Intention to use Social Media Tools Among Business-To-Consumer (B2C) Practitioners in Klang Valley, Malaysia: Insight from TPB

by
Jamil Bojei* & Mimi Liana Abu

Universiti Putra Malaysia
Faculty of Economics and Management
43400 UPM Serdang, Selangor, MALAYSIA

ABSTRACT
Social media tools have become ubiquitous and crucial not only to the customers but also the industry players. The intention to employ social media tools among practitioners, particularly in the Malaysian retail sector is doubtful as many businesses still opt to use costly traditional marketing. This study highlights different factors suggested by the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) which probably lead to the intention of using social media among businesses, at least in the Malaysian retail sector. A total of 200 practitioners is selected using convenience sampling. Results of a Pearson correlation analysis support the hypothesised associations of all variables, but behavioural adoption and self-efficacy are found to have the strongest association towards an intention to use social media tools. Several implications for social media research and business-to-consumer (B2C) retail practices are discussed.

Key Words: social media tools, intention to use, theory of planned behaviour, business-to-consumer

Corresponding author:
jamil@upm.edu.my
1. INTRODUCTION

Rose is worried. The recent sales of her company have terribly decreased, and there is a pool of customer complaints received in the company’s mailbox day by day. Something is wrong; she speaks to herself. Suddenly, she reminisces about her best friend’s suggestion, John, to try a social media strategy. John said it had been increasingly used among businesses to build relationships, drive sales, and reduce costs. She quickly turns her laptop on and searches for the keywords “social media marketing”. In a matter of seconds, there are more than 700 million results found by the search engine.

What is social media? Rose’s investigation begins. Social media tools are emerging every day and have been used by numerous businesses across different industries. Through social media tools, content, opinions, perspectives, insights and media can be easily shared (Nair, 2011). The tools in social media not only change the way businesses reach and communicate with customers, but also how it works with suppliers, internal employees, and other important stakeholders.

Like other industries, social media has already changed the business-to-consumer (B2C) retail sector. One of the key aspects is the customers’ expectation of response times. Previously, when customers send letters, they expect to get a response within two weeks. However, as we have moved to a social media era, email, online chat message, tweet and so on are expected to be replied instantly. Moreover, most of the buying processes or at least information searching stage is already done before an actual transaction between a customer and salesperson.

With the increasing number of consumers purchasing online in the past few years (The Nielsen Global Survey of E-commerce, 2014), the importance of social media tools in the online retail sector is justified. A Nielsen Global Online Survey 2014 reported that online purchase intentions around the world have doubled since 2011 for many durable and entertainment-related products including e-books, event tickets, sporting goods and toys. According to the same survey, Malaysia ranked among the world’s most avid online shoppers with more than six in ten Malaysian consumers choosing to purchase online within the six months for a variety of products. This categorises Malaysia as one of the most potential e-commerce markets in Southeast Asia along with Singapore and Indonesia (The Star, 2015).

Despite the remarkable growth and optimistic outlook in Malaysian online shopping, few local companies are involved in the e-commerce market. Specifically, only 1% of the retail market is available online and about 70% of SMEs do not have a website. Some of the brands have a presence in online marketplaces but have no online store (a website with shopping cart and online payment facilities). Global e-commerce companies such as Amazon.com, eBay, and Alibaba.com have led the Malaysian e-commerce market for years (UBS Securities, 2014) while the local players such as the online retailer and marketplace Lazada.com.my and the newcomer 11Street.my are currently lagging behind.

The reasons for this issue have been assumed by many. According to a 2012 survey by the Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia, businesses especially SMEs had a poor online presence due to the poor bandwidth, high cost of online involvement and security concerns over e-payment. PayPal. As quoted by Nadaraj (2015), SMEs not leveraging on e-commerce today are probably unsure about how to go about selling online...
Intention to use Social Media Tools Among Business-To-Consumer (B2C) Practitioners in Klang Valley, Malaysia: Insight from TPB

While many factors can be relevant, this study aims to provide a baseline understanding of practitioners’ intention towards social media tools. It examines different factors suggested by the literature and investigates their associations with the intention of using social media tools. The following section presents the review of underlying studies that contribute to the development of the research model and hypotheses. It continues with the research methodology before the findings and implications are presented.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Background and Hypotheses Development

The theory of planned behaviour (TPB), extended from the theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Fishbein & Azjen, 1975), is one of the underlying theories used as the guiding framework for developing the research model. In many studies, the intention is associated with one’s behavioural intention, and it is used to explain human behaviour in general. According to the TPB (Azjen, 1991), the intention is the most influential predictor of behaviour. In turn, intention can be best predicted by the attitude towards the behaviour, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control.

Attitude towards the behaviour is an individual’s overall evaluation of the behaviour. It refers to the extent to which a person has a positive or a negative evaluation of a particular behaviour. Subjective norm, on the other hand, refers to an individual’s perception of the opinions of others on whether or not he or she should perform a particular behaviour while perceived behavioural control refers to an individual’s perception of the presence or absence of the requisite resources or opportunities necessary for performing a behaviour (Azjen, 1991).

Evidence to support the significant relationship of attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control towards an intention to use has been documented by many studies including from the perspective of IT adoption and usage. The attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control were found to be significant determinants of intention to use electronic brokerage services (Bhattacherjee, 2000), intention to use social networking sites (Baker & White, 2010), and intention to use the e-file service (Hsu & Chiu, 2004) among others.

Azjen (2002) recommended that the measure of perceived behavioural control should contain self-efficacy. Although self-efficacy and perceived behavioural control is almost synonymous, the meaning of self-efficacy, at a general level, differs greatly from perceived behavioural control (Azjen, 2002). Perceived behavioural control is typically accessed by an item such as “It is easy for me to do x-y” while self-efficacy is more accurately related to one’s ability to perform a particular behaviour (Bandura, 1997). In fact, Azjen (1991) noted that the TPB can be extended if other variables are found to contribute to the prediction of behaviour.

Other than self-efficacy, behavioural adoption describes why people perform certain behaviours (Fishbein & Azjen, 1975). In the study on the use of privacy protection technologies and techniques, for example, behavioural adoption is expected to have a significant impact. Moreover, early adopters of a new technology provide information to others about the benefits from and correct use of technology (Kelsey, 2013). This explains why adding one more adopter across markets with the right tools and partners. Others may conclude that the local retailers are conservative in employing e-commerce.
in a network increases the likelihood of adoption by others (Bandiera & Rasul, 2006). With that, the association between adoption and behavioural intention to use social media tools deserves further research.

Ajzen’s extended TPB is appropriate for this study since it aims to explain the significance of factors and their relationship with volitional behaviour such as intention to use social media tools. On top of that, the theory has been successfully tested in many different studies in the last two decades (Ajzen, 2011) and proven in both social science and information technology (Nchise, 2012). Although both the consumers’ and business’ perspectives have been successfully covered (Truong, 2009), the theory is mostly used in consumer studies. As the consumers’ view of social media has predominantly examined, a diverse perspective from the business practitioners is crucial. The proposed research model is presented in Figure 1.

The foregoing leads to the following hypotheses:

H-1: Attitude towards behaviour is significantly and positively correlated with intention to use social media tools.

H-2: Subjective norm is significantly and positively correlated with intention to use social media tools.

H-3: Perceived behavioural control is significantly and positively correlated with intention to use social media tools.

H-4: Self-efficacy is significantly and positively correlated with intention to use social media tools.

H-5: Behavioural adoption is significantly and positively correlated with intention to use social media tools.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Instrument

Table 1 lists the instruments for the research constructs. The measures for the constructs were adapted from several studies including Cameron (2010), Eyrich et al. (2008), and Hsu and Chiu (2001). A 6-point Likert scale was used with anchors ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6). As depicted in Table 1, all measures are found to be reliable with the values of Cronbach’s alpha exceed the recommended threshold of 0.8 (Field, 2009).
3.2 Sample

A total of 200 business practitioners in Klang Valley was selected through convenience sampling. Using this technique means members of the population who are conveniently available to participate in the study are chosen, as there is no information about the specific population of social media tools practitioners can be accessed. The size of the sample is considered adequate, at least in the range of between 283 (Eyrich et al., 2008) and 409 (Curtis et al., 2010) as previously used by various studies in relevant contexts. The sample consists of B2C-practitioners from different sectors with more than 50% of the respondents involved in home appliances and electronics as well as the food and beverage sector. Table 2 summarises the demographic profile of respondents.
4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to test the hypotheses, whereby the strength and direction of the association between two metric variables were examined. The values of correlation coefficient range from -1 to +1. A value of +1 shows that the variables are perfectly linear related by an increasing relationship, while a value of -1 indicates that the variables are perfectly linear related with a decreasing relationship. It is considered a strong correlation if the correlation coefficient is greater than 0.8 and a weak correlation if the correlation coefficient is less than 0.5.

Table 3 Results of Correlation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H-1: Attitude towards social media tools → Intention to use social media</td>
<td>.803*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-2: Subjective norm → Intention to use social media</td>
<td>.643*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-3: Perceived behavioural control → Intention to use social media</td>
<td>.809*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-4: Self-efficacy → Intention to use social media</td>
<td>.854*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-5: Behavioural adoption → Intention to use social media</td>
<td>.862*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
As depicted in Table 3, a strong and positive relationship occurs between attitude towards social media tools and intention to use it, as the value of r reached at 0.803 (H-1). The result also indicates that the p-value is smaller than 0.05. Therefore there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the true population correlation coefficient is not equal to zero. That is, a practitioner’s intention to use social media relates significantly to their attitude towards social media itself.

The association between perceived behavioural control and intention to use social media tools is examined through H-3. According to the result, the p-value is 0.0001, less than the recommended alpha of 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis of no relationship between perceived behavioural control and intention to use social media tools is rejected. This, along with the positive and high r of 0.809, indicates that the better the practitioners perceive of behaviour (perception) about social media, the higher their intention of using it.

As for H-4, r is equal to 0.854 and the value is close to 1.0. This means that practitioners’ self-efficacy towards the tools in social media is highly associated with their intention to use social media marketing. Furthermore, it has been found that both self-efficacy and intention to use social media related to each other positively and significantly.

Additionally, the study found a positive and strong relationship between behavioural adoption and intention to use social media among practitioners (r=0.862). Besides that, the enhancement of their behavioural adoption will significantly increase the intention to use social media, thereby accepting the fifth hypothesis (H-5).

Unlike other relationships, a moderate association exists between subjective norm and intention to use social media with r value of 0.643 (H-2). The p-value is significant at the level of 0.05, indicating a significant relationship between subjective norm and intention to use social media. Thus, there is enough evidence to support a hypothesised positive and significant relationship between practitioners’ subjective norm and their intention to employ social media tools.

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS
Intention to employ social media tools among business practitioners is influenced by many factors. The aspects that have been discussed in this study are those adapted from the TPB. By adapting the theory, this study found that behavioural adoption plays the most crucial role in the implementation of social media. The finding confirms a series of business studies which have explored and developed conceptual models for the adoption of the internet (Jones, Hecker & Holland, 2003), e-commerce (Simpson & Docherty, 2004), and e-business (Fillis, Johannson & Wagner, 2004).

As mentioned in previous studies (e.g. Jones, Hecker & Holland, 2003; Simpson & Docherty, 2004; Fillis, Johannson & Wagner, 2004), adoption of new technology was strongly influenced by the perception of the benefits of usage, or the ability to envision the usefulness of a new medium. Although in the situation where the call for social media was communicated through other businesses’ success stories, some practitioners still hesitate to use social media in their business as they feel that they may or may not have the same market orientation, or even be in the same industry (Ryan, 2012). This led to the other substantial result discovered in this study called self-efficacy.
Self-efficacy is the belief in one’s own ability to complete tasks and reach goals. Similar to behavioural adoption, it is found to have a high correlation with intention to employ social media. This correlation is comparable to the significant correlations found by John (2013), Alenezi et al. (2010), and Yi and Hwang (2003) in similar studies. The high correlation between self-efficacy and intention explains why people with high self-efficacy might be able to perform a particular task better than those with lower self-efficacy.

Results from this study provide significant implications to the body of knowledge. For related businesses and practitioners, the findings demonstrate multiple factors in which intention to use social media tools may associate. The study highlights the strong association of attitude, self-efficacy, perceived behavioural control and behavioural adoption towards the intention to use social media. There are many other factors that practitioners need to consider to employ a social media strategy, but the importance of these associations is worth considering.

This study draws attention to the connection that behavioural adoption has with the intention of using social media tools. It provides interesting implications for marketers, especially in the retail industry as it seems that if managers were equipped with basic knowledge, insights and information regarding how to begin and the benefits others’ are seeing, there is a high likelihood of increased social media application among them. Thus, we urge B2C-practitioners to be adaptive and proactive in embracing the appropriate tools of social media as a new platform for marketing by providing training, workshops, and relevant internet marketing seminars so that the prospect of social media is understood.

This study also contributes to the literature on social media marketing that has predominantly focused on the consumer perspective. It incorporates different elements suggested by the TPB that most probably lead to the intention of using social media tools among businesses, at least in the retail sector. While the TPB proved to be a good framework to guide research in investigating intention of using social media, this study highlights significant contributions of self-efficacy and behavioural adoption on its relationship with social media’s intention. The addition of these factors is a contribution to the existing behavioural intention literature as the pioneer of the theory, Ajzen (1991) had also suggested to include a number of factors that can influence the relationship between intention and behaviour.

6. CONCLUSION
The most important goal of this study is to support the assumption that self-efficacy and behavioural adoption, apart from the classic factors of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control, have statistical associations with the intention to use social media. While the strong correlation found in the study provides an interesting conclusion for both research and practice, the generalisation to other future studies need to be approached with caution as the research model is limited to the B2C retail sector. Additionally, it is crucial to take note that the relationships examined in this study are linear as the Pearson correlation would be unable to explain a non-linear relationship.

Back at Rose’s office, she feels better. Now, she has an idea of social media and how it can be potentially used to solve her company’s problems. She learnt about the barriers that may prevent the practitioners from having a successful social media strategy. No wonder people said that the biggest reasons for poor online presence in the Malaysian retail sector are ignorance of the potential opportunity and how to go about it. It is never too late, she thinks.
REFERENCES


Kelsey, J.B. (2013). *Constraints on the adoption of agricultural technologies in developing Countries*, Literature review, Agricultural Technology Adoption Initiative, J-PAL (MIT) and CEGA (UC Berkeley).


The Nielsen Global Survey of E-commerce (2014). Malaysians rank among the world’s most avid online shoppers, Nielsen Press Room.


AIM & SCOPE

The Malaysian Management Review (MMR) is an academically-refereed professional journal of the Malaysian Institute of Management (MIM). The aim of the MMR is to advance knowledge and practices in key areas of management and leadership. As such, the MMR presents both theoretical and practical knowledge useful to practitioners, researchers, and academicians.

The MMR welcomes two categories of manuscripts: articles of management interest that have direct practical implications and value for practitioners, and academic articles which may take the form of research papers, literature reviews or their equivalents. Authors are welcome to submit original manuscripts of between 5,000 and 9,000 words on topics in the following areas:

- Accounting and finance (including Islamic finance)
- Business ethics
- Business sustainability
- Cross-cultural management
- Entrepreneurship
- E-commerce management
- Healthcare management
- Human resource management
- International business management
- Knowledge management
- Leadership and succession planning
- Management cases
- Marketing management
- Operations and quality management
- Organizational behavior
- Performance management
- Public sector management
- Strategic management
- Supply-chain management
- Technology and innovation
MANUSCRIPT PREPARATION

Text within the body of the manuscript should be typed, double-spaced, in 12pt Times Roman/Times New Roman font, with headings, and no more than two levels of subheadings.

Authors should write in clear and concise English, following the latest version of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, with exceptions as follows: the MMR advocates British spelling and an American Psychological Association referencing format (see below). For equations, the MMR prefers the use of Roman letters to Greek letters wherever possible (a instead of \( \alpha \) and \( b \) instead of \( \beta \), etc.).

Numbers one to nine should be spelled out, while two-digit numbers may be in Arabic numerals (10, 839, etc.). Avoid beginning a sentence with Arabic numerals.

The MMR discourages the use of personal pronouns in academic manuscripts. However, manuscripts containing articles of management interest may employ personal pronouns and language devices such as metaphors, figures of speech, et cetera to a conservative extent at appropriate instances.

All manuscripts must contain the following information:

- A title page with the title of the manuscript and name(s) of author(s), affiliation(s), mailing address(es), and e-mail address(es). Correspondence will be directed only to the corresponding author.

- An abstract of 100-150 words that outlines the purpose, scope and conclusions of the manuscript, and that provides two to five selected keywords.

- A main body of text that should begin on a new page headed by the full article title. Limitations of the study MUST be presented as part of the discussion or conclusion.

- A list of references that should clearly distinguish between References (references that were cited within the body text), and Bibliography (references that were not directly cited in the body text). Every citation in the text must have a detailed reference in the Reference section. Bibliographic information will not be published in the MMR.

- Figures and tables should be titled and numbered, each printed on a separate sheet with the preferred location stated clearly within the body text (e.g., Insert Table 2 here).

- Brief biography of all the authors should be provided. Each author may use a maximum of 75 words to prepare his/her biographical note.

Please note: Manuscripts that do not fit MMR’s aim, or that are in major violation of the preparation guidelines (e.g., they are single-spaced, they use footnotes rather than the indicated referencing format, or they greatly exceed the maximum length), will be returned to authors without review.

REFERENCING FORMAT

References should be listed at the end of the text and arranged in alphabetical order by the surnames of the authors.

The use of superscripted references is NOT acceptable. For example, “There are two major sources of government funding””. Within the text, citation should be made in the following
way: “Graham (2000) has written an interesting article on tax benefits”. OR, “Ethnic entrepreneurship has given rebirth of American enterprise sector (Butler and Greene, 1997)”.

Only references cited in the text should be listed in the References.

Some examples of Reference formats are provided below:


**MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION CHECKLIST**

- Submitted manuscripts should not be under concurrent consideration by another journal. However, revision or re-publication of a manuscript that has been disseminated during conferences or under equivalent circumstances may be considered.

- All manuscripts must be in Microsoft Word format, and submitted via e-mail to mmr@mim.org.my.

- Authors must affirm the originality of their work and indemnify MIM on the use of visuals, photographs and other related materials contained in their submission. A Declaration Form for this purpose can be found at the end of this document. The form must be completed, signed, and returned via fax to the Editor-in-Chief at +603-7960-0760, or mail to the Malaysian Institute of Management at the following address:

  *Malaysian Management Review, Malaysian Institute of Management, Unit T1-L11, Level 11, Tower 1, Jaya 33, No 3 Jalan Semangat Seksyen 13, 46200 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia. mmr@mim.org.my*

- Manuscripts must be proofread by language experts prior to submission.
MANUSCRIPT REVIEW & ACCEPTANCE

• Submissions will be acknowledged via e-mail upon receipt.

• MMR strives to respond to all authors with an editorial decision within three (3) months of the receipt of the manuscript.

• The acceptance of manuscripts is at the sole discretion of the MMR Editorial Committee.

• Since the publication of the journal is on a bi-annual basis, submitted manuscripts will not necessarily be immediately published upon acceptance by MIM.

• Unselected manuscripts may be revived when a suitable theme occurs. In such cases, authors will be contacted to update their manuscripts prior to publication.

• For accepted manuscripts, authors will be advised via e-mail if their manuscript requires revision.

• Revised manuscripts will be reviewed for a final decision to accept or reject.

• All accepted manuscripts are subject to editorial changes. The author is solely responsible for all statements made in the manuscript, including those resulting from editorial changes.

OTHER POINTS OF IMPORTANCE

• MIM does not approve or disapprove any data, facts, views or conclusions contained in manuscripts submitted by authors.

• MIM has the discretion to reject and/or change the publication theme and timeline, and is not in the position to guarantee prior endorsement of the content and publication date.

• MIM reserves the right to change any of content in these Notes for Contributors without prior notice.

• These Notes for Contributors constitute the “Terms and Conditions” referred to in the Declaration Form at the end of this document.

COPYRIGHT

Upon the acceptance and publication of a manuscript, authors automatically transfer copyright of their manuscript to the publisher. This transfer of copyright enables the MIM to protect the copyrighted material for the authors, but do not relinquish their own proprietary rights. The copyright transfer grants the MIM exclusive rights to republish or reprint the manuscript in any form or medium, as well as the right to grant or refuse permission to third parties to republish all or parts of the manuscript.