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How The One-Stop Services from Mobile Applications Aligned with Customers' Contemporary Purchasing Behavior: A Study on Grab's Brand Recognition Among Customers

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ABSTRACT

The ride-hailing app Grab has now grown into a multinational transportation company headquartered in Singapore with offices in eight Southeast Asian countries. Since its founding in 2012, the company has expanded beyond its core business of ride-hailing services to transportation, delivery, finance and insurance, enterprise, and more, all integrated into a cloud-based system. This study is being conducted to find out how Grab, with its core function as a ride-hailing application, fits into customers' contemporary purchasing behavior and how the company has developed a strong brand recognition among its customers. Five influential aspects were evaluated: the super app, flat rate fees, short waiting times, reliability, and environmental friendliness. A total of 201 Grab users participated in an online survey, and IBM SPSS was used to analyse the results. The results showed that factors such as super app, flat rate fees, environmental friendliness, and reliability are positively related to customers purchasing behavior. Short waiting times, though, had no significant impact on customers' purchasing behavior. This survey gives Grab important information on how customers view the company, which helps them boost brand awareness.

Keywords: Brand Recognition; Grab; Mobile Apps; Purchasing behavior; Ride-Hailing

INTRODUCTION

In the past, many people complained about their dissatisfaction with the difficulties in obtaining taxi services, the inadequate public transportation system, and the outdated transportation systems that have impeded the daily movement of the metropolitan area's rapidly growing population (Ezzatul et al., 2019). As transportation does play a key role in the development of a country, if this problem is not addressed, it will have an impact on the growth of the transportation system (Htoo et al., 2022). Fortunately, these conditions can be mitigated by employing ride-hailing mobile applications thanks to the creation of multiple transportation facility mobile phone applications. 'Ride-hailing' is defined under the Laws of Malaysia, 2017, as a motor vehicle having a seating capacity of four to eleven people (including the driver), transporting people to their destination for a seat cost based on their travel. The smartphone application's intermediary method of transportation is used for all simple processes, including planning, making reservations, and paying for rides.

Due to how simple and convenient it is for users to simply click a few buttons on their smartphone application, customers now prioritize e-hailing services when making cab appointments. Realizing this huge market opportunity and embracing the idea of making safer taxi rides in Malaysia, Anthony Tan and Tan Hooi Ling 2012 spun the idea of building the ride-hailing company. The company was first known as "MyTaxi" before changing its name to "Grab." Grab was developed as an online ride-hailing service that assists passengers to reach their destinations safely and conveniently. Since its founding in 2012, Grab has been able to grow its market and user base from Malaysia to become the top ride-hailing platform in Southeast Asia. Another glorious achievement where Grab is the first worldwide ride-hailing company to be awarded the ISO 9001:2015 certification, showing that Grab is recognized for its quality standard and governance (Adam et al., 2020).

Grab is a leading Southeast Asian super app offering a wide range of services, including ride-hailing, food delivery, digital payments, and financial services. Founded in 2012 in Malaysia, Grab has rapidly expanded across the region, becoming a ubiquitous platform for everyday needs. Users can book rides, order food, make payments, and access various lifestyle services through the Grab app, providing convenience and efficiency in urban areas. Beyond transportation and food delivery, Grab has diversified its offerings to include GrabPay for cashless transactions, GrabExpress for courier services, and GrabFinancial for financial services like loans and insurance. With a strong presence in countries like Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines, Grab continues to innovate and expand its ecosystem, aiming to improve the lives of millions across Southeast Asia.

In order to grow its customer base and gain customers' loyalty, Grab has realized that it needs to comprehend the purchasing behavior customers take when deciding which products and services to look for, purchase, use, assess, and discard. For instance, according to PYMNTS & Paypal, in 2021, nearly 72% of customers will be interested in Super Apps, which are single apps that combine multiple main feature offerings into a single platform. Grab has since evolved into a Super App that offers more services than just ride-hailing, such as food delivery, cashless payments, online shopping, online bill payment, and more, as well as fostering a better lifestyle and economy. Additionally, Grab ensure that its partner drivers offer flat rate fees so that their customers would not be overcharged (Widyatama et al., 2020). To prevent dissatisfaction over cost,

customers will be notified of the trip cost prior to making a reservation. The flat rate costs that Grab offers help customers who practice frugal purchasing to recognize it.

In the realm of ride-hailing services, Grab stands out for its ability to provide customers with relatively short waiting times, a factor that significantly influences their purchasing behavior. With a vast network comprising 2.6 million registered partner drivers spread across more than 500 cities and municipalities, Grab excels in promptly locating the nearest drivers for its users. This efficiency in driver allocation not only reduces wait times but also enhances the overall user experience, making Grab an appealing choice for consumers seeking convenience and prompt service. By leveraging its extensive driver network and advanced technology, Grab effectively addresses one of the key pain points for ride-hailing users, thereby influencing their decision to opt for Grab over other competing platforms.

Moreover, Grab's commitment to environmental sustainability further enhances its appeal to consumers, particularly those who prioritize eco-conscious purchasing behavior. Unlike traditional car ownership, which contributes to carbon emissions and environmental degradation, ride-hailing services like Grab promote more sustainable transportation practices, particularly through the encouragement of ride-sharing. By facilitating carpooling and reducing the number of vehicles on the road, Grab helps minimize congestion and pollution, aligning with the values and preferences of environmentally conscious consumers. As sustainability becomes an increasingly important consideration for consumers worldwide, Grab's eco-friendly business model positions it as a socially responsible choice for transportation, appealing to a growing segment of environmentally conscious consumers.

In addition to its environmental initiatives, Grab's focus on safety and reliability further reinforces its appeal to consumers with high safety-consciousness purchasing behavior. The platform implements various safety measures and features to ensure a secure and reliable ride experience for its users. One such feature is the star rating system, which allows passengers to evaluate and assess the performance of drivers based on their average score. This rating system serves as a valuable tool for customers in making informed decisions regarding their choice of driver, providing them with greater confidence and assurance in the safety and reliability of their ride. By prioritizing safety and reliability, Grab demonstrates its commitment to providing a trustworthy and dependable ride-hailing service, catering to the needs and preferences of safety-conscious consumers.

As of 2022, Grab has emerged as a dominant player in the ride-hailing industry, boasting over 180 million users and capturing more than 60% of the market share in Southeast Asia. Despite facing stiff competition from rivals such as Go-Jek and AirAsia, Grab has managed to maintain its leading position through continuous innovation and strategic expansion. However, in an increasingly competitive landscape, it is imperative for Grab to stay attuned to the evolving needs and preferences of its customers to retain its market dominance.

To this end, this study aims to investigate how various factors, including the functionality of Grab as a super app, flat-rate fees, short waiting times, environmental sustainability initiatives, and reliability measures, influence consumer purchasing behavior when using Grab's services. By examining the impact of these factors on consumer perceptions and decisions, the study seeks to provide valuable insights into the drivers of consumer

behavior within the ride-hailing sector. Through a comprehensive analysis of these factors, the study aims to shed light on the key determinants of consumer choice and loyalty within the ride-hailing market, offering actionable recommendations for Grab to further enhance its services and maintain its competitive edge.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Super App

According to Steinberg, 2020, a super app is defined as an application that performs every task; mega-platforms unto itself. Meanwhile, Gelici et al. (2022) relate super apps as adding value application by making daily tasks more efficient for their customers since they let them access a variety of daily tasks and purchases through a single platform. This is supported by Rao et al., 2021 explain that today's customers are looking for applications that attempt to meet a variety of everyday consumer needs in the same environment without having to download another application. Grab's diverse services meet customers' purchasing behaviors. For instance, GrabCar was developed as a solution to the problems with the safety, cost, and quality of taxi services in Malaysia (Lin & Dula, 2016) and the challenges for finding a safe and dependable cab in urban areas (Ackaradejruangsri, 2015). Grab introduced GrabPay to create a comfortable shopping experience because of the intense competition for customers' mobile payments that has resulted from the rapid rise for consumer desire in cashless transactions. Additionally, Grab has created delivery services including GrabExpress, GrabFood, and GrabMart. This situation appears that the omnito single platforms characteristic of super apps might lead to a better chance of recognition, which makes omnichanneling seen to be superior and promote stronger customer purchasing intention. With this, this research hypothesized:

H1: Super app is positively related to contemporary purchasing behavior

Flat Rate Fee

Flat rate fee means it only charge a single fixed price for a given service and the cost remains the same no matter how much time or work is required to complete it. The users have to pay a fixed amount for unlimited service used under flat rate fees system. Flat rate fees always preferred compared with other system in the context of existing services (Leinsle et al., 2018). Razak et al. (2016) figure out that the price range of a service can bring big impact on a customer's purchase decision as the relationship between prices and consuming purchasing behaviours is positive. The fairness of the price affects the perception of customers and ultimately their willingness to purchase the service or product. When the price is reasonable, consumers are more likely to purchase the product or service. The fixed-rate bias runs counter to traditional economic theory, which holds that consumers aim to maximize their welfare and choose the rate that results in the lowest cost (Khan et al., 2004). Numerous studies such as conducted by (Hobson & Spady, 1988) supports the occurrence of this bias. This situation causes customers to have positive contemporary purchasing towards Grab. Therefore, this research hypothesize:

H2: Flat rate fees is positively associated with contemporary purchasing behaviour.

Short Waiting Time

According to Brady and Cronin (2001) waiting time is defined as the number of times a customer is willing to wait for their turn to get a service. In a service industries like ride-hailing in order to achieve high customer satisfaction, the amount of waiting time should be valued by the service provider as it will influence customers' intention to repurchase the services (Leclerc et al., 1995). Similarly, Bielen and Demoulin (2007) revealed a negative relation was formed where the longer the service's waiting time, the lower the customers' satisfaction. Customers will be displeased and eventually cause a loss of customers if a service makes them wait for an extended period before their turn (Davis, 1991). This statement is supported by psychological factors as throughout the waiting time, customers are unsure about the time they would have to wait and hence experience stress. (Bielen & Demoulin, 2007). As a result, Ting et al., 2019 encouraged service providers to properly regulate and reduce the waiting time in order to reduce passenger frustration. Ride-hailing for example provides a shorter and more consistent waiting time, making it more convenient to use. More customers would purchase the services as a result of their ease and benefits (Almunawar et al., 2021). Therefore, this research hypothesizes:

H3: Short waiting time is positively associated with contemporary purchasing behavior.

Environmental Friendliness

All market segments have experienced a sharp increase in environmental consciousness over the last several years as a consequence of the "green shift" and marketing tactics used by many businesses. This is reinforced by a previous study by Young et al. (2009), which found that 30% of customers attempted to incorporate their environmental concerns into their purchasing decisions by adopting green purchase behaviors. They learn that environmental sustainability is not just about minimizing the amount of energy used and waste produced, but also focused on developing an environmentally friendly business for the future. For instance, the sharing economy practice by Grab (sustainable business model) has reduced inefficiency to the environment and allows people to satisfy their demands. This is true as the sustainable business model by Grab encourages transport sharing as an alternative to buying a new one. Wu and Zhi (2016) explained that sharing economy contributes to better resource allocation, energy saving, and reducing the greenhouse effect. Additionally, by referring to Martin, 2016 reported that companies from sharing economy can make use of their idle assets (transportation) will pave the way for more sustainable environmental development in the future. This is supported by the study performed by Curtis and Lehner (2019), all of the sustainable benefits of sharing economy stimulate those environmental-conscious customers to prioritize the company that practices environmentally friendly. With this, we hypothesized:

H4: Environmental friendliness is positively related to contemporary purchasing behavior.

Reliability

Through a study by Johnson and Karlay (2018), the reliability aspect of consumer behavior is the process by which the person who provides services to his customers can be trusted with the services he offers. Reliability ensures the service provider's capacity to consistently supply a perceived level of service. The buyer's behavior after using the service offered symbolizes the trust and overall image of the customer which is influenced by the reliability itself whether they want to use the service again or not. According to the research, user services quality factors like comfort and reliability have an impact on Grab users' happiness in Malaysia. As a result, Grab must use service

quality as a competitive advantage. Additionally, they must fulfil riders' expectations to increase customer happiness, brand image, and customer loyalty, all of which will improve business profitability. According to Kotler and Keller (2006), a person's satisfaction depends on how happy they are with the performance of the products and services offered. Significant customer rejection leads to satisfaction, while negative rejection leads to dissatisfaction with the service offered. According to studies conducted by Lai & Chen (2010), customers will be satisfied with ride-sharing services when their desire for a timely, reasonable price is met. Hence, the hypothesis is formed as follows:

H5: Reliability is positively related to contemporary purchasing behavior.

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Purchasing Behavior

Purchasing behavior is research on how people, groups, and organizations choose, acquire, use, or dispose of goods and service es, to satisfy their needs and preferences (Solomon et al., 1999). Kochina, 2019 explained many types of consumer purchasing behavior, including complex buying behavior, dissonance-reducing buying behavior, habitual buying behavior, and variety-seeking buying behavior. While Kotler and Keller (2006) have emphasized on how crucial it is for manufacturers and service providers to understand consumer purchasing behavior and how customers select their goods and services because doing so gives them a competitive edge over rivals in a number of areas. According to Kazmi and Mehmood (2016), purchase behavior is an essential factor in customers' brand recognition since it leads customers to choose between different options available depending on their desires. In support Ezzatul et al. (2019), stated that long-term customer relationships, competition depend on innovation. Grab in order to maintain its brand recognition as the top taxi-hailing firm in Southeast Asian has designed a few suggestions to improve the service provided for them to stay on par with customers purchasing behavior. This research will identify the link between influencing elements, such as super app, short waiting time, environmental friendliness, and reliability affect customers' current purchase behavior to use ride-hailing and subsequently increase their brand recognition.

H6: Purchasing behavior is positively related to brand recognition

Brand Recognition

According to Keller (2008), brand recognition relates to if a customer can remember or identify a brand, or whether customers are merely aware of a brand. Few would deny that customers create brand recognition through their images of the product or services they received and that these images eventually have a significant effect on product and service selection decisions and purchasing behaviors (Porter & Claycomb, 1997). Brand recognition holds a significant part when customers make decisions, influence market performance, enhance brand equity, and boost company performance (Zhang, 2020). For instance, when customers are confronted with a huge variety of brands, the greater the brand recognition, the higher the chances to attract customers. When customers are given the option between a familiar and one unfamiliar new product, brand awareness will assist customers to purchase toward their recognized familiar brand. Additionally, several past studies have revealed a positive relationship between brand recognition and purchase behavior (Charo et al., 2015, Jalilvand et al., 2012). Furthermore, Yoo and Donthu (2001) argued that brand recognition influences firm profitability since high brand recognition may induce people to acquire services or goods at higher costs.

RESEARCH METHOD

This survey was conducted online via a Google Form with the objective of understanding Grab users' perceptions of the mobile application and their purchasing behavior. Comprising ten sections, the questionnaire aimed to gather comprehensive data: Section A collected demographic information, while Section B focused on users' experiences with Grab. Sections C to G delved into independent variables including the app's super functionality, flat-rate fees, short waiting times, reliability, and eco-friendliness. Section H addressed the moderator variable of contemporary purchasing behavior, while Section I examined the dependent variable of brand recognition.

Using a five-point Likert scale, respondents rated their agreement levels, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This methodology facilitated nuanced insights into users' perceptions and behaviors. By employing an online platform, the survey could reach a wide audience, providing valuable data for analysis. The structured format of the questionnaire ensured consistency in data collection, allowing for robust statistical analysis. Overall, this survey served as a comprehensive tool to explore the relationship between Grab usage patterns, user perceptions, and purchasing behavior, shedding light on key factors influencing brand recognition and consumer preferences within the ride-hailing industry.

RESULTS

A digital questionnaire was used to obtain data from 201 respondents of various nationalities for the survey. Table 1 summarises the demographic features of the respondents. According to table 1, the majority of respondents, 63.2% are female, while the remainder 36.8% are male. There are 62.7% Malaysians, 12.4% Chinese, 23.9% Indians, and 0.5% Nigerians and Indian Muslims among the 201 responses. The majority of respondents are between the ages of 20 and 29, accounting for 72.6%, as younger respondents are more familiar with digital gadgets and are constantly exposed to technology comforts. Student level of 79.1% represents the highest occupational level, while government field, 1.5% represents the lowest. In terms of income, the majority of respondents, 33.3% are from the intermediate low income group, while a minority of respondents, 1.5% are from the high income group.

Furthermore, the survey found that the majority of respondents, 96.5% believe Grab is a useful mobile application. Meanwhile, most of the respondents, 76.1% have positive experiences with Grab services. Aside from that, most respondents, particularly students, utilized Grab Applications on a weekly, 34.3%, and monthly, 33.8% basis in riding frequency. The bulk of respondents, 71.6% use the Grab Application for ride-hailing. According to the respondents' experiences, 76.1% will suggest Grab as a choice for ride-hailing, food delivery, and other services to their friends and family, and the majority of them, 77.1% will continue to use the Application Grab in the future. Table 1 below summarises the respondent's profile details.

This survey is filled by 201 respondents to study the brand recognition of Grab among the customers. There are 6 elements consist in the scale, which are Super app, Flat rate fees, Short waiting time, environmental friendliness, Reliability and Contemporary purchasing behaviour. Pearson Correlation Analysis is utilized to detect the relationship among the variables. The table above shows that all the variables are greater than 0.90, which tested by Cronbach Alpha. The variables have the internal consistency of 0.949, 0.950, 0.943, 0.959, 0.961, 0.964 and 0.937. The results perfectly indicate all the

variables are reliable. High Cronbach alpha indicates that participants' response values are consistent across the statements. Besides, the average mean for all the variables is 3.89 (in between value '3' and '4' on Likert scale), which shows that most of the respondents feel neutral or agree with the survey. The standard deviations of the variables are acceptable, which is around 1.09 to 1.25. A higher standard deviation indicates the data is less reliable, so lower standard deviation is better as it indicates the data is more reliable.

Brand recognition, as shown in Table 3, will be the dependent variable, and the independent factors will be super app, flat rate fees, short waiting times, environmental friendliness, and reliability. Besides that, the results showed that contemporary purchasing behaviour might be influenced by super apps, flat rate fees, short waiting time, environmental friendliness and reliability. Consumer perceptions of the goods and services offered by the Grab Application service platform are referred to as contemporary purchasing behaviour. The outcome demonstrates a positive relationship between the dependent variable of contemporary purchasing behaviour and the independent variables of super apps, flat rate fees, environmental friendliness, and reliability, with β values of 0.161, 0.168, 0.278, and 0.344, respectively. H1, H2, H4, and H5 are therefore accepted. The value of R^2 was 0.780, meaning 78% of the variation in contemporary purchasing behaviour. On the other side, there is little correlation between contemporary purchase behaviour and short waiting times. H3 is therefore not accepted. Next, Brand Recognition was positively connected with contemporary purchasing behaviour with the β value of 0.848, respectively. Thus, H6 was supported.

DISCUSSION

From the study, we can conclude that the desire for a reliable platform has the strongest positive relationship to contemporary purchasing behavior (β-value of 0.344). The availability of Driver Rating (DR) enables customers to make references based on past passengers' experiences and promptly left the cab when they feel (Grab, 2020). This is in line with the research conducted by Kurniawati et al. (2021), where such characteristics are not equipped on traditional taxis, making 50.5% of customers strongly agree with Grab is more convenient for a journey compared to taxis. Next, according to Htoo, 2022, 89.3% of customers agreed Grab emphasizes customers' safety as Grab's drivers are required to pass PSV vocational driving license that permits them to drive any vehicle before registering as Grab's driver partner (Grab, 2019). Moreover, Grab require customers and drivers to register with real-name authentication bringing to a median of 61.5% of respondent who feels 'agree' with their interactions with the Grab driver (Kurniawati et al., 2021). This indicates that personal safety assurance by Grab will result in aligning with consumers' contemporary purchasing behavior.

Environmental friendliness also has strong positive relationship with contemporary purchasing behavior (β-value of 0.278). The increased environmental sustainability awareness enabled a majority of 29% of respondents to turn out neutral to the statement that they choose to Grab because it is more environmentally friendly (Kurniawati et al., 2021). In addition, Grab is devoted to decreasing the environmental impact, for example enhancing its partnership with Hyundai Motor to solve the high electric vehicle costs, limited charging locations, and lengthy charging time (Grab, 2020). This situation is similar to what Kurniawati et al. (2021) get where 37% of customers stated that they choose to use Grab as they want to reduce energy and resource consumption. Meanwhile, the sharing economy mode implemented by Grab satisfies customers' demand to reuse underused vehicles rather than acquire new vehicles. This is in sync

with the finding of Raj et al., 2021, where 32.5% of respondents agree that they choose to Grab's a sustainable business approach that promotes car-sharing instead of self-riding.

Grab's Super app also perform a positive relationship with contemporary consumer buying behavior (β-value of 0.161). Grab's super app offers a variety of services (ride-hailing, food delivery, e-payment, and other relevant experiences) on a single platform, enabling Grab to indulge in multi-dimensional sales (Asian Insights Office, 2019). Food delivery services have become embedded in everyday life, according to Grab, 2021, 87% of customers will continue ordering from food delivery platforms, and there is a 13% increase in their meals delivery service. Another service widely used is e-payments which facilitates and simplifies people's transactions. According to Gary Won, 2021, 77% of transactions on Grab platform were via GrabPay and about 75% of Grab users in Singapore utilize GrabPay on many services.

The study also indicates that Grab has performed outstanding performance expectations towards customers' purchasing behavior which served as a mediator between independent variables and has a significant correlation with the dependent variable – brand recognition (β-value of 0.848). Grab has increased its range of services over time to include delivery, transportation, finance and insurance, enterprise, and more. This statement is supported by Zhu et al. (2021), where the respondents with beta value of 0.808 agree that Grab provides vital and diverse services. Moreover, among those unpredictable risks, customers strive to prevent while purchasing ride-hailing services, personal safety is the priority (Yang et al., 2022). This customer's priority is met by Grab and this interpretation was justified by (Almunawar et al., 2021) where 41.7% of respondents highly recognize Grab ride-hailing service is safe. Grab's recognition was again proven by Singh, 2021 where 56.5% of respondents review that they will recommend the Grab application to their friends and family.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has provided compelling evidence underscoring the critical role of various factors, including the functionality of a super app, transparent flat-rate fees, environmental sustainability initiatives, and reliability, in influencing contemporary consumer purchasing behavior. By shedding light on these key determinants, this research offers valuable insights for Grab to adapt its strategies and enhance brand recognition in an increasingly competitive market landscape. Understanding and responding to evolving consumer preferences is paramount for Grab to maintain relevance and drive customer loyalty.

To effectively influence consumer purchasing behavior, Grab can leverage the insights gained from this study to tailor its services to better meet the diverse needs of its user base. This may involve expanding the range of services offered within its super app platform, providing users with a seamless and comprehensive solution for their everyday needs. By offering a one-stop shop for various services, Grab can increase user engagement and retention, thereby strengthening its position in the market.

Furthermore, implementing transparent and competitive pricing structures, such as flat-rate fees and promotional incentives, can play a pivotal role in influencing consumer

purchasing decisions. Research has shown that consumers often respond positively to price reductions and promotional offers, leading to increased sales and customer satisfaction. By incorporating these pricing strategies into its business model, Grab can attract more users and incentivize repeat purchases, ultimately driving revenue growth and market share expansion.

In response to the growing demand for environmentally friendly options, Grab should continue to invest in carbon reduction initiatives and environmental sustainability programs. As consumers become increasingly conscious of their environmental footprint, they are more likely to support brands that demonstrate a commitment to sustainability. By integrating eco-friendly practices into its operations, Grab can appeal to environmentally conscious consumers and differentiate itself from competitors, thereby enhancing its brand image and reputation.

Moreover, ensuring reliability and consistency in service delivery is essential for building trust and confidence among consumers. In today's fast-paced and interconnected world, consumers expect reliable and efficient service from the brands they engage with. Therefore, Grab must prioritize reliability and customer satisfaction by upholding high standards of service quality and addressing any issues or concerns promptly. By prioritizing customer care and maintaining a reputation for reliability, Grab can cultivate strong brand loyalty and foster long-term relationships with its users.

In summary, by aligning its strategies with consumer preferences and prioritizing reliability, transparency, and sustainability, Grab can strengthen its brand recognition and competitive position in the ride-hailing industry. By leveraging the insights gained from this study and continuously innovating and improving its services, Grab can remain at the forefront of the market and drive sustainable growth in the years to come.

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The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

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