

## **CUSTOMER CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR (CCB): THE ROLE OF BRAND EXPERIENCE AND BRAND COMMUNITY COMMITMENT AMONG AUTOMOBILE ONLINE BRAND COMMUNITY IN MALAYSIA**

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### **Abstract**

This paper aims to examine the relationship of brand experience and brand community commitment on customer citizenship behaviour (CCB), as well as the mediating effect of brand community commitment in the relationship between brand experience and customer citizenship behaviour. Data were collected via online questionnaire surveys. PLS 3.0 and bootstrapping methods were used for the data analyses. Results show that brand experience plays a significant role in influencing brand community commitment and CCB. Besides, community commitment also mediates the relationship between brand experience and customer citizenship behaviour (i.e. recommendation, helping other customers, and providing feedback). The findings suggest that marketing or service managers must create positive brand experience among the automobile customers, and create programs to enhance brand community commitment.

**Keywords:** *social media, online community, brand experience, brand community commitment, customer citizenship behavior*

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### **1.0 Introduction**

In the digital age, the ways customers communicate with companies and other customers have changed. The popularity of social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, blogs) has created a new phenomenon for marketers to attract their customers and compete with other brands. In Malaysia, automobile customers have used the social media to (1) search for and share product recommendations, and dealer's views, (2) voice complaints, (3) view peer opinions, and (4) engage in on-going dialogues with their favourite brands (Chaudhuri, 2017). This group has particularly joined its favorite online brand community to interact with the company and other customers. Online brand communities, according to Armstrong and Hagel (1996), are important communication platforms for both companies and consumers. The communities help marketers to (1) obtain valuable information, (2) develop successful long-term relationships with consumers, and (3) enhance consumers' brand loyalty (Algesheimer, Dholakia, & Herrmann, 2005; Casaló, Flavián, & Guinalíu, 2007; Adjei, Noble, & Noble, 2012). Therefore, the way a company manages its brand communities is considered important.

In an automobile industry, the concept of brand experience is crucial to influence customers' behavior (Zarantonello, & Schmitt, 2010). Customers use social media to share positive or horrible experiences with existing and potential customers (Cheung & Lee 2012). The information can also become viral just by one click. Previous studies have revealed that customers with positive experience are willing to promote the company, help other customers to make the right decision, and give recommendation about the brand (Riivits-Arkonsuo & Leppiman 2013; Rodríguez Molina, Frías-Jamilena, & Castañeda-García, 2013; Cetin & Dincer, 2014). All these behaviours are commonly associated with customer citizenship behaviour (CCB), a voluntary behaviour performed by customers to benefit particular brands or firms (Yi & Gong, 2008). However, the knowledge on how brand experience influences CCB among brand communities remains scarce. Previous studies appear to focus on the link between brand experience and customer engagement (Harwood & Garry, 2015), brand loyalty (Ramaseshan & Stein, 2014; Huang, Lee, Kim & Evans, 2015; Chen, Papazafeiropoulou, Chen, Duan & Liu, 2014) behaviour intention (Morgan-Thomas & Veloutsou, 2013) and brand love (Garg, Mukherjee, Biswas & Kataria, 2015). Therefore, this study intends to determine the role of brand experience in influencing brand community commitment and CCB, because positive comments and evaluations about the product will improve consumers' perceptions of the trustworthiness of the seller, yet, the negative comment will substantially damage brand reputation at large (Lee & Lee, 2006).

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Customer citizenship behavior (CCB)**

The concept of customer citizenship behaviour (CCB) was mainly derived from organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), which refers to "individual behaviour that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system and that, in the aggregate, promotes the effective functioning of the organization" (Organ, 1988). Accordingly, this study defines CCB as a person's self-willingness to engage in unsolicited, helpful, and constructive behaviours towards other customers and a firm (Groth, 2005; Bove, Pervan, Beatty & Shiu, 2009; Bartikowski & Walsh, 2011; Yi, Gong & Lee, 2013). CCB is identified by terms such as customer discretionary behaviour (Ford, 1995; Soch & Aggarwal, 2013), customer voluntary performance (Bettencourt, 1997; Rosenbanum & Massiah, 2009), customer extra-role behaviours (Ahearne, Bhattacharya & Gruen, 2005), customer citizenship behaviour (Yi & Gong, 2008; Oyedele, & Simpson, 2011; Balaji, 2014; Chen, Hsieh, Chang, & Chen, 2015), customer OCBs (Bove, Pervan, Betty & Shiu, 2009), customer helping behaviours (Johnson & Rapp, 2010), and community citizenship behaviour (Chen, Chen, & Farn, 2010). Different conceptualisations of customer citizenship behaviours are also reported in the service literature (Bove et al., 2009; Groth, 2005; Johnson & Rapp, 2010). Bettencourt (1997) suggested three dimensions of CCB (loyalty, participation, and cooperation) and Groth (2005) indicates that CCB consists of three dimensions: making recommendations, providing feedback to the organisation, and helping other customers. Further, Johnson and Rapp (2010) propose slightly eight different dimensions (expanding behaviours, supporting behaviours, forgiving behaviours, increasing quantity, competitive information, responding to research, displaying brands, and increasing price). Yi and Gong (2013) argue that CCB encompasses feedback, advocacy, helping, and tolerance dimensions.

CCB can affect turnover intention as well as improve organisational performance and service quality (Yi & Gong, 2006; Yi, Nataraajan, & Gong, 2011; Revilla-Camacho, Vega-Vázquez & Cossío-Silva, 2015). Therefore, identifying the determinants of customer citizenship behaviour is an important effort, and recent studies appear to focus on the antecedent of CCB in online context. Chen et al., (2010) examined the impact of information quality, service quality, social climate, and member satisfaction on CCB. In another study, Yen, Hsu, and Huang (2011) analysed (1) how self-enhancement, reward, and problem-solving support information quality and system quality, and (2) how service quality influences in-role and extra-role behaviours. Anaza and Zhao (2013) examined the influence of e-store familiarisation and facilitating conditions on CCB in the context of e-retailing. Son, Lee, Cho, and Kim (2016) attested that factors such as shared values (cognitive dimension of social capital) and social trust (relational dimension of social capital) were important to increase social media citizenship behaviour. However, little studies have been conducted to understand how CCB is shaped by brand experience in online brand communities. In view of this gap, the present study focuses on the influence of brand experience on CCB particularly among automobile online brand communities in Malaysia.

## **2.2 Brand experience**

Brand experience is an important component to maintaining the relationship between customers and brands (Fournier, 1998). Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009) conceptualise brand experience as “subjective, internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings and cognitions) as well as behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand’s design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments” (p. 53). Experiences occur when customers search, buy, get service, and use the product (Holbrook, 2000; Brakus, Schmitt & Zhang 2008). It is composed of four dimensions: sensory, affective, behavioural, and intellectual (Brakus et al., 2009). In an automobile industry, the way a company manages product information and after-sale service is important, because these aspects are related to affective and behavioural brand experiences (Brakus et al., 2009). For instance, service efficiency and the way an employee interacts with customers are crucial to influence the customer’s feelings (Schmitt, 1999). As mentioned by Grönroos (2011), customers who have positive brand experiences are willing to help the organisation and other customers. As such, a positive brand experience can also (1) influence customer satisfaction and loyalty, and (2) increase purchase intention among the customers customer engagement and brand loyalty (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello 2009; Gabisch, 2011; Harwood, & Garry, 2015; Ramaseshan & Stein, 2014).

The social exchange theory suggests that customers who have positive experience with brand or company are likely to reciprocate by engaging in voluntary behaviour (Bettencourt, 1997), for instance, by engaging in WOM, providing positive recommendation about a brand, and word-of-mouth (Ferguson, Paulin, & Bergeron, 2010; Cetin & Dincer, 2014; Delgado-Ballester & Fernandez Sabiote, 2015; Chelminski & Coulter, 2011; Loureiro & Araújo 2014). Therefore, creating an excellent customer experience is an important goal in order to compete with other competitors (Harris, Harris & Baron, 2003). Previous studies have also revealed that brand experience is a crucial factor that influences customer commitment (Cheung & Lee, 2009; Iglesias, Singh & Batista-Foguet, 2011; Maheshwari, Lodorfos & Jacobsen 2014). Nevertheless, most studies have focused on the impact of brand experience and loyalty on product categories,

and multi-channel fashion retailing (Ramaseshan, & Stein, 2014; Huang, Lee, Kim & Evans, 2015) and limited studies have dealt with the influence of brand experience on commitment (Cheung & Lee, 2009).

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

H2: Brand experience has a significant relationship on brand community commitment

### **2.3 Brand community commitment**

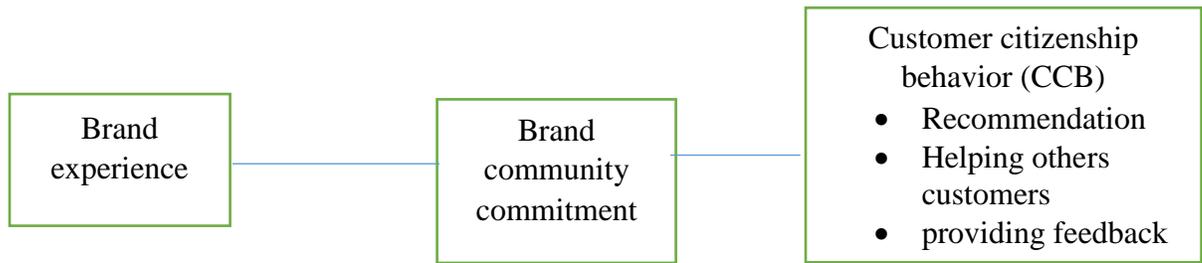
According to Muniz and O'Guinn (2001), brand community is defined as “a specialised, non-geographical-bound community, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of the brand” (p.412). In other word, brand community is a group of people who share the same interest and goal to discuss a particular brand. In this study, brand community commitment refers to its members' desire to maintain their relationships with a brand community (Zhou, Zhang, Su & Zhou, 2012). The concept of commitment is important; once a member feels a commitment to an online community, he or she will (1) develop a positive attitude toward the brand, such as information-sharing behaviour, WOM, and constructive complaints, and (2) defend the brand (Hur, Ahn, & Kim, 2011; Yeh & Choi, 2011; Kuo and Feng, 2013). All these behaviours represent a social exchange behaviour and can be considered as CCB. However, the central focus of many studies on brand community has been to link the direct effect of brand community commitment on brand loyalty (Jang, Olfman, Ko, Koh & Kim, 2008; Raïes & Gavard-Perret, 2011; Kuo & Feng, 2013; Zhang, Zhang, Lee & Feng, 2015; Munnukka, Karjaluo & Tikkanen, 2015), and little has been researched to increase our understanding on how brand community commitment leads to a positive outcome for companies and other members (CCB).

H3: Brand community commitment has a significant relationship on customer citizenship behaviour.

H4: Brand community commitment mediate the relationship between brand experience and customer citizenship behaviour.

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

The relationship between brand experience, brand community commitment, and CCB can be explained by the social exchange theory [SET]. The SET is based on the fundamental premise that people develop and maintain relationships with others over time because of their belief that doing so will benefit both the customers and organisations (Blau, 1964). In online communication, customers who experience positive brand experience are more likely to engage in relationship commitment (Iglesias, Singh, & Batista-Foguet, 2011; Maheshwari, Lodorfos & Jacobsen, 2014; Sun, Lee & Wu, 2016), engage in word-of-mouth recommendation, and help others make the right decision (Cetin & Dincer, 2014; Loureiro & Araújo, 2014). Besides, customers who receive negative brand experience will warn other customers against experiencing the same problem with the brand (Fu, Ju & Hsu, 2015). These positive behaviours represent a social exchange because when customers achieve positive brand experience, they feel attached to a company or a brand hence are willing to enhance their relationship with the companies and other members (Anaza & Zhao, 2013)



**Figure 1:** Research Framework

### **3.0 Research Methodology**

This study involved individual customers who have participated in an automobile online brand community in Malaysia. In 2016, the leading automobile brands in Malaysia as reported by *paultan.org* were Perodua, Honda, Proton, Volkswagen, Peugeot, and Kia (Lye, 2016). Accordingly, this study searched for large online communities dedicated to these brands or their products based on three criteria: number of members, number of posts, and recent post discussion. Finally, six well-known online brand communities were chosen: Civic FD Club Malaysia (CFDC), Proton Saga BLM Owners Club (PROSBOC), Produa Alza Club, Volkswagen Jetta Club Malaysia, Kia RIO Club Malaysia (RIOLUTIONS), and Peugeot 208 Club Malaysia. An automobile online brand community was selected because of the high levels of emotion and involvement among the car owners, which have encouraged 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 the six automobile clubs were contacted, the purpose being to seek permission to conduct the study. These organisers 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 on systematic random sampling. Five members from each community in the list were selected to participate in this study. At the end of the data collection period, only 273 questionnaires were collected and deemed 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 experience, brand community commitment, and customer citizenship behaviour (CCB). The eight items for brand experience were adapted from Brakus et al., (2009); six item for brand community commitment from Algesheimer et al., (2005), Jang, Olfman, Ko, Koh and Kim (2008) and Garbarino and Johnson (1999); and the three dimensions of CCB (helping behaviours, service firm facilitation, and recommendation) 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).

### 3.2 Findings And Discussion

The profile of the respondents is presented in table 1. Table 1 shows that the majority of the respondents are male (88.6%) aged between 27–35 years (57.9%). In terms of ethnicity, majority are Malays (87.2%). In term of education background, 67.4% of the respondents are from higher education, with a range of income between RM 2,001 to 4,000 (47.3%). Most of the respondents are from Selangor (31.1%).

**Table 1: Respondent's Profile**

Category	Frequency	Percentage %
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	242	88.6
Female	31	11.4
<b>Age</b>		
18-26 years old	58	21.2
27-35 years old	158	57.9
36-45 years old	49	17.9
46 years over	8	2.9
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Malay	238	87.2
Chinese	25	9.2
Indian	7	2.6
Others	3	1.1
<b>Education</b>		
Primary school	7	2.6
Secondary school	80	29.3
Higher Education	184	67.4
Others	2	0.7
<b>Income</b>		
Less than 2,000	54	19.8
2,001–4,000	129	47.3
4,001–6,000	48	17.6
6,001–8,000	23	8.4
More than 8,000	19	7.0
<b>State</b>		
Selangor	85	31.1
Johor	17	6.2
Sabah	4	1.5
Sarawak	2	.7
Perak	21	7.7
Kedah	10	3.7
WP	24	8.8
Pulau Pinang	16	5.9
Kelantan	11	4.0
Pahang	25	9.2
Terengganu	26	9.5
Negeri Sembilan	20	7.3
Melaka	11	4.0
Perlis	1	0.4

This study involved six groups of automobile online brand communities in Malaysia. Overall, 30.4% of the responses were obtained from Civic FD Club Malaysia (CFDC), 26.0% from Proton Saga BLM Owners Club (PROSBOC), 20.9% from Proton Alza Club, 13.9% from Volkswagen Jetta Club Malaysia, 6.2% from Kia RIO Club Malaysia (RIOLUTIONS), and 2.6 % from Peugeot 208 Club Malaysia. In terms of involvement in online brand community, 36.3% have joined the community for less than one year. 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	99	36.3
1–2 years	65	23.8
2–3 years	29	10.6
3–4 years	30	11.0
More than 4 years	50	18.3
<b>Online Frequency</b>		
Rarely	17	6.2
Once a month	10	3.7
Once every 2 weeks	9	3.3
Once a week	20	7.3
2–4 times a week	19	7.0
5–6 times a week	26	9.5
Once a day	53	19.4
Several times a day	119	43.6
<b>Posting Frequency</b>		
Rarely	165	60.4
Once a month	31	11.4
Once a week	24	8.8
2–4 times a week	27	9.9
5–6 times a week	9	3.3
Every day	8	2.9
Several times a day	9	3.3
<b>Commenting Frequency</b>		
Never	11	4.0
Very seldom	41	15.0
Sometimes	170	62.3
Often	39	14.3
Regularly	12	4.4

### 3.3 Measurement model

This study used a two-step approach as suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). The first approach was to test for reliability and convergent validity as shown in Table 3, and then discriminant validity as illustrated in Table 4. To test for convergent validity, factor loading, composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) were examined. As shown in Table 3, all the constructs achieve satisfactory factor

loading with all indicators achieving a loading of more than 0.5 (Hullant, 1999). Similarity, the composite reliability (CR) for each of the construct is good. All constructs achieve a CR of more than 0.7, indicating that the measure used possesses internal consistency (Gefen, Straub, & Boudreau, 2000). The average variance extracted is also greater than 0.5 (Fornell & Lacker, 1981). However, the items for BE1, BE 2 and BE7 were deleted because they did not meet the AVE and CR accepted values.

**Table 3:** Convergent Validity (Item loading, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE))

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Measurement Items</b>	<b>Factor Loadings</b>	<b>(CR)</b>	<b>(AVE)</b>
Brand Experience	BE3	0.736	0.848	0.527
	BE4	0.740		
	BE5	0.741		
	BE6	0.724		
	BE8	0.685		
Brand community commitment	CC1	0.761	0.930	0.689
	CC2	0.858		
	CC3	0.863		
	CC4	0.862		
	CC5	0.796		
	CC6	0.834		
Customer citizenship Behavior	CCB1	0.686	0.952	0.622
	CCB2	0.763		
	CCB3	0.757		
	CCB4	0.797		
	CCB5	0.818		
	CCB6	0.778		
	CCB7	0.859		
	CCB8	0.826		
	CCB9	0.735		
	CCB10	0.813		
	CCB11	0.798		
	CCB12	0.821		

To examine the discriminant validity of the constructs, this study used Fornell & Lacker's (1981) criterion. To achieve adequate discriminant validity, the square root of the AVE should be greater than the correlation among the latent constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As shown in Table 4, all the values of square root of AVE are greater than the value of correlation of latent construct, thus suggests adequate discriminant validity.

**Table 4:** Discriminant validity

	Brand community commitment	Brand experience	Customer Citizenship Behavior
Brand community commitment	0.830		
Brand experience	0.478	0.726	
Customer Citizenship Behavior	0.688	0.446	0.789

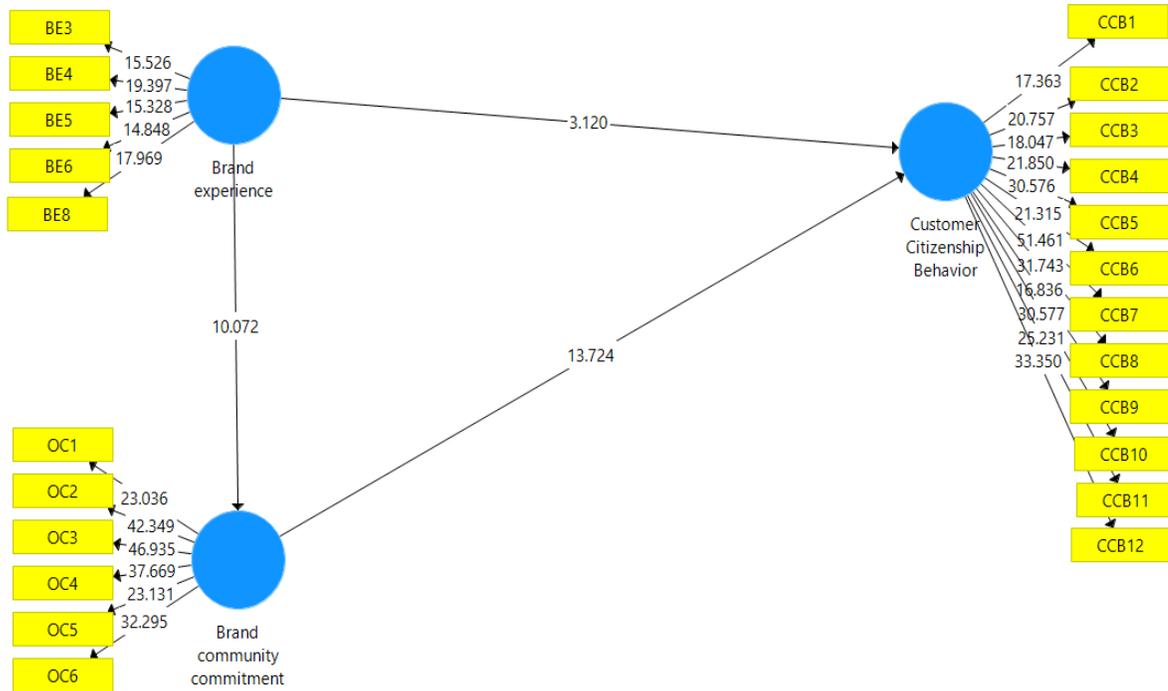
### 3.4 Structural model

After testing for convergent validity and discriminant validity, this study confirmed the strength and direction of the proposed relationship among the research constructs, by the structural model (i.e. path coefficient). The hypothesis result in Table 5 shows that brand experience significantly and positively influences CCB ( $\beta = 0.153$ ,  $t = 3.120$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ); brand experience significantly and positively influences brand community commitment ( $\beta = 0.478$ ,  $t = 10.072$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ); and brand community commitment significantly and positively influences CCB ( $\beta = 0.615$ ,  $t = 13.724$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ); and brand community commitment mediates the relationship between brand experience and CCB ( $\beta = 0.294$ ,  $t = 8.44$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ). These results, as shown in Table 5, attest all hypotheses.

**Table 5:** Structural model assessment with mediator

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta	Standard Deviation	T value	P Values	Decision
H1	Brand experience -> Customer Citizenship Behavior	0.153	0.049	3.120	0.001	Supported
H2	Brand experience -> Brand community commitment	0.478	0.047	10.072	0.000	Supported
H3	Brand community commitment -> Customer Citizenship Behavior	0.615	0.045	13.724	0.000	Supported
H4	Brand experience -> Brand community commitment-> Customer Citizenship Behavior	0.294	0.035	8.44	0.000	Supported

Notes:  $\rho \leq 0.01$



**Figure 2: Structural model**

#### 4.0 Conclusion and Implications

This study investigates the influence of brand experience on brand community commitment and CCB. It first attempts to explore whether brand experience has significant impact on brand community commitment and CCB. Second, brand community commitment also has significant influence on CCB, and it mediates the relationship between brand experience and CCB. Theoretically, this study contributes new findings in terms of the relationship between brand experience, brand community commitment, and CCB. The study proves that brand community commitment is crucial in mediating the relationship between brand experience and CCB.

Practically, this study give an important overview to marketing practices, particularly in understanding the importance of brand experiences in encouraging CCB among brand communities. The findings suggest that marketing managers need to enhance their relationship with brand communities. A good relationship with a community will give a competitive advantage to a brand. Following the social exchange theory, a community that achieves a favorable brand experience is more likely to engage in voluntary behavior that can benefit a company and other customers (Bettencourt, 1997; Bartikowski & Walsh, 2011; Anaza & Zhao, 2014).

Additionally, a marketing manager should focus on building positive brand experiences, for instance, by providing up-to-date information about automobile promotions, as well as new product additions and discounts through social media channels (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, and blogs). This action will remind the customers

and increase brand identification. Lastly, in order to maintain brand community commitment, a company needs to create a program or reward to customers who are active in social media. The role play by the active community can influence others customer perception. Potential buyers also prefer to evaluate the positive and negative information received from others, rather than information from commercial sources before making a purchase decision (Bone, 1995). Therefore, brand communities are important players in an automobile industry because they can change customers' perceptions regarding automobile brand.

## **5.0 Limitations And Future Directions**

Several limitations in this study need to be acknowledged. First, the integrated model was tested only in the automobile context. Future research needs to consider other online brand communities to generalize the developed framework. Besides, future research could also consider other determinants including brand satisfaction as other factors to influence CCB.

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