Perceived Value of Advertising Message That Influence Generation Y' Purchase Intention

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Abstract

This research investigates the perceived value of advertising message towards Gen Y with regards to the extent of perceived informativeness, perceived credibility and perceived entertainment of advertising message in indicating their behavioral intention. 300 Gen Y in Malaysia (respondents who are in the ages between 15 and 34 in 2020) were conveniently recruited to involve in the data collection of this research. They were recruited because they are the largest age group that largely exposed to the advertising in Malaysia and they are also potential customers in the future. All collected data were scientifically analyzed using SPSS particularly using the Multiple Linear Regression Analysis to test the relationship between variables and to find out the strengths of every connection of variables. On top of that, the objective of this research is aimed to identify the most significant factor that influences consumers' purchase intention. Interestingly, the results show evidence on the positive relationship between the perceived value of advertising message and consumers' purchase intention which as predicted and supported by various studies. In summary, all the findings in this research can be summarized as, all the three variables that include perceived informativeness, perceived credibility and perceived entertainment of advertisement messages are positively associated with Gen Y's purchase intention in Malaysia. Among the three factors, the perceived entertainment of advertising messages is the most significant driver that influenced Gen Y's behavioral intention. In conclusion, all research objectives and research questions were achieved and answered throughout this study.

Keywords: advertising messages, Gen Y, perceived informativeness, perceived credibility, perceived entertainment, purchase intention

1. INTRODUCTION

In the modern society of today, people are bombarded with advertisements in their daily life through direct and indirect advertising. Kotler and Armstrong (2005) describes that advertising is a means of informing, delivering and communicating essential information by a non-personal form of promotion through two major channels which is traditional media and digital media. In order to compete to get audiences' attention, many companies and brands spent heavily on advertising to promote their products and reach specific target segments through various medium, since advertising is an important way for the organizations to create awareness, boost sales and increase profits (Fennis & Stroebe, 2010). According to Zenith's Advertising Expenditure Forecasts by MCMC in 2018, Malaysia's advertising expenditures is estimated with a 3 percent growth compared to the previous year and predicted to reach RM7.37 billion in 2017. This statistical result reflects that the importance of advertising towards the consumer market and business units, however, some of the companies are not efficient in their advertising process even though they invest heavily in advertising and in return, the results did not meet their expectations. Ducoffe (1995) stated that the value of advertising serves as a key determinant of consumer response. The objective of advertising is a specific communication task as the messages can be informative, persuasive, comparative and reminder towards the audiences. Even though there have numerous researchers have already studied and examined the effectiveness of advertising and how they

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attract consumers by influencing their awareness, attitudes and shaping their buying behaviour (Arshad & Aslam, 2015; Bruce, Foutz, & Kolsarici, 2012), but the problem is those existing studies did not investigate more on how consumers assess the value of advertising, how they inspired by the advertisement and intend to purchase the product immediately or in the nearer future as in the market trend today are forwarded into consumers orientation as well as customers satisfaction.

Gen Y is the future customers and also, they are more value-oriented as they are willing to put more efforts in searching information and evaluating alternatives for the products or services that they want with the overall best value in the market (Noble & Noble, 2000). Thus, it is important to understand their perceptions and how they assess the value of advertising, in order to give marketers an insight to create superior advertisement by taking the consideration of Gen Y' knowledges and perceptions are vary from one to one as every individual is grown and came from different society. According to a report of Pew Research Center (2010), the attention span of Gen Y is low compared to other age groups since they are more likely to switch attention. Therefore, understanding the way Gen Y' assess the value of advertisement is imperative to benefit in further implementation of precise advertising strategy, in turn, to capture their attention. Moreover, Dyer (2008) asserted that the advertisement as communication exchange, which is passing the value between parties, thence, those researches should not only look from the perspective of marketers but also the value of communications transactions in consumers' point of view. In a result, this research is to carry out the significance of the knowledge of marketers in order to have a throughout understanding on consumers' perceived value of advertisement and gain insight among Gen Y in Malaysia as they are largely exposed to the advertising compared to other age groups

1.1 Research objectives

Parallel to the mobile phone industry, the practice of marketing also continues to evolve with time hence traditional marketing strategies might not be effective as it used to be. This study instead suggests to adoption of word of mouth (WOM) as a suitable alternative strategy to market mobile phones. In a survey on WOM, Marketing Association and American Marketing Association reported that 64% of marketers found WOM marketing more effective than traditional marketing (Asada & Yong, 2016). Nevertheless, studies that are dedicated to examine how WOM impact consumer's purchasing intention are lacking even though there are studies on the relationship of WOM and consumer behaviour (e.g. Lovett, Peres, & Shachar, 2013; Maxham, 2001; Van Vaerenbergh, Lariviere, & Vermeir, 2012). Such impact is more obscure towards the elderly's intent to purchase. Furthermore, Fung & Carstensen (2003), Tongren (1988) and Wolfe (2005) concluded that preferential difference towards advertising strategies between the older and younger population exists. It is thus imperative to study emerging marketing strategy such as WOM in order to cater the purchase intention of older population. Asada & Yong (2016) recommended that such study should emphasis on factors that determine the impact of WOM. In particular, the tie strength between sender and recipient should be included as a moderating variable as its inclusion would further shed light on the relationship of WOM and consumer behaviour (Baker, Donthu, & Kumar, 2016; Wang, Yu, & Wei, 2012). In this study, the impact of WOM towards the intention to purchase mobile phones among older consumers is examined. The study will also examine the role of tie strength in moderating the relationship between WOM and purchasing intention of the elderly.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

This study adopts theory of reasoned action and complements it with Aristotle's rhetoric theory. Kennedy (2006) explained that theory of reasoned action concerns the impact of subjective norm towards purchasing intention. Hence, consumer's intent to purchase can be impacted by WOM though the degree of impact is dependent on others' opinion that the consumer value. Meanwhile, Aristotle's rhetoric theory already concerns the impact of WOM on consumer's purchase intention. Sweeney, Soutar & Mozzarol (2012) however emphasised that Aristotle's rhetoric theory is more focus on the quality of message delivered through WOM. Besides that, another theory is integrated into the study's

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theoretical framework since this study involves the purchasing intention of older consumers. The theory; selective optimisation with compensation (SOC) was developed by Paul B. Baltes and Margret M. Baltes. Johnson & Mutchler (2013) explained that SOC concerns life choices made by strategizing to select available outcome according to their chronological age and in return optimising personal enjoyment while compensating circumstances caused by old age.

2.1 Older Consumers' Purchase Intention

Chang & Wildt (1994) and Spears & Singh (2004) defined purchase intention as the tendency of personal action towards a certain brand. The intent to purchase however can be influenced by others. Tsai, Chin & Chen (2010) clarified that others' influence whether intentional or not, affect consumer behaviour as consumers are inclined to trust those important to them. Today's older population act upon their purchasing intent when there are possible beneficial gained from the purchase (Szimigin & Carrigan, 2001). Most elderly nonetheless have difficulties to fully comprehend technological products such as mobile phones due to their decreased cognitive abilities. They are often labelled as 'late comers' in adopting new technologies compared to the younger population though recent studies suggest that the label might not reflect reality. The elderly is prone to adopt technological innovation that ease daily life transaction such as electronic fund transfer. The elderly also is more persuaded by advertising messages that provokes their emotions rather than informative and rational ones (Williams & Drolet, 2005). Older consumers therefore act upon their purchasing intention once they have considered their ulterior objectives, cognitive abilities and the personal gain from such purchase.

2.2 Source Credibility: Expertise and Trustworthiness

The content of WOM messages are more credible if the delivery is made by an expert. Yoon, Kim & Kim (1998) regard someone as an expert when they can make correct assertions. Determining whether someone possess the expertise required nevertheless remain subjective. Gotlieb & Sarel (1991) and Sweeney, Soutar & Mazzarol (2014) determine someone possessing a high degree of expertise based on their knowledge and competency. Meanwhile, Schiffman, O'Cass, Paladino & Carlson (2013) considers their occupation and social training in regarding someone as an expert. Experts thus are deemed to know about a product better than others and their WOM messages are perceived useful in consumers' purchasing deliberation. Such expertise holds more weight in product adoption as the purchase intention involved risks that are unfamiliar to the consumer (Lim & Chung, 2014). Hence, the possibility that consumers regard WOM messages come from a credible source is likely. Ohanian (1990a) though emphasized that acceptance of the message content is reliant on how much trust the recipient has towards the sender. Trustworthiness implies the confidence level of the consumer that the information delivered are honest, sincere, fair and honourable (Chu & Kamal, 2008; Ohanian, 1990b and Priester & Petty, 2003). Any instances that might jeopardize consumer's confidence should be avoided. Expertise and trustworthiness therefore could sway consumer's perception on the credibility of WOM messages and subsequently influence the impact towards consumers' purchase intention. The following are the hypothesized relationships between source credibility and purchase intention.

> H_{1a}: The expertise of word of mouth source is positively related to older consumers' purchase intention toward mobile phone.

> H_{1b}: The trustworthiness of word of mouth source is positively related to the older consumers' purchase intention toward mobile phone.

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2.3 Word of Mouth (WOM) Message: Richness and Advocacy

Valence in relation to the influence of WOM message according to Anderson (1998) vary as positive WOM are related to pleasant experiences while negative WOM are related to unpleasant experiences. Such influence is affected by content richness and advocacy strength of the message delivered by WOM. Sweeney et al. (2012) described the richness of message content as the depth which the message is considered as informative to the recipient while the strength of advocacy is how strong of an impact

is perceived when the message is delivered. The delivery of WOM message can be through several mean of communication in writing and verbally. The richest mean however is face to face communication as it enables direct message delivery through two-way communication (Daft, Lengel & Trevino, 1987). In terms of advertising, narrative message regarding product information is considered to be the best option by Adaval & Wyerjr (1998), Padgett & Allen (1997) and Phillips & McQuarrie (2010). The message delivered through this sort of WOM communication are more persuasive as it is based on actual fact instead of fabricated by the sender. WOM persuasiveness are influence by how the message is delivered to recipients. Sweeney, Soutar & Mazzarol (2008) asserted that WOM message that are delivered with strength and enthusiasm are more significantly perceived by both the sender and recipient. The delivery of WOM messages nonetheless mostly involves non-verbal communication such as body language and vocal tone (Gabbott & Hogg, 2000; Sweeney et al., 2008 and Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams, 2013). The non-verbal communication further influences the elderly's purchase intention as they prioritize fulfilling emotional social goals due to their perceived limited time. The following are the hypothesized relationships between WOM message and purchase intention.

H$_{2a}$: The richness of WOM message content is positively related to older consumers' purchase intention toward mobile phone.

H$_{2b}$: The strength of advocacy of WOM is positively related to older consumers' purchase intention on mobile phone.

2.4 Tie Strength as Moderator

Brown & Reingen (1987) revealed that messages delivered through WOM communication all involved social relationships. Specifically, the relationship is between the message sender and information recipient. In this study, the tie strength of such relationship is looked at according to Baker et al. (2016)'s classification of strong ties and weak ties. Strong ties imply that the relationship is significant whereby it involves frequent interaction with those close to the message recipient such as friends and family. Baker et al. (2016) deemed that WOM message from strong ties possesses higher degree of trust as the message source is more credible. Strong ties also have greater influence on recipient behaviour as the frequency and perceived importance of social interaction subsequently impact consumer's purchase intention (Bansal & Voyer, 2000 and Chu & Kim, 2011). Meanwhile, weak ties imply that the relationship is non-significant whereby it involves less frequent interaction with acquaintances or strangers. Weak ties nevertheless have a role in information dissemination as any delivered information is considered novel despite its infrequent interaction and untrusted sources. The following are the hypothesized relationships between tie strength and purchase intention.

H$_{3a}$: Tie strength is positively moderate the relationship between expertise of WOM source and older consumers' purchase intention.

H$_{3b}$: Tie strength is positively moderate the relationship between trustworthiness of WOM source and older consumers' purchase intention.

H$_{3c}$: Tie strength is positively moderate the relationship between richness of message content of WOM and older consumers' purchase intention.

H$_{3d}$: Tie strength is positively moderate the relationship between strength of advocacy of WOM and older consumers' purchase intention.

3. METHODOLOGY

Since this study is quantitative in nature, empirical data is collected from a questionnaire survey involving 180 respondents. All the questions posed were pilot tested and structured under 6 different categories: purchase intention, sender's expertise, sender's trustworthiness, richness of message, strength of advocacy and tie strength. The questionnaire uses a 7-point Likert scale to quantify feedback

given by respondents. The targeted respondents consist of the older population who have or intent to purchase mobile phones. They were approached through simple random sampling. This type of sampling according to Kumar, Talib & Ramayah (2013) enable potential respondents to be drawn from the targeted population on an equal basis of opportunity. The study defines the older population as those aged 50 years old and above (Yoon, Laurent, Fung, Gonzalez, Gutchess, Hedden, Lambert-Pandraud, Mather, Park, Peters & Skurnik, 2005). The study scope was limited to Klang Valley. Sumarjan, Mohd, Mohd, Zurinawati, Mohd, Saiful, Artinah, Bakhtiar, Hafiz & Hanafiah (2013) reckoned the area is among the rapid growing metropolitan cities in Malaysia with approximately 7.2 Million residents. The demographic layout was an ideal area of study considering the time and financial constraints. Once data collection is completed, feedback from the questionnaire survey is compiled and analyzed using IBM Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) software version 21.0. SPSS in this study ensures reliability and validity of the collected data. The overall process of data analysis involves descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, bivariate correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis and moderation test.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

Based on the previous literatures' discussion, the following theoretical framework is developed against the hypotheses which assumed the potential effect and influence of the four direct variables which are sender's expertise, sender's trustworthiness, richness of message, strength of advocacy and one moderating variable which is tie strength on the older consumers' intention to purchase mobile phone.
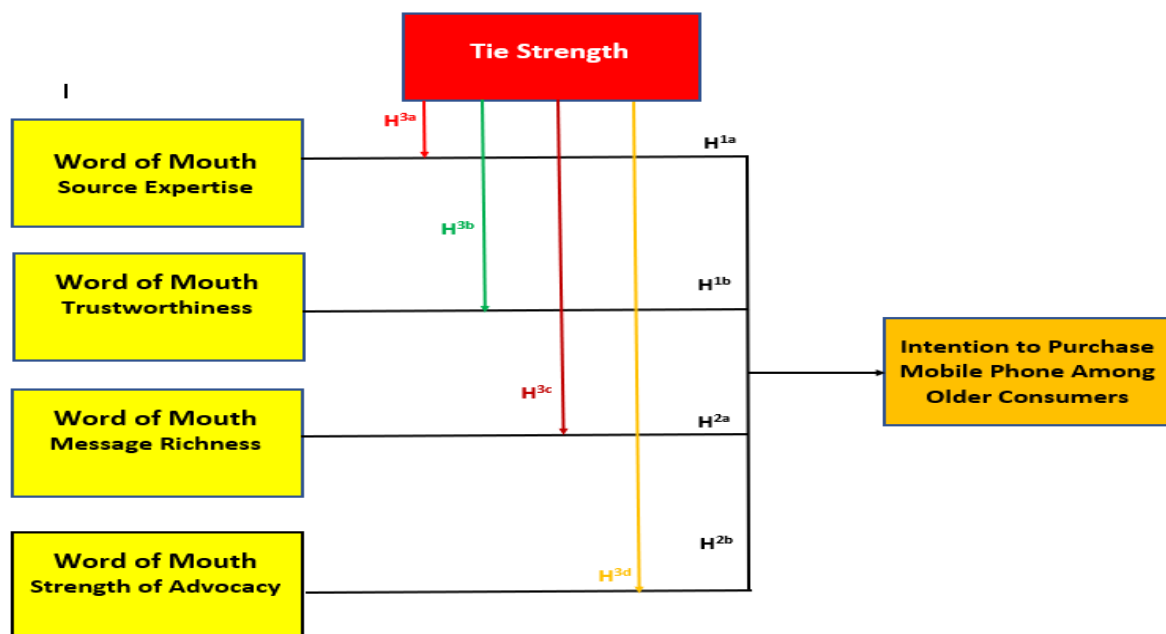

Figure 1 Theoretical Framework

3.2 Measurements and Reliability Analysis

The reliability analysis was carried out to assess the reliability of data collected in this study. Results from the analysis indicate that all the study's variables can be accepted as a Cronbach's Alpha of a minimum 0.7 is considered reliable by Meyers, Gamst & Guarino (2013). As shown in Table 1, the range for Cronbach's Alpha of each variable is between 0.841 to 0.929. Purchase intention has a reliability amount 0.929, source of expertise of word of mouth valued 0.841 and word of mouth source trustworthiness Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.891. As for the richness of message sent and received from word of mouth message has a high reliability value which is 0.923 while the strengths of the message content sent and received from the word of mouth is 0.911. Lastly, the moderator for this study which is the tie strength has a reliability value of 0.915. All variables have a high reliability value which considered good and reliable to be scientifically tested in detail using scientific research tool as mentioned before.

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The questionnaire designed for this study consist of series of questions which were developed from the credible past researchers. There are five items were adopted from the past researchers to measure purchase intention (dependent variable), four items were adopted to measure the linkage between source's expertise and older consumers' purchase intention. The source's trustworthiness was measured using five items adopted from the existing researchers while three items consecutively were adopted to measure richness of message content and the strength of message delivery. Finally, the moderator variable which is tie strength was measured using five items which also adopted from the past studies. Table 1 summarize the reliability values of each and every variable as well as the number of items used for this study.

Table 1 Results for Reliability Analysis

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Purchase intention	0.929	5
Source's expertise	0.841	4
Source's trustworthiness	0.891	5
Richness of message content	0.923	3
Strength of message delivery	0.911	3
Tie Strength	0.915	5

4. RESULTS

4.1 Bivariate Correlation Analysis

Table 2: Results for Bivariate Correlation Analysis

	Source's Expertise	Source's Trustworthiness	Richness of Message Content	Strength Of Message Delivery
Pearson Correlation	.639**	.643**	.582	.314
Purchase Intention Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	180	180	180	180

Pearson correlation is used to assess the correlation of relationship between the study's variables. Taylor (1990) considers the correlation efficiency of $r \leq 0.35$ as weak or low correlation, 0.36 to 0.67 as moderate or modest correlation and 0.68 to 1.0 as high or strong correlation. Results from the analysis as shown in Table 2 implies that the relationship between source's expertise and purchase intention, source's trustworthiness and purchase intention and richness of message content and purchase intention is moderate positive while the relationship between strength of message delivery and purchase intention is weak positive. Despite the difference in Pearson correlation, the value of Sig. (2 tailed) for all variables is 0.000 which imply that there is a statistically significant correlation between variables at p-value of less than 0.01

4.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 3: Results for Results for Multi Linear Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	*-.226*	*.401*		*-.563*	*.574*
Expertise	.483	.121	.368	3.996	.000
Trustworthiness	.308	.156	.236	1.975	.050
Richness of message content	.307	.137	.249	2.240	.026

Strength of advocacy	-.195	.084	-.173	-2.313	.022

Results from the analysis is summarized in Table 3. The value of Beta (β) for expertise, trustworthiness, richness of message content and strength of advocacy implies that the source's expertise has the most impact on the purchasing intention among older consumers. Meanwhile, the t-statistics indicate that the relationship between variables are supported at a confidence interval of $t > 1.960$ (2-tailed). The results also indicated the significant level of p-value of less than 1% for expertise (0.000) or 5% for trustworthiness (0.050), richness of message content (0.026) and strength of advocacy (0.022). These imply that the proposed hypotheses; the expertise of WOM source is positively related to consumers' purchase intention (H_{1a}), the trustworthiness of WOM source is positively related to consumers' purchase intention (H_{1b}), the richness of WOM message content is positively related to consumers' purchase intention (H_{2a}) and the strength of advocacy of WOM message is positively related to consumers' purchase intention (H_{2b}), are supported.

4.3 Moderation Test Analysis

Table 4a: Results for Moderation Analysis (H_{3a})

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.6429	.4133	1.1701	41.3321	3.0000	176.0000	.0000

Table 4b: Results for Moderation Analysis (H_{3a})

Model	Coefficient	SE	t	p
Constant	.6371	.7333	.8688	.3861
Tie Strength	-.2156	.2173	-.9924	.3224
Expertise	.8128	.1724	4.7147	.0000
int_1	.0273	.0420	.6512	.5158

Table 4c: Results for Moderation Analysis (H_{3a})

	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
int_1	.0014	.4240	1.0000	176.0000	.5158

Results from the analysis shown in Table 4a indicate that it is a significant model between H_{3a} variables. The results also indicated that 41.33% of the variables are being explained. Results from the analysis shown in Table 4b give indication of tie strength as moderating factor between source's expertise and purchase intention. The results imply that there is a modest relationship between the variables. The p-value was not statistically significant for tie strength at significant level of 5% and the interaction between tie strength and source's expertise at significant level of 5% whilst the p-value was statistically significant for source's expertise at significant level of 1%. Results from the analysis shown in Table 4c indicate that there is no significant change when the moderation variable; tie strength is added into the regression analysis. The results also indicate that the p-value of the interaction between moderator or tie strength and predictor variable or source's expertise is not statistically significant as $p > 0.05$. This imply that the proposed hypothesis; tie strength positively moderates the relationship between expertise of WOM source and older consumers' purchase intention is not supported.

Table 5a: Results for Moderation Analysis (H_{3b})

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.6503	.4229	1.1511	42.9857	3.0000	176.0000	.0000

Table 5b: Results for Moderation Analysis (H_{3b})

Model	Coefficient	SE	t	p
Constant	.2236	.7178	.3115	.7558

Tie Strength	-.1079	.2218	-.4867	.6271
Expertise	.9830	.1691	5.8115	.0000
int_1	-.0078	.0419	-.1870	.8519

Table 5c: Results for Moderation Analysis (H$_{3b}$)

	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
int_1	.0001	.0350	1.0000	176.0000	.8519

Results from the analysis shown in Table 5a indicate that it is a significant model between H$_{3b}$ variables. The results also indicated that 42.29% of the variables are being explained. Results from the analysis shown in Table 5b give indication of tie strength as moderating factor between source's trustworthiness and purchase intention. The results imply that there is a modest relationship between the variables. The p-value was not statistically significant for tie strength at significant level of 5% and the interaction between tie strength and source's trustworthiness at significant level of 5% whilst the p-value was statistically significant for source's trustworthiness at significant level of 1%. Results from the analysis shown in Table 5c indicate that there is no significant change when the moderation variable; tie strength is added into the regression analysis. The results also indicate that the p-value of the interaction between moderator or tie strength and predictor variable or source's trustworthiness is not statistically significant as p > 0.05. This imply that the proposed hypothesis; tie strength positively moderates the relationship between trustworthiness of WOM source and older consumers' purchase intention is not supported.

Table 6a: Results for Moderation Analysis (H$_{3c}$)

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.5900	.3481	1.3002	31.3281	3.0000	176.0000	.0000

Table 6b: Results for Moderation Analysis (H$_{3c}$)

Model	Coefficient	SE	t	p
Constant	.0819	.7618	.1075	.9145
Tie Strength	.1941	.2117	.9169	.3604
Expertise	1.0130	.2009	5.0431	.0000
int_1	-.0624	.0446	-1.3984	.1637

Table 6c: Results for Moderation Analysis (H$_{3c}$)

	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
int_1	.0072	1.9557	1.0000	176.0000	.1637

Results from the analysis shown in Table 6a indicate that it is a significant model between H$_{3c}$ variables. The results also indicated that 34.81% of the variables are being explained. Results from the analysis shown in Table 6b give indication of tie strength as moderating factor between richness of message content and purchase intention. The results imply that there is a modest relationship between the variables. The p-value was not statistically significant for tie strength at significant level of 5% and the interaction between tie strength and richness of message content at significant level of 5% whilst the p-value was statistically significant for richness of message content at significant level of 1%. Results from the analysis shown in Table 6c indicate that there is no significant change when the moderation variable; tie strength is added into the regression analysis. The results also indicate that the p-value of the interaction between moderator or tie strength and predictor variable or richness of message content is not statistically significant as p > 0.05. This imply that the proposed hypothesis; tie strength positively moderates the relationship between richness of message content of WOM and older consumers' purchase intention is not supported.

Table 7a: Results for Moderation Analysis (H$_{3d}$)

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.4378	.1916	1.6122	13.9086	3.0000	176.0000	.0000

Table 7b: Results for Moderation Analysis (H$_{3d}$)

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Model	Coefficient	SE	t	p
Constant	-.0038	.8230	-.0046	.9963
Tie Strength	.9040	.2074	4.3583	.0000
Expertise	.8307	.2429	3.4197	.0008
int_1	-.1596	.0496	-3.2168	.0015

Table 7c: Results for Moderation Analysis (H$_{3d}$)

	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
int_1	.0475	10.3480	1.0000	176.0000	.0015

Results from the analysis shown in Table 7a indicate that it is a significant model between H$_{3d}$ variables. The results also indicated that 19.16% of the variables are being explained. Results from the analysis shown in Table 7b give indication of tie strength as moderating factor between strength of advocacy and purchase intention. The results imply that there is a modest relationship between the variables. The p-value of; tie strength, strength of advocacy and the interaction between tie strength and strength of advocacy, at significant level of 1% was statistically significant. Results from the analysis shown in Table 7c indicate that there is a significant change when the moderation variable; tie strength is added into the regression analysis. The results also indicate that the p-value of the interaction between moderator or tie strength and predictor variable or richness of message content is statistically significant as $p > 0.05$. This imply that the proposed hypothesis; tie strength positively moderates the relationship between strength of advocacy of WOM and older consumers' purchase intention is supported.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Discussion on source credibility (expertise and trustworthiness of WOM source).

Findings indicate that the expertise and trustworthiness of WOM source does impact the intention of purchasing mobile phone among the older population. Gilly, Graham, Wolfinbarger & Yale (1998), Jun, Cha & Aggarwal (2011) and Martin & Lueg (2013) reasoned that the information provided by experts are persuasive enough as their knowledge and experience are of higher value. The elderly thus is likely to be persuaded to act upon their purchase intention based on any information from messages delivered by those perceived as experts. This is because the delivered message would be more effective in tempting the intention of older consumers towards purchasing as the possibility of them to accept instead of debating any expert's information is higher. A trustworthy source may also affect consumer's purchase intention. Older consumers in particular put emphasis on trustworthiness when it comes to communication and the perceived honesty of the message source might prompt the elderly to make the purchase. Findings also indicate that tie strength does not moderate the relationships between source's expertise and older consumers' purchase intention and source's trustworthiness and older consumers' purchase intention. The elderly value their bound with others even though the depth of such bond might lessen the impact of source's expertise towards older consumers' purchase intention. Trocchia & Janda (2000) clarified that the elderly is more inclined to change their decision to align themselves with opinions of others whom they perceived as important. The elderly nevertheless is expose to risk whenever they put their trust on others as it would mean becoming vulnerable to the actions of others.

5.2 Discussion on Word of Mouth (WOM) message (richness and strength of advocacy).

Findings indicate that WOM message in terms of richness and strength of advocacy does impact the intention of purchasing mobile phone among the older population. Sweeney et al. (2008) considers the content of WOM message to be rich when it provides informative product details. The provided details in turn might be perceived credible and persuasive and subsequently affect consumer's behavioral intention. Sweeney et al. (2008) also considers the strength of advocacy of WOM message to be significant for the recipient and sender. Strength of advocacy is apparent through the manner of message delivery. WOM message that is positively delivered affect the consumer's perception and as a result, affect their behavioral intention as well. The elderly in particular tend to be more convinced by emotional messages (Fung & Carstensen, 2003). Tie strength for WOM message indicate opposing

findings as tie strength does not moderate the relationship between richness of message content and older consumers' purchase intention while tie strength does moderate the relationship between strength of advocacy and older consumers' purchase intention. The elderly tend to rely upon their personal bounds with others (Jun et al., 2011) whenever information is needed to clarify any uncertainties that arises. Such tendency however might affect consumers' thought process depending on the closeness of the consumer with the information provider.

6. CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION AND RECOMMENDATION

The population for older consumers is growing in numbers however the efforts in marketing mobile phones to them remain lacking. Such efforts are emphasized in this study as the outcomes would be beneficial to both sides, marketers and consumers. Hence, outcomes of this study aid marketers with their mobile phone campaigns by providing better understanding of how WOM could impact consumers' purchasing intention particularly among the older population. The outcomes would help enhance the current practice whilst developing marketing strategies that takes advantage of their new understanding. Moreover, companies' awareness regarding their adopted marketing plan can further be improved by incorporating WOM communication so that their competitive advantage could be sustain in the long run. This study is aimed at understanding the impact of WOM towards the intent to purchase mobile phone among older consumers. The impact is examined through hypothesized relationship and tie strength as moderator between variables. The study's variables were all related to WOM and consist of source's expertise, source's trustworthiness, richness of message content, strength of advocacy, tie strength and older consumer's purchase intention. Data analysis based on empirical collection indicated that all the hypotheses proposed were supported. The support implied that WOM source and message content do have their own role to play in influencing the elderly purchasing intent. In terms of tie strength as moderator, data analyzed supported only one hypothesis which were strong tie does moderate the impact of strength of advocacy of WOM and the purchase intention of older consumers. Literature revealed that the tendency to be persuaded by advertising appeal that are infused with emotions is higher with older consumers due to their perceived limited time and declining cognitive abilities. Findings suggested that older consumers are more likely to act upon their purchase intention when they received credible recommendations from others whom they trust. The elderly also is inclined to make the purchase when the recommendations are rich in informative content. Such recommendations have a strong emotional appeal that attracts the older population's attention. Limitations faced in this study is mainly rooted from the study scope as time and financial constraints affected the data collection process. Hence, future studies should include different age groups and areas to provide a more comprehensive understanding.

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