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Abstract - The intention of this study is to determine the influence of social media towards generation Y purchasing behaviour. It is also to explore the important role social media play as a medium to communicate a message. The findings of this research are, intended to provide accurate and useful information so as to facilitate further research in similar fields of study. Permission was granted by the Directors of the IHLs to deliver and collect the questionnaires. Questionnaires were given to 200 students of ten selected institutions of higher learning in the Klang Valley. The respondents involved were students enrolled in the institute of higher learning. The respondents were asked about their perception with regards to its current social media website and how does it play a role in influencing their buying behaviour so as to gain their true interpretation and understanding of social media. Responses from the respondents have shown that, generally social media were used to gain information, prefer group buying and as a community platform to express and share their views.

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Empowering Social Marketing Media Towards Genration Y Buying Behaviour

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Abstract - The intention of this study is to determine the influence of social media towards generation Y purchasing behaviour. It is also to explore the important role social media play as a medium to communicate a message. The findings of this research are, intended to provide accurate and useful information so as to facilitate further research in similar fields of study. Permission was granted by the Directors of the IHLs to deliver and collect the questionnaires. Questionnaires were given to 200 students of ten selected institutions of higher learning in the Klang Valley. The respondents involved were students enrolled in the institute of higher learning. The respondents were asked about their perception with regards to its current social media website and how does it play a role in influencing their buying behaviour so as to gain their true interpretation and understanding of social media. Responses from the respondents have shown that, generally social media were used to gain information, prefer group buying and as a community platform to express and share their views. The respondents agreed that social media was more effective in finding information as compared to the use of the traditional mass media. Viral advertising and video are very appealing to them. Furthermore, social media also improve customers' service and business networking.

I. Introduction

Kotler and Zaltman (1971) stated that social marketing combines social policy and marketing practices to achieve a set of social behaviourial goals within a target audience. This is when the traditional marketing tools were used to sell concepts and behavioral practices instead of products. Borges (2009), Safko and Brake (2009) and Handley, et al. (2010) noted that social media is concerned with communication and collaboration while social media marketing (SMM) is concerned with marketing activities done via social media. SMM seeks to achieve branding and marketing communication goals through customers' participation in various social media. Many large companies utilizes social network and web 2.0 tools to build relationships with its customers. A central activity is to involve customers in improving operations by soliciting ideas and discussing them. Social media is a large electronic suggestion box. The main objective is to increase flow of visitors both to the physical and the virtual sites. By using special promotions and rewards, many companies attracted visitors considerably improving revenue and profits since embarking on social media projects. In addition to this utilizing social media for marketing, advertisement, customer service, market research, and social entertainment are the major trend in social media. Harris and Rae (2009) reported that social media and networking are becoming new technological skills that influence the way people exchange information so much so that social networking is quickly becoming a desirable job skill.

Leggatt (2010), found that in July 2010 there were over 700,000 small business with Facebook Fan pages and close to 850,000 in February 2011, and LinkedIn's network exceeds 90 million members. In addition to this almost 70 percent of all companies worldwide use some social networking. Leggatt confirmed that social commerce results in significant monetary and strategic benefits to businesses. In addition to this, over 40 percent of businesses globally found new customers via social networks and over 27 percent of companies invest in social networking in order to acquire and retain customers. Most Web 2.0 applications have a rich, interactive, user friendly interface based on Ajax (Asynchronous JavaScript) and XML. The intent is to make Web pages feel more responsive by exchanging small amounts of data with the server behind the scenes so that the entire Web page does not have to be reloaded each time the user makes a change. This is meant to increase the Web pages' interactivity, loading speed and usability. Web 2.0 tools and social networks are changing the way people communicate, collaborate, work and live. According to Turban, E., et al. (2011), since March 2010, there were more Internet visits to Facebook than to Google in US. Facebook's membership exceeded 750 million (worldwide in June 2012), aiming at $1 billion in annual revenue. Groupon, the leader in group – buy social shopping, a start – up had annual revenues of 4500 million in its second year. This promoted Google to offer 46 billion to acquire the sites in October 2010. However, Groupon rejected the offer. Meeker et.al. (2010), stated that social network are the kings of communication, replacing e mail. Bernoff and Li (2008), claimed that about 25 percent of all Internet users are engaged in social activities and this percentage is increasing rapidly.

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Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, which allows the creation and exchange of user generated content." Today, businesses also view social media as consumer-generated media.

This article, offers some insights into how social media can be used to influence generation Y's buying behavior. The next section discusses literature review of the effectiveness of social media towards generation Y. Then, the methodology for this study is outlined. A section on findings first gives a brief profile of each of the case study libraries, and then surfaces the factors that are influencing their behaviour. Finally, conclusions and recommendations are offered.

a) Problem Statement

The aim of this research study is to determine if social media can be an alternative means of medium to influence generation Y buying behaviour in Malaysia. In the past the traditional mass media have been used by companies to promote their products and services. Until today, some companies still use the traditional mass media such as newspapers, magazines, radio and television for their marketing strategy.

This research study hopes to discover the effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool for companies and how the effectiveness of social media can be realised. Through the researcher's empirical experience in the advertising industry, it is very expensive and time consuming to build brands through the traditional mass media. This is because many media companies charge a very high price for their advertisement columns. The charges for print advertisement will depend on the number of columns and colours used.

Besides this, many processes are involved to produce an effective advertisement. It is even more expensive for companies to advertise via air time on television. Charges will depend on the various time slots selected. Due to the high cost involved, only large and financially rich companies are able to utilise this media. Many small-and-medium-size educational companies will have to resort to more affordable advertising and marketing media such as participating in road shows and exhibitions.

By using the Internet, companies would find the cost of advertising cheaper as compared to advertising through the traditional mass media. According to Catterall, M., Maclaran, P. and Stevens, L. (2002), time spent on preparation of a Internet advertisement is also shorter. This is one of the aspects that the study wants to put forward in this research study which deals strictly on the issues of the how effective social media is used to influence buying behaviour in this country.

b) Research Questions

The research questions for this research study were designed as follows:-

i. Can social media influence generation Y's buying behaviour?
ii. Can social media be an effective medium to communicate message to generation Y?

c) Purpose of the Study

The objectives of this research study have been to highlight these issues;

i. To determine whether social media can influence generation Y's buying behaviour
ii. To determine whether the utilisation of social media is a preferred medium to communicate messages to generation Y

d) Significance of the Project

This research study will hopefully benefit people who are already in business regardless of whether they are marketers or advertisers. Marketers would benefit from this study through gaining information that might help them make their academic decisions. Information has been until now, made easily available through the social media. Companies could have a competitive advantage if they could brand themselves appropriately. Web and multimedia designers could have a better understanding of how to further enhance their website or multimedia designs. This is due to the fact that this study will hopefully; help them in their efforts in developing an effective way to influence and communicate message to the generation Y. There is, therefore, an increasing importance in providing continuity and customer commitment in a fast moving market place.

e) Literature Review

Stephen and Tuobia 92010) define social commerce as a form of Internet based social media that allows people to participate actively in the marketing and selling of products and services in online marketplaces and communities. Dennison, et. Al. (2009) stated that social commerce is the concept of word of mouth applied to e commerce and it is the marriage of a retailer's products and the interaction of shoppers with content. Marsden (2009a) definitions include social commerce's properties (such as word of mouth, trusted advice, buying with the help of friends). Wells et al. (2000) divided the various sources of messages that consumers can receive about an organisation's products into three major categories: the "planned" or "controlled", the "uncontrolled", and the "often unconsidered". Messages created by real customers reflect the genuine feelings of product users and as such are more credible and more effective than messages created by advertising agencies (Constantinides and Fountain, 2008, p. 242).

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The main role of marketing communication is to "support the overall marketing plan by sending messages to the target audience that an organisation's products or services are simply better than those of its competitors" (Burnett, 1993, p. 241). In fact with the planned sources, the marketer has full control over the message content, when and how the message will be delivered and to whom it will be delivered. By way of contrast, the unplanned (and therefore "uncontrolled") sources of messages (word-of-mouth, gossip, internet chat-rooms, etc.) can be more influential than the planned sources (Bone, 1995). Definition of Web 2.0 offered by Kennedy et al. (2007): Web 2.0 refers to a loose collection of "second generation" web-based technologies and services, many of which are designed to facilitate collaboration and sharing between users. Internet marketing tactics include banner advertising, sponsorships, pop-ups or – unders, links, paid searches and so forth (Belch and Belch, 2007). But the Web 2.0 environment has provided organisations with a broad range of new tools and strategies for communicating with their customers, and marketers can capitalize on these developments in different ways by actively or passively engaging in the use of these applications as part of their overall marketing strategy. Constantinides and Fountain (2008) suggested how organisations can make use of web 2.0 applications as a means of reaching and informing customers and online opinion leaders (Bloggers, Podcasters, etc.) about their products, services and new market offers.

II. Methodology

A survey was conducted through questionnaire, with students from private institutions of higher learning in Malaysia. The questions asked comprised a) respondent's personal characteristics and b) factors influencing perception of social media towards their buying behavior and communicating message. The investigated variables include source of social comm.-erce via social media. A total of 200 respondents, all of them fulltime students enrolled in Malaysian public and private institutions of higher learning were used in this study. The sample came mostly from ten institutions of higher learning. (Table 1)

The full scale consisted of 10 items along two categories; including basic usage assessment, factors associated with social media, and finally reports of personal behavioural tendencies and frequencies associated with social media applications. Response was rated on a five-point Likert scale. On the basis of the questions related to behavioural tendencies and social media usage, two main constructs emerged. The first one concerned "sense of community/emotional connection", including questions such as: being proud to tell people he/she is in a social media and part of the community. According to Mangold and Faulds (2009), consumers feel more engaged with products and organizations when they are able to submit feedback. This may come in the form of criticism, accolade, or helpful suggestions. But taken as a whole, this feedback contributes to a sense of community in which honest, open communications are encouraged and customer engagement is enhanced. Also, could not resist and tend to logged on to social media apps first when connected to the Internet. The second part concerned "everyday usage", including questions such as: social media is part of their everyday activity to keep update on any current events and happening, and social media provides a good way to connect with people and getting first hand information besides any other media. In addition to the basic demographic questions, a few questions related to general computer and internet availability and usage patterns were included. Table 2 shows the respondents profile.

Table 1 : List of Higher Educational Institutions and Number of Students Involved in the Research

No.	Names of institutions of higher learning involved in the research	Number of student involved
1	INTI International University	20
2	Selangor University (UNISEL)	20
3	Limkokwing University	20
4	New Era College	20
5	KDU University College	20
6	Monash University	20
7	KBU International	20
8	SEGI University	20
9	Sunway University	20
10	Taylor's University	20
	Total number of respondents	200

Table 2 : Respondents Profile

Age	Frequency (N=200)	Percentage (%)
Above 18 and 19	101	50.5%
20 and 21	70	35%
22 and 23	18	9%
24 and above	11	5.5%
Monthly Family Income		
RM 1000 or less	1	0.5
RM 1001 - 2500	11	5.5
RM 2501 - 4000	20	10
RM 4001 - 6000	38	19
RM 6001 or More	130	65
Academic Qualification		
SPM	118	59
STPM/A-Level	12	6
Diploma	40	20
Bachelors degree	28	14
Others	2	1

A confirmatory factor analysis and comparison of means was conducted to examine the good-of-fitness

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of the measurement model. These were carried out to establish the factors for respondents in selecting social media that influence their buying behavior and as a medium to communicate message.

a) Results

The seven most commonly used in this study: Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Blogs, Linkedin, Flickr and others. The only other Web 2.0 application cited as being in use for professional purposes by a respondent was Four Square. This is a web and mobile application that allows registered users to connect with friends and update their location.

Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin and Youtube are the most popular applications in this sample. (Table 3)

Overall, these results indicate the general use of Web 2.0 applications in the global population as a whole. Facebook, Twitter and Linkedin are currently the largest of thousands of platforms currently available on the WWW. According to Facebook, 2010), more than 200 million people logging on to Facebook daily, their reach is one of the largest in the world Twitter has over 100 million users (Twitter, 2010). While Linkedin has over 65 million users. (Linkedin, 2010). Therefore, the widespread popularity of these platforms has attracted marketers' attention. The widespread – and growing – use of Facebook, Twitter and Linkedin specifically for marketing purposes has been highlighted by a number of surveys. This include the study by Stelzner (2010) who noted that these three applications, followed by blogs, were by far the tools used most extensively by marketers.

Table 3 : List of Preference of Social Media Applications Usage

No.	Social Media Application	Percentage of most preferred
1	Facebook	51%
2	Twitter	22%
3	Linkedin	9%
4	Youtube	8%
5	Blogs	4%
6	Flickers	3%
7	Foursquare	1%
8	Others	2%

III. General Tendencies and Patterns

All respondents reported to have at least one computer and Internet access in their homes. Besides, majority of respondents agreed that the home was the place where most of the daily usage to take place. All the participants spent more than 2.5 hours on the internet each day. Majority of participants reported memberships in various social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter LinkedIn and Youtube. However the study discovered that Facebook is one of their favourite. The study showed that 51 percent reported to visit Facebook on more than four occasions per day, and 50 percent of the participants admitted to have at least over 300 Facebook friends. Table 4 provides the descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations for basic usage patterns for social media.

a) Variables Influencing Respondents Perception Towards Social Media

A comparison of means was perform to statistically analyze the responses from respondents to evaluate the order of importance of the criteria influencing the perception towards social media. Table 5 lists only the variables that influence respondents' perception. Generally, respondents were found to favor of social shopping, social rating and reviews, social recommendations and referrals, about the products and services offered by the company with mean values of 4.57, 4.52 and 4.32, respectively. The lowest ranking variable influencing institution choice with a mean value of 3.8 was social entertainment. This supposedly the least concern the respondents, as they were all willing to gain alternative entertainment form via others apps or websites.

The factors affecting respondents' perception are indicated in Table 6. Based on chi-square results, the study show that eight items were significant in affecting the respondents perception towards social media and also found to be significant at 0.1 significant level. The eight items were: collecting information, group buying, forum, online clubs, viral marketing, and viral video, sharing views and personalized experience.

Table 4 : Respondents Usage Pattern for social media

	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1	Discover new brand	3.86	0.59	(0.76)				
2	Interact with brand representative	3.41	0.77	0.62 *	(0.83)			
3	Getting great dealsvia group buying	3.48	0.55	0.45* *	0.58 * *	(0.80)		
4	Exchange information with friends, fans and others	3.53	0.75	0.65 * *	0.63	0.58 * *	(0.85)	
5	Build and Share wish list	2.29	0.73	20.09	0.03	20.08	20.12	(0.88)

Notes : Significant value at *p less than or equal to 0.05, * *p less than or equal to 0.01; n ¼ 52; internal reliabilities (*a* coefficients) for the overall dimensions.

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Table 5 : List of Variables Influencing Respondents Perception Towards Social Media

No.	Variables influencing perceptions of social media	Mean Value
1	Social Shopping	4.57
2	Social Rating and Reviews	4.52
3	Social Recommendations and Referrals	4.32
4	Social Advertising	4.28
5	Social Networking	4.25
6	Social Customers Service	4.16
7	Social Commerce	4.12
8	Social Entertainment	3.8

Table 6 : Chi-Square Results of Social Media Impacts on Generation Y Buying Behaviour Characteristics

Characteristics	Chi-square	Significance
Collect information	1.968	0.045*
Group buying	1.833	0.043*
Forum	1.813	0.041*
Online clubs	1.802	0.040*
Viral Marketing	1.765	0.038*
Viral Video	1.743	0.036*
Sharing Views	1.728	0.035*
Personalize experience	1.726	0.034*
Improve relationship	1.724	0.034*
Improve customer service	1.722	0.033*
Business networking	1.721	0.032*

**Statistically significant factors*

IV. Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of the paper was to explore various aspects associated with the influence of social media among the target market to purchase a certain brand. The study found prior to purchase on social media, target market liked to collect information such as what brand to buy, from which vendor and at what price. According to (Techshout.com 2010), the majority of online customers already rely on social networks to guide them in their purchase decision. This is possible where customers resort to friends, fans, followers and experienced customers. Vendors recognized that peer-to-peer engagement through social media can be their strongest marketing tools.

Through social media the target market also considers group buying offering discounts or special deals during a short time frame as important. The study of suggests that group buys is possible via social media. Community platforms including forums and online clubs connect people with each other and sometimes to experts and businesses are also essential for the target market. Forums and communities are effective, popular and useful for the generation Y. All this can be integrated into social media to allow personal messaging and status updates to create an increased sense of community. This will facilitate purchasing decisions primarily by allowing members to share trusted information with each other. Ideas boards such as online suggestion and discussion boards to capture constructive feedback, and user powered Q&A forums for customer supports are fundamental qualities considered important for generation Y communities.

In addition to this, generation Ys are especially interested at viral marketing. The research shows that word of mouth advertising is effective. Whatever they like can spread very quickly at a minimal cost to companies' advertisers. This is in line with Clifford (2010), stated that social media increase customer loyalty. This is where the nature of location based marketing changed to being social, entertaining and rewarding; where advertisement came as an add on service. Besides, generation Ys also find that viral video advertisement appealing to them. This is consistent with the study by Turban (2012) stated that viral video is growing rapidly mainly due to the popularity of YouTube and similar sites. Online video is growing at nearly 40 per cent annually while TV viewing continues to fall. Furthermore, generation Y find that Twitter and some other micro blogging sites have also influence their buying behavior. This is because these sites provide lists of fans and friends where seller can reach out to them via strong word of mouth. According to Learnmonth (2011), twitter is becoming a little more of a business. MacMillan (2010) stated that Twitter is already the world's third-largest social networking platform (about 200 million registered users) and may reach 1 billion followers in a few years. On the other hand, generation Ys feel that social media will be more effective to promote compared to traditional media. This is in line with the study by Patel (2011), where a Nielsen study of iPhone users compared Apple's iAds against similar TV ads. The researcher discovered that those exposed to one of iAd campaigns were more than twice as likely to recall it as those who had seen similar TV ads. The study found that consumers shown an iAds remembered better than TV ad respondents and the ad messaging.

In fact the study also discovered that generation Y are interested to express and share their views in regard to their purchased product. This is supported by Gogoi's (2007) study that retailers know that customers, especially the younger and more Net-savvy ones, want to be heard and they also want to hear what others like them say. Increasingly, retailers are opening up their websites to customers, letting them post product reviews, ratings and in some cases photos and videos. Customer reviews are emerging as a prime place for online shoppers to visit. The study also shows that the full view of generation Ys is meant to help create personalized customer experiences and improve customer relations. It is found that these activities generate a considerable amount of data that needs to be analyzed. This is to ensure the management can conduct better marketing campaigns such as product

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design and service offerings. By analyzing the information in social media, it can be used as a basis for marketing advertising strategies. Based on the study by Jayanti (2010), owning to customers untainted, unfiltered and unbiased nature online consumer conversations have the potential to help marketers discover the right questions for conducting market research and to understand emerging issues, follow brand sentiments, benchmark companies against major competitors, detect damaging issues or rumors, spur product development, gather product suggestions, and discover alternate uses and enhancements volunteered by consumers. This analysis can provide companies with a holistic view of consumer opinions and the important role they play throughout the purchase funnel and in overall brand health.

Generally the study also shows that generation Y agreed that social media improves customers service. The study by Bernoff and Schadler (2010) stated that one angry tweet can torpedo a brand, but one tweet can correct a problem. Companies are afraid of the negative comments posted by social network members, but also because they see an opportunity to involve customers proactive to reduce problems by improved customers service (Baker 2010). According to Ogneva (2010), companies can improve customers' loyalty, make their own customers service people happier, and get more respect from customers. The findings of this research indicated that consumers social media is a platform for business network. Overall the respondents perceived the importance of good relationships between sellers and buyers. Respondents agreed that social networking site enables a new method of communication between different people. This is in line with the study by Bughin and Chui (2010), where social networking can be done by business either in public or in private social networks. They perceived that business network that is built on social relationships and can exist offline or online. Valentine (2010) elaborated that 57 percent of U.S. companies implemented enterprise social media for business purposes. This can fundamentally alter how businesses interact with employees, customers and partners. Commercial activities related to social networks are on the rise. There is an increasing the number of people and companies engaged in business-oriented social networking, which refers to business activities, especially marketing and operations. Thus, business opportunities are created through social networks of business people.

Social media could be the next alternative business model for companies that allow them to track and trace users and to process their data. Today, social media are able to reach their members and even non members. This is due to the extensive web coverage where, social media has a potential connection with all web users.

V. Limitation of the Study

Some of the limitations of this study include the respondents' self-report approach used in the survey. Self-report may result in the respondents providing socially acceptable responses rather than their actual views. Besides this, the research was confined to a limited number of respondents from institutions of higher learning in the Klang Valley as well as restricted this district only due to convenience of accessibility for data collection to the exclusion of other institutions in other districts. Greater geographical coverage would allow richer data, and generalization on findings can be done more accurately.

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