

# A Quantitative Insight into Digital Marketing and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) for SME Food & Beverage (F&B) Industry in Klang Valley Malaysia

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## Abstract

Recent businesses struggle to promote their brand due to lack of knowledge and expertise in running effective marketing campaigns and customer relationship management in digital marketing. Customer relationship experience, generational gap, data privacy and security effect on how customers will react to digital marketing. This paper studies the relationship between customer relationship experience in digital marketing and customer relationship management, to examine the relationship between generation gap in digital marketing and customer relationship management and to determine the relationship between customers' perception of data privacy and security in digital marketing and customer relationship management. The study employed a quantitative methodology. Data was collected through a self-administered survey questionnaire. Simple random sampling technique is used and a total of 220 questionnaires were returned out of 132, with a response rate of 60 percent. The target population consists of walk-in customers in four selected local SME F&B businesses in Klang Valley. The findings shows that there is significant positive strong relationship between customer relationship management in digital marketing and generational gap. A moderate positive relationship is found between customer relationship management in digital marketing and customer relationship experience and data privacy and security concerns. This study will benefit the local SME F&B businesses to remain competitive and drive towards a sustainable long-term growth. The local SME F&B businesses will have a clearer picture of customers behaviour and perception by tracking customer purchasing behaviour.

**Keywords:** Customer Relationship Management in Digital Marketing, Customer Relationship Experience, Generational Gap, Data Privacy & Security.

**Introduction**

Since the last decade, the digital marketing communications in businesses, ranging from micro-SMEs, SMEs to large corporations, are steadily increasing in the B2B sector (Pandey, 2021). Digital marketing and advertisement are crucial for closing the generational gap and capturing the interest of Generation and Millennials (Munsch, 2021). Businesses to evolve and reach a larger pool of consumers without spending a fortune on offline marketing strategies such as roadside billboards, banners, and posters. Business models for digital marketing are based on how users interact in customer relationship management programs, which also requires examining user-generated content and the resources used by the customers (Saura et al., 2020). Incorporating digital marketing and at the same time engaging customer relationship experience is not an easy task. Nonetheless, it results in building a sustainable brand and satisfied customers if managed successfully.

Based on the World Bank's data, about 90% of the Malaysian population was internet users in 2020 which is an increase of 23.8% from 2012 (Müller, 2021). In early 2022, the Facebook ad's reach in Malaysia was equivalent to 65.8% of the total population. However, according to New Straits Times Malaysia, many small businesses struggle to promote their brands due to lack of knowledge and expertise in running effective marketing campaigns and customer relationship experience. survey reveals that 98% of marketers concur that personalization enhances customer experiences (Edge Market, 2021). But according to Agarwal et al., (2019), only 25% of customers are pleased with the amount of personalization customers receive from firms.

All generations, except Gen Z, favour emails as preferred mean of communication with the companies (Talbot, 2021). The boomers are keener than Gen Z to communicate with firms through TV advertisements. Thus, to develop the omni-channel digital marketing strategies, brands need to consider the generational gap as each generation has a different preference for reaching out.

The advanced ICT capabilities enable businesses to collect and use customer information cost effectively (Goldfarb & Tucker, 2019). However, it also raises concern about consumers' data privacy (Nissenbaum, 2018). The relationship of trust between a consumer and a brand is fundamentally based on privacy concerns. Both workers' training and precautions against data theft and transparency on the usage of data are essential. Thus, how data may be scaled while preserving client trust and privacy is an important challenge. This customer relationship experience (Agarwal et al., 2019), generation gap (Talbot, 2021) and data privacy assurance (Nissenbaum, 2018) in digital marketing for better customer relationship management.

Thus, the research question formulated for this study are as follows:

- i. Is there a significant relationship between customer relationship experience in digital marketing and customer relationship management?
- ii. Is there a significant relationship between the generation gap in digital marketing and customer relationship management?
- iii. Is there a significant relationship between customers' perception of data privacy and security in digital marketing and customer relationship management?

The next section reviews the literature to develop research framework and hypotheses. The research methodology is explained in section 3. Section 4 discusses the research findings followed by conclusion and research limitations.

### **Theoretical Support and Literature Review**

According to a Digital World Marketing Forum, five billion people in the world have mobile devices and 4 billion people are connected to the internet (Hannay, 2019). The advanced ICT technologies facilitate efficient, targeted, and cost-effective marketing tools. Which enable marketers to collect, analyse and use all type of data (structured and unstructured) for targeted advertisements, customers-centric marketing plans and customer engagement. Thus, the adoption of digital marketing tools would spur the way forward for small and medium sized food and beverage enterprises to have efficient marketing campaign.

### **Customer Relationship Management (CRM)**

The Customer relationship management (CRM) is defined as "the philosophy, policy and coordinating strategy mediated by a set of information technologies, which focuses on creating two-way communications with customers so that firms have an intimate knowledge of their needs, wants, and buying patterns" (Zhang et al., 2008, p.97). The basis of Customer Relationship Management is a set of tools that are specially identified to address the three axis of a company-customer relationship which are sales, marketing, and customer service (Gomez et al., 2020). The product and services sales are affected by customer relationship management (CRM) in building trust and loyalty towards the product and services (Purnomowati et al., 2022).

The businesses may obtain enormous amounts of data to meet the demand of consumers by profiling consumers (Zaim et al., 2020). The importance of CRM has grown in comparison to the past to get proper, understanding of consumers' needs. The modern technologies and systems offer practical and cost-effective ways to comprehend consumer behaviour. The primary goal of CRM is to enhance consumers' perceptions of how consumers fit in and interact with the business. Furthermore, the CRM's central database is accessible to all the company's consumers, allowing consumers to access a variety of the company's services and products. Everyone will be more aware of the firm's services and products and decides what is best for the consumer's expectations and needs (Al-Suraihi et al., 2020).

### **Customer Relationship Experience in Digital Marketing**

The digital marketing era began to expand in 2014 (Faruk et al., 2021). The communication has become significantly more convenient than it was in older times because of the innovation of social media, the web, and smartphone apps (Khomenko et al., 2020). Every marketing and sales campaign nowadays includes an aspect of digital marketing. Another domain discovered by the segmentation is mobile marketing with app development. To reach a wider audience, marketers use mobile marketing strategies such as SMS marketing, popup advertisements on applications, and other approaches (Bhojaraja, 2018).

Building a stronger bond between the brand and the customer is the main goal of consumer experience. This has led consumers to prioritize experience over price and products. Customers' behaviour may be greatly influenced by developing a distinctive marketing experience that engages consumers on many personal levels.

Customers' behaviour may significantly affect purchase intention and can be influenced by developing a distinctive marketing experience that engages customers on many different personal levels (Esmailpour & Mohseni, 2019; Urdea et al., 2021).

According to Bolton et al (2018), the issue of how to put the idea of customized experiences into reality will be overwhelming in the future due to "the requirement for connectedness and congruence among the digital, physical, and social cultures." The literature highlights the importance of customer relationship experience, thus, this study aims to examine the relationship between customer relationship experience in digital marketing in relation to customer relationship management.

### **Customer Markets**

With reference to an academic article by Widihandojo & Athanasius (2022), customers are at the center of marketing efforts in the Six Market Model by Payne (1991), hence the "customer market" is regarded as the model's central market. Businesses must place a strong emphasis on supplier markets in order to add value for the customer markets. Improved quality, just-in-time delivery, lower levels of inventory, and other benefits come from developing deeper, mutually beneficial relationships with suppliers. Consequently, by supplying high and consistent quality in a timely manner, strategic alliances with suppliers help a business to create value for its customers and this results in customer happiness. As the world currently are going through a technological revolution and most of the consumers are savvy, consumer expectations are at an all-time high. This has brought on by the many technological advances that can improve the consumer experience during purchase. Therefore, the expectations of the consumer have increased and SMEs can't afford to overlook this portion. As described in the Six Market Model by Payne (1991), the customer market is the most important for any business and therefore it is imperative that the company must take care of the customer.

H1: Customer relationship experience in digital marketing has a significant relationship with customer relationship management.

### **Generation Gap in Digital Marketing**

Generation is a method of market segmentation (Islam et al., 2018; Sawaftah et al., 2021). It is crucial to concentrate on generational cohort segmentation in order to comprehend how each generation interacts with brand pages on social media and what motivates consumers to engage with information (Msallati, 2021, Magni & Manzoni 2020). The relative impact of different features of digital marketing on brand defence deviates by generation (Sawaftah et al. (2021). The risk factors are not present for younger generations, such as Generation Y and Generation Z, who are digital natives. Marketers should focus on minimizing baby boomers' and Gen Xers' perceptions of purchasing risk (Lissitsa & Kol, 2019).

Furthermore, Roth-Cohen et al (2021), research suggest that in order to influence Generation X consumers into purchase intention, advertisers are advised to disclose information; Generation Y consumers are multi-taskers, thus, Generation Y do not find mobile advertisements to be annoying or bothersome; Generation Z reacts well to communications that are engaging, straightforward, reliable, and informational.

**Generational Cohort Theory**

Mannheim (1952), initially proposed the idea of generational cohort theory, which is characterized as a certain type of characterization of a region. The fact that particular patterns of experience and cognition tend to emerge as one generation shifts to the next generation (Thach et al., 2020). According to Inglehart's (1997), generational cohort theory, people who experience the same political, economic, and social events will be shaped into people with comparable attitudes, morals, and behaviors. According to the generational cohort model, individuals may be divided into groups according to generations (Kim & Park, 2019), where people within each generational cohort distinguish by sharing common experiences, expectations, values, aspirations, talents, traits, and lifestyles (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021; Grow & Yang, 2018). It allows these people to maintain a relatively stable identity throughout the course of lifetimes (Kim & Park, 2019). Generation X had little exposure to Western values, culture, and technology, which Generation X later came to fully understand and enjoy as adults with the development of modern communication technology. Because Gen Xers are susceptible to peer pressure, marketers find it easier to target Generation X with commercials (Dabija et al., 2018).

Generation Y, which is known as the Millennials, is a fast-growing group in terms of social impact, political power, and economic strength. Youn & Kim (2019), found that social contacts, friendships, civic activities, and hobbies are all heavily mediated by digital technology in Generation Y's lifestyles and daily lives, which has shaped Generation Y to be digital natives. The continual flow of information has become the norm for the majority of this generation, who are multi-taskers who uses smart devices for social networking, job searching, and grassroots-generated information collection about goods, services, schools, employment, and travel experiences. In terms of spending, Generation Y is more likely to engage in status-seeking consumption to portray standard of living and spending power (Liu et al., 2018).

There is no consensus in the literature as to when generation Y began and ended as no widely acknowledged date for the start of generation Z has been established due to the lack of agreement on this matter. However, most of Generation Z are active on social networking sites, (Korombel & Ławińska, 2019). It was observed that Generation Z has a relatively limited attention span for digital marketing communication and advertising since Generation Z are digital natives (Munsch, 2021). As a result, marketers are engaged in a vigorous battle for the attention and mindshare of Millennials. Social media websites and video-sharing websites like Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and YouTube are popular among Generation Z users. The challenge for digital marketers and advertisers is to create focused campaigns that will attract the interest of these forthcoming influential consumers of goods and brands—the digital natives.

H2: Generational gap in digital marketing has a significant relationship with customer relationship management.

**Customers' Perception of Data Privacy & Security in Digital Marketing**

Quach et al (2019), emphasises that customers are more concerned about privacy and the negative outcomes connected with it, such as information being used without permission. Recent businesses attempt to gather and use more customer data. Privacy is often seen as

the ability to regulate how information is shared (i.e., disclosed) and used (i.e., appropriated, invaded, and misrepresented). In relation to this, privacy concerns can also have an impact on how customers interact with businesses in customer relationship management since customers are less likely to disclose sensitive information or personal networks.

Numerous information streams are produced by digital marketing in customer relationship management (CRM), including but not restricted to names, credit card information, email addresses, and shipping addresses. Digital marketing comes with advantages and lower costs for vendors, but it also comes with dangers for consumers that can be either minimally detrimental or extremely harmful. These risks include monitoring of online behavior, location, intrusive marketing, and data breaches. Customer relationship management (CRM) systems frequently raise privacy issues, which in turn have a detrimental impact on consumers' behavioral intentions (Frik & Mittone, 2019).

The privacy-trust-behavioral intention (PTB) model (Liu et al., 2004) is used in this study because it aims to discover how consumers' privacy concerns can affect trust and intents. Trust becomes even more crucial in a high-tech setting. Websites without it probably don't exist at all. In researchers' findings, basic lack of confidence in online transactions that necessitate the customer's provision of personal information is the main barrier preventing many consumers from engaging in online shopping or giving vendors personal information (Wang & Herrando, 2019)

### **Privacy**

Malaysian academics Wen et al (2020), studied about the relationship between data privacy and consumer behavior towards the online shopping in Malaysia whereby privacy is a concern and data privacy features of a transaction could boost positivity in consumer's attitude towards shopping online. Malaysian academics Wen et al (2020), research was future interpreted to close the gap by using the Technological Acceptance Model (TAM) with examines the relationship between the influence of privacy towards shopping online.

Another academic research from Mckenzie et al (2022), stated that a marketing research and consulting firm, Ipsos had surveyed that in 2019, Malaysians revealed a high probability of acceptance with regards to sharing of data to the government or private sector when there are benefits bundled with it (Ipsos, 2019).

### **Trust**

In the view of social media marketing, the consumers are highly reliant on the trust factor when comes to various marketing interactions whereby trust plays a significant role, not only assuring but also delivering the results of online activities and translating the marketers' efforts in building consumer loyalty and branding. With reference to Warner-Søderholm et al., (2018) study, further analyses that user's trust varies from age, gender and time spent using social media (Warner-Søderholm et al., 2018).

Building consumer or customer trust is not a simple task as it requires a lot of effort and time to assure the consumer or customer. It is a continuous process that an organization or marketer, also known as the seller, needed to do to assure the consumer or customer to prove the quality of the product and services. Foundation in any business is trust, meaning for a

transaction to occur, it needs two parties which is the willing seller and willing buyer to trust each other before a transaction could take place (Akbar et al., 2019).

Al-Suraihi et al (2020), researched into how e-CRM success factors affected how well businesses performed. Researchers mission is to develop an integrated framework to study the influence of e-CRM success factors (process fit, customer information quality, and system support) on customer satisfaction, client trust, and client retention, all of which have an impact on the financial performance of Jordanian commercial banks in Amman. Researchers results showed a positive correlation between customer satisfaction, customer trust, and customer retention and the e-CRM success elements of process fit, customer information quality, and system support. The researchers have also discovered that customer trust and satisfaction have a positive effect on client retention. Customers' trust, satisfaction, and retention are found to have a favorable effect on business.

### Behavioral Intentions

The magnitude to which a person has made conscientious arrangements to engage in or refrain from engaging in a particular future behavior is known as behavioral intention (Deb, 2021). Influencing others, creating positive WOM, and purchasing the product are examples of behavioral intents (Bae, 2018). According to academic research from Handa & Gupta (2020), found that there is no significant relationship with the participation effort for the marketing campaign and consumer behavioral intention. Customers are more likely to stick with the same merchant after choosing one that provides service quality that meets or exceeds expectations. The most common indicator of customer retention is behavioral intent, which necessitates considering customer retention from a transactional standpoint (Anggraeni et al., 2020).

H3: Customers' perception of data privacy and security in digital marketing has a significant relationship with customer relationship management.

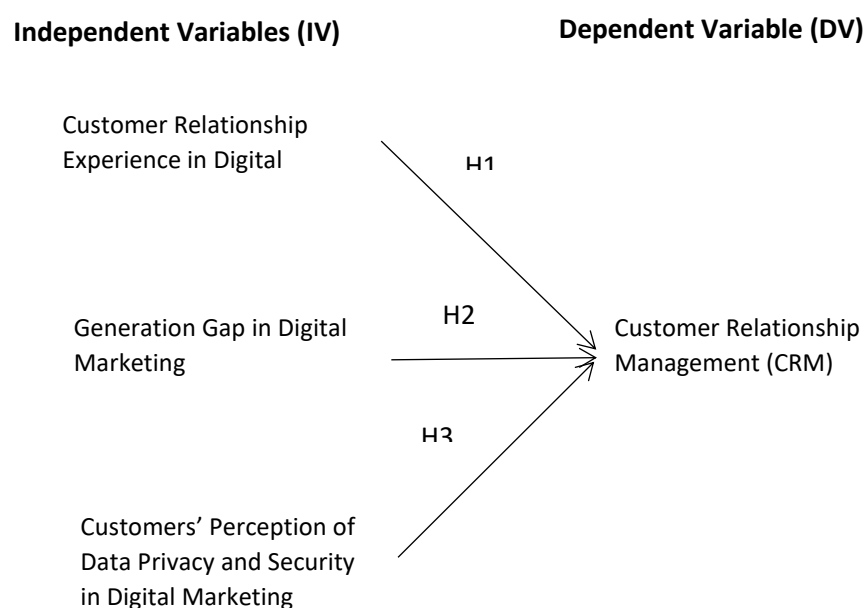


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

**Methodology**

This study employed the probability sampling approach across defined socio-demographics of age in the sample. A simple random sample of F&B customers was selected. The survey required 132 replies in total to be filled, while the gathered information was divided into generational cohorts as specified as the unit of analysis. A survey form was prepared using Google Forms and distributed via Google link, WhatsApp and QR code. The survey was conducted in two weeks' timeline.

The goal of the data analysis matrix is to process and examine the data by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 28. Descriptive and inferential statistics are the two types of statistical approaches used. Furthermore, the objective of this study was to examine the relationship of the independent variables towards customer relationship management. Simple correlation analysis is used to determine the relationship between independent variables and a dependent variable. This also gauges the strength of the correlation between the values of the dependent variable at different values of the independent variable. Predictions are made using the inferential statistics technique using sample data, and then generalizations about the population are concluded. Prior to deciding whether to employ Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation or Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, the normality test was evaluated.

**Data Analysis and Findings***Research Approach*

A research design is built on a well-articulated issue statement, research questions, and research goal. This study adopts quantitative approach that collectively measures the relationship between variables. From a given population of 200 and based on the Table in Determining Sample Size by Krejcie & Morgan (1970), the required sample size was 132. We chose to increase the required sample size by 10% to make for out-of-the-range responses, missing questionnaires, and incomplete responses. (Anderson et al., 2019).

**The Data**

A total of 69 (52.3 percent) female respondents and 63 (47.7 percent) male respondents participated in the study. This analysis indicates that female respondents had higher percentage of participation. An age control was used on this survey as can be seen in Figure 1. There are four categories of age groups assessed in this study which are Generation Boomers (born from 1946 to 1964), Generation X (born from 1965 to 1980), Generation Y (born from 1981 to 1996) and Generation Z (born from 1997 to 2012). The highest number of respondents were from the Generation Y (born from 1981 to 1996) with a total of 63 (47.7 percent) followed by Generation Z (born from 1997 to 2012) with a total of 35 (26.5 percent), followed by another Generation X (born from 1965 to 1980) with a total of 23 (17.4 percent) and finally Generation Boomers (born from 1946 to 1964) with a total of 11 (8.3 percent) participated in this study.

The study identified five statements, (1) Content marketing increases brand awareness and increases purchase intention; (2) I prefer to use social media as a platform in survey café, restaurant and shops before your visit to the restaurant or place an order for online delivery; (3) Online advertisement enhances purchase intention; (4) Good quality digital customer service enhances customer relationship management (CRM) engagement in customer



satisfaction and loyalty; (5) Pop up ads based on search history increase purchase intention and customer engagement. From the results shown in Table 1 below, 114 respondents agree that content marketing increases brand awareness and increases purchase intention. This was supported by another 118 respondents who agree that respondents prefer to use social media as a platform in survey café, restaurant and shops before your visit to the restaurant or place an order for online delivery. This was supported by another 108 respondents who agree that online advertisement enhances purchase intention. Followed by another 122 respondents who agree that good quality digital customer service enhances customer relationship management (CRM) engagement in customer satisfaction and loyalty. Lastly, the finding also shows that 83 respondents agree that pop up ads based on search history increase purchase intention and customer engagement.

Table 1

*Statements on Customer Relationship Management: n=132*

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
Content marketing increases brand awareness and increases purchase intention.	41	73	14	0	4
I prefer to use social media as a platform in survey café, restaurant, and shops before your visit to the restaurant or place an order for online delivery	54	64	9	0	5
Online advertisement enhances purchase intention.	41	67	18	4	2
Good quality digital customer service enhances customer relationship management (CRM) engagement in customer satisfaction and loyalty.	45	77	8	0	2
Pop up ads based on search history increase purchase intention and customer engagement.	37	46	31	13	5

Measures of central tendency were conducted for the dependent variable (customer relationship management) and independent variables (customer relationship experience in digital marketing, generation gap in digital marketing, and customers' perception of data privacy and security in digital marketing). The study's variables' means, and standard deviations are presented in Table 2. It was discovered that the standard deviation for all the variables indicated above 0.60 means that most respondents agree with statements stated for each variable (Andrade, 2020).

Table 2

*Mean Score for Customer Relationship Management, Customer Relationship Experience in Digital Marketing, Generational Gap in Digital Marketing and Data Security & Privacy in Digital Marketing.*

	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Customer Relationship Management	132	1.8712	.76573	.071
Customer Relationship Experience in Digital Marketing	132	1.8030	.61084	.092
Generation Gap in Digital Marketing	132	1.8106	.67826	.044
Customers' Perception of Data Privacy & Security in Digital Marketing	132	1.9318	.67894	.081

Normality tests used the Q-Q Plot as supporting evidence for customer relationship management and customer experience in digital marketing. Observations for data with a normally distributed distribution should be approximately on a straight line. If the data is not normal, the points generate a curve that distributes away from a straight line (Khatun, 2021). Based on the overall findings as shown in Figure 2, it was found that all variables tested indicated a negatively skewed normal distribution.

### **Analysis of Research Questions**

Research Question 1: Is there a significant relationship between customer relationship experience in digital marketing and customer relationship management?

The findings from analysis for customer relationship experience in digital marketing in Table 3 below indicates where  $r = 0.549$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . Therefore, according to Akoglu (2018), there is a moderate positive relationship customer relationship experience in digital marketing and customer relationship management

Research Question 2: Is there a significant relationship between generation gap in digital marketing and customer relationship management?

The findings from the analysis for generation gap in digital marketing in Table 3 below indicates where  $r = 0.893$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . Therefore, according to Akoglu (2018), there is a significant

strong positive relationship between generation gap in digital marketing and customer relationship management.

Research Question 3: Is there a significant relationship between customers’ perception of data privacy and security in digital marketing and customer relationship management?

The findings from the analysis for customers’ perception of data privacy and security in digital marketing in Table 3 below indicates where  $r = 0.570$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . Therefore, according to Akoglu (2018), there is a moderate positive relationship between generation gap in digital marketing and customer relationship management.

Table 3

*Correlation Analysis (Customer Relationship Management, Customer Relationship Experience in Digital Marketing, Generational Gap in Digital Marketing and Data Security & Privacy in Digital Marketing)*

		<b>Customer Relationship Management</b>	<b>Customer Relationship Experience in Digital Marketing</b>	<b>Generation Gap in Digital Marketing</b>	<b>Customers’ Perception of Data Privacy &amp; Security in Digital Marketing</b>
<b>Customer Relationship Management</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.549	.893	.570
	Sig. (1-tailed)		<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	132	132	132	132

**Discussion and Conclusion**

Customer relationship management is likely to assist on improving customer experience in digital marketing. Some older generation continues to struggle to learn with modern technology, which means marketers must prioritize the use of digital platform for target segments of customers. Data privacy & security is equally important to keep the confidentiality of withholding customer's profiles safe.

SMEs need to adapt to using customer relationship management in digital marketing to study and track on the customer behaviour and interactions. Factors such as customer experience in digital do play some role in engaging with customers. Customers' perception of data privacy and security is important to assure that data are not easily exploited by unwanted third parties.

**Recommendation for Future Studies**

Maintaining all aspects of customer relationship management raises the bar for digital marketing because the outcomes indicate a moderate and strong positive relationship. Future research should also use mixed methods, using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. This is because the qualitative findings would support and strengthen the quantitative conclusions. It is recommended that the sample size to be extended into more local SME Food & Beverage business. This will give a unique perspective on how other customers

behave. This can be expanded to include a larger sample size, allowing the study's results to be more applicable.

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