




Scroll, Click, Buy: The Impact of Social Media Attributes on Purchase Intentions among Young Adults

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Abstract

Online review sites and social media platforms have become crucial sources of information for consumers, greatly influencing their purchasing behavior and decision-making, especially in the food and beverage industry. However, not many studies have been carried out to understand how social media influences customers' purchase intentions at fast-food

restaurants. This paper examines the growing influence of social media attributes on purchase intentions, with a focus on the Malaysian context. Previous studies highlight the increasing importance of social media platforms as marketing tools and their impact on customers' purchase intentions. The research explores the relationship between habit and informativeness and their influence on purchase intentions among young adults in fast-food restaurants. A purposive sampling method was utilized to gather data from 142 fast-food customers through a cross-sectional online survey. The research hypotheses were analyzed using the partial least square structural equation modeling. Key findings found that habit and informativeness have a significant positive impact on customers' intentions to purchase at fast-food restaurants. The study contributes to the existing literature by highlighting the growing influence of social media on consumer behavior in the context of fast-food restaurants. It adds to our understanding of how social media platforms serve as effective marketing tools, particularly among young adults, and how they can influence purchase intentions. By understanding the interplay of habit, informativeness, and purchase intentions, businesses can develop more effective marketing strategies and foster stronger relationships with their customers.

Keywords: Habit, Informativeness, Purchase Intention, Social Media, Young Adult.

Introduction

Social media is playing an increasingly important role in various aspects of modern life, including marketing and promotional activities in businesses (Jeswani, 2023). With the proliferation of shops targeting young adults on social networking sites, the significance of social media as a marketing platform has efficiently fostered communications between customers and marketers, becoming crucial to their overall marketing strategy (Hafez, 2021). Furthermore, the expanding capabilities of mobile devices have brought about significant commercial potential. Presently, approximately 70% of consumers make purchases based on online advertising, indicating a growing trust and acceptance of mobile advertising. As a result, businesses are allocating a higher proportion of their budget to mobile advertising each year (Chen et al., 2021).

The retail industry has faced significant and enduring challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Akram et al., 2021). To thrive in this new environment, businesses must demonstrate resilience (Eger et al., 2021). The pandemic has underscored the importance of information technology and digital transformation, leading to an accelerated shift in consumer purchasing behavior towards platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Amazon, and Pinterest (Veldhoven & Vanthienen, 2022). Previously, consumers relied on shopping malls and physical stores, but because of COVID-19, they have reduced their visits to retailers and increasingly turned to social commerce platforms (Pillai et al., 2022). These platforms enable direct communication between buyers and suppliers, fostering the development of more personalized and direct relationships (Uzir et al., 2023).

As of January 2020, social media usage worldwide stood at 49% (Dixon, 2023). Monthly, around 45% of global internet users utilize social networks to gather information about products or services they are considering purchasing. However, this percentage is even higher among young adults. Generation Z internet users show a greater preference for conducting brand research on social networks rather than search engines, and it is predicted that younger Millennials will also adopt this behavior. According to Kemp (2021), 53% of adults between the ages of 16 and 24 rely primarily on social media for brand research instead of using search engines. These findings highlight the significant influence of social media on the choices, shopping intentions, and purchasing behaviors of young adults.

The consumption of fast food has become a global phenomenon, and this trend is expected to gain further momentum in the future. Malaysia is no exception to this trend, as more and more Malaysians are opting to eat out due to factors such as urbanization, evolving lifestyles, increasing household income, and the growing number of working mothers. As a result, people are dedicating less time to cooking meals at home and instead, are relying on fast-food restaurants, which offer quick service, convenience, and affordable prices (Mokhtar et al., 2020). Additionally, the captivating marketing techniques employed by fast food companies have a significant influence on the eating habits of young adults. These corporations are utilizing advanced technology as a key component of their marketing strategies to meet the demands of their customers.

The food and beverage industry, along with its consumers, is influenced by the Internet, social media, and mobile applications, both positively and negatively. Consumers perceive that marketers place great importance on the quality and quantity of advertising to attract customers to the food and beverage sector (Kumar et al., 2020). Online review sites and social media platforms have become crucial sources of information for consumers, greatly influencing their purchasing behavior and decision-making (García-León & Teichert, 2024). Besides, Lee et al. (2021) found that the engagement of Instagram users with food content plays a significant role in driving increased spending power among the young adult demographic. Anecdotal evidence shows that the purchasing intentions of young adults in the food and beverage industry are heavily influenced by how social media features are utilized in food-related advertising (Matos et al., 2023). However, there is a lack of research specifically focusing on young adults, despite indications that they may be particularly susceptible to food marketing (Molenaar et al., 2021).

Therefore, this study aims to explore the relationship between habit and informativeness in the Malaysian restaurant sector and its impact on young adults' purchase intentions in fast-food restaurants. It is particularly important to conduct this research in the Malaysian context to understand the influence of social media on local consumers and their restaurant preferences. By combining habit and informativeness, this article aims to contribute significantly to the existing literature on social media marketing by quantifying their effects on customer purchase intentions in Malaysia's fast-food industry. The study includes a

literature review with proposed hypotheses, followed by the research methodology, data analysis, and discussion of results. The implications of the study will be discussed, along with its limitations and recommendations for future research.

Literature Review

Social Media

Due to the development of the Marketing 5.0 concept, Savytska et al. (2023) stated that mobile devices and the Internet, available at any location, will enable contact and connection with customers at any time. Social media and platforms are also becoming increasingly significant. In addition, Chen and Lin (2019) stated that social media marketing aims to affect how consumers make decisions through advertising and communication. In their research, Aichner et al. (2021) referred to "social media" as "broad online platforms that allow people to network, message, and create (such as posting, tweeting, blogging), tag, exchange, evaluate (including liking, commenting, voting, rating), and share content."

The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission reported that there are 19.2 million Internet users in Malaysia, and 15.6 million are regular Facebook users (Kumar et al., 2020). Social media has become a part of the lives of almost 64% of the people in the United States. Short video platform apps like TikTok were downloaded more than 2 billion times worldwide by 2020 (Sharabati et al., 2020). In Indonesia, 22.2 million users used short-form video platforms like TikTok in the same year (Jingga et al., 2023). Other short-form video sites include Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts, and others.

The rapid evolution of communication technologies has given rise to numerous social media platforms in recent times. As a result, marketing professionals have embraced these platforms to effectively engage, communicate, and collaborate with their customers (Jamil et al., 2021). Moreover, Singh (2024) emphasized the increasing adoption of social media by marketers and advertisers for promotional activities to understand client needs and provide workable solutions for their marketing issues. Utilizing social media, companies can actively interact with their customers, fostering robust and meaningful relationships (Hanaysha, 2022). Consequently, the dynamic nature of these tools presents novel opportunities for connecting with people.

Since the advent of the Internet, information technology has spread to every business. Also, Maurya et al. (2022) assert that social media can significantly boost revenue for entrepreneurs in today's technology-driven world. By effectively utilizing social media platforms, businesses can influence customer decisions and encourage positive word-of-mouth marketing. The digitalization of media has led to new media products, such as mobile phones, which make it easy to reach customers and talk to them (Al-Solaiman et al., 2020). People are using social media more and more, so companies are focusing more and more on

connecting and talking to their customers through social media to learn more about their needs and wants (Bataineh, 2022).

Fast-food Restaurant

According to a report by Grand View Research, the fast-food industry is experiencing rapid global expansion, with the global fast-food market projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5.1% from 2020 to 2027 (Chun & Nyam-Ochir, 2020). Fast food has become a preferred choice for many due to its easy availability, appealing taste, and affordability. Fast food refers to food that can be prepared and served quickly (Lun et al., 2021). It typically includes items like hamburgers that require minimal cooking time or are already prepared and can be served promptly at restaurants. Surprisingly, even in areas with smaller populations, such as East Malaysia, fast food consumption is significant. The implementation of the Franchise Development Programme in 1992 led to the establishment of numerous fast-food chains and franchises in East Malaysia, contributing to the popularity of fast food in the region (Man et al., 2021).

Fast-food restaurants have become increasingly popular worldwide, and this trend is attributed to the busy lifestyles of people who require convenient and time-saving options for meals. As a result, the demand for fast-food restaurants is expected to continue rising due to their ease of access, time-saving nature, and diverse food choices (Hasbullah et al., 2021). To cater to customer preferences, restaurant chains globally, including those in Malaysia, strive to provide a wide range of products and services. The convenience factor has greatly contributed to the popularity of fast-food dining while shifting consumer trends have further boosted the growth of the fast-food industry (Chun & Nyam-Ochir, 2020). Young adults are among the increasing number of individuals worldwide who choose fast food restaurants as they fulfill their requirements for convenience, time efficiency, and affordability.

In Malaysia specifically, the fast-food industry has experienced significant growth over the years, reflecting the Malaysian population's affinity for fast food. Since 2000, numerous fast-food establishments have emerged, drawing inspiration from the fast-food culture prevalent in the West. For instance, KFC has emerged as Malaysia's most popular fast-food chain, with an impressive expansion in its number of outlets. In 2009, KFC had 295 locations in Malaysia, and by 2015, this number had doubled to 590 outlets, indicating the remarkable growth rate of the fast-food industry in the country (Lun et al., 2021). These statistics demonstrate the rapid pace at which the fast-food business has flourished in Malaysia.

Purchase Intention

The likelihood of a consumer purchasing a product or service is broadly described as purchase intention. Purchase intention is regarded as a consumer's behavioral tendency to buy a product or service and as a key indicator for purchasing decisions (Li et al., 2022). Understanding consumer purchasing intent is critical for brands because consumer actions frequently follow plans (Hassim et al., 2024). According to a study by Stuhldreier (2024), the results emphasize

the benefits of a high corporate response rate and the significance of demonstrating a strong customer orientation to increase social network users' intent to comment and observe others before making a purchase.

To increase customer purchase intention, businesses dedicate more time and resources to promoting and selling goods and services on social media platforms (Alalwan, 2018). Numerous studies show that social media technologies enable online retailers and everyday individuals to participate in social commerce (Rajendran & Wahab, 2022; Selem et al., 2023). There is a real connection between purchase intention and social media platforms, according to Yapp and Kataraiian (2022). As consumer purchase intentions are a predictor of actual purchasing behavior, it is critical to investigate how external influences influence consumer purchase intentions (Djafarova & BA, 2023).

Habit

Researchers have defined habits as the outcome of a process, the automatic nature of behavior, a tendency to act, or the association between cues and behavior (Fleetwood, 2021; Handel & Smith, 2024). The social media ad environment gives users a more conventional social media behavior. They rely heavily on social media platforms for daily marketing interactions (Le et al., 2022; Wu et al., 2023). Multiple studies have demonstrated that habit is among the most influential factors determining a user's perception, intent, and behavior toward social media marketing activities. According to Si et al. (2023), the user's habitual use of social media significantly improves the user's creative performance in this instance. As noted by Müller and Montag (2024), social media can favorably foster creativity.

Additionally, habit is something that people do frequently and routinely, sometimes without realizing it (Al-Halbusi et al., 2022). Consequently, according to a few previous research, consumers who frequently view social media advertisements are more likely to be influenced and have a favorable attitude toward them (Alalwan, 2018; Singh et al., 2022). Therefore, the study hypothesized as follows:

H1: There is a significant relationship between habit and purchase intention.

Informativeness

Djafarova and BA (2023) pointed out that an informative brand gives customers enough knowledge about its products and services to help them decide what to buy through various media channels. The quality of the information is a meaningful sign that significantly affects how interaction leads to a decision to buy. According to Hassim et al., (2023), one of the most important things concerning how people feel about social media ads is their insight. Besides, Selem et al. (2023) found that customers pay more attention to information that shows details about a product or service.

Alalwan (2018) asserts that social media ads affect customers because they can give them helpful information. A recent study by Sawmong (2022) revealed that customers are more

likely to buy something if the live-stream provider can quickly give them correct and complete information about its products or trends. It is supported by Mohammadiani et al. (2023), which informativeness brings product or service awareness by influencing consumer perceptions and behavioral intentions. For example, customers can compare Apple phones to other brands and share the usefulness of the information with their online groups if the ads for Apple phones include interactive information (Alalwan, 2018).

According to Cahyani and Artanti (2020), informativeness is the ability of an ad to tell the customer something about a product or service. This has led to customers interacting with businesses through social media platforms, which is called engagement (Mohammadiania et al., 2023). Moreover, Sreejesh et al. (2020) add that interactivity significantly impacts how information is sent, how it is valued in online groups, and how it gets to consumers who think about buying something. This means that the informativeness of interactivity makes people more likely to want to buy something and helps customers and marketers connect and share information (Selem et al., 2023). This discussion led to the following hypothesis as stated below:

H2: There is a significant relationship between informativeness and purchase intention.

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses Development

The conceptual framework (Figure 1) illustrates the relationship between habit and informativeness toward young adult's purchase intention in the fast-food restaurant business in Malaysia, which is impacted by social media. The factors (independent variables) shown in the model are habit and informativeness. Meanwhile, the dependent variable is customer purchase intention towards the fast-food restaurant.

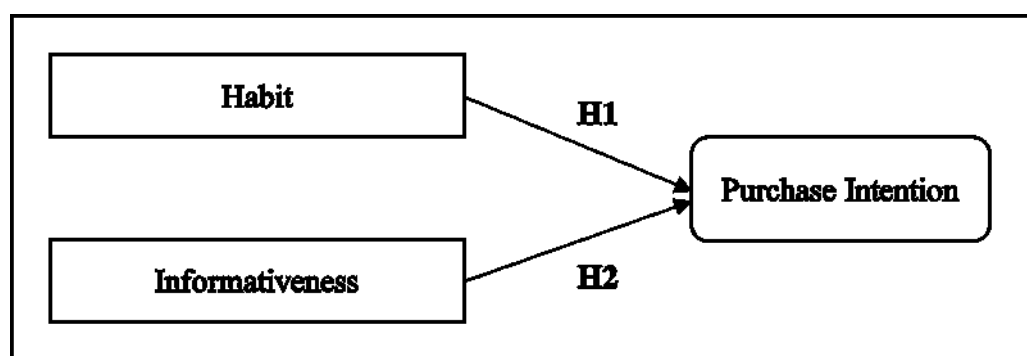


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Methodology

This study aims to investigate young adults' perceptions of social media attributes (habit and informativeness) influence on their purchase intention. This study is cross-sectional. The target population for this study is Malaysian young adults aged 19 to 24 years. The researchers opted for purposive sampling, which involves deliberately selecting participants who meet specific criteria relevant to the study. In this case, the researchers likely chose

participants who fall within the defined age range and have experience with social media. To determine the appropriate sample size, the researchers utilized GPower software, which is a statistical tool commonly used for power analysis in research. The software recommended a minimum sample size of 107 respondents and 142 usable questionnaires were collected.

The questionnaire consists of four sections. Section A examines the respondents' demographic profile, including gender, age, education level, marital status, and two screening questions to validate the respondents. Sections B and C assess social media attributes, focusing on habits (Venkatesh et al., 2012) and informativeness (Logan et al., 2012). Section D measures purchase intention (Duffett, 2015). All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaires were prepared in English, and a pilot study was executed to confirm the instruments' validity and reliability.

The eligibility of respondents was ensured to confirm their validity in this study. The survey link was repeatedly posted on various social media apps to encourage more responses, where the respondents were advised to spend 15 minutes completing the questionnaire. The respondents were asked to read the opening instructions, understand the study description, and carefully respond to the survey questions. 83.8% of the respondents were female and 16.2% were male. The vast majority were within the age group of 22-24 years old (71%), while only 19.0% of the respondents were within the age group of 18 and 21 years old. Most of the respondents had a good education level; 45.8% had a bachelor's degree, 33.1% had a diploma, 20.4% had graduated from high school and 0.7% had other qualifications. Most of the respondents were single (79.6%) while 20.4% were married.

The collected data were coded, cleaned, and analyzed using the SPSS version 26 software. The partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was selected to evaluate the study hypotheses via the SmartPLS 4 software. This technique has been used widely for the past decade by many researchers and its usage is increasing. PLS-SEM has made it easier for researchers to compare the relationship among multiple independent and dependent constructs (Hair et al., 2020). PLS-SEM also can deal with reflective and/or formative indicators (Sultan et al., 2020). In addition, with small to medium data sizes, PLS-SEM can model latent constructs in non-normal circumstances (Hair et al., 2020). Moreover, PLS-SEM has been widely used in many social sciences studies, including tourism and hospitality management (Seočanac, 2024).

Results

Descriptive Analysis

As mentioned, (Table 1), in the habit section, most of the respondents use social media as their habit ($M=4.00$, $SD=0.968$), and the respondents become natural of using social media ($M=3.44$, $SD=1.077$). The respondents also must use social media ($M=3.41$, $SD=0.896$) and

addicted to using social media ($M=3.01$, $SD=0.987$). In terms of informativeness, most respondents agreed that social media is a good source of up-to-date fast-food product information ($M=3.98$, $SD=0.927$) and believed that social media is a convenient source to obtain fast-food product information. Moreover, social media supplies relevant information about fast-food products ($M=3.69$, $SD=0.908$) and provides timely information ($M=3.59$, $SD=1.076$). Lastly, as for the purchase intention section, most of the respondents desire to buy fast-food products that are promoted on social media ($M=3.31$, $SD=1.051$) and planning to purchase products that are promoted on social media pages of fast-food brands ($M=3.09$, $SD=0.996$). Respondents also agreed that they will purchase products that are advertised on the social media pages of fast-food brands that they follow ($M=3.04$, $SD=1.049$).

Table 1. The Descriptive Analysis

Code	Items	Mean	Std Dev
Habit			
HABIT_1	The use of social media has become a habit for me	4.00	0.968
HABIT_2	I am addicted to using social media	3.01	0.987
HABIT_3	I must use social media	3.41	0.896
HABIT_4	Using social media has become natural to me	3.44	1.077
Informativeness			
INFO_1	Social media supplies relevant information about fast-food product	3.69	0.908
INFO_2	Social media is a good source of up-to-date fast-food product information.	3.98	0.927
INFO_3	Social media is a convenient source to obtain fast-food product information.	3.96	0.906
INFO_4	Social media provides timely information.	3.59	1.076
Purchase Intention			
PI_1	I desire to buy fast-food products that are promoted on social media.	3.31	1.051
PI_2	I will purchase products that are advertised on the social media pages of fast-food brands that I follow.	3.04	1.049
PI_3	I plan to purchase products that are promoted on the social media pages of fast-food brands that I follow.	3.09	0.996

Note(s): N = 142

Structural Equation Modelling

Measurement Model

The following section describes the measurement model assessment (Figure 2) by reporting the reliability, convergence validity, and discriminative validity of the reflective constructs.

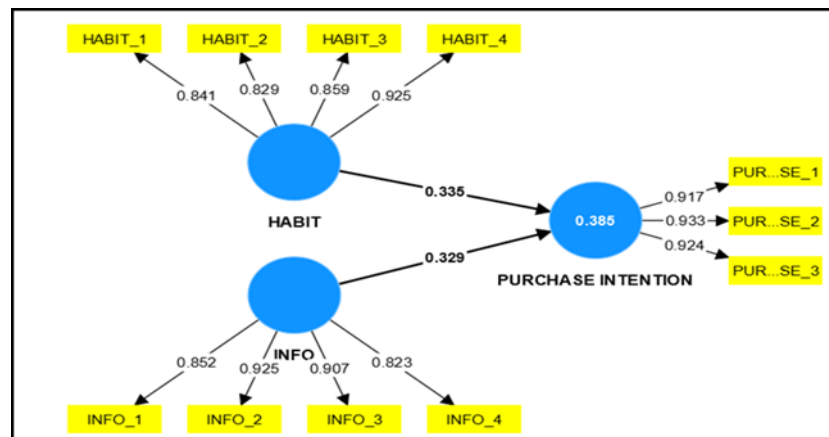


Figure 2. The Measurement Model

Reliability and Convergent Validity

Reliability and convergent validity were conducted through the model. Based on the analysis (Table 2), all the constructs achieved good internal reliability as the CR score exceeded 0.70 (Hair et al., 2017). The reliability analysis was deliberately performed to confirm the internal consistency of the measured construct. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of the measurement model also exceeded 0.50 with the lowest score of 0.747 (Informativeness) and the highest counterpart of 0.855 (Purchase Intention). Conclusively, the convergent validity of the measurement model was achieved following Hair et al. (2017). The convergent validity of the constructs proved vital to ensuring that the hypothetically related constructs were linked.

Table 2. Reliability and Convergent Validity

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE
Habit	0.887	0.895	0.747
Info	0.900	0.904	0.770
Purchase Intention	0.916	0.919	0.855

Discriminant Validity

The HTMT analysis for discriminant validity purposes were summarized (Table 3). Following Hair et al. (2017), the HTMT analysis is an excellent discriminant validity test for the PLS-SEM reflective model. All the correlations scored below 0.85 and achieved construct discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 3. Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT)

Variables	Habit	Informativeness	Purchase Intention
Habit			
Informativeness	0.842		
Purchase Intention	0.636	0.635	

Structural Model

Path Coefficient

Several indicators were implemented to assess the statistical significance of the path coefficient (Figure 3). First, the significance level of 0.05 demonstrated a statistically significant path relationship. As the critical values for a significance level of 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$) are 1.96 in a two-tailed test and 1.645 in a one-tailed test, t-values exceeding 1.96 (two-tailed test) and 1.645 (one-tailed test) indicate a statistically significant relationship.

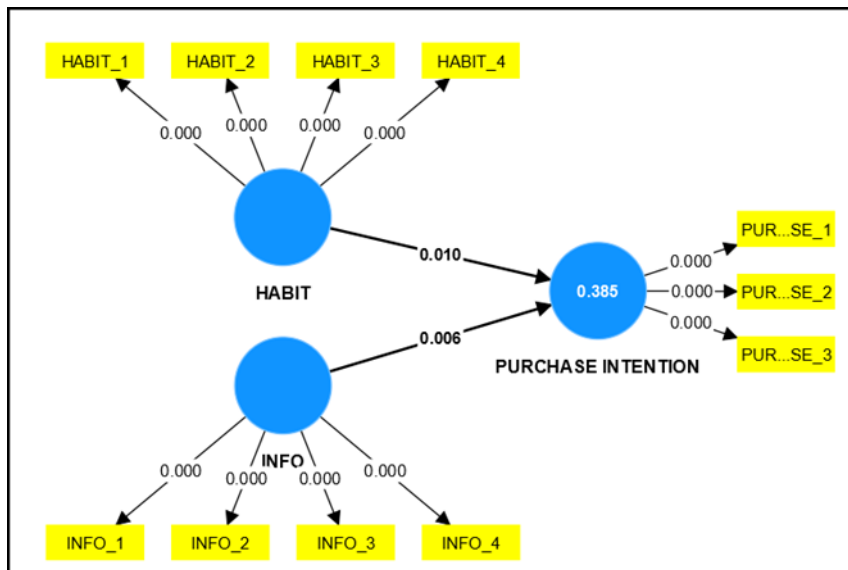


Figure 3. The Path Coefficient

Based on the analysis (Table 4), the habit was found to be statistically significant toward purchase intention ($B=0.335$, $p\text{-value} = 0.010$). When habit increased by 1 standard deviation, purchase intention increased by 0.335. Therefore, the result of the hypotheses testing was summarized (Table 5). The first hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between habit and purchase intention is supported. Other than that, the result for informativeness toward purchase intention showed a significant result ($B=0.329$, $p\text{-value}=0.006$), hence, the second hypothesis which is there is a significant relationship between informativeness toward purchase intention is supported. When informativeness increased by 1 standard deviation, purchase intention increased by 0.329.

Table 4. The Path Analysis

Path Analysis	Original (O)	STDEV	T statistic	P values
Habit > Purchase Intention	0.335	0.145	2.315	0.010
Informativeness > Purchase Intention	0.329	0.129	2.541	0.006

Table 5. Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Path Analysis	Result
Habit > Purchase Intention	Supported
Informativeness > Purchase Intention	Supported

Coefficient of Determinant (R²)

The R² explains how many variances could be justified by the research model (Hair et al., 2017). The R² value of purchase intention (Table 6) indicated that the model could justify only 37.1% of the variance while the remaining 62.9% was explained by other factors. Thus, the constructs of purchase intention could be categorized as a substantial level of predictive accuracy (Cohen, 1988).

Table 6. The Coefficient of Determination

Variables	R ² values
Purchase Intention	0.371

Note: 0.02 (weak); 0.13 (medium); 0.26 (substantial) (Cohen, 1988)

Effect Size (f²)

Essentially, f² assesses the relative impact of a predictor construct on the endogenous counterpart (Ramayah et al., 2018). The f² specifically assesses the strength of one exogenous construct contribution to explain the endogenous construct R². Based on the summary score (Table 7), habit (0.079) and informativeness (0.077) denoted a medium f² for purchase intention.

Table 7. The Coefficient of Determination

Variables	Purchase Intention
Habit	0.079
Informativeness	0.077

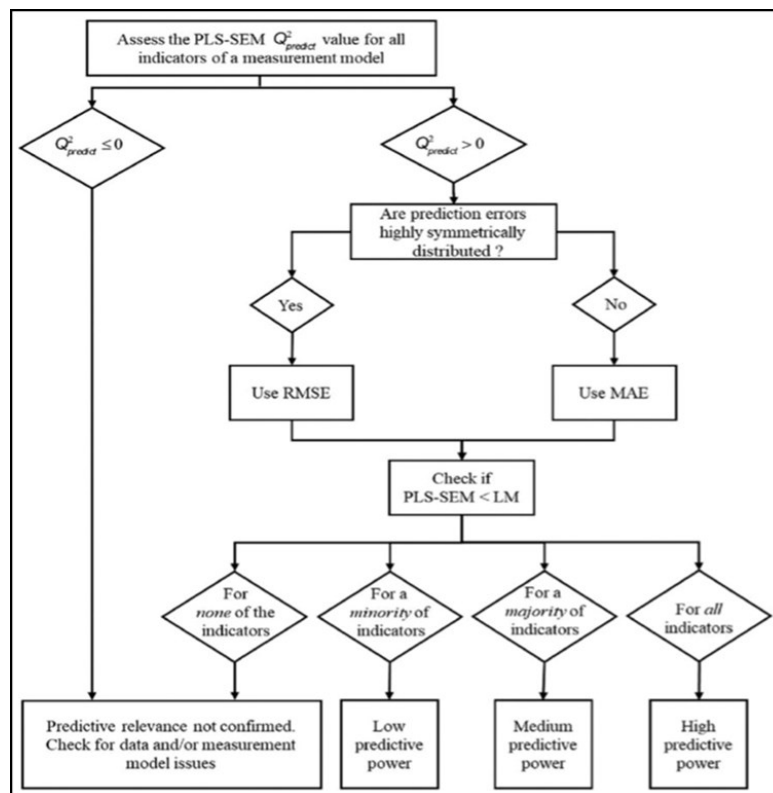
Predictive Relevance (Q²)

The Q² was conducted with a blindfolding procedure. The procedure is a resampling technique that systematically deletes and predicts every data point of the indicators in the endogenous construct within the reflective measurement model (Ramayah et al., 2018). The test deliberately compares the original values with pertinent ones to identify the endogenous construct in the model (Kamarudin et al., 2021; Ramayah et al., 2018). The fundamental rule of thumb for Q² assessment is that the value should exceed zero for predictive model relevance (Kamarudin et al., 2021).

The predictive power of Q² was evaluated by comparing the PLS-SEM and LM scores of relevant items following Shmueli et al. (2019) and Hair et al. (2017). The Q² exceeded zero (> 0) and was duly affirmed. A summary of the score is presented (Table 8). Most items (RMSE =1 out of 3; MAE = 2 out of 3) scored highest on LM compared to PLS-SEM. The RMSE score is primarily referred to following the high symmetrical distribution of prediction errors. Thus, the model (Figure 4) denoted the medium predictive power (Shmueli et al., 2019).

Table 8. The Predictive Relevance

Variables	Q ² Predict	PLS-SEM_RMSE	PLS-SEM_MAE	LM_RMSE	LM_MAE
Purchase Intention	0.337	0.830	0.631	0.869	0.638
	0.246	0.882	0.695	0.871	0.650
	0.288	0.814	0.678	0.850	0.652
Total item score on LM bigger than PLS= MAE 1/3 RMSE 2/3					

**Figure 4. The Model of Predictive Power**

Discussion

This paper examines how young adults' purchase intentions at fast-food restaurants are influenced by both the habitual use and informativeness of social media. The results show that the two independent variables have a significant relationship with purchase intention: habit and informativeness. Therefore, both hypotheses of the study, H1 and H2, were supported. This study also provides strong evidence supporting the finding that habits and informativeness influence young adults' preferences for buying fast food through social media.

The research showed that young adults' habits are one of the most important things affecting their buying decisions when using social media. According to the researcher, social media has become a habit, particularly among young individuals. According to Cohen's (1988) criteria, the results revealed a substantial positive linear association between habit and young adult purchase intention. This is consistent with the earlier study by Gardner et al.

(2024), which discovered that habit and intention are related to buying intention because habit influences the intention to purchase online. However, Alalwan (2018) and Amalia et al. (2020) disagree with this finding, stating that customers' habits do not play a significant role in their decision to buy products presented in social media ads, implying that habits do not influence customers' decisions to purchase products from social media.

In contrast, Xue et al. (2020) discovered that attitudes substantially impacted a person's likelihood and level of buying intention when purchasing fast food online. Furthermore, Yapp and Kataraiian (2022) discovered that habits considerably impacted people's intentions to make online purchases. Similarly, Singh et al. (2022) discovered a high association between habit and behavioral intention towards online shopping via social networking sites. According to Wu et al. (2023), customers with high levels of habit are more likely to repurchase from the same online business if they are equally satisfied with their online purchases. As a result, habit is a factor that will improve customer satisfaction with online transactions (Al-Halbusi et al., 2022). Thus, this indicates that social media usage has significantly influenced young adults' preferences and intentions to buy fast food online.

Similarly, young adults' plans to buy fast food are strongly linked to how informative social media sites are. The results of this study are consistent with those of previous researchers, who discovered that the informativeness of a social media page is one of the most important factors in how customers see the value of social media (Mohammadiani et al., 2023; Alhothali & Aljefree, 2023). Also, this study shows that most of the young people who participated in it agreed that social media gives them the most recent information daily because they believed online reviews were useful. Al-Halbusi et al. (2022) agree with this point of view and say that it happens because WOM is so important in marketing and e-commerce as it is hard to judge intangible goods before they are used. Hence, social media platforms could give more knowledge about the product to help users make better decisions based on their preferences, which in this case is about fast food.

Additionally, this means that information standards and the quality of useful information are essential when figuring out whether someone will buy something (Bushara et al., 2023). It is also important for marketers to share information about their goods and services with potential customers, build trust, and encourage customers to give them accurate information (Singh, 2024). This is because consumers will remember useful messages and will be more likely to buy goods advertised on social media. Social media is also always accessible, which makes advertising on social media more successful at reaching the intended target market (Singh et al., 2022). Since social media gives much information about goods and services, it should be seen as a place where young adults can get information that could affect their buying decisions. Zejnnullahu et al. (2024) anticipated that the Internet will continue to have a significant impact on the food business, especially in terms of product promotion.

Conclusion

Researchers and practitioners in the business sector have been paying attention gradually to how social media affects people's buying decisions. The main goal of this study is to find out how habits affect the likelihood that young people will go to fast-food restaurants. This study also examined the link between how knowledgeable young people felt about the fast-food business and how likely they were to buy it. So, based on the results of this study, we can say that habit and informativeness have a significant effect on the buying intention of young adults, which is the dependent variable. Thus, the owner of a fast-food business needs to have a social media page containing the food's information to attract young adults since social media is a big part of their daily lives.

Nevertheless, this study excellently explains the main things that could affect how customers think about and act towards social media usage; it has some flaws that should be considered in future studies. For example, the current study does not look at personality traits like image, being ready for technology, being creative with ads, caring about the community, and being concerned about privacy. Thus, it might be a good idea for future studies to pay attention to these things. In the same way, this study does not look at how social factors affect the results. Therefore, it would be good to test how these factors affect the results of future studies. Besides, the fact that the respondents were all young people, between 18 and 24 years old, made this study less reliable. Consider how this study might be more generalizable if the participants were of different ages. Hence, it is recommended that future researchers who want to discover how social media affects young adults' plans to buy include a wide range of target respondents from all age groups. This could help them get a lot of useful information during their study. Lastly, it is important to keep in mind that the study was done in the context of social commerce. This could lead to generalizations. Thus, future research could use this model in other industries and sectors to gain more insights into the effects of social media.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no potential conflict of interest regarding the publication of this work. In addition, the ethical issues including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and, or falsification, double publication and, or submission, and redundancy have been completely witnessed by the authors.

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