

## **ANTECEDENTS OF CUSTOMER CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR AMONG AUTOMOBILE ONLINE BRAND COMMUNITY IN MALAYSIA**

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### **Abstract**

This study intends to explore the antecedents of customer citizenship behaviour (CCB) in Malaysia. CCB has been frequently debated in the last few decades, but researchers have not reached consensus on the definitions of various extra-role behaviour due to the inconsistent terminologies of CCB. The systematic sampling among 156 members of automobile online brand communities revealed that brand trust and brand love have significant relationships with customer citizenship behaviour. However, only brand love have significant effect on CCB. The finding of the study give new idea to marketing manager, in understanding the important factor that motivate CCB among online brand community in Malaysia.

*Key Words: social media, online community, brand trust, brand love, customer citizenship behavior*

### **1.0 Introduction**

Online communities provide new ways for people to share knowledge with others without the need to see each other (Hsu, Ju, Yen, & Chang, 2007). Online community is defined as an aggregation of people who share a common attention and communicate through electronic internet user groups, mailing lists, chat rooms, or any other computer-mediated mechanism (Kim, Choi, Qualls, & Han, 2008). Social media (e.g., blogs, Facebook, and Twitter) is a type of online community and platform for a brand community to connect and share their enthusiasm about their favourite brands with their friends, personal contacts, and other acquaintances (Schau, Muniz, & Arnould, 2009; Laroche, Habibi, Richard, & Sankaranarayanan, 2012).

Nowadays, organisations intend to support the development of online communities (Hsu et al., 2007) because a strong brand community can develop committed and loyal customer base (Jang, Olfman, Ko, Koh, & Kim, 2008). The interaction among the members of an online brand community will also lead to certain behaviours that could affect overall brand success (McWilliam, 2000; Adjei, Noble, & Noble, 2012). Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) referred brand community as "a specialised, nongeographical bound community, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of the brand (p.412)." Empirical evidence has revealed that online brand communities can be important sources of valuable market information. Community members usually own a lot of product knowledge, discuss the introduction of new products, generate ideas for new product development, and share their experiences with the organisation (Fuller, Jawecki, & Muhlbacher, 2007). Thus, an online brand community can help organisations to (1) understand consumer needs and (2) generate new idea for future product or service improvement (Kim, et al., 2008).

Members of an online community also contribute to the group spontaneously without expecting return or reciprocation from the companies (Yu & Chu 2007). For instance, members of an online community would voluntarily assist other members with buying decision, suggestions of new idea for product developments, and promoting positive word-of-mouth (Sicilia & Palazon, 2008; Nambisan & Baron, 2009; Yen, Hsu, & Huang, 2011; Royo-Vela, & Casamassima, 2011; Munnukka, Karjaluto, & Tikkanen, 2015; Sierra, Badrinarayanan, & Taute, 2016). All these behaviours are commonly associated with customer citizenship behaviour (CCB)—an unconditional behaviour performed by customers to benefit particular brands or firms (Yi & Gong, 2008; Huang & You, 2011). However, past studies have focused CCB in an offline context (Groth, 2005) and very few studies have concentrated on CCB among online brand community members (Anaza, 2014). Considering the growing importance of social media among brand communities in Malaysia, this study attempts to examine how members of an online brand community react (specifically CCB) and what factors contribute to their behaviours.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Customer Citizenship Behavior (CCB)**

CCB refers to a person's self-willingness to engage in unsolicited, helpful, and constructive behaviors toward other customers and the firm (Groth, 2005; Bove, Pervan, Beatty, & Shiu, 2009; Bartikowski & Walsh, 2011; Yi, Gong, & Lee, 2013). In online community context, customers who engage in CCB are more likely to express their support for an organisation (Bateman & Organ, 1983) by engaging in positive WOM, sharing their belief in the brand, as well as recommending their communities to relatives and friends (Bettencourt, 1997; Anderson, Fornell, & Mazvancheryl, 2004; Albert, Merunka, & Valette-Florence, 2013; Tuškej, Golob, & Podnar, 2013; Vallaster & Lindgreen, 2013; Casalo, Flavian, & Guinaliu, 2013). CCB has been interchangeably termed as customer discretionary behaviour (Ford, 1995; Soch & Aggarwal, 2013), customer voluntary performance (Bettencourt, 1997; Rosenbanum & Massiah, 2009), customer extra-role behaviour (Aherne, Bhattacharya & Gruen, 2005), customer OCBs (Bove, Pervan, Betty & Shiu, 2009), and *e*-customer citizenship behaviour (Ponnusamy, & Ho, 2015; Chen, Hsieh, Chang, & Chen, 2015).

In most recent studies, CCB has been discussed and applied in the online behaviour context (Anaza & Zhao, 2013). Chen, Chen, and Farn (2010) examined factors that influenced community citizenship behaviour among Taiwanese community fashion. The study revealed that service quality and social climate were the important factors to influence member satisfaction and promote community citizenship behaviour. In another study, Ho (2014) investigated the behaviour of young adult Facebook brand community in Taiwan and found that brand trust and community identification play an important role in influencing in-role and extra-role behaviours. However, limited attention has been given to the factors that foster customer citizenship behaviour (CCB) in online communities (Chen et al., 2010; Hsu, & Yen, 2016). Considering these issues, the present study intends to examine brand trust and brand love as the primary determinants for developing CCB among automobile online brand community (OBC) members in Malaysia.

Different conceptualisations of customer citizenship behaviours have also been reported in the service literature (Bove et al., 2009; Groth, 2005; Johnson & Rapp, 2010). Bettencourt (1997) suggested the three dimensions of CCB: loyalty, participation, and cooperation. Groth (2005) indicated that CCB consists of three dimensions: making recommendations, providing feedback to the organisation, and helping other customers. Further, Johnson and Rapp (2010) proposed eight different dimensions, which are expanding behaviours, supporting behaviours, forgiving behaviours, increasing quantity, competitive information, responding to research, displaying brands, and increasing price. This study adapted the three dimension of

CCB from Groth (2005), which are recommendation, helping customers, and providing feedback. Recommendation refers to the voluntary creation and distribution of messages by customer to the family, peers, and friends, particularly about knowledge and the firm's products or services. Helping customers refers to a customer's willingness to assist other customers in using the product or service. Lastly, providing feedback refers to a customer's willingness to help a firm and its employees by providing useful information, which the company can use to improve future product or service performance.

## **2.2 The social exchange theory (SET)**

The relationship between brand trust, brand love, and CCB can be explained by the social exchange theory [SET]. A SET is based on the fundamental premise that people develop and maintain relationships with others over time because of the belief that doing so will benefit both the customers and organisations (Blau, 1964). In online brand community context, the customer usually reciprocates positive behaviour from a sense of personal obligation or gratitude, and when customers engage in the community, they will foster CCB among other customers (Yi, Gong, & Lee, 2013). For instance, customers who achieve a level of trust with a company will talk positively about the product or brand to others, giving constructive suggestions to improve the service and cooperating with the employees (Balaji, 2014). Besides, customers who feel love for a brand are more likely to talk about the brand to others, and promote positive word-of-mouth (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012; Rageh Ismail & Spinelli, 2012; Yasin & Shamim, 2013). All these behaviours represent a social exchange which denotes that the customers are willing to enhance their relationship with the members and companies (Anaza & Zhao, 2013). Based on this theory, a hypothesised relationship was developed as proposed in the following section.

## **2.3 Brand trust**

Brand trust is an important component of successful marketing relationships (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Garbarino & Johnson, 1999). Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) defined brand trust as "the willingness of the customer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function." Trust exists when one party has confidence in an exchange partner's reliability and integrity (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). In an online community context, Fuller, Metzler, and Hoppe (2008) explained that brand trust is the degree to which a community member believes that the brand keeps its promises regarding performance. A brand that successfully delivers products and services as promised can generate customers trust, and the customers in turn would be inclined to maintain a relationship with the brand (Butler & Cantrell, 1994). Previous studies have revealed that the more a customer trusts a company or brand, the more he or she is willing to engage in positive word-of-mouth, help other community members who have problems, and give constructive suggestions to improve the service (Xu, Li, & Shao, 2012; Balaji, 2014; Ho, 2014). This is in line with the social exchange theory, which proposes that two parties are more likely to have "prepaid and latter return" behaviour and strategies when they have mutual trust as a basis (Blau, 1964). Thus, it is expected that brand trust will be positively related to represent the CCB in an automobile online brand community, because previous finding has attested the positive role of brand trust in brand relationship continuation. It is expected that brand trust will be positively related to represent the CCB in an automobile online brand community.

H1: Brand trust has a significant relationship on customer citizenship behaviour.

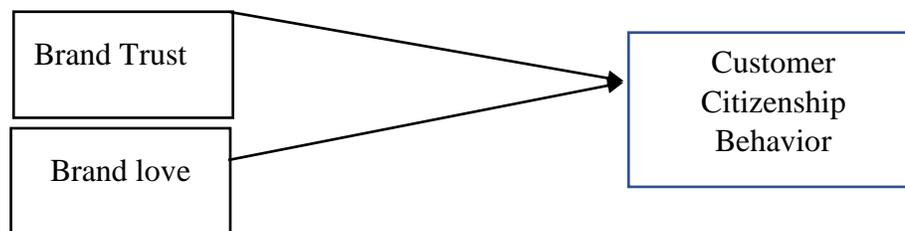
## **2.4 Brand Love**

Recent literature on marketing notes brand love as an important construct that affects customer-brand relationships (Fournier, 1998; Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005; Rageh Ismail, & Spinelli, 2012). Brand love refers to "the degree of passionate, emotional attachment a satisfied customer

has for a particular trade name” (Carrol & Ahuvia, 2006). In a business environment, a brand that is able to create emotion among customers can get competitive advantage because the more a customer feels love for a brand, the more he or she will be motivated to engage in word-of-mouth, give suggestions for brand improvements, spread personal experience, tolerate brand failures, forgive mistakes made by the brand, and share positive brand information (Füller, Matzler, & Hoppe, 2008; Heinrich, Albrecht, & Bauer, 2012; Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012; Albert, Merunka, & Valette-Florence, 2013; Albert, & Merunka, 2013; Fetscherin, 2014; Wallace, Buil, & Chernatony, 2014). Based on related finding, a hypothesis was postulates that the more a customer loves a brand the more he or she is willing engage in CCB.

H2: Brand love has a significant relationship on customer citizenship behaviour.

Based on previous discussion, the following research framework is developed.



**Figure 1:** Research Framework

### **3.0 Research Methodology**

This study involves individual customers of Proton who participate in an automobile online brand community in Malaysia. Proton has recorded considerably high numbers of sales and passengers in Malaysia (Lye, 2016). In terms of involvement in social media, Proton has rendered the highest number of entertaining posts (Kormin, & Baharun, 2016) which has served as a crucial factor that affects the behaviour of social media users (Sledgianowski & Kulviwat, 2009; Lin & Lu, 2011). An automobile online brand community is selected because of the high levels of emotion and involvement among the owners, which encourage brand community participation and engagement (Algesheimer, Dholakia, & Herrmann, 2005). The sample of this study consisted of 384 respondents, which is considered adequate by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Before the data collection process, the organisers or the admin of three automobile clubs at Facebook were contacted. The clubs were Exora Owners Club Motorspot (EOCM), Proton Preve Owners Club (PREVOC), and Proton Saga BLM Owners Club (PROSBOC), the purpose being to seek permission to conduct the study. The organisers of each club then encouraged their members to complete the survey. Based on the list of members at Facebook, the members appropriate for the study were selected based systematic random sampling. Every five members from the list were selected to participate in this study. At the end of the data collection period, only 172 questionnaires were collected and determined to be usable for the data analysis.

#### **3.1 Measurement of variables**

The questionnaire consists of several sections. The first part seeks to gain information about the demographic profiles of the respondents, including their gender, state, ethnicity, income, education, and social media behaviour. The second part comprises the measurement for brand trust, brand love, and customer citizenship behavior (CCB). The eight items for brand trust were adapted from Delgado-Ballester’ (2004); the eight items of brand love from Carrol and Ahuvia (2006); and the three

dimensions of CCB (helping behaviors, service firm facilitation, and recommendation) were adapted from Groth (2005). Respondents rated their degree of agreement to questions anchored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

### **Findings and Discussion**

The profile of the respondents is presented in table 1. Table 1 shows that the majority of the respondents are male (88.4%), aged between 27–35 years (55.2%). In terms of ethnicity, majority are Malays (93.6%). In term of education background, 64.0% of the respondents are from higher education, with a range of income between RM 2,001 to 4,000 (43.6 %). Most of the respondents are from Selangor (34.9%).

**Table 1: Respondent's Profile**

Category	Frequency	Percentage %
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	152	88.4
Female	20	11.6
<b>Age</b>		
18-26 years old	28	16.3
27-35 years old	95	55.2
36-45 years old	41	23.8
46 years over	8	4.7
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Malay	161	93.6
Chinese	5	2.9
Indian	2	1.2
Others	4	2.3
<b>Education</b>		
Primary school	4	2.3
Secondary school	57	33.1
Higher Education	110	64.0
Others	1	0.6
<b>Income</b>		
Less than 2,000	52	30.2
2,001–4,000	75	43.6
4,001–6,000	28	16.3
6,001–8,000	9	5.2
More than 8,000	8	4.7
<b>State</b>		
Selangor	60	34.9
Johor	15	8.7
Sabah	3	1.7
sarawak	4	2.3
Perak	13	7.6
Kedah	6	3.5
Kuala Lumpur	18	10.5

P.Pinang	7	4.1
Kelantan	7	4.1
Pahang	7	4.1
Terengganu	6	3.5
N.Sembilan	12	7.0
Melaka	14	8.1

This study involves three groups of automobile online brand community. Overall, 30.2 % of the responses were obtained from Exora Owners Club Motorspot (EOCM), 22.7% from Proton Preve Owners Club (PREVOC), and 47.1 % from Proton Saga BLM Owners Club (PROSBOC). In terms of involvement in online brand community, 30.8% have joined the community for more than 4 years. Others details are shown in table 2.

**Table 2: General Behaviour of Online Brand Community**

Category	Frequency	Percentage %
<b>Membership Tenure</b>		
Less than 1 year	40	23.3
1–2 years	37	21.5
2–3 years	25	14.5
3–4 years	17	9.9
More than 4 years	53	30.8
<b>Online Frequency</b>		
Rarely	5	2.9
Once a month	3	1.7
Once every 2 weeks	4	2.3
Once a week	11	6.4
2–4 times a week	26	15.1
5–6 times a week	10	5.8
Once a day	33	19.2
Several times a day	80	46.5
<b>Posting Frequency</b>		
Rarely	104	60.5
Once a month	23	13.4
Once a week	14	8.1
2–4 times a week	15	8.7
5–6 times a week	4	2.3
Every day	5	2.9
Several times a day	7	4.1
<b>Commenting Frequency</b>		
Never	7	4.1
Very seldom	24	14.0
Sometimes	117	68.0
Often	21	12.2
Regularly	3	1.7

### 3.2 Reliability Test

Cronbach’s Alpha was used to assess the consistency of the scales used. The value of Cronbach’s Alpha should be at least .60 for an exploratory study, and .70 is considered better (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). The analysis indicated that all the main variables were reliable (brand trust = 0.861, brand love = 0.902, and CCB = 0.962). Following Hair et al., (2006) rule of thumb, the internal consistency of items in this study ranged from “good” to “excellent.”

### 3.3 Pearson’s Correlation

The strength of relationship between brand trust and brand love on customer citizenship behaviour was investigated using Pearson correlation coefficient. On the basis of the findings, brand trust and brand love had a positive, moderate correlation on CCB (brand trust [ $r = .418$ ], brand love [ $r = .486$ ]). The following table 3 summarises the result for Pearson’s correlation.

**Table 3:** Pearson’s Correlation Analysis of Variables

Brand trust	0.418**
Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
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Brand love	0.486**
Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### 3.4 Regression analysis

A regression analysis was carried out to test the hypotheses formulated and identify significant predictors of CCB. The analysis was based on assumptions as suggested by Hair et al. (2006). The following tables summarises the result for H1 and H2.

**Table 4 :** Result of regression analysis

Variables	$\beta$	t- value	p- value
Brand Trust	0.189	2.238	0.027**
Brand Love	0.368	4.353	0.000*

Notes: Significance at: \* $p, \leq 0.01$  and \*\* $p, \geq 0.01$ ;  $R^2 = 0.258$  adjusted  $R^2 = 0.249$ ; dependent variable: Customer Citizenship Behavior (CCB)

Results shown in Table 4 indicate that brand trust has an insignificant effect on CCB ( $\beta = 0.189$ ,  $p, \geq 0.01$ ) and brand love has a significant effect on CCB ( $\beta = 0.368$ ,  $p, \leq 0.01$ ). Therefore, H1 is not supported, and H2 is supported.

### 3.5 Contribution of the study

The objective of this study is to examine the factor that influences CCB among online brand communities in Malaysia. The findings indicate that brand trust has a positive relationship with CCB, in line with the discovery of Ho (2014), who attested the influence of brand trust on the extra-role behaviour

among Facebook brand community in Taiwan. In an automobile industry, the feeling of love is also key to competing with other competitors because such a factor will motivate the community to help each other, provide positive recommendation, and provide feedback to the company. Therefore, to encourage brand community involvement in CCB, companies must manage all product information and communication to ensure that the available information is trustworthy. Besides, to create brand love and enjoyment feeling among the community, companies can reward and give attention to a brand community that is active in sharing feedback and information about the brand. Positive and negative feedbacks can give valuable impact to the companies, improve their product or service, and recover the existing service problems and improper services quality (Yi & Gong 2013; Nguyen, Goth, Walsh, & Hennig-Thurau, 2014).

### **3.6 Limitation and Future Research**

Several limitations in this study need to be acknowledged. First, the sample of this study is limited to the brand community of Proton. Future studies need to consider other online brand communities, such as Perodua and other international automobile brands in order to generalise the developed framework. Future research could also consider other determinants including brand satisfaction as other factors to influence CCB.

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