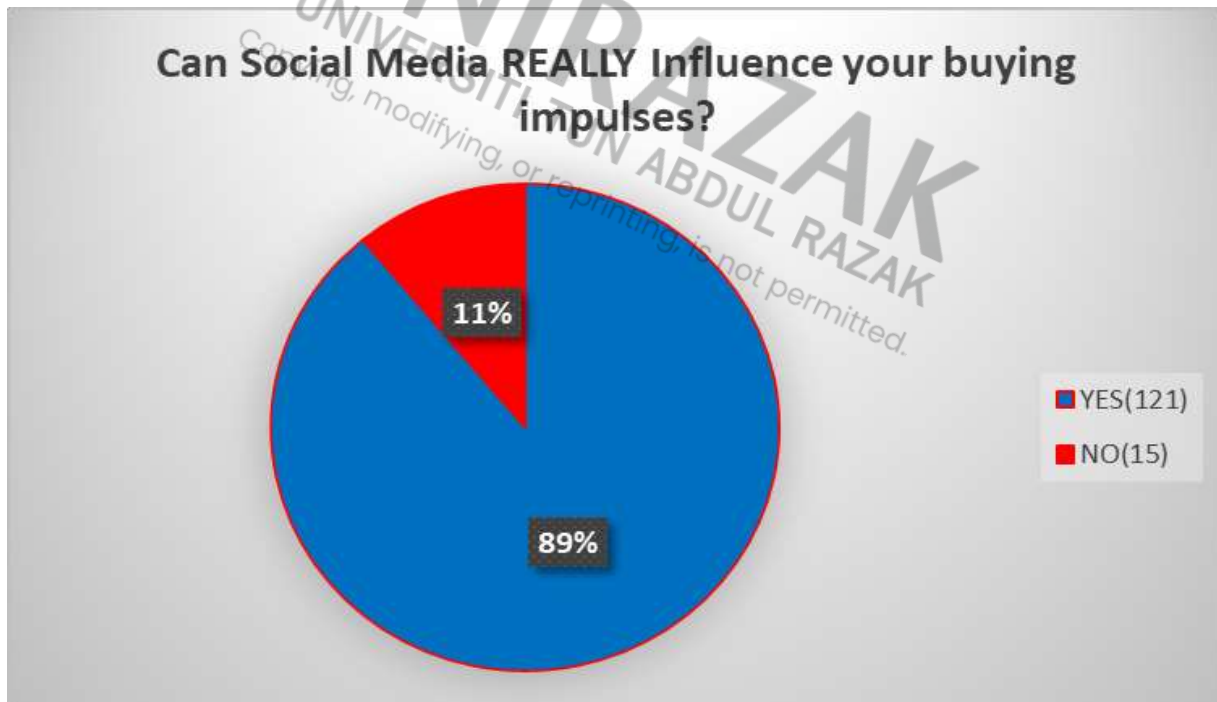
5.2 Conclusion of Survey

Findings of this study bear significant implications for businesses and marketers, underscoring the pivotal role of a strategic and captivating social media presence. Brands that grasp and harness the potential of social media to inform, persuade, and engage consumers are poised to secure a competitive advantage in an ever-evolving digital marketplace. As the influence of social media on purchasing decisions continues to expand, it becomes an indispensable arena for businesses to navigate and leverage in their pursuit of consumer loyalty and increased sales.

It is essential to reiterate that I ensured a representative sampling of respondents across various demographics, including academic, financial, marital status, and racial backgrounds. This meticulous approach guarantees that the research results are meaningful and can authentically reflect the sentiments and preferences of the majority of social media users in Malaysia.

CHAPTER 6: Recommendations:

Based on my survey results and findings, I have decided to share some recommendations per below as a guideline for the businesses using social media as part of their efforts in order to better navigate through the ever evolving landscape of social media and consumer behaviour.

6.1 Data-Driven Decision-Making:
Businesses can consider investing in data analytics tools to extract meaningful insights from social media data. This data-driven approach can help them better understand consumer preferences, sentiments, and trends more effectively while making sure they are constantly on top of things.

6.2 Content Personalization:
Tailoring content and advertising to individual consumer preferences can enhance the impact of social media campaigns. Personalization fosters a stronger connection with consumers, leading to higher engagement and conversion rates.

6.3 Engagement Strategies:
Encouraging active engagement with consumers on social media, such as responding to comments and questions promptly, can build trust and loyalty. Engaging content, contests, and user-generated content campaigns can also proof to be effective.

6.4 Influencer Marketing:
Collaboration with influencers that align with a brand's values and target audience can amplify social media influence. It is very important to choose influencers carefully and ensure authentic partnerships. Endorsements from subject matter experts in fields related to the marketed product or service will boost confidence in the consumers as well.

6.5 Ethical Practices:

Maintaining transparency and ethical practices in social media marketing is extremely important and should not be downplayed. Consumers are increasingly concerned about issues like data privacy and authenticity, so brands should prioritize these aspects to reach out to more potential customers while maintaining their existing customers.

6.6 Monitoring and Adaptation:

Social media trends evolve rapidly therefore businesses must continuously monitor changes in algorithms, user behaviour, and emerging platforms. They need to adapt strategies accordingly to stay relevant.

6.7 Cross-Channel Integration:

They may also consider merging social media efforts with other marketing channels for a cohesive brand presence. This can enhance the overall consumer experience.

6.8 Consumer Education:

Help consumers understand how social media may influence their decision-making. Educate them about identifying credible sources, recognizing sponsored content, and protecting their privacy.

6.9 Collaborative Research:

Collaboration with academic researchers and industry peers to gain deeper insights into the evolving dynamics of social media and consumer behaviour. Knowledge and experience sharing can benefit the entire field in the long run and for the greater benefit of all parties.

6.10 Ethical Responsibility:

It is also important to recognize the social responsibility that comes with wielding such influence over consumers. They must use social media platforms to promote positive social change and responsible consumption at the same time besides focusing on e-commerce.

CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research that I have done has shed light on the undeniable impact of social media on consumer behaviour. Through my survey and analysis, we have observed a significant correlation between social media usage and various aspects of consumer decision-making, which includes product discovery, purchasing decisions, and brand loyalty.

The prevalence of online reviews, influencer endorsements, and targeted advertisements has transformed the social media universe into a dynamic marketplace where consumers not only share their experiences but also seek guidance from their peers. This state of constant evolution has presented a vital opportunity for businesses to engage with their audience in meaningful and more efficient ways.

7.1 Limitations:

While the study captures a broad range of data points and enjoys a high response rate, it is important for us to note some potential limitations:

-The self-reported nature of the survey might introduce biases in responses. The sample, though diverse, might not be fully representative of the entire Malaysian population aged 21 and above.

- The study is cross-sectional and provides a snapshot at a specific point in time, limiting its ability to infer long-term trends or causality.

However, it is important to note that due to various constraints, the analysis was limited to quantitative techniques, specifically descriptive statistics. As such, the research was unable to provide inferential or regression statistics and findings. Despite these limitations, the study offers valuable insights into the multifaceted dimensions of social media's influence on consumer behaviour in Malaysia. It is acknowledged on the need for further exploration of qualitative aspects to complement the quantitative findings calls for future research to address this gap

7.2 Conclusion

As I conclude this study, it is crystal clear that social media's influence will only continue to grow. To stay competitive in today's digital landscape, companies must adapt to this new paradigm, while harnessing the power of social media to build brand awareness, foster trust, and drive consumer engagement.

While this research has provided valuable insights, it also opens the door to further exploration. Future studies may delve deeper into specific social media platforms, emerging trends, or the evolving role of influencers. By staying attuned to these developments, businesses can navigate the ever-changing social media and consumer landscape successfully.

This is an era where social media's impact is undeniable. A good grasp of understanding and harnessing its influence is not just a choice but a necessity for businesses seeking to thrive in the digital age. The internet age is rapidly entering the age where artificial intelligence will has already been present and in use by many social media sites to decrease costs and increase revenues. (M.Kaput , 2021)

Appendix 1: SURVEY QUESTIONS

(as shared via Google Forms)

CONSUMER SENTIMENTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA SURVEY

We live in an age where some of us cant live without social media and all its features. Please help me answer some questions about Social Media in order to aid me with my research. Thank you in advance. :) Regards- Andy Yeoh P. Ian

Please state your gender. *

○ Male

○ Female

Please state your age bracket. *

○ 21-30

○ 31-40

○ 41-50

○ 51-60

○ 61 and above

What's your marital status? *

○ Single

○ Married

What's your employment status? *

◯ Not Employed/Student

◯ Working (Private Sector)

◯ Working (Govt)

◯ Self-Employed /Business Owner

◯ Not Employed/Pensioner

Where are you located?(Within Malaysia) *

1. KL

2. Selangor

3. Pahang

4. Negeri Sembilan

5. Terengganu

6. Kelantan

7. Johor

8. Perak

9. Kedah

10. Penang

11. Perlis

12. Sabah

13. Sarawak

Please state your Income bracket (In RM) *

○ Pensioner

○ Student

○ Up to 2999

○ 3000-4999

○ 5000-7999

○ 8000-9999

○ 10,000 to 15,000

○ 15,001 and above

What is your highest level of education? *

○ SRP/SPM

○ Professional Certificate/Diploma

○ Degree/Masters

○ PHD

How often do you use social media in a day? *

Usage of FB/Tik Tok/Intagram/TWiTTER etc

○ Everyday

○ Few days a week

○ Once or Twice a month

○ NEVER(Hmm? Whats Social Media?)

What's the reason you use Social Media? (You may choose more than one box) *

☐ Networking (Friends/Family etc)

☐ Entertainment

☐ Shopping

☐ Just browsing

☐ All of the above

Which social media platforms do you often use? (You may choose more than one box) *

☐ Facebook

☐ Tik Tok

☐ Instagram

☐ Twitter

☐ YouTube

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Out of all these shown here, which is your favorite platform? *

○ Facebook

○ YouTube

○ Instagram

○ Tik Tok

○ Twitter

Do you shop on line? *

○ Yes

○ No

What kind of purchases do you normally make?   (You may choose more than one box) *

☐ Food and Beverage

☐ Clothes

☐ Personal care * Hair/Body*

☐ Electronic/Tech

☐ ALL of the above

Have you ever been influenced to purchase something because of what you seen on social media? *

○ Yes

○ No

Which of the below would most likely influence you to try or buy something? *

◯ Advertisement from Businesses

◯ Friend/Family recommendation

◯ Self researched. (Reviews/Feedback etc)

◯ YouTube/Influencer recommended

◯ As long as its cheap. Who cares? :)

Have you ever made any unplanned purchases due to exposure to social media? *

◯ Yes

◯ No

Which platform has influenced your purchases the most? *

◯ Instagram

◯ Tik Tok

◯ FaceBook

◯ Youtube

◯ Twitter

◯ Shoppee/Lazada

What makes you loyal to a brand? (You may choose more than one box) *

☐ The Brand itself.

☐ Quality of the product

☐ Price of the product

☐ Friend/Family influence (Conformity/Word of Mouth)

Have you ever used the social media to express how you felt about a product or service? (Review)

◯ Yes

◯ No

Overall. Do you believe that social media can impact our buying decisions? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

END

Appendix 2: FREQUENCY TABLES

GENDER		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	82	60.3	60.3	60.3
	Male	54	39.7	39.7	100.0
	Total	136	100.0	100.0	

AGEGROUP		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	21-30	16	11.8	11.8	11.8
	31-40	43	31.6	31.6	43.4
	41-50	28	20.6	20.6	64.0
	51-60	25	18.4	18.4	82.4
	61 and above	24	17.6	17.6	100.0
	Total	136	100.0	100.0	

MARITAL		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Married	94	69.1	69.1	69.1
	Single	42	30.9	30.9	100.0
	Total	136	100.0	100.0	

LOCATION		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Johor	2	1.5	1.5	1.5
	Kedah	1	.7	.7	2.2
	Kelantan	3	2.2	2.2	4.4
	KL	20	14.7	14.7	19.1
	Melacca	3	2.2	2.2	21.3
	Negeri Sembilan	6	4.4	4.4	25.7
	Pahang	1	.7	.7	26.5
	Penang	9	6.6	6.6	33.1
	Perak	23	16.9	16.9	50.0
	Perlis	3	2.2	2.2	52.2
	Sabah	5	3.7	3.7	55.9
	Sarawak	7	5.1	5.1	61.0
	Selangor	51	37.5	37.5	98.5
	Terengganu	2	1.5	1.5	100.0
	Total	136	100.0	100.0	

INCOME		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	10,000 to 15,000	8	5.9	5.9	5.9
	10,000 to 15.000	1	.7	.7	6.6
	15,001 and above	9	6.6	6.6	13.2
	2999 and below	24	17.6	17.6	30.9
	3000-4999	47	34.6	34.6	65.4
	5000-7999	19	14.0	14.0	79.4
	8000-9999	9	6.6	6.6	86.0
	Pensioner	14	10.3	10.3	96.3
	Student	5	3.7	3.7	100.0
	Total	136	100.0	100.0	

EDUCATION		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Degree/Masters	67	49.3	49.3	49.3
	PHD	5	3.7	3.7	52.9
Valid	Professional Certificate/Diploma	39	28.7	28.7	81.6
	SRP/SPM	25	18.4	18.4	100.0
	Total	136	100.0	100.0	

FREQ-USE					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Everyday	122	89.7	89.7	89.7
Valid	Few days a week	11	8.1	8.1	97.8
	Once or Twice a month	3	2.2	2.2	100.0
	Total	136	100.0	100.0	

REASON-USE					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	All of the above	72	52.9	52.9	52.9
	Entertainment	6	4.4	4.4	57.4
	Entertainment, Just browsing	4	2.9	2.9	60.3
	Entertainment, Shopping	1	.7	.7	61.0
	Entertainment, Shopping, Just browsing	3	2.2	2.2	63.2
Valid	Just browsing	8	5.9	5.9	69.1
	Networking (Friends/Family etc)	5	3.7	3.7	72.8
	Networking (Friends/Family etc), Entertainment	8	5.9	5.9	78.7
	Networking (Friends/Family etc), Entertainment, Just browsing	13	9.6	9.6	88.2

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Networking (Friends/Family etc), Entertainment, Shopping	10	7.4	7.4	95.6
	Networking (Friends/Family etc), Just browsing	3	2.2	2.2	97.8
	Networking (Friends/Family etc), Shopping	2	1.5	1.5	99.3
	Networking (Friends/Family etc), Shopping, Just browsing	1	.7	.7	100.0
	Total	136	100.0	100.0	

PLATFORMWHICH					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Facebook	12	8.8	8.8	8.8
	Facebook, Instagram	4	2.9	2.9	11.8
	Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok	1	.7	.7	12.5
	Facebook, Instagram, YouTube	3	2.2	2.2	14.7
	Facebook, Tik Tok	1	.7	.7	15.4
	Facebook, Tik Tok, Instagram, YouTube	1	.7	.7	16.2
	Facebook, Tik Tok, YouTube	1	.7	.7	16.9
	Facebook, Tik Tok, YouTube, Instagram	1	.7	.7	17.6
	Facebook, Twitter	1	.7	.7	18.4
	Facebook, YouTube	14	10.3	10.3	28.7
	Facebook, YouTube, Instagram	1	.7	.7	29.4
	Facebook, YouTube, Tik Tok, Instagram, Twitter	1	.7	.7	30.1
	Instagram	5	3.7	3.7	33.8
	Instagram, Facebook	3	2.2	2.2	36.0
	Instagram, Facebook, Tik Tok	3	2.2	2.2	38.2
	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Tik Tok	1	.7	.7	39.0
	Instagram, Facebook, YouTube	2	1.5	1.5	40.4
	Instagram, Tik Tok	2	1.5	1.5	41.9

Instagram, Tik Tok, YouTube	1	.7	.7	42.6
Instagram, Tik Tok, YouTube, Facebook	1	.7	.7	43.4
Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Tik Tok	1	.7	.7	44.1
Instagram, YouTube	2	1.5	1.5	45.6
Instagram, YouTube, Facebook	4	2.9	2.9	48.5
Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter	1	.7	.7	49.3
Tik Tok	4	2.9	2.9	52.2
Tik Tok, Facebook	2	1.5	1.5	53.7
Tik Tok, Facebook, YouTube	4	2.9	2.9	56.6
Tik Tok, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter	1	.7	.7	57.4
Tik Tok, Instagram	3	2.2	2.2	59.6
Tik Tok, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube	1	.7	.7	60.3
Tik Tok, Twitter, Instagram	2	1.5	1.5	61.8
Tik Tok, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube	1	.7	.7	62.5
Tik Tok, YouTube	3	2.2	2.2	64.7
Tik Tok, YouTube, Facebook	4	2.9	2.9	67.6
Tik Tok, YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram	1	.7	.7	68.4
Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, YouTube	1	.7	.7	69.1
Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube	1	.7	.7	69.9
Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram	1	.7	.7	70.6
Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Tik Tok, Instagram	1	.7	.7	71.3
Twitter, Instagram, Facebook	1	.7	.7	72.1
Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Tik Tok	1	.7	.7	72.8
Twitter, Instagram, Tik Tok, Facebook	1	.7	.7	73.5
Twitter, Tik Tok, Instagram	1	.7	.7	74.3
Twitter, YouTube, Facebook	2	1.5	1.5	75.7

	Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok	1	.7	.7	76.5
	YouTube	5	3.7	3.7	80.1
	YouTube, Facebook	10	7.4	7.4	87.5
	YouTube, Facebook, Instagram	2	1.5	1.5	89.0
	YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok	1	.7	.7	89.7
	YouTube, Instagram	3	2.2	2.2	91.9
	YouTube, Instagram, Facebook	1	.7	.7	92.6
	YouTube, Instagram, Tik Tok	2	1.5	1.5	94.1
	YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, Tik Tok	1	.7	.7	94.9
	YouTube, Tik Tok	1	.7	.7	95.6
	YouTube, Tik Tok, Facebook	2	1.5	1.5	97.1
	YouTube, Tik Tok, Facebook, Instagram	1	.7	.7	97.8
	YouTube, Twitter	1	.7	.7	98.5
	YouTube, Twitter, Instagram	1	.7	.7	99.3
	YouTube, Twitter, Tik Tok, Instagram	1	.7	.7	100.0
	Total	136	100.0	100.0	

FAVSITE		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Facebook	50	36.8	36.8	36.8
	Instagram	26	19.1	19.1	55.9
	Tik Tok	26	19.1	19.1	75.0
	Twitter	3	2.2	2.2	77.2
	YouTube	31	22.8	22.8	100.0
	Total	136	100.0	100.0	

ONLINESHOPPING

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	10	7.4	7.4	7.4
	Yes	126	92.6	92.6	100.0
	Total	136	100.0	100.0	

BUYWHAT

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	ALL of the above	44	32.4	32.4	32.4
	Clothes	6	4.4	4.4	36.8
	Clothes, ALL of the above	1	.7	.7	37.5
	Clothes, Electronic/Tech	2	1.5	1.5	39.0
	Clothes, Personal care * Hair/Body*	10	7.4	7.4	46.3
	Clothes, Personal care * Hair/Body*, Electronic/Tech	3	2.2	2.2	48.5
	Electronic/Tech	14	10.3	10.3	58.8
	Food and Beverage	12	8.8	8.8	67.6
	Food and Beverage, ALL of the above	1	.7	.7	68.4
	Food and Beverage, Clothes	7	5.1	5.1	73.5
	Food and Beverage, Clothes, Electronic/Tech	3	2.2	2.2	75.7
	Food and Beverage, Clothes, Personal care * Hair/Body*	9	6.6	6.6	82.4
	Food and Beverage, Electronic/Tech	7	5.1	5.1	87.5
	Food and Beverage, Personal care * Hair/Body*	6	4.4	4.4	91.9
	Food and Beverage, Personal care * Hair/Body*, Electronic/Tech	3	2.2	2.2	94.1
	Personal care * Hair/Body*	4	2.9	2.9	97.1

	Personal care * Hair/Body*, Electronic/Tech	4	2.9	2.9	100.0
	Total	136	100.0	100.0	

SEEN_BUY

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	31	22.8	22.8	22.8
	Yes	105	77.2	77.2	100.0
	Total	136	100.0	100.0	

WHICH_INFLUENCE

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Advertisement from Businesses	12	8.8	8.8	8.8
	As long as its cheap. Who cares? :)	12	8.8	8.8	17.6
	Friend/Family recommendation	28	20.6	20.6	38.2
	Self researched. (Reviews/Feedback etc)	70	51.5	51.5	89.7
	YouTube/Influencer recommended	14	10.3	10.3	100.0
	Total	136	100.0	100.0	

INFLUENCEBUY

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	70	51.5	51.5	51.5
	Yes	66	48.5	48.5	100.0
	Total	136	100.0	100.0	

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INFLUBUYMOST					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	FaceBook	22	16.2	16.2	16.2
	Instagram	9	6.6	6.6	22.8
	Others	3	2.2	2.2	25.0
	Others (Shoppee/Lazada)	4	2.9	2.9	27.9
	Shoppee/Lazada	62	45.6	45.6	73.5
	Tik Tok	23	16.9	16.9	90.4
	Youtube	13	9.6	9.6	100.0
	Total	136	100.0	100.0	

LOYALWHY					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Friend/Family influence (Conformity/Word of Mouth)	3	2.2	2.2	2.2
	Price of the product	6	4.4	4.4	6.6
	Quality of the product	43	31.6	31.6	38.2
	Quality of the product, Friend/Family influence (Conformity/Word of Mouth)	3	2.2	2.2	40.4
	Quality of the product, Price of the product	27	19.9	19.9	60.3
	Quality of the product, Price of the product, Friend/Family influence (Conformity/Word of Mouth)	3	2.2	2.2	62.5
	The Brand itself.	4	2.9	2.9	65.4
	The Brand itself., Friend/Family influence (Conformity/Word of Mouth)	1	.7	.7	66.2
	The Brand itself., Price	3	2.2	2.2	68.4

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		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	of the product				
	The Brand itself., Price of the product, Friend/Family influence (Conformity/Word of Mouth)	1	.7	.7	69.1
	The Brand itself., Quality of the product	6	4.4	4.4	73.5
	The Brand itself., Quality of the product, Friend/Family influence (Conformity/Word of Mouth)	2	1.5	1.5	75.0
	The Brand itself., Quality of the product, Price of the product	21	15.4	15.4	90.4
	The Brand itself., Quality of the product, Price of the product, Friend/Family influence (Conformity/Word of Mouth)	13	9.6	9.6	100.0
	Total	136	100.0	100.0	

REVIEWER

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	55	40.4	40.4	40.4
	Yes	81	59.6	59.6	100.0
	Total	136	100.0	100.0	

ULTIMATEINFLU

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	15	11.0	11.0	11.0
	Yes	121	89.0	89.0	100.0
	Total	136	100.0	100.0	

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Appendix 4: APPROVAL PAGE

TITLE OF PROJECT: **THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR**

NAME OF AUTHOR: **YEOH PHEE IAN**

The undersigned is pleased to certify that the above candidate has fulfilled the condition of the project paper prepared in the partial fulfilment for the award of the degree of Master of Business Administration.

SUPERVISOR

Signature   **:** _____

Name   **:**

Date   **:**

ENDORSED BY:

_____

Dean

Graduate School of Business

Date**:**