The Use and Gratification of Social Media on Purchase Intention via Customer Brand Engagement of Gen X and Millennials

การใช้ประโยชน์และความพึงพอใจที่มีผลต่อความตั้งใจซื้อผ่านการปฏิสัมพันธ์กับตราสินค้าบนสื่อสังคมออนไลน์กับผู้บริโภครุ่นเจเนอเรชันเอกซ์และมิลเลนเนียลส์

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Abstract

In this study, we apply the theory of uses and gratification to explore the types of motivation or benefit that influence customer engagement with brands in social media environment. Two generations of Thai customers are focused in this study: Generation X (Gen X) and the Millennials (Gen Y) in regard to online communities such as Facebook, LINE, YouTube, and Instagram. This quantitative research employs SPSS and PLS-SEM software to analyze data. A total of 300 Gen X and 306 Millennial responses were collected and analyzed. The results indicated that information benefits do not influence customer brand engagement (CBE); however, entertainment, social and personal identity and self-disclosure influenced CBE for both generations. Moreover, CBE was also found to have a positive influence on purchase intention. This finding may help marketing managers to design social media online community strategies as well as develop appropriate content for both generations in Thailand.

Keywords: *Motivation, Millennials, Generation X, Customer Brand Engagement, Purchase Intention*

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บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้ได้นำทฤษฎีการใช้ประโยชน์และความพึงพอใจจากสื่อมาประยุกต์กับการใช้สื่อสังคมออนไลน์ สำหรับผู้บริโภคคนไทยรุ่นเจเนอเรชันเอกซ์และมิลเลนเนียลส์ เพื่อศึกษาประเภทของแรงจูงใจที่ส่งผลต่อการสร้างปฏิสัมพันธ์ระหว่างตราสินค้าและผู้บริโภคโดยจะเน้นไปที่ชุมชนออนไลน์ประเภท เฟซบุ๊ก ไลน์ ยูทูบ และอินสตาแกรม เป็นหลัก เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ คือ โปรแกรม SPSS และ PLS-SEM โดยทำการเปรียบเทียบข้อมูลจากกลุ่มเจเนอเรชันเอกซ์ จำนวน 300 คน และจากกลุ่มมิลเลนเนียลส์ จำนวน 306 คน ผลจากการศึกษาพบว่า แรงจูงใจจากการได้รับข่าวสารไม่ส่งผลกระทบต่อปฏิสัมพันธ์ระหว่างผู้บริโภคกับตราสินค้าของผู้บริโภคทั้งสองกลุ่ม แต่แรงจูงใจที่ก่อให้เกิดความบันเทิง สร้างความสัมพันธ์สังคมและสร้างอัตลักษณ์ส่วนบุคคลและการเปิดเผยตนเองเป็นแรงจูงใจที่ทำให้ผู้บริโภคทั้งสองรุ่นมีปฏิสัมพันธ์กับตราสินค้ามากขึ้นยิ่งไปกว่านั้น การปฏิสัมพันธ์กับตราสินค้ายังมีอิทธิพลต่อความตั้งใจซื้อผู้บริโภคทั้งสองรุ่นอีกด้วย นักการตลาดอาจนำผลจากการศึกษาไปปรับใช้ในการสร้างกลยุทธ์ที่เกี่ยวกับสื่อสังคมออนไลน์ และใช้ในการสร้างเนื้อหาที่เหมาะสมกับองค์กร

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Introduction

The use of social media for company communication has become one of the top issues for many companies. Social media are highly interactive platforms where users, who can be individuals or companies, can share, discuss, co-create or edit user-generated content (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011). The use of social media not only allows customers to participate in company marketing activities, but also allows companies to understand their customers' tastes, desires, consumption behavior, and levels of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with products and services that are purchased and used. Companies have been using social media to facilitate both online purchase and repeat purchase (Permatasari & Kuswadi, 2017). Social media are used by customers in various age groups. Studies on consumer behavior revealed that the young generations tend to behave quite differently from previous generations as a result of political, cultural and socio-economic factors (Delafrooz, Paim, & Khatibi, 2010).

Recent research has focused on consumer/brand relationships. The concept of Customer Brand Engagement (CBE) has emerged to explain the nature of consumers' particular interactive brand relationships (Hollebeek, Glynn, & Brodie, 2014). Although many social media sites were initially designed for social purposes, companies have employed them to establish and develop their presence not only to create awareness, but also to cultivate positive experiences in regard to brands, which may encourage trial purchase (Salvation & Sorooshian, 2018). In order to increase customer engagement, brands need to understand the benefits that encourage customers to participate in their online communities. This study will thus examine the motivation (benefit) factors that may influence CBE and purchase intention in regard to Gen X and Millennials in a Thai context.

Literature review
Social media in Thailand

Social media is a communication mechanism that allows users to communicate globally. Examples of social media platforms include social networking sites (SNSs) like Facebook, photo sharing sites like Flickr, video sharing sites like YouTube, business networking sites like LinkedIn, and microblogging sites like Twitter. Most social media sites are inexpensive or free (Whiting & Williams, 2013). Social media can also be considered as a form of communication and interaction between brands and consumers.

Thailand is the location of this study, and it seems to be a good example of how social media usage is growing in developing Asia. The website

datareportal.com, which published the Digital 2020 Thailand report, indicated that Thailand is ranked 5th in the world in terms of the daily average time spent on the internet, which is 9.01 hours, and is ranked 14th in the world in terms of the amount of time spent on social media. Approximately 75.00 percent of the total population use social media. Although many kinds of social media are used in Thailand, the top five social media platforms are Facebook, YouTube, LINE, Facebook messenger, and Instagram (Kemp, 2020). We will therefore conduct this study based on the top four major social media online community platforms, which are Facebook, YouTube, LINE and Instagram.

Gen X, the Millennial generation and social media use

From a company perspective, companies need to identify the behavior of various generations of customers so that they are able to participate in value co-creation activities, create an online presence, and offer content and develop communication strategies (Bolton et al., 2013; Dabija, Bejen, & Tipi, 2018). Gen X and the Millennials are among the three main generations (which are Gen X, Gen Y (Millennials), and Gen Z) who use social media and websites as a key source of communication (Giarla, 2019).

Wiedmer (2015) indicated that each generation has different characteristics, work styles, and motivations. Studies on social media communication behavior revealed that there are different buying patterns for different generations when purchasing products online (Dabija & Grant, 2016; Haydam, Purcarea, Edu, & Negricea, 2017). The Millennials are one of the segments most likely to be approached by companies that employ online marketing because this generation has a very large population, is driven by technology, and has high purchasing power (Hamel, Fenz, & Hofer, 2018; Haydam et al., 2017; Young, 2015). More than one billion Millennials currently live in Asia (Hamel et al., 2018).

In Thailand, this generation is considered the biggest generation and comprises approximately 27.00 percent of the population, or around 20 million people and obtains much information through social media. They use social media to communicate and also prefer to interact with firms online via social media (Kittikrairat & Ogawa, 2016). Gen X tend to be more cautious and responsible in their use of social media communication than Millennials (Hamel et al., 2018). This is because they began to use mobile device technology and social media during adulthood (Dabija & Grant, 2016). The study of Kittikrairat and Ogawa (2016) posited that Gen X are the second largest group among four generations which comprises baby boomers, Gen X, Gen Y (Millennials), and Gen Z in Thailand. This group comprises approximately 24.00 percent of the total Thai population. In this study, Gen X are defined as all people born between 1961 and 1980, and the Millennials as people born between 1981 and 1999 as they are the most frequently-used dates by researchers (Ash, 2015; Bolton et al., 2013; Brosdahl & Carpenter, 2011; Wiedmer, 2015).

Customer Brand Engagement (CBE)

An engaged customer may benefit the company in various ways including trust, word-of-mouth and loyalty. Engagement is a complex and multidimensional concept. It can be viewed from different perspectives. From a psychological standpoint, people may be motivated to engage to receive benefits, including personal interest, enjoyment and rewards. One of the keys to success in establishing electronic marketing strategies is knowing how to manage customer relationships through social media engagement. The CBE concept has been implemented in both offline and online environments. However, in the early development stage of CBE, two problems were the lack of clarity regarding the engagement construct and insufficient insight into its interrelationships with other constructs.

Although there is no consensus on the definition or dimensions of CBE, many studies agreed that CBE is multidimensional, and includes cognitive, emotional, and behavioral elements (Hollebeek, 2011; Vivek, Beatty, & Morgan, 2012). Hollebeek described the CBE concept as the level of an individual customer's motivational, brand-related, and context-dependent state of mind characterized by specific levels of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral activity (Hollebeek, 2011). This definition is adopted in this study and is also used to develop measurements. As companies realize benefits from brand engagement and utilize social media platforms to build online brand communities, they need to know how to best engage customers in order to develop favorable customer experiences and sustain their businesses (Marbach, Christiana, & Daniel, 2016).

Uses and gratifications theory

Uses and Gratifications theory (U&G) is based on the idea that individuals are active users of various communication channels, and they consciously choose channels to satisfy their perceived needs and desires (Baxter, Egbert, & Ho, 2008). Therefore, U&G theory concerns how individuals satisfy or gratify their needs in regard to content while using media, which can be both offline and online. Several U&G studies revealed that there are various motivations or benefits which help to encourage involvement between consumers and brands on social media platforms. These benefits are, for example, entertainment, information seeking, social interaction, sustaining strong ties, personal identity, and self-disclosure (Scheepers, Scheepers, Stockdale, & Nurdin, 2014; Shao, 2009). In this study, the benefits are categorized into four groups: information, entertainment, social reasons, and personal identity/ self-disclosure.

Through online social media communities, customers can search for advice, opinions, learning materials and news. This could be described as an information benefit. Gratification increases when consumers receive relevant and useful information from a brand. This may initiate involvement with the brand. The first hypothesis is thus as follows:

H1: Information benefit has a positive influence on customer brand engagement on social media sites.

Eighmey and McCord (1998) defined entertainment benefit, or gratification on the Internet, as the extent to which web media is fun and amusing. Some social media sites focus on entertainment content such as music, movies, and pictures. Fan page users use entertainment for enjoyment, relaxation, escape from their problems, and to seek emotional release. These may draw the attention of consumers and may initiate engagement. The second hypothesis is thus as follows:

H2: Entertainment benefit has a positive influence on customer brand engagement on social media sites.

In online social media communities, socializing and interactive behavior occurs when users "like" the content, or share and post comments. This behavior develops a sense of community and encourages continued use. An example of socializing activities on a fan page is user-generated reviews or comments (Ho & See-To, 2017). This may stimulate conversation and thus increase gratification and engagement. Communicating and interacting with friends or like-minded consumers in an online social media community may encourage a sense of belonging and fulfill a social need. The third hypothesis is as follows:

H3: Social benefit has a positive influence on customer brand engagement on social media sites.

Activities in brand-related social media communities can persuade customers to become more involved by creating and disseminating their own content. By posting content, one can relate the brand image to oneself and, in that way, communicate one's own personality and personal

identity. This self-expression motivation can generate high involvement with a brand since such activities consume the greatest amount of the customer's time and effort (Vries, Peluso, Romani, Leeflang, & Marcati, 2017). For those who seek to reinforce their personal values, determine models of behavior, or seek attention or popularity, personal identity and self-disclosure gratification may encourage them to engage more with a brand in online social media communities. The fourth hypothesis is thus as follows:

H4: Personal identity and self-disclosure benefit has a positive influence on customer brand engagement on social media sites.

Purchase intention

Purchase intention is defined as the customer's degree of perceptual conviction to purchase a particular product or service. Customers go through different stages before making a decision after receiving product information from a company.

One of the well-known models that explains the advertising impact on the decision of customers is the Hierarchy of Effects (HOE), which refers to the hierarchical order in which consumers perceive, process, and use marketing communication information. These processes begin when a customer acquires an awareness of a product (cognitive stage); then they grow emotionally engaged (the affective stage); and finally, they react by buying or rejecting the product (conative stage) (Kotler & Bliemel, 2001). At the end of the affective stage, consumers build an intention to purchase the brand. From a marketing point-of-view, consumers who are heavily committed to a particular brand are more willing to make an investment in the brand and pay more to acquire it. This relationship leads to the fifth hypothesis as follows:

H5: Customer brand engagement (CBE) has a positive influence on purchase intention on social a sites.
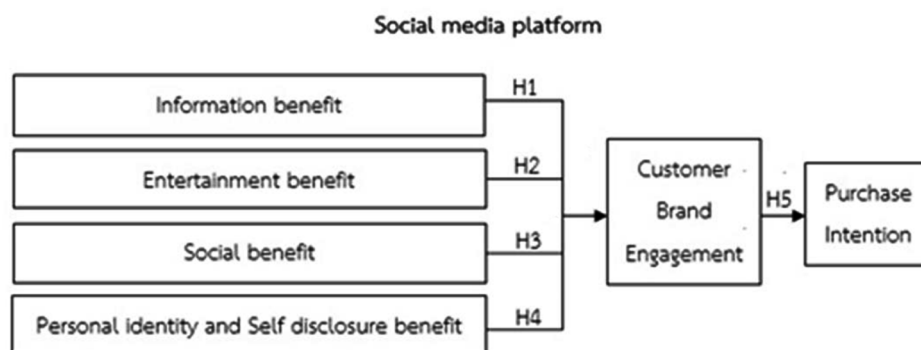

Figure 1 Conceptual model

Limited studies have employed U&G theory and the CBE concept in a social media context. This study will therefore help to develop a better understanding of the benefit factors which influence CBE for Gen X and Millennials using online social media brand communities in Thailand, especially on Facebook, LINE, YouTube and Instagram. The results

of the study will also indicate if purchase intention is a consequence of CBE.

Research methodology

The study is quantitative research which involves the following steps: IOC, pilot test, and mainstream survey. After measurements were

developed based on the literature review and were tested using expert opinions (IOC). This was followed by a pilot test and a final survey. IOC and the pilot test were employed to refine the measurements to ensure that all of the measurements were valid and reliable to use in the main study. During the IOC stage, opinions were sought from two academics and one industry expert. They evaluated questions and provided feedback on each construct. Then the questions were revised based on their comments in order to make the questions clearer and more concise.

The pilot test was conducted with 50 respondents from both Gen X and the Millennials who had used online social media communities such as Facebook fan page, LINE, YouTube and Instagram. Users between 20 and 38 years old are classified as Millennials and those between 39 and 58 as Gen X. The researcher distributed the survey using hard-copies and email to the respondents using convenience and judgmental sampling methods. The reliability tests revealed that all six variables had a Cronbach's Alpha greater than 0.70 (Information benefit = 0.828; Entertainment benefit = 0.779; Social benefit = 0.931; Personal Identity and Self Disclosure benefit = 0.857; CBE = 0.894; Purchase Intention = 0.851), so we can continue to the next step, which is the main survey.

The questions in the main survey are divided into two sections. The first section consists of demographic information and the second section asks questions about six variables or constructs. The measurement of these six constructs was adapted from previous research, as follows:

- The measurement of information benefit was adapted from DeVries and Carlson (2014), Gummerus, Liljander, Weman, and Pihlström (2012), Ho and See-To (2017), Omar, Rachid, and Majid (2014), and consists of 6 questions.

- The measurement of entertainment benefit was adapted from DeVries and Carlson (2014), Gummerus et al. (2012), Omar et al. (2014), Shao (2009), and Whiting and Williams (2013), and consists of 5 questions.

- The measurement of social benefit was adapted from DeVries and Carlson (2014), Gummerus et al. (2012), and Serra and Soto-Sanfiel (2014), and consists of 7 questions.

- The measurement of personal identity and self disclosure benefit was adapted from Omar et al. (2014), Serra and Soto-Sanfiel (2014), and Shao (2009), and consists of 5 questions.

- The measurement of Customer Brand Engagement was adapted from Cheung, Lee, and Jin (2011), Hollebeek et al. (2014), Solem and Pedersen (2016), and consists of 6 questions.

- The measurement of purchase intention was adapted from Arya and Verma (2018), Cha (2011), and Ho and See-To, (2017), and consists of 6 questions.

There is a total of 35 questions from 6 variables in the second section. The descriptive analysis was conducted by using SPSS software on demographic information. Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was also employed to analyze the relationships between variables. The population of this study is large but the researchers do not have data about the total population. Based on the study of Hair, Gabriel, and Patel (2014), the number of samples must be at least 5 to 10 times the number of indicators to create a reliable model. Since the number of questions used to measure key variables in the second section is thirty-five; therefore, 175 is the minimum number of samples which is 5 times the number of indicators to obtain reliable statistical results.

The main survey was conducted between December, 2019 and April, 2020 and 606 responses were collected from Gen X (300) and Millennials (306). Thus, the sample size collected in the mainstream stage was higher than the required threshold. Fundamental requirements for research respondents are those who have followed or subscribed to Facebook, LINE, YouTube, or Instagram within the past 6 months, and whose age is between 20 and 58 years old.

Snowball and judgmental sampling methods were employed. Questionnaires were distributed both online and offline. In each generation, the percentage of males and females was almost equal so it reflects the demographic structure of the social media population in Thailand in 2019.

Results

The sample was divided into Gen X and Millennials and the demographic information of the respondents is presented below.

Table 1 Demographic information of Gen X and Millennials

		Gen X (300)	Percent (%)		Millennials (306)	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	146	49.00	Male	159	52.00
	Female	154	51.00	Female	147	48.00
Age	39-44 years old	159	53.00	20-24 years old	99	32.40
	45-54 years old	130	43.30	25-34 years old	171	55.90
	55-58 years old	11	3.70	35-38 years old	36	11.80
Location	Bangkok and metropolitan	124	41.30	Bangkok and metropolitan	298	97.40
	East	23	7.70	East	8	2.60
	North	9	3.00	North	0	0
	Central	117	39.00	Central	0	0
	Northeast	9	3.00	Northeast	0	0
	South	18	6.00	South	0	0
Occupation	State Enterprise staff	33	11.00	State Enterprise staff	7	2.30
	Government officer	19	6.30	Government officer	-	-
	Entrepreneur	148	49.30	Entrepreneur	59	19.30
	Company staff	100	33.30	Company staff	240	78.40
No. of social media use hours per day	1-3 hours	138	46.00	1-3 hours	185	60.50
	4-6 hours	130	43.30	4-6 hours	109	35.60
	>7 hours	27	9.00	>7 hours	6	2.00

Table 1 Demographic information of Gen X and Millennials (continued)

		Gen X (300)	Percent (%)		Millennials (306)	Percent (%)
Preferred log in time	12:01 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	1st rank		12:01 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	1st rank	
	6:01 p.m.- 9:00 p.m.	2nd rank		6:01 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	2nd rank	
	6:01 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.	3rd rank		9:01 p.m. - 12:00 p.m.	3rd rank	
Top of mind social media	Facebook	1st rank		Facebook	1st rank	
	LINE	2nd rank		LINE	2nd rank	
	YouTube	3rd rank		Twitter	3rd rank	

The data presented in table 1 show that both Gen X and the Millennials had almost the same proportion in regard to gender. In addition, more than fifty percent were between 39 and 44 years old for Gen X respondents and between 25 and 34 years old for Millennials. For occupation, almost half of the Gen X respondents were entrepreneurs and about eighty percent of the Millennials were working as company employees. In terms of hours used on social media, 46.00 percent of Gen X and approximately 60.50 percent of Millennials spent one to three hours per day, followed by four to six hours. The preferred log in time to use social media from both groups was from noon to 3 p.m. followed by 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. However, the third highest time period for Gen X was 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. while for the Millennials it was 9 p.m. to 12 p.m. When asked to recall a social media platform, the top three choices for Gen X were Facebook, LINE and YouTube while the Millennials identified Facebook, LINE and Twitter. In the next section, a two-step approach is employed using PLS-SEM, which means the measurement model will be tested first, followed by the assessment of the structural model.

Table 2 Summary of results of the measurement model: Reliability and convergent validity explanation for Gen X and the Millennials (those with *)

Variables	Indicators	Loadings	AVE	R^2	Composite reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Information benefit (INFO)	Infor2	0.839, 0.738*	0.682, 0.647*	---	0.895, 0.880*	0.845, 0.817*
	Infor3	0.856, 0.854*				
	Infor4	0.836, 0.810*				
	Infor5	0.770, 0.810*				
Entertainment benefit (ENTE)	Ent1	0.787, 0.726*	0.580, 0.562*	---	0.847, 0.837*	0.760, 0.742*
	Ent2	0.728, 0.749*				
	Ent4	0.743, 0.740*				
	Ent5	0.787, 0.784*				

Table 2 Summary of results of the measurement model: Reliability and convergent validity explanation for Gen X and the Millennials (those with *) (continued)

Variables	Indicators	Loadings	AVE	R²	Composite reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Social benefit (SOCI)	Socia1	0.824, 0.788*	0.700, 0.672*	---	0.933, 0.925*	0.913, 0.902*
	Socia2	0.829, 0.805*				
	Socia3	0.846, 0.837*				
	Socia4	0.880, 0.874*				
	Socia5	0.789, 0.844*				
	Socia6	0.851, 0.766*				
Personal identity and Self disclosure benefit (PISD)	PISD1	0.936, 0.841*	0.868, 0.794*	---	0.952, 0.920*	0.924, 0.870*
	PISD3	0.928, 0.914*				
	PISD4	0.931, 0.915*				
Customer Brand Engagement (CBE)	CBE1	0.874, 0.776*	0.751, 0.704*	0.583, 0.506*	0.938, 0.922*	0.976, 0.894*
	CBE2	0.817, 0.791*				
	CBE3	0.879, 0.890*				
	CBE4	0.913, 0.885*				
	CBE5	0.846, 0.846*				
Purchase Intention (PINT)	PI1	0.825, 0.869*	0.661, 0.782*	0.486, 0.360*	0.886, 0.935*	0.828, 0.907
	PI2	0.869, 0.918*				
	PI3	0.817, 0.899*				
	PI4	0.737, 0.849*				

The information in table 2 presents the measurement model test information. The criteria for reliability and convergent validity were used to evaluate the adequacy of the measurement model.

To establish reliability, "Cronbach's alpha" values should exceed 0.70 (Hair, Anderson, Tatum, & Black, 1992; Nunnally, 1978). All values were found to be above 0.70 which indicate good reliability for all of the measurements. The composite reliability (CR) of all latent variables should be greater than 0.70 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988) and they were found to range from 0.837 to 0.952. For indicator reliability, the level of factor loading should be above 0.60 (Suh & Han, 2002) which all values met. Lastly, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each latent variable was evaluated. The analysis confirmed the adequate convergent validity of the measures, with all AVE values surpassing the recommended level of 0.50 (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).

R^2, or the coefficient of determination, is the overall effect size measure for the structure model. From the study of Chin (1998)'s, R^2 values of 0.67, 0.33, or 0.19 for the endogenous latent variables in the inner path model are described as substantial, moderate, or weak, respectively. From table 2, R^2 were 0.583 and 0.506 for the CBE, which is the endogenous variable for Gen X and the Millennials. This means that the four latent variables (INFO, ENTE, SOCI, PISD) moderately explain approximately 58.30 percent and 50.60 percent of the variance in CBE

of Gen X and the Millennials, respectively. CBE also moderately explains 48.60 percent and 36.00 percent

of the variance in the Purchase Intention variable (PINT) for Gen X and the Millennials, respectively.

Table 3 Gen X discriminant validity

	CBE	ENTE	INFO	PINT	PISD	SOCI
CBE	**0.866**	0	0	0	0	0
ENTE	0.459	**0.762**	0	0	0	0
INFO	0.274	0.445	**0.826**	0	0	0
PINT	0.697	0.352	0.273	**0.813**	0	0
PISD	0.726	0.403	0.225	0.611	**0.932**	0
SOCI	0.553	0.453	0.325	0.397	0.534	**0.837**

Table 4 The Millennials discriminant validity

	CBE	ENTE	INFO	PINT	PISD	SOCI
CBE	**0.839**	0	0	0	0	0
ENTE	0.529	**0.748**	0	0	0	0
INFO	0.414	0.433	**0.803**	0	0	0
PINT	0.600	0.453	0.393	**0.884**	0	0
PISD	0.598	0.510	0.378	0.469	**0.891**	0
SOCI	0.570	0.471	0.376	0.471	0.446	**0.817**

Tables 3 and 4 indicate the discriminant validity for Gen X and Millennials. Discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the AVE of each individual construct with shared variances between it and all the other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). This validity required a higher value for the square root of the AVE of each construct than the correlation value between this construct and all other constructs. As shown in Tables 3 and 4, the square root of the AVE (highlighted) scores for constructs of all variables CBE, ENTE, INFO, PINT, PISD, and SOCI were greater than the correlation scores between each construct and all other constructs. The analysis results indicate acceptable construct discriminant validity.
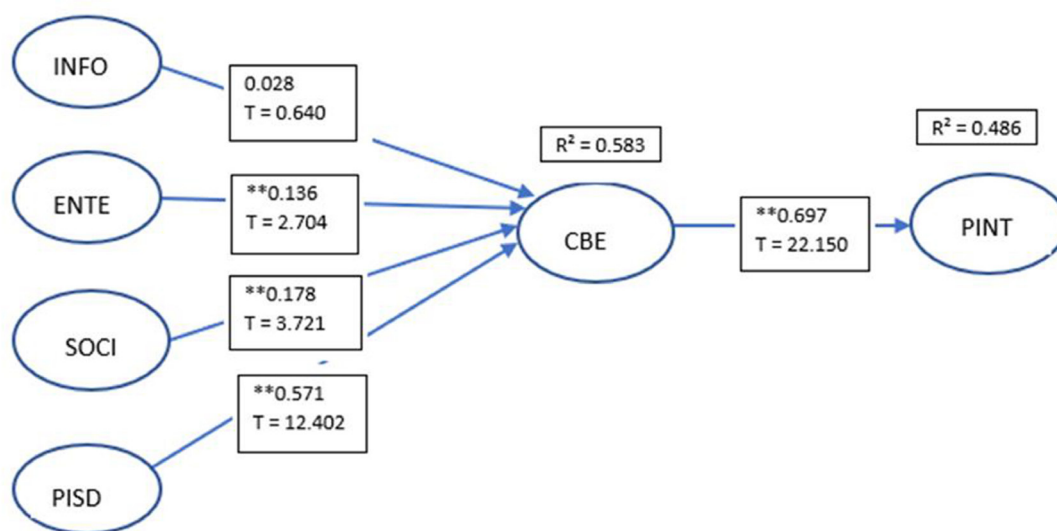

Figure 2 Structural model with path coefficient, t-values of Gen X
Remarks: ** p < 0.01

The results of the assessments of the structural model are presented in Figure 2 for Gen X and in Figure 3 for the Millennials. The inner model of Figure 2, which shows the path coefficients and t-values, suggests that PISD has the highest effect on CBE (0.571), followed by SOCI (0.178), and ENTE (0.136) respectively. The results indicate that there is no significant relationship between INFO and CBE;

weak relationship between SOCI, ENTE and CBE; and moderate relationship between PISD and CBE. CBE also showed moderate relationship with PINT (0.697). The important criteria to evaluate the structural model were the estimates of path coefficients and R^2. As already mentioned in regard to the R^2 value, INFOR, ENTE, SOCI, PISD explained approximately 58.30 percent of the variance in CBE. CBE was also able to explain approximately 48.60 percent of the variance in PINT. From the t-values above, it can be concluded that entertainment benefit, social benefit, personal identity and self-disclosure benefit had positive influences on CBE with a 0.01 level of significance. Information benefit did not influence CBE since the t-value was not statistically significant. CBE also had a positive influence on purchase intention with a 0.01 level of significance. Therefore, H2, H3, H4, and H5 are supported.
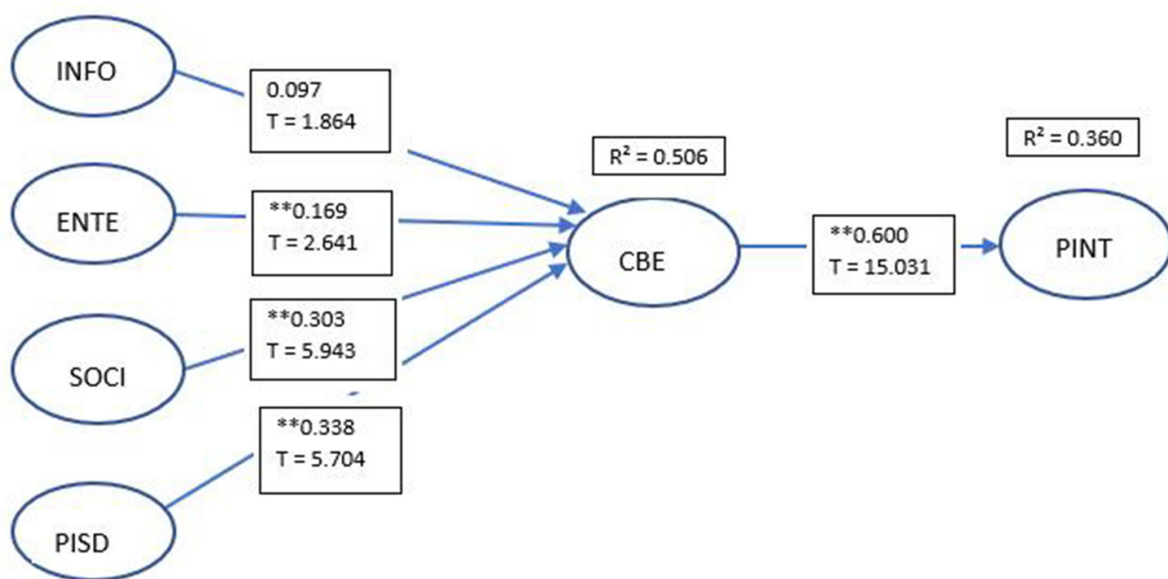

Figure 3 Structural model with path coefficient, t-values of the Millennials
Remarks: ** $p < 0.01$

The inner model from Figure 3 suggests that PISD has the highest effect on CBE (0.338), followed by SOCI (0.303), and ENTE (0.169) respectively. The results indicate that there is no significant relationship between INFO and CBE; weak relationship between SOCI, ENTE, PISD and CBE. CBE also showed moderate relationship with PINT (0.600). As already mentioned in regard to the R^2 value, INFOR, ENTE, SOCI, and PISD explained approximately 50.60 percent of the variance in CBE. CBE was also able to explain 36.00 percent of the variance in PINT. The results of the path coefficients and t-values in figure 3 demonstrated that entertainment benefit, social benefit, personal identity and self-disclosure benefit had positive influences on CBE with a 0.01 level of significance. Information benefit did not influence CBE. CBE also had a positive influence on purchase intention with a 0.01 level of significance. Therefore, H2, H3, H4, and H5 are supported.

Conclusion and discussion

The empirical results for the structural model test show that social and entertainment benefits influenced CBE for both Gen X and the Millennials. These results are in line with the findings of some previous studies (Curras-Perez, Ruiz-Mafe, & Sanz-

Blas, 2014; Gogan, Zhang, & Matemba, 2018; Kamboj, 2019), indicating that the fulfilment of personal needs, such as enjoyment, relaxation, and socializing with like-minded persons in online communities, strengthened the engagement with a brand in social media. Contrary to expectations, the results show that information benefit did not influence CBE for both generations. Chang (2017), in his study on finding low impact information gratification on social network sites (SNSs), revealed that users may easily use other interactive technology to obtain information from others. Therefore, users may not expect to get fruitful information from SNSs. Dabija et al. (2018) posited that Millennials usually take information for granted since they have a high level of proficiency using social media. Their study also indicates that Gen X had lower expectations about information from social media because they use their own experience and compare the information with other sources.

The demographic information in this study revealed that the respondents from both generations are in working-age groups. For Millennials, the largest group are working as company employees and are between 25 and 34 years old. They are keen to use social media and are able to search for and find information from other sources. This might be one of the reasons why information gratification does not have much influence on engaging with a brand for the Millennials.

For Gen X, since they are more mature and experienced, their expectations on information benefit may not be as high. Furthermore, the results of this study indicate that personal identity and self-disclosure benefit (PISD) had the strongest effect on CBE followed by SOCI and ENTE for both generations. This is in line with Serra and Soto-Sanfiel (2014) and Shao (2009) who found that people may feel engaged in user-generated media (UGM) when they are able to accomplish their self-expression and self-actualization by producing their own content.

Both of these activities also help to build their own identity. Fornara and Lomicka (2019) posited that using visual social media platforms such as Instagram allows people to use tools such as pictures, images, emojis, and emoticons to promote self-disclosure.

This type of visual social media platform is now changing the way information is shared and communicated on social media. New development tools help to increase creativity and engagement as well as to perform social functions better in online communities. Their findings are also confirmed by this study for both generations. They engaged better with a brand if they were able to express their identity, develop their own content, and interact with their communities.

The last relationship found in this study was that for both generations, CBE heavily influenced purchase intention (PINT). This finding is in line with Ho and See-To (2017), who indicated that benefits received from online social media had positive impacts on attitude, which may lead to stronger purchase intention. Salvation and Sorooshian (2018), also found that social media marketing helps strengthen customer involvement, which influences purchase intention.

The findings of this study explain how managers should manage social media marketing strategy using motivational factors to strengthen brand engagement with customers. Ranking from high to low levels of motivation to engage are personal identity and self-disclosure, socializing, and entertainment. These results are the same for both generations.

In order to enhance the personal identity and self-disclosure benefits, companies may initiate strategies that allow customers to express their ideas with a brand creatively. One example of this is to host branding competitions in which users can create and submit original content related to the product, such as new looks or designs. Easy-to-use tools such as video, pictures, emojis and stickers

can be used to build better visual content that represents the people, promotes self-identity and strengthens communication in an online brand community. Once users start creating, contributing, and sharing materials, it can be seen as a deeper level of engagement.

To strengthen social benefit for social media users, managers should develop an environment where users feel comfortable to interact, share, support, or seek advice from those who have common interests. This is one of the ways social gratification is achieved. In order to enrich the entertainment benefit, managers should provide content that is entertaining and can create a relaxing and happy atmosphere in the online community. These are, for example, games, free gifts, funny video clips, and beautiful photos. Lastly, when customers have a positive experience and have a high level of brand engagement, there is a strong probability that the company can retain them as customers, build more trust, and encourage repeat purchases in the future.

Contributions

This study offers two key contributions. First, it reveals the social media behavior of two generations of Thai consumers who had engaged with brand communities. With demographic information analysis, marketing managers are better informed on the platforms and the best time to reach its target users. They can enhance this result by selecting platforms and arranging appropriate social media operating times. This may benefit small companies that have limited social media marketing resources. Second, this study offers insights into social media user's motivations to engage. To have better brand engagement, marketing managers should prepare and prioritize content that enhances the customer relationship with the brand, which may help companies to survive in this fast-changing world. ◆

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