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## Research Article

# Neuroticism Indifference to Brand Familiarity and Social Influence Towards Purchase Intention in Social Networking Services (SNS) in Malaysia

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## Abstract

**Background and Objective:** The usefulness of social networking services (SNS) to businesses has remained under scrutiny. Nevertheless, one valid defend for SNS worth is its influence on users' purchase intention on product and services. Therefore, it is vital to examine the factors that influence purchase intention in SNS for marketers to better plan and strategize marketing plans. Due to sparse evidence on SNS viability for businesses in Malaysia, this study was conducted to examine the effects of social influence and brand familiarity in SNS on purchase intention, while accounting for the mediating role that personality trait played in SNS. **Materials and Methods:** About 369 SNS members were surveyed to test their purchase intention based upon opinions of friends, acquaintances and familiarity of brands. This study adopts Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) model and personality traits profiled from Big Five Factor model. The structural model fit and hypothesis testing are validated using structural equation modeling-AMOS 20. **Results:** The results indicate that social influence and brand familiarity significantly and directly affect SNS users' purchase intention. However, result shows that SNS users with particular personality trait, neuroticism, were neither influenced by friends, acquaintances, nor brand familiarity in intention to purchase. These findings are aligned with neurotic personality traits, which are portrayed as highly sensitive and anxious in facing external situations. They need more than superficial interactions to affect decision making. **Conclusion:** SNS could increase sales via endorsements, social media engagement and branding activities in SNS, while generating alternative advertising for different types of personality traits.

**Key words:** SNS, brand familiarity, purchase intention, social influence, neuroticism

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**Data Availability:** All relevant data are within the paper and its supporting information files.

## INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is ranked 7th highest for number of SNS users worldwide, which points to how involved is SNS in people's daily lives here<sup>1</sup>. People rely on SNS for various uses and one of the top reason is for its information and accessibility. After interaction in SNS, the particular spillover which effect on SNS users relevant to this study is consumer purchase intention. Customer behavioral intentions are considered signals of actual purchasing choice and are thus desirable to monitor<sup>2</sup>. Intention to buy is a forecast of which brand a person will choose. The concept has been used extensively in predicting the purchases of durable goods and may be characterized as a response short of actual purchase behavior<sup>3</sup>. As technology progresses from the early days of the Internet, consumers' purchase decision today has been shown to be affected by online social networks<sup>4</sup>. This stems from the reasoning that consumers often make joint decisions after taking into consideration suggestions from family, friends and coworkers<sup>5</sup>.

As technological innovation has become an integral part of modern life and the world economy in recent decades<sup>6</sup>, comprehension and prediction of behavior within these contexts have become major goals of many researchers in academia and industry. The immediacy to understand what factors drive purchase intention is especially seductive because social media platforms offer abundant opportunities for researchers and businesses to deeply comprehend consumers from many different angles and perspectives. What is more important is that, because of the readability of SNS, users are spending countless hours online<sup>1</sup>. This time spent is a source of unending opportunities for businesses around the clock.

Interactions between SNS users range from sharing of information, experience, emotions, to all sorts of other exchanges. According to studies, although SNS users receive same kind of information in each own communities, due to differences in personality<sup>7</sup>, the outcome of information processed would be different<sup>8</sup>. Understanding these differences may explain why some SNS users are attracted to deals and offerings in social media, while others are not intrigued by any information received<sup>7</sup>. These conditions may be explained through SNS users' personality traits. The findings could help businesses understand segments of consumers in SNS and the characteristics of certain personality traits via the effects of social process and also the strength of branding. Thus, this study will determine the effects of social influence and brand familiarity on SNS users with different sets of personality traits for business understanding.

**Brand familiarity:** Users often employ SNS is to search for information<sup>1</sup>. But sometimes, even when a user is not looking, he or she is bound to come across information in a subtler form, such as in the form of pictures, videos, storylines, or advertisements that happens to display a particular brand. These repeated exposures are known to influence an SNS user's purchase intention. Previous studies suggest that steps taken by companies to monitor and strategize actions in social media will eventually improve brand image and could optimize and improve companies' competitive advantages<sup>9</sup>. Evidently, consumer attach meanings and interpretations to a brand for the services or satisfaction it promises to deliver, hence, branding is found to be significant that hardly no product or service go without brand<sup>10</sup>. Hestad<sup>11</sup> and Malik *et al.*<sup>12</sup> further state that brands help consumer make decisions and brand awareness could influence consumers' attitude and intention to purchase. Consumers are well aware of the various brands in the market and as such, brand familiarity has become crucial for consumers' purchase decision.

It is a fact that brand name has strong influences on purchase decision<sup>13</sup>. In many instances as much as quality, rates, income, age groups and others<sup>14</sup>. Hence, brand familiarity is suggested to have a positive and significant relationship with consumer purchase intention in SNS. This has guided this study to the following hypothesis:

H1: Brand Familiarity significant and positively influence purchase intention

**Social influence:** In addition to brand name, social influence may affect decision-making, especially in the SNS context. Through interactions in SNS, users experience acceptance and unification with their social group<sup>15</sup>. This is an important outcome of social influence as part of their judgment preparation process towards a purchase. Not only that, positive or negative information of a product or a brand in social media has significant overall influence on consumers' purchase behavior<sup>12</sup>. The importance of social influence is further strengthen by when a person's attitude, belief and behaviors are proven to reflect social influence of others<sup>16</sup>.

Here in Malaysia, people are known for being culturally bounded, compliant and averse to changes<sup>17</sup>. Nonetheless, off late, due to exposure to different cultures, foreigners, boundary less information dissemination, cultural enhancement and other factors, people here are adapting to global ways<sup>18</sup>. Therefore, for the reasons above, this study excludes compliance, coercion, or subjective norm

from testing for purchase intention among SNS users. The balance of social influence model that is left are social identity and internalization dimensions.

For the purpose of this research, social influence is investigated in terms of the two dimensions defined by Kelman<sup>8</sup>. Differentiating these processes allows determination of whether usage behavior is caused by the influence of referents on one's intent or by one's own attitude. Hence, the present study suggests that there is a positive relationship between social influence and consumer purchase intention in SNS. Based on the above, the following hypothesis is generated:

H2: Social influence significant and positively influence purchase intention

**Personality traits:** It is being widely reported that individual personality traits have impacts in SNS usage<sup>7,19-22</sup>. In determining the relationships between personality traits and SNS behaviors, researchers have utilized various tools in their work. One such tool is the Five Factor Model. The Five-Factor Model (FFM) is a broad classification of personality traits where the model separates the human personality into a series of five dimensional traits<sup>23</sup> and are used to predict types of behavior of subject on hand. Using the OCEAN acronym, the FFM consists of five spectrums of personality traits which are openness to experience<sup>24</sup>, conscientiousness<sup>25</sup>, extraversion<sup>22</sup>, agreeableness<sup>23</sup> and neuroticism<sup>26,27</sup>.

Yang *et al.*<sup>28</sup> listed personality traits to predict intention in social network as future work to be carried out in SNS. Based upon previous studies, personality traits have not achieved a good antecedent position or as independent variable and often fail to find strong predictive behavioral links. However, personality traits are important contributors to the personality/behavior relationship through organism component or internal factors of an individual<sup>27,29</sup>. Hence, this research posits that personality traits act as a mediator between social influence and individual purchase intention in SNS. This leads to the following hypotheses:

H3: Social influence significant and positively influence personality traits

H4: Brand familiarity significant and positively influence personality traits

H5: Personality traits significant and positively influence purchase intention

Although e-commerce is deemed to be beneficial to businesses, profit revenue from SNS model is not stable and

maybe unsustainable<sup>30</sup>. Sparse research on SNS contribution to businesses conducted in Malaysia adds to lack of support for SNS in terms of its credibility as part of a robust business model. Not knowing is unfortunate especially since Malaysia is at the 7th highest place of SNS penetration and also among the highest country who spend numerous hours online. Malaysia is one of the country with highest rate for data connection<sup>31</sup>. Hence, this research model offers insight into factors involved in SNS and their relationships to users' purchase intention. This supports the credibility of SNS as part of a comprehensive business strategy.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Data collection:** A quantitative approach for this study was chosen to obtain targeted response of SNS users in Malaysia in five major towns, with highest SNS reported population. Due to the exploratory nature of this research, a non-probability purposive quota sampling is considered appropriate<sup>32-34</sup>. Since time and cost are of major constraints, a predetermined proportion of people are sampled from different groups, but on a convenience basis<sup>35</sup>. Furthermore, according to Abbott and McKinney<sup>36</sup> although quota sampling be similar to probability sampling, it is not considered as scientific source, because it is difficult to look for exact population of characteristics and not everyone in these categories has an equal chance to be selected. Hence, these subjects could not represent any type of relevant population<sup>37</sup>. Questionnaire was distributed to SNS users and sample size of 369 qualified questionnaire were returned. About 17 were incomplete and not included for analysis. Table 1 presents a descriptive summary of the respondents' demographic profile.

**Respondents' attributes:** About 386 questionnaires were collected from various locations in state of Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Penang and the city of Johor Bahru, Johor in May 2017. Total of 369 questionnaires were found useable. 53.9% of respondents from the age group of 21-25 years, which reflects the majority of internet users in Malaysia from this age group. The longest length of SNS usage of three years and more are represented by majority at 80.7% of respondents. Additionally, the most preferred type of SNS is Facebook, with 82.6% having access to their own accounts, followed by Instagram at 75.4%.

Income levels were divided into six categories. Most respondents earn RM 1,500 and less, at 69.9% of total respondents. The next group earns between RM 1,501 and RM 3,000 and is represented by 14.9% of respondents. 8.9% of respondents earn between RM 3,001 to RM 5,000 and 1.9% of

Table 1: Descriptive summary of demographic profile

Items	N	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	118	32.0
Female	251	68.0
Total	369	100.0
<b>Age (years)</b>		
15-20	24	6.5
21-25	199	53.9
26-30	81	22.0
31-35	13	3.5
36-40	13	3.5
41 years and above	39	10.6
Total	369	100.0
<b>Race</b>		
Chinese	82	22.2
India	26	7.0
Malay	247	66.9
Others	14	3.8
Total	369	100.0
<b>Education level</b>		
Secondary and equivalent Certificate	44	11.9
Diploma	90	24.4
Degree	203	55.0
Post graduate	3	0.8
Professional degree	5	1.4
Total	369	100.0
<b>Occupation</b>		
Company workers	63	17.1
Engineers and technician	6	1.6
Professional	11	3.0
Public servants	21	5.7
Self-employed	19	5.1
Student	223	60.4
Others	26	7.0
Total	369	100.0
<b>Income</b>		
Rm 1500 and less	258	69.9
Rm 1501-3000	55	14.9
Rm 3001-5000	33	8.9
Rm 5001-7000	7	1.9
Rm 7001-10,000	4	1.1
Rm 10,001 over	12	3.3
Total	369	100.0
<b>Reason using SNS</b>		
Content	49	10.3
Debating	6	1.3
Family	66	14.0
Free SMS	42	8.9
Friends	78	16.4
New relations	27	5.7
Other reason	13	2.8
Profile surf	29	6.2
Research	54	11.5
Socialize	64	13.5
Time kill	45	9.5

Source: Authors' calculations

respondents earn between RM 5,001 and RM 7,000. The final two groups earn RM 7,001 and RM 10,000 and over RM 10,001,

at 1.1 and 3.3%, respectively. According to statista.com<sup>1</sup>, 88% of Malaysian internet users are between 20-34 years old. Additionally, data from the same source shows that there were 18.62 million SNS users in 2017, a figure projected to increase to 20.42 million by 2022.

**Ethical consideration:** Participants were briefed prior to answering the survey in terms of the purpose of the study and the criteria of participation in terms of legal considerations.

**Measurement of variables:** A self-administered questionnaire was chosen for data collection method based on its efficiency in terms of money and time<sup>37</sup>. All measures use seven-point scales re-adapted from various researchers. Seven item scales are used for Social influence in SNS, broken down into two dimensions, which are Social Identity and Group Norm. The design of this research questionnaire uses multi-item approach where each construct is measured with multiple items for the goal of improving reliability and validity. Seven-point Likert scales are employed (Bryman and Bell, 2011) with 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = neutral, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree and 7 = strongly agree. Additionally, both positive and negative questions were included in this questionnaire to ensure participants read and answer listed questions<sup>38</sup>. The ensuing subsections detail how the variables were measured empirically.

**Personality traits:** This study adapted "Personality Traits" from Big Five Inventory by Chen<sup>39</sup> with eight items from Openness to New Experience, eight items from Conscientiousness, nine items from Extra version, eight items from Neuroticism and eight items from Agreeableness. After the pretest, items were slightly adjusted to the recommendations of an expert panel.

**Social influence:** Seven item scales are used for "Social Influence in SNS" broken down into two dimensions, which are "Social Identity" and "Group Norm". Items were adapted from these following researchers respectively: social identity dimension has adapted six items from Cheek and Briggs<sup>40</sup> and eight items from Grace *et al.*<sup>41</sup>. These sentences were adjusted to suit the understanding of pretest survey from their feedback. Social identity dimension was measured using the following items: (1) My popularity with other people; (2) The ways in which other people react to what I say and do; (3) My physical appearance: my height, my weight and the shape of my body; (4) My reputation, what others think of me; (5) My

social behavior, such as the way I act when meeting people; and (6) If I want to be like someone, I often try to buy the same brands that they buy.

Group Norm is the second dimension of social influence. It was measured by the following seven items that were adjusted after pre-test results: (1) Achieve a sense of belonging by purchasing the same products and brands that others purchase; (2) I like to know what brands and products make good impressions on others; (3) I often consult other people to help choose the best alternative available from a product class; (4) I often identify with other people by purchasing the same products and brands that they purchase; (5) If I have little experience with a product or brand, I often ask my friends about the product; (6) If other people can see me using a product, I often purchase the brand they expect me to buy; and (7) When buying products, I generally purchase those brands that I think others will approve of.

**Brand familiarity:** Aspects reflecting the influence of brand familiarity on SNS users are measured by six items. Three items were adapted from Schivinski and Dabrowski<sup>42</sup>; one item from Villarejo-Ramos and Sanchez-Franco<sup>43</sup>; one from Ahuja<sup>14</sup> and one from Yoo and Donthu<sup>44</sup>. Items were slightly amended after pretest upon the feedback of pilot respondents as follows: (1) For a product or service, I would rather buy a familiar brand than any other brands available; (2) For a product or service, I have a pleasant idea of my favorite brand; (3) For a product or service, I believe in brand name, (4) For a product or service, it makes sense to buy a familiar brand instead of any other brand, even if they have the same features and specifications; (5) For a product or service, even if another brand has the same feature as my normal brand, I would prefer to buy the brand I am familiar with and (6) If another brand is not different from a familiar brand in any way, it seems smarter to purchase the familiar brand.

**Purchase intention:** Finally, purchase intention is the final construct with four items adopted from Hasan *et al.*<sup>45</sup>. Figuring respondent purchase intention answers were pretty

straight forward hence, the items were adopted as the original author structure: (1) I intend to buy through the Internet in the future; (2) I would buy through the Internet in the future; (3) I intend to buy through the Internet and (4) It is probable that I will buy through the Internet in the future.

**Statistical analysis:** Data analysis starts off with ensuring no missing values or outliers by cleansing of data. For data software, SPSS 23 was selected to perform data coding and screening, which in later part, descriptive statistics of collected data were scrutinized. After that, to gauge the consistency of measurements, reliability tests were performed. The instrument was pre-tested with a pilot test and Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient using SPSS statistical package version 23 to measure the consistency between measurements which form the scales and SEM AMOS 20 software was used to validate the theoretical model of the study.

## RESULTS

**Results from exploratory factor analysis:** Preceding factor analysis, correlation matrix was inspected where most of the item coefficients were 0.3 and above utilizing Principal Component Analysis (PCA). After cross loadings were deleted and loadings below 0.5 were crossed out, PCA extracted eight factors from nine existing factors. These 8 factors cumulatively captured 48.76% of the variance. Factor 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 contributed 14.790, 7.657, 6.304, 5.226, 4.492, 4.098, 3.202 and 2.968% of the common variance, with Eigen values of 7.395, 3.829, 3.152, 2.163, 2.246, 2.409, 1.601 and 1.493%, respectively. The factor loading values for the scales were in the range of 0.471-0.890. This study has performed internal reliability for its different constructs with multiple measures utilizing Cronbach's alpha values. Hair, Jr. *et al.*<sup>46</sup> consider that the ideal Cronbach's alpha to apply is 0.70. As a general acceptance, a figure of 0.90 is excellent reliability, 0.7-0.9 is high reliability, 0.50-0.70 is moderate reliability and below 0.5 is low reliability<sup>47</sup>. Table 2 lists all nine variables of this

Table 2: Reliability assessment

Variable	Number of measures	Cronbach's alpha	Type
Openness to new experience	5	0.494	Low reliability
Conscientiousness	6	0.488	Low reliability
Extra version	7	0.471	Low reliability
Agreeableness	4	0.623	Moderate reliability
Neuroticism	5	0.836	High reliability
Social identity	6	0.752	High reliability
Brand familiarity	5	0.829	High reliability
Group norm	7	0.827	High reliability
Purchase intention	4	0.890	High reliability

Source: Authors' calculations

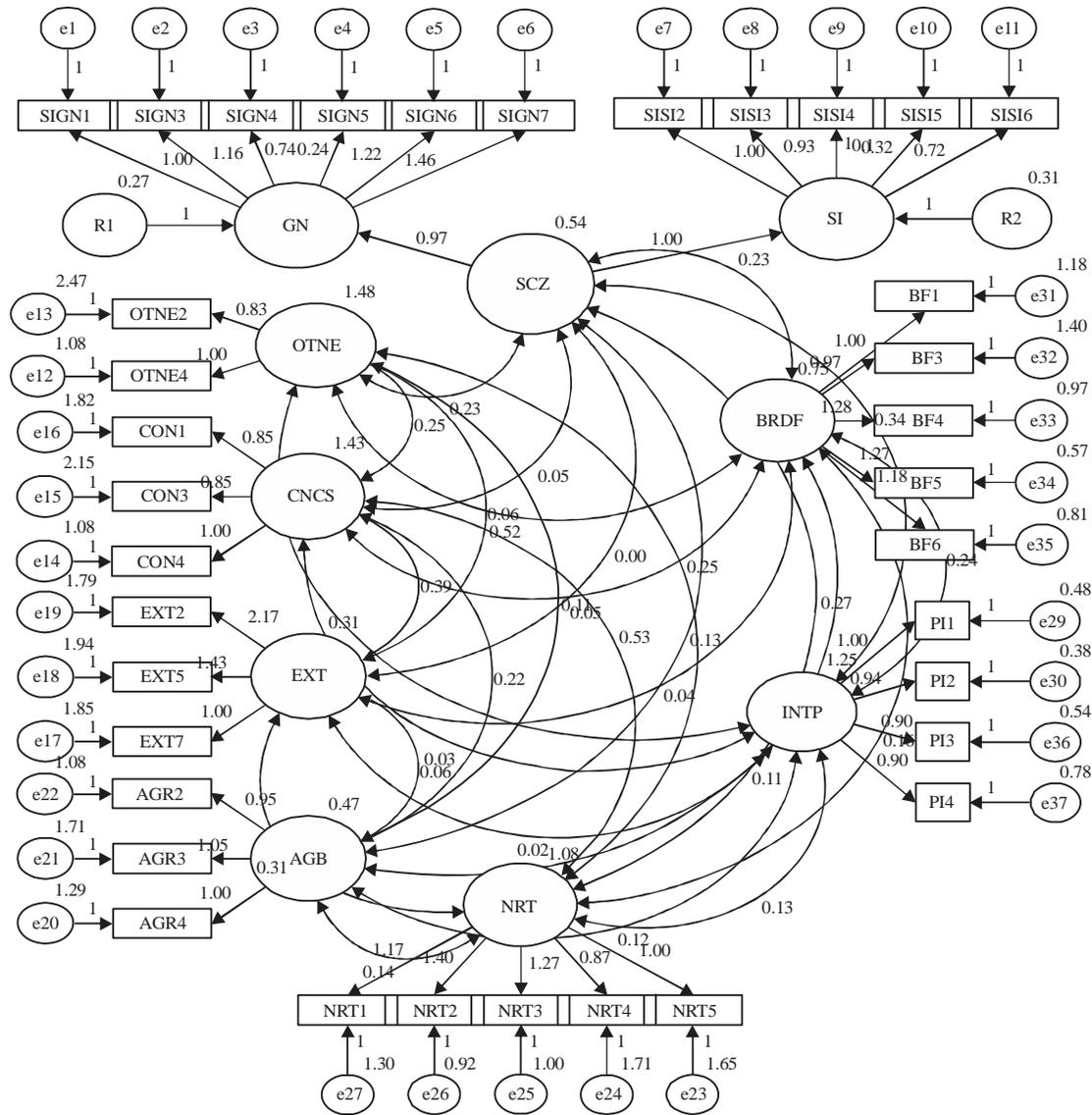


Fig. 1: Preliminary confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

research, demonstrating the consistency for scales used in this study. There are four variables that achieved low to moderate reliability from the Personality traits construct. These four variables are removed from further testing due to its low reliability.

**Validation of measurement model:** Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is a statistical technique used to analyze multiple inter-relationships among all variables in a model<sup>48</sup>. The preliminary CFA as shown in Fig. 1, performed with nine variables consisting of forty-nine measures. All variables designated as Openness to New Experience (OPNE), Conscientiousness (CONS), Extraversion (EXTR), Agreeableness

(AGBR), Neuroticism (NRTCS), Brand Familiarity (BRDF), Social influence [Group Norm (SIGN), Social identity (SISI)] and Purchase Intention (INTP), were loaded with own measures and tested through CFA. A second order construct was added to the model<sup>48</sup>. Social identity and Group Norm are both sub-constructs variables to social influence in SNS users. According to Kline<sup>49</sup>, CFA and Structural model should be tested with at least four tests of model fit. The results show that the goodness of fit indices was not achieved in the preliminary CFA. All readings were beneath the recommended criteria. Therefore, some measures were deleted or related to another variable with added correlated measurement errors<sup>50</sup>. Four personality traits with low reliability and Cronbach Alpha

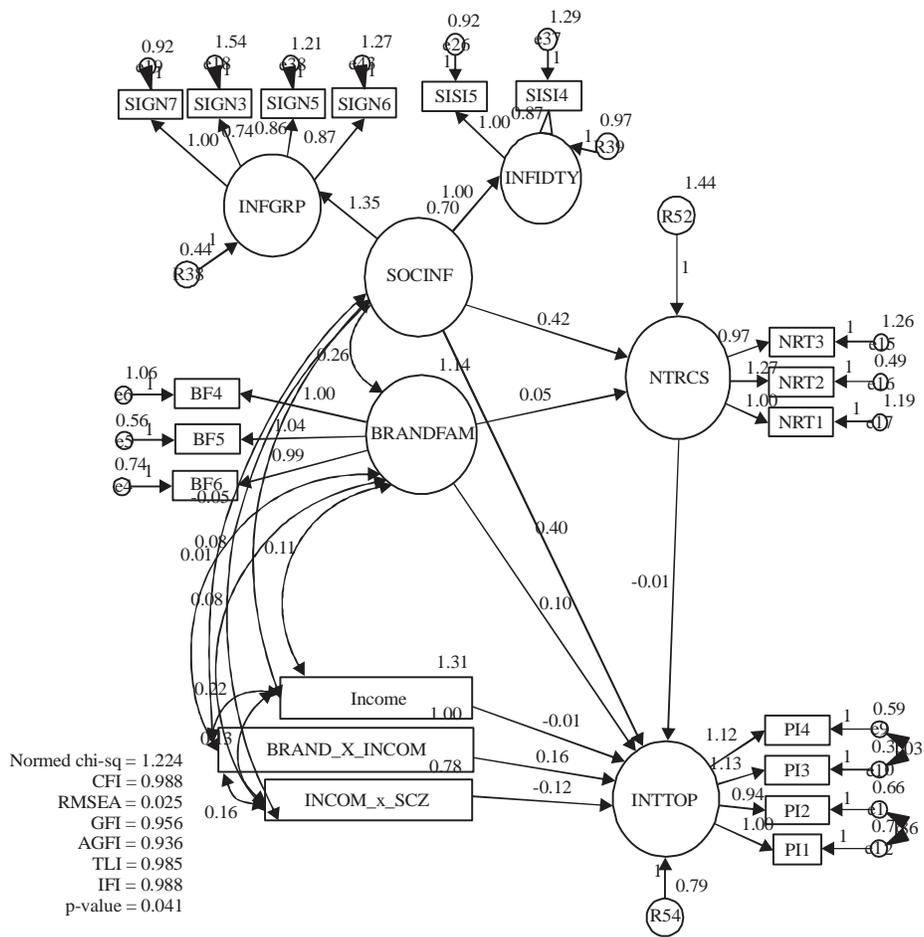


Fig. 2: Revised hypothesized model

less than 0.5 were not able to go for the next stage. According to CFA results and requirements, Openness to New Experience, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness and Extra version were dropped from the model from further analysis due to low reliability in terms of KMO/MSA and Cronbach's Alpha values. Four other constructs achieved the required level to proceed (Table 3).

Modification indices were applied to the model based on suggestions from Hair Jr. *et al.*<sup>46</sup> and the model fit was improved. Discriminant validity was also analyzed to check if scales are reflecting other scales in any way. For this analysis, each of the square roots of AVE are positioned higher than other correlation coefficients for satisfactory discriminant validity<sup>51</sup>.

**Hypotheses testing:** Goodness of fit indices for the structural model and commended criteria for said test (Hair Jr. *et al.*<sup>46</sup>) supports all goodness of fit indices on the tests for the

structural model. The figures for  $X^2/Df$  (1.386), GFI (0.956), AGFI (0.936), CFI (0.988), RMSEA (0.025) and PCLOSE (0.988) all met the recommended criteria.

The explanation of the hypothesized result is based on the revised model (Fig. 2). According to Sachs<sup>52</sup> the path coefficient is significant at 0.05 level when the critical ratio is more than 1.96, while the path coefficient is significant at 0.10 level when the critical ration is more than 1.645. Based on Table 4, hypothesis 1 is supported indicating that brand familiarity significant and positively influence purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.10, p < 0.10$ ). Hypothesis 2 is also supported, as social influence significant positively influences purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.40, p < 0.05$ ). Subsequent hypothesis 3 is supported ( $\beta = 0.42, p < 0.05$ ) where social influence significant positively influence neuroticism trait. The relationship between brand familiarity and neuroticism has a very low positive relationship ( $\beta = 0.047$ ) and p-value more than 0.05, thus hypothesis 4 is not supported. Subsequently,

Table 3: Results of CFA

Factors indicators	X2	Df	P	GFI	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA	Factor loading	Composite alpha
Socialization	48.108	13r	0.015	0.916	0.832	0.849	0.153		0.799
SIGN3								0.60	
SIGNS								0.72	
SIGN6								0.70	
SIGN7								0.82	
SISI2								0.58	
51514								0.67	
SISI5								0.81	
Brand familiarity	13.266	2	0.001	0.984	0.918	0.979	0.124		0.818
BF1								0.62	
BF4								0.76	
BF5								0.82	
BF6								0.74	
Neuroticism	25.518	2	0.000	0.967	0.836	0.967	0.179		0.844
NRT1								0.76	
NRT2								0.88	
NRT3								77.00	
NRT5								0.56	
Intention to purchase	48.149	2	0.000	0.935	0.673	0.948	0.250		0.875
P11								0.86	
P12								0.87	
P13								0.80	
P14								0.75	

Source: Authors' calculations

Table 4: Relationship between exogenous and endogenous variable

Hypotheses	Exogenous	Endogenous	Std. estimate	Critical ratio	Hypothesis
H1	BRANDFAM	INTTOP	0.112	1.698***	Supported
H2	SOCINF	INTTOP	0.341	3.717***	Supported
H3	SOCINF	NTRCS	0.280	3.587***	Supported
H4	BRANDFAM	NTRCS	0.047	0.621	Not supported
H5	NTRCS	INTTOP	-0.011	-0.181	Not supported

Table 5: Result of income and research as moderator between social influence with purchase intention

			Estimate	SE	CR	P
INTTOP	<---	Income	0.079	0.069	0.944	0.847
INTTOP	<---	Szc x income	-0.157	0.072	-2.399	0.019
INTTOP	<---	Brand_x_income	0.157	0.060	2.947	0.008

Source: Authors' calculations

hypothesis 5 is also not supported due to low negative relationship between neuroticism and purchase intention ( $\beta = -0.011$ ) and p-value more than 0.05.

**Findings on moderator effect:** SNS users' socio demographic were tested to investigate its moderating effect on social influence and brand familiarity in purchase intention. Demographic characteristics such as age, gender, education and race are found not to moderate social influence impact on consumer purchase intention. However, as shown in Table 5, it is found that higher income significantly moderates SNS users to increase purchase intention when exposed to a brand.

## DISCUSSION

This study fills a research gap by empirically testing social influence effect and brand familiarity in SNS via personality

traits mediating construct on purchase intention and verify the importance of SNS to businesses<sup>53</sup> in the Malaysian context. Previous researches were conducted on SNS users from many topics including promotions<sup>54-56</sup>, brand awareness<sup>57</sup> and purchase intention<sup>10</sup>. Demographically, SNS users are shown to be experienced users and have established basic routine behaviors, with Malay group leading the group in penetration and experience. A prominent finding shows that Malay are exposed to SNS earlier and at a lower age, which signals unregulated usage of SNS among Malay families. Respondents were also asked about the length of their use of SNS. From the results, there are evidence of statistical differences in years of experience in SNS uses across races. Per the results, Malays seem to have more extensive experience with SNS compared to Malaysian Chinese and Indians, while there are no statistical differences in between Chinese and Indians.

Most compelling evidence from this study is the direct positive effect of social influence on intention to purchase of SNS users. This result supports the interaction with others via SNS, inclined users to have significant positive purchase intention<sup>58-64</sup>. On a related note, empirical result also shows that SNS users are inclined to experience purchase intention when they are familiar with a brand at a 90% confidence interval. This finding supports a previous study<sup>45</sup> which stated that both intention to purchase and online intention to purchase are significantly affected by brand name. However, personality trait specifically neuroticism, shows insignificant effect of social influence and brand familiarity towards purchase intention. The idea that SNS has a positive and significant impact on users' purchase intention could be made, but not for all users. Neurotics need stabilizing effects that will help naturalize their natural reactions to respond positively, with delayed communication acting as buffer zones.

When it comes to social considerations, a higher income moderates brand familiarity to have a higher purchase intention, unlike social influence. When a consumer has more money, they become prone to have intention to purchase after having reminded the brand that they are familiar with. On the contrary, social influence significantly negatively moderates intention to purchase with higher income earner. Marketers could strategize to interact with SNS users with higher income based on brand familiarity and communicate useful and attractive information, as this group is more selective and thoughtful when purchasing.

Repeated tactical placement of brand in SNS would attract higher earners to increase purchase intention. On the other hand, low earners are found to be eager to believe information passed by friends and contacts in SNS. This group has higher needs to conform, fit in and prove themselves to be liken to other group members. Therefore, being on SNS significantly increases purchase intention. There are various ways for marketers to be on SNS and it works well for low involvement products, for example paid advertisements, fans club, blogs and tweets<sup>16</sup>. Marketers could also engage in self-promoting influencers that are celebrities in their own ways. Hence, by approaching these individuals, specifically targeting low earners, marketers have a chance to entice potential buyers through real ordinary attractive people who "happens" to use such and such brand.

### **CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Despite the considerable theoretical and practical contributions in this study, the following limitations can be

addressed in future research. This study has adopted a non-probability quota sampling technique. Although the respondents have mixture of different sub representative, they might not precisely reflect the whole population. Future study could choose other sampling methods with bigger population and include other personality traits.

### **SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENTS**

This study was able to categorize the different types of personality traits of SNS users in Malaysia. It also provides empirical evidence on neurotic personality traits that they do not easily succumb to external factors in purchase intention specifically from social influence and brand familiarity. Generated outcomes add value to the existing literature and contributes to researchers that wish to further test neuroticism receptivity of other factors affecting purchase intention in SNS. Meanwhile, practitioners could benefit from the findings of moderator effect of years of SNS use for tactical consideration.

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