The Influence of Customer Satisfaction, Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty on Purchase Intention: A Study of Mcdonald's in Malaysia

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

ABSTRACT

Customer satisfaction is crucial to the success of any business. It has been studied in business and marketing since the 1970s. When customers are satisfied, brand loyalty is immediately involved. As a result, brand loyalty has received much attention in recent decades. McDonald's is the world's leading fast-service restaurant, with over 36,000 outlets worldwide and over 70 million customers served daily in more than 100 countries. Every month, McDonald's serves approximately 13.5 million customers in over 320 stores in Malaysia. The company's performance is strongly related to its high brand loyalty and customer satisfaction. This paper examines how customer satisfaction, brand trust and loyalty may influence McDonald's purchase intention in Malaysia. We applied SPSS to test hypotheses, and 150 McDonald's customers engaged in a Google form-based online survey. The findings reveal that customer satisfaction, brand trust and loyalty influence McDonald's customers purchasing intentions. Recommendations and implications were discussed.

Keywords: Customer Satisfaction, brand trust, Brand Loyalty, Purchase Intention, McDonald

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the dominant food consumption trend in developing-country metropolitan centres has been an increase in the number of customers who eat outside the home, with the fast-food business accounting for most of this expansion (Habib, Dardak, & Zakaria, 2011). A greater emphasis has been placed on quick meal options because of the busier consumer lifestyle and dual-working households with kids (Atkins & Bowler, 2016). As a result, the fast-food sector is expanding quickly both internationally and in Malaysia, especially in urban areas. In APRIL 1982, the first McDonald's restaurant in Malaysia opened on Jalan Bukit Bintang in Kuala Lumpur. Three hundred eighteen locations and more than 15,000 people will be part of McDonald's Malaysia by 2021 (Hong, 2022).

Due to a cultural mismatch, multinational fast-food outlets initially faced difficulties gaining the acceptance of Malaysian consumers. In Malaysia, the fast-food industry is currently adapting to local dietary preferences and is a growing phenomenon. In an Islamic country like Malaysia, where the majority of the population is Malay, halal certification is essential for a company to survive. Therefore, McDonald in Malaysia has taken an important step toward HALAL recognition. McDonald's Malaysia is the country's first Quick Service Restaurant to receive Halal certification from the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (JAKIM). This certification ensures that McDonald's adheres to the halal standards and regulations established by JAKIM and that customers can confidently purchase their products. Since then, McDonald's has offered healthier fast-food options to keep up with the trend. In order to dispel the misconception that fast food is a high-calorie affair, McDonald's has made the nutritional information available. It is actually feasible to choose a combination that has fewer than 500 calories. Major food industries, like fast food, are under pressure to raise food quality as people become more conscious of their health (Segmanta, 2021).

This paper will examine Malaysia's McDonald's customer satisfaction, brand trust, and brand loyalty concerning purchase intent. Consequently, this study will analyze previous research by providing a more in-depth investigation of customer satisfaction, brand trust, and brand loyalty, as well as revealing how these three factors influence the purchase intention of McDonald in Malaysia. In this context, understanding customers' purchase intentions facilitates the development of long-term, profitable customer relationships through management strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is "an assessment of the perceived mismatch between prior expectations and the actual performance of the product" (Tse and Wilton, 1988, Oliver 1999). A person's feelings of contentment or discontent are brought on by a contrast between a product's perceived performance or outcome and their expectations. Consumer satisfaction with its goods and services is the most crucial component contributing to a company's competitiveness and success (Hennig-Thurau and Klee, 1997). According to studies, good customer satisfaction is related to higher client lifetime value, customer retention, and brand reputation. This is in line with Ho, Teik, Tiffany, Loong, and Teh stated that the competitiveness and success of the company can be characterized by the level of customer satisfaction associated with the company's products and services (in Tang et al., 2022). Negative customer satisfaction scores are also important (Raouna, 2022). Customer satisfaction is significant in marketing because it may be used to anticipate customers' purchasing behaviour (Anderson, Fornell, & Lehmann, 1994, and McQuitty, Finn, & Wiley, 2000). Previous research has shown that when consumers are satisfied, brand relationships can be successful and long-lasting

(Eshghi, Haughton and Topi, 2007). Customer satisfaction and an organization's goal of maximizing profits are always correlative (Bowen & Chen, 2001). Therefore, it assists in forecasting corporate growth and earnings. Customers are the most important people, and ensuring their pleasure through better services is the ultimate goal to continue being competitive, save money in the future, and reduce costs. Client satisfaction is an operational indicator of how well your organization's product meets customer needs (Hill & Alexander, 2006: 2; Shankar, Smith, & Rangaswamy, 2003). Therefore, meeting their requirements is necessary before they are satisfied (Matzler, Strobl, Thurner, & Füller, 2015). Customers are satisfied when the organizationoperating procedures and systems reflect their expectations (Hill & Alexander, 2006).

It is a well-known truth that a company's services and prices significantly impact its consumers' satisfaction levels more than any other aspect (Turel & Serenko, 2006). The customer's involvement is crucial, since it raises the level of pleasure when the customer takes the product thoughtfully and takes the time to research it (Russell-Bennett, McColl-Kennedy & Coote, 2007). A business's bottom line can be impacted by customer satisfaction through product repurchases, new product purchases, positive word-of-mouth marketing, and customer willingness to pay more for a particular brand. Any company that cannot give its consumers the same level of effective and efficient service as its competitors risks losing market share, clients, and investment (Anderson et al., 2004).

H1: Customer satisfaction is positively related to purchase intention. H4: Customer satisfaction is positively related to brand loyalty.

Brand trust
Brand trust means the level of customer confidence in the company's product, services and capabilities (Feehily, 2020). Brand trust greatly impacts consumer brand loyalty (Le, Ngo, & Aureliano- Silva, 2021). According to research by Shin, Amenuvor, Basilisco and Owusu-Antwi, (2019) customers trust a brand when they have a sense of security and confidence in its ability to live up to their expectations. Long-lasting relationships with customers result when a brand is able to consistently live up to customer expectations (Shin et al., 2019). Customer brand loyalty is a result of their continued purchasing habits (Le, Ngo, & Aurelianno- Silva, 2021). Trust is crucial in the relationship between perceived service quality, website quality reputation, and intention to conduct an online transaction (Qalati et al., 2021). Brand trust is crucial as consumers may choose your brand's product or service over another business based on their trust in your brand. It demonstrates whether your branding regularly abides by its guiding ideals.

H2: Brand trust is positively related to purchase intentionH5: Brand Trust is positively related to brand loyalty

Brand loyalty
Brand loyalty is described as a customer's intentional or nonrandom response to a brand decision (Le, Ngo, & Aurelianno-Silva, 2021) or evaluation of how far the customer's relationships with the brands extend (Hansopaheluwakan, Oey, & Setiawan,2020). In order to be profitable, brand loyalty is essential for the following clear reasons: Most companies receive 65% of their revenue from repeat clients (Kopp, 2023). Customers devoted to a particular brand tend to be less responsive to price fluctuations since they are more sensitive to product quality and value (Shin et al., 2019). The expansion of a company's clientele depends on its loyal clients, who also significantly affect both buy intentions and earnings (Tabaku & Zerellari, 2015). One of the most sought-after

characteristics in a business strategy is loyalty, mainly when it boosts productivity. Brand loyalty favours consumers' purchasing intentions, as demonstrated by a study by Hameed and Kanwal (2018). The conceptual definition of brand loyalty is one of the most thorough and frequently used formulations (Jacoby & Chestnut,1978). Their explanation of brand loyalty stated that the biased behavioural response of some decision-making unit, exhibited over time,with respect to one or more alternative brands from a group of such brands, is a function of psychological decision-making and evaluative processes. Cunningham (1956)established three factors determining brand loyalty: the timing of individual purchases,customers lost and gained throughout certain time intervals, and market share (Smith).

H3: Brand loyalty is positively related to purchase intention

Purchase Intention
The term "consumer's purchasing intention" (Zhang, Zhou, & Liu, 2020) refers to a consumer's attitude toward a particular purchase behaviour as well as their desire to pay for the goods or services. In the business world, purchase intention has been regarded as one of the most crucial factors. Purchase intention also determines whether a product meets consumers' wants and expectations, allowing them to go deeper into their evaluations of items and services. When products and services meet customers' expectations, and vice versa, consumers will be more satisfied (Xiao, Yang, & Iqbal, 2018). The purchase intention is a complicated process connected to consumer behaviour, perceptions, and attitudes and serves as a useful indicator of the buying process (Mirabi, Akbariyeh, & Tahmasebifard, 2015). A consumer's purchasing intention is developed before making the ultimate purchase decision. Numerous elements influence the consumer's intentions while purchasing, and the decision is ultimately made based on the consumer's intentions in combination with critical external factors. Product packaging, such as plain or appealing packaging, will also affect consumers' purchasing intentions. Besides, buying intention is a variable that depends on various internal and external aspects like cost, perceived quality, and values (Dehghani & Tumer, 2015) assert that these crucial traits have impacted consumers' purchase intentions. Further, a study by Ali, Abbass, and Farid (2020) that involved 384 participants from Lebanon revealed that elements including trust, social commerce frameworks, and online behavioural advertising positively influence consumers' intentions to purchase. Furthermore, a study by Peña-García, Gil-Saura, Rodríguez-Orejuela, and Siqueira-Junior (2020) using a cross-cultural perspective to evaluate purchase intentions and online behaviour in Columbia and Spain reveals attitudes about e-commerce, perceived behavioural control (PBC), perceived utility, and compatibility positively influenced customers' online purchase intentions in both nations (Peña-García et al., 2020).

Figure 1. A total of five hypotheses were formulated based on the past literature review.
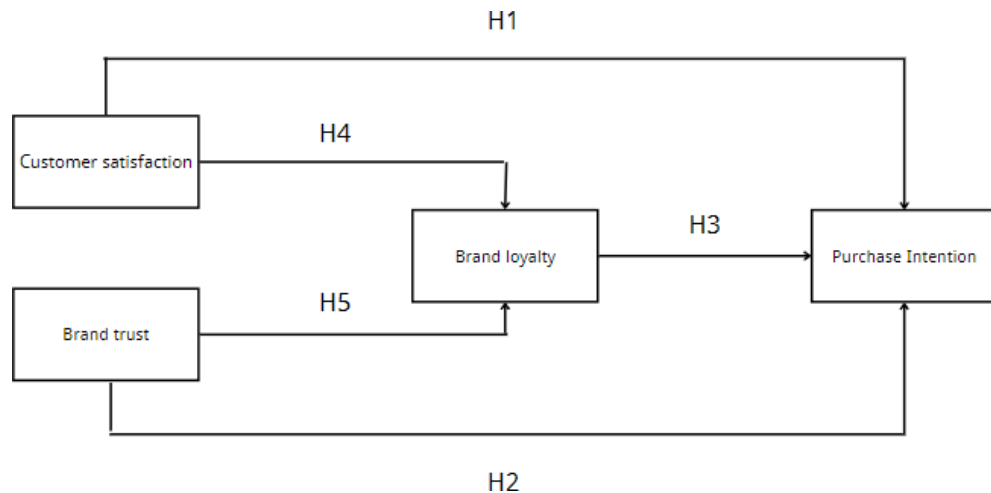
RESEARCH METHOD

Sample and Procedure
Primary and secondary data were employed in this study in different combinations to gather information for the investigation. A Google Form was used to conduct an online survey of Malaysian McDonald's customers in order to collect primary data. This survey examines how brand loyalty and customer satisfaction affect consumers' buying propensity. This survey's five-point Likert scale size distribution was started in 2022, with 1 signifying a strong disagreement, two a disagreement, three a neutral opinion, four an agreement, and five a firm agreement. Appendix 1 has a list of all measures. Using IBM SPSS Statistics 26, descriptive and multiple regression analyses were performed on the data. Additionally, this research used secondary data from journals, papers, and the internet.

Measures
The demographic respondents, customer satisfaction, brand trust, brand loyalty, and purchase intention are the four categories that make up this questionnaire. Demographic respondents. In order to determine the background of respondents, we used single-statement items, which included gender, age, ethnicity, occupation, monthly income, frequency of consuming fast food, and frequency of ordering McDonald's products.

Dependent variable: Purchase Intention. Four questions of five-point Likert scale are prepared in this section to measure how agree respondents are with those statements. A sample item included "I intend to order McDonald's for the next lunch."

Independent variables. We adapted a 10-item to assess e-word of mouth, brand trust, and brand loyalty effect the purchase intention. The items included "Satisfaction will influence my purchase decision (customer satisfaction)"; "I feel comfortable and safe when buying food at McDonald's (brand trust)"; and "McDonald's is my go-to fast food restaurant (brand loyalty)".

Frequencies Analysis
Frequency analysis was utilized in this study to understand the general profiles of respondents, which included the nine variables. The respondent's gender, age, ethnicity, occupation, monthly income, year of study, frequency of eating fast food, and frequency of eating McDonald's fast food are the nine variables. This data was computed using frequencies and percentages.

Reliability Analysis
We employ reliability analysis to assess the consistency and validity of the data. The

reliability test on the multi-item instrumentals used in this study was the first test done on the data. Cronbach's coefficient alpha is utilized in this research to determine reliability. The optimal reliability coefficient value is close to 1.0. Cronbach's alpha values of 0.7 or higher are considered reliable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). In the case of ability tests, the acceptable value of alpha in reliability analysis, according to Kline (1999), is 0.7. If the alpha value is 0.7 or greater, the items are homogeneous and measure the same concept. A number of 0.5 would be the lowest allowed threshold (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Correlational Analysis
Correlational analysis determines the strength and direction of the link between two variables. The correlation coefficient, commonly known as the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, calculates correlation.

Regression Analysis
This study uses regression analysis to test the hypothesis by creating a multiple regression. A predictive study that describes the link between one dependent variable and two or more independent variables is known as multiple regression.

RESULTS

Table 1. Summary of Respondent's Profile (N=150)

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	79	52.7
Female	71	47.3
Age		
Gen Z: Born: 1997-2012 (Age: 10-25)	102	68.0
Millennials: Born: 1981-1996 (Age: 26-41)	34	22.7
Gen X: Born: 1965-1980 (Age: 42-57)	12	8.0
Boomers: Born: 1946-1964 (Age: 58-76)	2	1.3
Ethnicity		
Malay	71	47.3
Chinese	72	48.0
Indian	7	4.7
Occupation		
Employed	37	24.7
Homemaker	7	4.7
Self-employed	11	7.3
Student	90	60.0
Unemployed	5	3.3

Monthly Income		
B40: RM4,850 and below	96	64.0
M40: RM4,851- RM10,970	48	32.0
T20: RM10,971 and above	6	4.0
Frequency of Eating Fast Food		
Everyday	4	2.7
Often (2-3 times per week)	19	12.7
Once a month	32	21.3
Once a week	24	16.0
Sometimes (2-3 times per month)	71	47.3
Frequency of Eating Mcdonald's Fast Food		
Everyday	2	1.3
Often (2-3 times per week)	14	9.3
Once a month	48	32.0
Once a week	15	10.0
Sometimes (2-3 times per month)	71	47.3

Summary of respondents' demography in this research was shown in table 1. There were 79 (52.7%) males and 71 (47.3%) females in the sample (N=150). The majority of respondents (68%) were from gen z, ages between 10-25 years old while 22.7% of the respondents were between 26-41 years old from the millennials category. Then, followed by gen x (8%), and boomers (1.3%). In terms of ethnicity, there were 72 of Chinese respondents (48%) while 71 respondents were Malay (47.3%), and finally with the fewest respondent coming from Indian with 6 respondent (4.7%). The findings reveal that most of the respondents were students (60%) followed up with employed (24.7%), and self-employed (7.3%). Afterwards followed by homemakers and unemployed, with their respective percentages 4.7% and 3.3%. Additionally, over 50% of responders as much as 96 from level B40 (64%), followed by 48 respondents were from M40 level (32%), and 6 respondents were from T20 level of income (4%). In terms of eating fast food frequency, 71 of the response were "sometimes (2-3 times per month)" (47.3%), 32 were "once a month" (21.3%), 24 were "once a week" (16%), 19 were "often (2-3 times per week)" (12.7%), and 4 were "everyday" (2.7%). Apart from that, in term of eating Mcdonald's fast food frequency, the survey findings show that 47.3% of the respondents purchase 2 to 3 times per month (sometimes), 32% purchase once a month, followed by 10% respondents purchase once a week, 9.3% respondents purchase 2 to 3 times per week (often), and only 1.3% respondents purchase every day. The number of purchases and repeated purchases could be another indication of their satisfaction towards Mcdonald's.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis, Cronbach's Coefficients Alpha and Zero Order Correlations All Study Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4
Customer Satisfaction	0.865			
Brand Trust	0.632**	0.739		
Brand Loyalty	0.368**	0.503**	0.809	
Purchase Intention	0.439**	0.574**	0.814**	0.812
No. of items	3	3	4	3
Mean	4.14	4.11	3.57	3.84
Standard Deviation	0.83	0.70	0.91	0.86

Note: N = 150; *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001 Diagonal entries in bold indicate Conbach's Coefficient Alpha

As we can see, brand trust, brand loyalty, and consumer satisfaction are all evaluated about purchasing intention. It's crucial to understand the relationship between those three elements as well as their strengths and limitations. Table 2 shows relationships between the research variables as well as descriptive statistics. According to Cronbach's coefficient alpha, a range between 0.739 to 0.865 showed sufficient dependability for all four variables.

Table 3. Summary of Regression Analysis

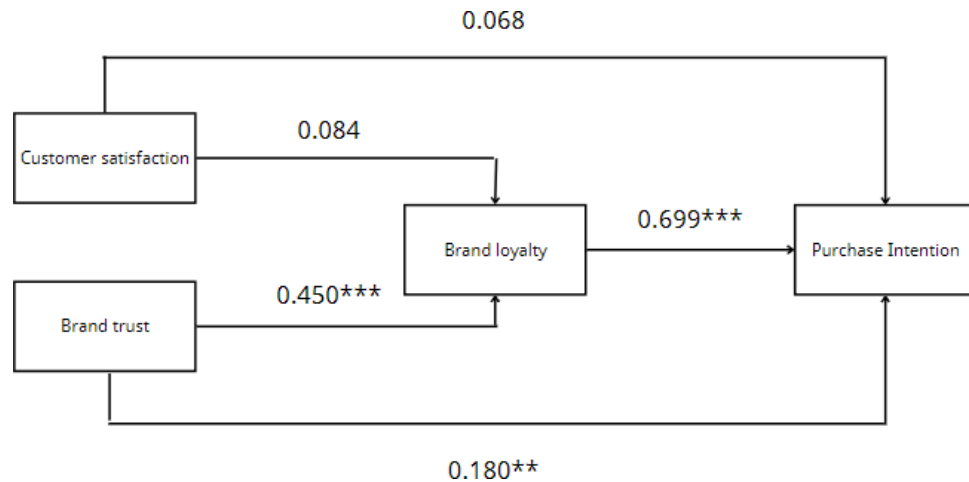| Variables	Purchase Intention	Brand Loyalty
Customer Satisfaction	0.068	0.084
Brand Trust	0.180**	0.450***
Brand Loyalty	0.699***	
R^2	0.696	0.247
F value	114.471	25.469
Durbin-Watson Statistic	1.976	1.679

Note: N=150, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

The four factors being assessed are customer satisfaction, brand trust, brand loyalty, and purchase intention. Table 3 demonstrates how these factors are related. Purchase intention was the dependent variable, whereas customer satisfaction, brand trust, and brand loyalty were independent factors, as indicated in the table. Brand loyalty and trust had respective beta values of 0.180 and 0.699, and both variables were highly linked with the intention to purchase. R^2 was 0.696, indicating that brand trust and loyalty account for 69.6% of the variation in purchase intention. The highest beta value was 0.657 which is brand loyalty. These findings revealed that the brand-loyalty variable that affects customer's purchase intention in Malaysia, followed by brand trust with a beta value of 0.180. However, customer satisfaction did not significantly affect purchase intention.

With respect to the previous paragraph, customer satisfaction and brand trust guide purchase intentions through brand loyalty. With beta values of 0.084 and 0.450, respectively, brand loyalty, customer satisfaction, and brand trust are strongly correlated.

In addition, the value of R2 is 0.247 – 24.7% of the variation of purchase intention would be affected by brand loyalty. The summary of our hypothesized model is shown below in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Our Hypothesised Model

Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

DISCUSSION

This study investigated the variables that influence consumers' purchase intention at McDonald's, which is located in Malaysia. The investigation results show that brand trust was a variable that directly affected the customers' purchase intention. Furthermore, brand trust also impacted purchase intention, where brand loyalty was an intermediary variable. However, customer satisfaction has no significance to both brand loyalty and purchase intention. Three of the five hypotheses received support: the H2, H3 and H5. H2 (brand trust is positively related to purchase intention) received support with two asterisks, while H3 (brand loyalty is positively related to purchase intention) and H5 (brand trust is positively associated with brand loyalty) received support with three asterisks. The asterisk in the regression table demonstrates the variables' significance level. The higher the number of asterisks, the higher the significance level of the independent variables that affect the dependent variable. Based on Table 3, it displays brand trust is the stronger predictor not only to purchase intention but also to brand loyalty. Brand loyalty is the strongest predictor to purchase intention compared to customer satisfaction and brand trust.

According to the results, customer satisfaction does not significantly influence purchase intention. Based on Table 1, demonstrates that students make up the majority of the customers (60%), and the majority of the respondents (64%) have a monthly income of B40 (RM4,850 and below). Prices are rising in our society now. Therefore customers are probably more likely to prepare meals for themselves than eat at McDonald's in order to save money. Hence, although they are satisfied with McDonald's, it does not always affect their purchase intention. Furthermore, the market is fiercely competitive nowadays and many businesses put in a lot of effort to attract customers and satisfy their needs. If McDonald's only slightly raises customers' satisfaction, the customers will switch to competitors like KFC or Pizza Hut that offer more satisfaction for them.

Moreover, the result has proven that brand trust significantly correlates with purchase intention. The results of the previous study likewise showed that brand trust significantly influenced purchasing intention (Cuong, 2020). Based on surveys that have been

conducted, the majority of customers responded that they feel comfortable and safe when buying food at McDonald's. Most of them also stated that McDonald's guarantees the quality of food. Hence, customers can enjoy meals at McDonald's without fear of getting food poisoning, which will also increase their intention to repurchase from McDonald's again. As brand trust is a significant variable that affects the purchase intention of the customer, McDonald's must always build a good relationship with their customers in order to gain their trust and increase their purchase intention from McDonald's. McDonald's can boost brand trust by ensuring that the food is as described in its advertisement as well as that the ingredients used to prepare the meal are always fresh and meet the standard.

After that, the result shows that brand loyalty strongly impacts purchase intention. Referring to Hanzaee and Andervazh (2012), the study demonstrated a substantial correlation between brand loyalty with purchase intention. According to surveys that have been done, most of the customers show that they are loyal customers of McDonald's, and they will recommend people who are around them to enjoy the meal at McDonald's. Customers are more inclined to purchase the brand they are loyal to than other brands (Naeem & Sami, 2020). Hence, high brand loyalty from customers can prevent customers from switching to another competitor. McDonald's can use the reward program to maintain brand loyalty by offering discounts or coupons to repurchasing customers, which can also increase their intention to purchase more from McDonald's.

In addition, the outcome shows that customer satisfaction does not greatly impact brand loyalty. Oliver (1999) reported that both marketers and researchers find that customer satisfaction and brand loyalty are not directly proportional to one another. Customers who are loyal to brands are generally satisfied, while those who are satisfied are not always loyal to the brand. Even if the customers are satisfied with McDonald's, it does not imply that customers will not switch to another brand such as KFC if a cheaper price is available in KFC. Thus, it is not always the case that a satisfied consumer will become a brand loyalist and continue purchasing. Customers will be loyal to one's brand until their satisfaction with it reaches a specific level.

Next, the outcome shows a strong relationship between brand trust and brand loyalty. Based on a survey, many customers responded that they feel pleasant and secure when purchasing food at McDonald's. Most of them also responded that they have repeatedly ordered food at McDonald's. Brand trust is a major factor in determining brand loyalty (Bozbay & Baslar, 2020). According to Shin et al. (2019), it suggests that brand managers aim to promote consumer brand loyalty by leveraging brand trust via social responsibility. Donating to charities, participating in volunteer events and organizing a yearly tree-planting program are some examples of corporate social responsibility activities. Hence, McDonald's can practice this kind of activity to gain the trust from customers and let them become loyal customers. Furthermore, brand trust affects purchase intention indirectly through brand loyalty. In other words, brand loyalty acts as an intermediary variable that lets brand trust influence purchase intention.

CONCLUSION

The study aims to assess consumer satisfaction and brand loyalty at McDonald's Malaysia and their relationship. The five hypotheses were created after identifying four variables: Customer satisfaction, brand trust, brand loyalty, and purchase intent are all factors to consider. This study examined four factors: customer satisfaction, brand trust, brand loyalty, and purchase intention, and five hypotheses were developed. The study found that brand loyalty and brand trust both significantly influence consumers' intentions to make purchases. While customer satisfaction has no significance on brand loyalty. As a result, brand loyalty and brand trust have been identified as essential elements in

influencing consumer purchase intention, which will aid in understanding consumer buyer behaviour and strengthening customer relationships.

LIMITATION
The results of the study must be considered in the context of limiting factors. Firstly, this study's sample size is deemed too small and may not accurately represent the full target demographic. In addition, Malaysia is the only target country for this study, which aims to examine the connections between the variables affecting consumers' purchasing intentions. As a result, the overall conclusions could not provide enough information. Due to the disparities in nation and culture, future research should expand the sample size used in the study and include respondents from other Malaysian states to represent the entire target population accurately. The conclusion will be more accurate the higher the target responders.

Future research should concentrate on sending questionnaires to various age groups. Given that 68% of Generation Z respondents to the data gathered for this study were students, it is clear that this cohort has already had higher exposure to and awareness of social media compared to other generations.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS
The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest.

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