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Shockwaves in consumer minds: The thunderous role of media in sculpting brand popularity

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Abstract

This study explores the complex relationship between brand popularity, media exposure, curiosity, fear of missing out, and consumers' information-seeking behaviour on digital platforms. Negative and controversial news sometimes actually makes a brand increase in popularity. This phenomenon is known as the Streisand Effect. With a sample of 358 smartphone users in Indonesia, and utilizing a theory of planned behaviour (TPB) approach, we analyze how digital news content influences consumers' perceptions and behaviour towards brands, primarily through increased information-seeking behaviour. Partial-Least-Squares Structural Equation Modelling and Importance-Performance Analysis (IMPA) were used to analyze the data. Our findings show a significant correlation between information-seeking behaviour and brand popularity, underscoring the impact of digital news content in shaping individual preferences and behaviours. Positive news, negative news, and controversial news, respectively, have different influences on each relationship. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of media in brand management and offers insights for marketers looking to utilize digital platforms for brand enhancement. Future research could expand our study with additional variables.

Introduction

The interactions between customers and brands are becoming more intricate, with media playing a crucial role as a catalyst. Diverse media outlets, predominantly digital media, including social media and online news platforms, have surfaced. Brands employ diverse techniques to effectively reach a wide range of target consumers, such as disseminating information through the media (Gómez et al., 2019). The expectation is that through widespread popularity, consumers will get familiar with the brand, thereby cultivating trust (Ye, 2021) and loyalty (Leyton et al., 2021). Nevertheless, the media does not exercise complete control over information, as it presents not only positive and uplifting news, but also occasionally includes unfavorable news. A fascinating paradox arises when readers have a greater inclination towards controversial information as opposed to positive news (Petit et al., 2021). An infamous incident known as the United Airlines Dragging Incident 2017 took place (Victor & Stevens, 2017). The airline's unfavorable treatment of passengers, as reported in controversial news, had a detrimental impact on the company's reputation. Nevertheless, the company's acknowledgment of fault and subsequent compensation to passengers gradually repaired its reputation. Media industry participants can find such events to be lucrative, as they can lead to higher ratings, the attraction of advertisers, and more visibility. However, for readers, it is a reciprocal relationship. The lack of synchronization between the headline and news content in clickbait articles is damaging. Nevertheless, if the contentious material pertains to a genuine circumstance, it has the potential to incite the Streisand effect.

The Streisand effect, coined after an incident involving celebrity Barbara Streisand, pertains to internet users who intentionally disseminate detrimental information extensively to control and manage an entity's reputation (Hagenbach & Koessler, 2017). This phenomenon arises when

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limitations on knowledge enhance its desirability (Mach, 2022; Pritchard et al., 2022). Essentially, limiting the dissemination of pre-existing lousy material in the media captures the interest of individuals and leads to a broader spread. Including controversial figure Colin Kaepernick as the main star in Nike's 'Just Do It' campaign boosted Nike's exposure and garnered global attention despite the negative headlines surrounding it (Crace, 2018).

According to (Petit et al., 2021), negative and controversial information generates significant curiosity, leading to a greater desire to be informed about news. The rapid dissemination of news, encompassing various forms of content such as information, videos, photographs, and trends, leads to accelerated societal development (Vosoughi et al., 2018). The level of information-seeking rises in proportion to the increase in perception, as indicated by the fear of losing out on information, which is heightened by high news intensity (Przybylski et al., 2013). In the end, having a strong sense of interest and a willingness to stay informed through the media can significantly impact a brand's appeal among individuals repeatedly exposed to information.

Despite previous studies on brand popularity (Filieri et al., 2019; Ishmah et al., 2021; Mazloom et al., 2016), there is still significant room for further improvement (Bhargavi et al., 2018). In our research, we focus on examining the correlation between brand popularity and individual information-seeking behavior. This study examines the correlation between the behavior of seeking information and the popularity of a brand, taking into account the moderating impact of news content. The focus of our investigation is to determine whether negative and contentious news has a notable impact on boosting the level of brand popularity. This study is significant for contributing to the existing literature on brand popularity and offering valuable managerial insights, particularly in brand development strategies aimed at maximizing reach and exposure. In the current age of digitalization, attaining fame is crucial for succeeding in corporate competition and increasing consumer confidence.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Brand Popularity

Brands that are well-known to a large audience are considered popular. A brand's popularity level can be measured by its degree of recognition and the amount of its products being consumed (Chang & Ko, 2014). Prior research suggests that well-known brands have a higher probability of being considered by consumers (Macdonald & Sharp, 2000), positively impacting loyalty, image, and sales (Aaker, 1996), influencing consumer attitudes and purchase intentions (Chang & Chang, 2014), and decreasing consumer perception of risk when making a purchase (Kim et al., 2014). Regarding consumer purchasing patterns, research has identified a direct correlation between the popularity of a brand and its impact on market performance, such as sales and market share (Filieri & Lin, 2017; Huang & Sarigöllü, 2012). To summarize, research has demonstrated that the popularity of a brand has a beneficial impact on customer loyalty, aids in making more accurate assessments, reduces the perception of risk, offers more excellent value, and leads to increased purchasing behavior.

Customers make decisions by using brand awareness as a heuristic. According to cue usage theory, individuals tend to have a heightened trust and confidence in well-known brands, reducing uncertainty (Dean, 1999). Therefore, when brand popularity is used as an external incentive, it can stimulate more favorable assessments and perceptions, resulting in increased product value and reduced perceived risk. Brands naturally desire widespread recognition to enhance the sales potential of their products and produce optimal profitability.

This study examines the determinants of brand popularity using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as the primary theoretical framework. Three conceptual frameworks—attitude, behavior control, and social norm—are utilized by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to generate accurate forecasts of human behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

Theory Planned Behavior

The idea of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), has often been employed in predicting behavior. This theory builds upon the idea of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Hill et al., 1977). Behavioral control was

incorporated into the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) by Ajzen (1985, 1991). Three distinct elements—personal attitude, subjective norm, and behavioral control—influence an individual's intention, according to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Individual attitudes refer to the anticipated results of certain conduct (Tan et al., 2022). Subjective norms comprise societal influences and pressures, whereas behavioral control encompasses the factors that facilitate or hinder behavior (Ajzen, 2011). The intention to partake in a particular behavior is favourably impacted by attitudes, norms, and perceived control. If individuals possess adequate tangible authority over their actions, they will execute their objective when the occasion presents itself. Therefore, intention is regarded as a primary factor that directly influences Behavior, and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a substitute for actual control and aids in forecasting behavior (Bosnjak et al., 2020; Yuriev et al., 2020). According to Ajzen (2020), individuals are more likely to engage in a particular behavior when they possess positive attitudes, subjective solid norms, and high self-control levels.

The social norm concept in this study is represented by the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), as it is equivalent to social pressure. The attitude construct employs curiosity as it mirrors individual attitudes. On the other hand, media exposure is a type of behavior control, as it enables individuals to develop brand perceptions more quickly through the information they receive from the media. An analysis is conducted on three elements that influence the emergence of information-seeking Behavior in relationships.

A comprehensive conceptual framework for understanding individual behavior, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is profound. It emphasizes explicitly the deliberate and aware behavioral responses to environmental inputs. This study utilizes the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to investigate Seeking Behavior, expanding the application of the TPB theory. Figure 1 displays the comprehensive research framework.

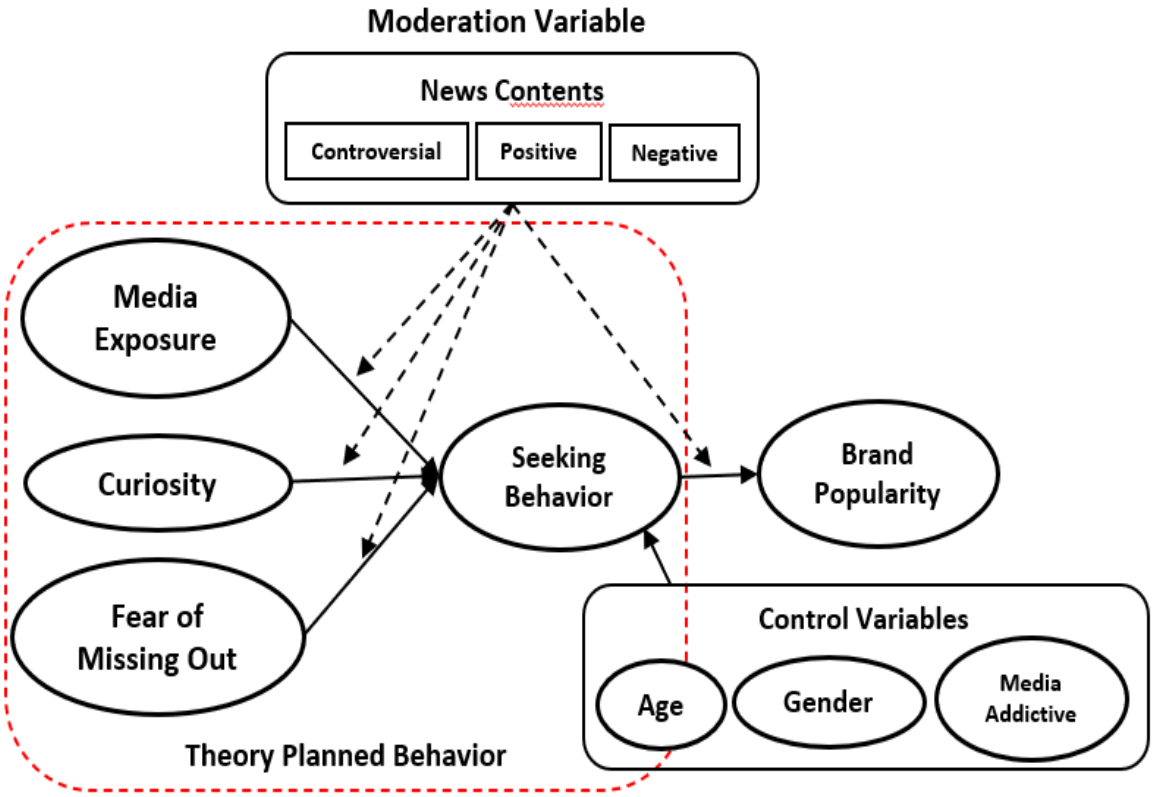

Figure 1. Research Framework

Seeking Behavior

Csikszentmihalyi (1975) introduced the notion of flow experience, which refers to an inherent state of the individual characterized by deep engagement and intense concentration on the task at hand.

Flow refers to the ideal condition of internal motivation, in which individuals are wholly absorbed in their activities (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Wang & Wang, 2020). Engaging in information-seeking via online media is an individual action that demands intense concentration and involvement (Pilke, 2004). Engaging in the search for information generates enjoyable sensations that can lead to the integration of thoughts and actions, reducing the impact of the surrounding physical environment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Wang & Wang, 2020). This refers to a state where the consumer solely focuses on obtaining information that captivates their interest, disregarding all other factors.

Information search behavior refers to the active effort made by individuals to acquire specific information and integrate it with their existing knowledge (Wilson, 2000). Discovering accurate information about a product or brand effectively cultivates a favorable perception. As the magnitude of acquired information intensifies, it molds individual perspectives. Exposure to product or brand information leads to heightened awareness among individuals. This study hypothesizes that the increased intensity of information-seeking behavior about a product or brand may influence its level of popularity. Therefore, we suggest:
H_1: Seeking behavior has positive impact on brand popularity

Media Exposure

Cutting-edge information technology has been employed in searching and disseminating information. Media exposure pertains to the frequency with which individuals come into contact with media (Strömbäck & Shehata, 2010). Media exposure refers to how information is perceived or observed (Lee & Cho, 2020). Media exposure can exert psychological pressure on individuals, as evidenced by studies conducted by Bernstein et al. (2007) and Holman et al. (2014, 2020). This pressure manifests as a heightened curiosity to acquire further knowledge about the delivered content.

Furthermore, the media disseminates visual information with written content. Including emotional material significantly enhances visibility on social media platforms (Brady et al., 2017, 2020). According to Huang et al. (2018), extensive and repetitive news coverage across different media platforms can substantially impact people's perceptions, emotions, and subsequent behavioral responses. We believe that the appearance of captivating information might motivate folks to pursue additional information actively. Therefore, we suggest:
H_2: Media exposure has positive impact on seeking behavior

Curiosity

Curiosity is the inclination to pursue and acquire novel knowledge (Litman, 2010). Curiosity is seen as a fervent drive for motivation (Loewenstein, 1994). Curiosity has two primary components: firstly, it elicits favorable emotions via acquiring knowledge, and secondly, it diminishes aversion towards undesirable information (Litman, 2010). Earlier studies have established a connection between curiosity, boredom, and sensation-seeking (Loewenstein, 1994). A positive correlation exists between a person's level of motivation and their inclination to seek information. If a person experiences good emotions towards a specific behavior, their drive to explore and acquire more information may be heightened. Therefore, we suggest:
H_3: Curiosity has positive impact on seeking behavior

Fear of Missing Out

Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) refers to the experience of negative and uncomfortable emotions that arise from the perception of being excluded or left behind by others (Przybylski et al., 2013) or from the fear of not participating in enjoyable activities (Abel et al., 2016). This behavior is linked to individual engagement driven by jealousy or competition. Furthermore, FoMO can be linked to external environmental characteristics connected to one's self-image and social status (Zhang et al., 2020), resulting in noticeable social behavior, feelings of jealousy, and social isolation (Reagle, 2015). The prevalence of FoMO, or the fear of missing out, has been intensified by increased social media usage and excessive sharing of personal information. This phenomenon is

often described as an addiction to online networking (Rautela & Sharma, 2022; Zendle & Bowden-Jones, 2019). Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) is frequently linked to maladaptive psychological functioning, such as heightened levels of anxiety (Argan & Argan, 2019). We believe that the accessibility of obtaining information has heightened individuals' concern around the possibility of not being up-to-date compared to others, hence stimulating more intense behavior in seeking information. Therefore, we suggest:

H_4: Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) has positif impact on seeking behavior.

Moderating Role of News Contents

Media plays a crucial role in shaping comprehension and how individuals seek knowledge in the era of digital information. The diverse array of media channels, from social media platforms to online news outlets, provides extensive accessibility to many materials. Multiple research has investigated the influence of media exposure on the behavior of seeking information, specifically in the areas of political information (Weeks et al., 2017), sexual material (Bleakley et al., 2011), and health information (Kim, 2015). The overall consensus indicates that exposure to specific media forms can catalyze individuals to pursue additional information actively. Yet, a relatively unexplored facet is the impact of news content on this correlation. News items' relevancy, novelty, or informative value typically heightens the incentive to seek more information. The informative and frequently urgent quality of news information will likely enhance individuals' responses to media exposure by providing more depth. Given the diverse nature of news material, encompassing positive, negative, and controversial information, we anticipate it will elicit varying impacts on individuals' information-seeking behavior. Therefore, we suggest:

H_5: News contents moderate the relationship between media exposure and seeking behavior such that with news contents, the effect is stronger than without news contents.

The innate human desire for knowledge motivates individuals to pursue information actively, playing a crucial part in the process of exploration, comprehension, and acquisition of new knowledge (Han et al., 2020; Kidd & Hayden, 2015). Curiosity can manifest in two distinct ways: particular curiosity, characterized by the pursuit of information to address specific gaps in knowledge, and broad curiosity, characterized by acquiring any available information (Kupor et al., 2021). Consuming media frequently exposes individuals to news content that may not be immediately relevant or necessary. Nevertheless, the intriguing and captivating nature of the given material can motivate individuals to pursue additional knowledge actively. It is our hypothesis that the level of attractiveness of news material is directly proportional to the growth in curiosity. The media's significant role in information dissemination suggests that news content could potentially influence the connection between curiosity and search activity. Consequently. Our proposition is:

H_6: News contents moderate the relationship between Curiosity and seeking behavior such that with news content, the effect is stronger than without news contents.

The phenomenon known as Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) has garnered significant attention in today's technology-driven and media-saturated society. Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) is a psychological condition where individuals feel anxious about not being aware of or being left out of news and current events. This condition notably impacts how people interact with the information available to them (Przybylski et al., 2013; Pundir et al., 2021). Exposure to media content, mainly when encountered repeatedly and with high intensity, can elicit FoMO behavior (Lin et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2020). Given the widespread presence of news content across different media platforms, it is essential to consider how news content impacts the connection between FoMO (Fear of Missing Out) and the behavior of seeking information. Provocative news content frequently stimulates a heightened state of adrenaline, prompting individuals to pursue additional information actively (Lee & Oh, 2013; Niederdeppe, 2008). Considering that persons exhibiting high levels of FoMO tend to seek out information actively, we put forward the following proposal:

H7: News contents moderate the relationship between fear of missing out (FoMO) and seeking behavior such that with news content, the effect is stronger than without news contents.

The relationship between customers and brands is growing more intricate, with media playing a crucial role in driving this change. An area of interest is the impact of information-seeking behavior on brand popularity, as explored by de Vries et al. (2012) and Menidjel et al. (2017). Individuals consistently want to acquire knowledge to satisfy their demands and curiosities. News material is crucial in influencing perceptions of a specific brand (Peterson et al., 2019; Sundar & Nass, 2001). A significant amount of effort put into searching for information about a brand will directly affect how aware people are of that brand. Considering the ability of news medium to capture attention and deliver pertinent and current information, we suggest:

H8: News contents moderate the relationship between seeking behavior and brand popularity such that with news contents, the effect is stronger than without news contents.

This study employed sociodemographic characteristics as controls for the seeking behavior variable. We incorporate age, gender, and addictive media variables in our analysis because previous research has demonstrated their association with changes in individual behavior. For instance, these variables have been found to influence choices of transportation mode (Bernetti et al., 2008), disease prevention strategies (Mavi et al., 2021), responses to Covid-19 (Mondal et al., 2021), environmental attitudes (Sargisson et al., 2020), physical fitness levels (Anderson et al., 2016), lifestyle patterns (Páscoa et al., 2021), and preferences for specific types of exercise (Zhang et al., 2003).

Research Methods

Study Design

This study utilized a quantitative research design, utilizing a structured questionnaire. Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was applied through SmartPLS 3.2.8 (Ringle et al., 2015) in this study. The PLS-SEM is a "regression-based" and "component-based" approach that helps to lessen the residual variances of the endogenous constructs (Hair et al., 2011), hence it is different to covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM). Moreover, compared to CB-SEM, PLS-SEM has less strict rules in terms of sample size, measurement scales, and normality assumptions (Chin, 2010; Wong, 2013).

The PLS-SEM analysis involves two steps. In the first step, the measurement model, which covers containing convergent and discriminant validity, is examined. To illustrate how the statements are correlated with each other and to understand if the statements are covered in the same measurement, convergent validity was checked through the composite reliability (CR) and the average variance extracted (AVE), as well as by examining factor loadings of individual measures (Hair et al., 2019). Another issue is discriminant validity to explain whether two constructs are statistically different. To ensure the discriminant validity of constructs in the research, two criteria (Fornell and Larcker and HTMT) were checked. In the second step, the structural model was analyzed, which comprises path coefficients and their p-values. Accordingly, in this step, it is stated that the hypotheses are supported or rejected.

Furthermore, this study utilizes PLS-multi-group analysis (PLS-MGA) as a technique that allows researcher to test for differences between different groups of respondents with identical estimation models (Hair et al., 2016; Sarstedt et al., 2011). The main objective of using PLS-MGA is to prove whether there is a statistically significant difference between the group models (variation in recommendation form and variation in discount form) and the observed characteristics (Hair et al., 2016).

Data Source

A sample size of 358 is sufficient for PLS-SEM, with existing studies recommending that a sample size should be at least 100 (Ling et al., 2021). Additionally, PLS was used in this study because of common usage in technology adoption studies and its capacity to investigate the relationship between the observed and latent variables and the relationship between the exogenous and endogenous latent variables (Hair et al., 2016; Jadil et al., 2022; Sharma et al., 2022). Further, using

G*Power analysis, we found that a minimum of 138 samples was enough to obtain a power of 0.95 for analysis (Faul et al., 2009). Hence, the sample size of this study surpasses the required threshold. We collect 358 smartphone users were surveyed from November to December 2023 to gather data. The applied criteria were being at least 17 years old, possessing an active social media account utilized daily, and being acquainted with online news platforms or search engines like Google. Sampling for this study was conducted via online surveys utilizing a non-probability technique. The study employed purposive sampling, a technique that selects respondents based on their knowledge and experience, to answer each item in the questionnaire.

Questionnaire Design

This study utilized the scales for the constructs in the model from prior literature (see Table 2). The items were assessed using a 5-point scale. The measurements for media exposure are derived from the study conducted by Goldsmith & Litvin (1999), while the measurement items for seeking behavior are based on the research conducted by He et al. (2018). We utilized content from Ashley & Noble (2014) and Przybylski et al. (2013) regarding the Fear of Missing Out. The curiosity measurements were derived from Manis & Choi (2019), while the assessment of brand popularity utilized elements from Wu & Lee (2016).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Respondents

Parameters	Frequency N=358	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	164	45.8
Female	194	54.2
Age (years old)		
17 - 25	132	36.9
26 - 40	168	46.9
41 - 58	47	13.1
Over 58	11	3.1
Income (IDR-Monthly)		
0 – 5,900,000	97	27.1
Over 5,900,000	261	72.9
Occupation		
Not working: e.g. Student.	92	25.7
Self-employed: e.g. Entrepreneur, Freelance.	149	41.6
Working for Other: e.g. Private Employee, Civil Servant.	117	32.7
Number of media accounts used daily		
1	35	9.8
2	109	30.4
3	163	45.5
4	36	10.1
Over 5	15	4.2
Average online media usage in a day		
1-2 times a day	0	0.0
3-4 times a day	1	0.3
5-6 times a day	52	14.5
7-8 times a day	203	56.7
Over 8 times a day	102	28.5

Results and Discussion

Respondent Profiles

The demographic data of the participants indicates a greater percentage of female respondents, comprising 194 individuals (54.2%), compared to 164 individuals (45.8%) who are male. There are

168 individuals (46.9%) in the age group of 26-40 years; 132 individuals (36.9%) are between the ages of 17-25; 47 individuals (13.1%) are between the ages of 41-58; and 11 individuals (3.1%) are over the age of 58. Individuals under the age of 40 are more inclined to depend on internet platforms than those older. In this study, 261 participants (72.9%) reported an income exceeding IDR 5,900,000, while 97 participants (27.1%) reported an income below that threshold. The World Bank provides the average income of the Indonesian populace in 2022, upon which we establish a threshold of IDR 5,900,000 (Kusnandar, 2023). The predominant profession among the participants was self-employment, held by 149 individuals (41.6%). Working workers comprised 117 individuals (32.7%), and students constituted 92 individuals (25.7%). Self-employed individuals may have greater flexibility and autonomy when accessing online platforms, which could account for this data. Among individuals who utilise online media platforms daily, 207 (56.7%) do so more frequently than 7-8 times, 52 (14.5%) do so 5-6 times, and 102 (28.5%) do so more frequently than 8 times. The characteristics of the respondents are detailed in Table 1.

Measurement Model Evaluation

The factor loadings, validity metrics, and scale reliability are shown in Table 3. The item loadings for the constructs under consideration (namely, brand popularity, curiosity, fear of missing out, and media exposure) all exceeded 0.70, which is the minimum value recommended by (Hair et al., 2019). We illustrated in Figure 2.

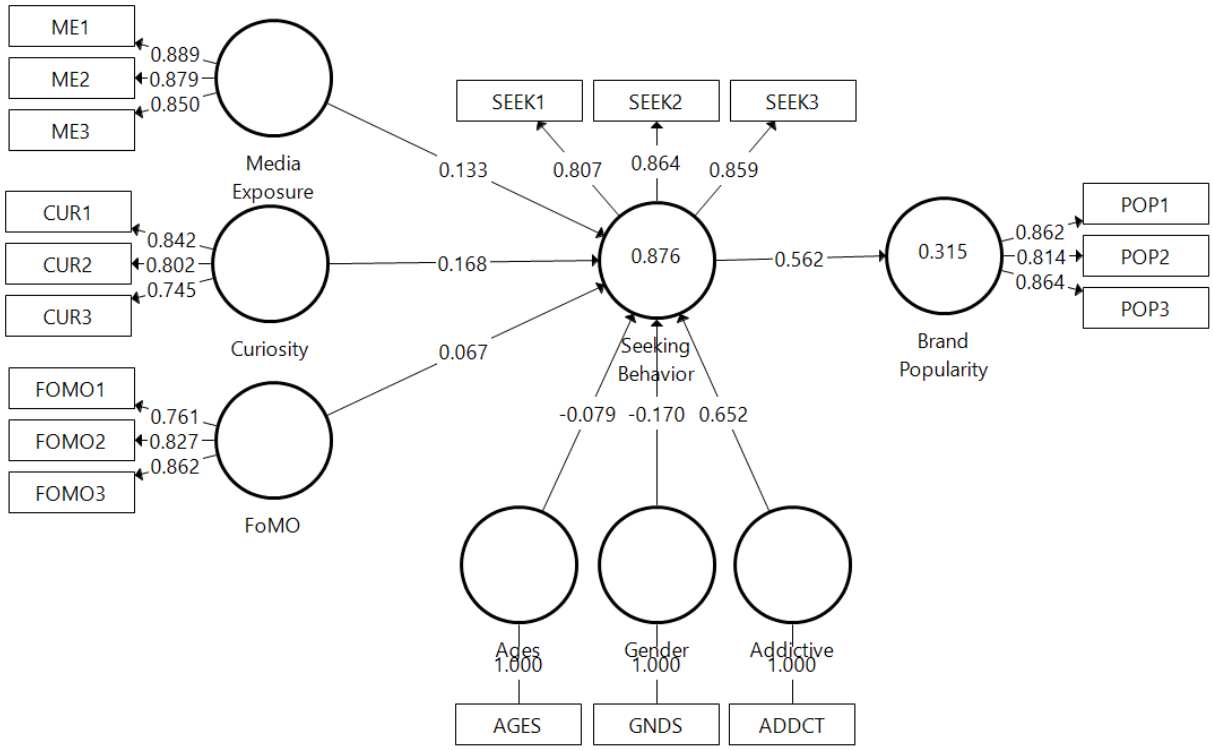

Figure 2. The Main Findings of Path Coefficients and R2 Values

Convergent Validity

Each variable exhibited a composite reliability value exceeding 0.8, fulfilling the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1975). All constructs' AVE values exceeded the minimum recommended value of 0.50, signifying that the items fulfilled the criterion for convergent validity (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Moreover, by the findings of Ali et al. (2018) and Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), Cronbach's alpha values exceeded 0.70.

Table 2. Measurement Items

Media Exposure (Goldsmith & Litvin, 1999)
MEDX1: The media I use often informs the latest information (about Brand XXX) repeatedly MEDX2: I know the latest information (about Brand XXX) through the media with intensity: • 0-1 times/day • 2-4 times/day • 5-7 times/day • 8-10 times/day • Over 10/day MEDX3: Media exposure to the latest information (from Brand XXX) is useful to me
Seeking Behavior (He et al., 2018)
SEEK1: When recurring information is circulated (about Brand XXX), I intend to find out more about it. SEEK2: When there is recurring information circulating (about Brand XXX), I am interested in finding out more about it. SEEK3: When there is recurring information (about Brand XXX), I want to find out more about it.
Fear of Missing Out (Ashley & Noble, 2014; Przybylski et al., 2013)
FOMO1: I am worried that other people are getting the latest information (about Brand XXX), and I am not FOMO2: I am worried that other people will benefit (from Brand XXX's updates) and I will not. FOMO3: I am afraid of missing out on the latest information (about Brand XXX) while others get it
Curiosity (Manis & Choi, 2019)
CURS1: I often browse the media to find out the latest information (about Brand XXX) CURS2: I often read news in the media because I am curious (about Brand XXX) CURS3: I often look at the timeline in the media to find out the latest information (about Brand XXX) if there is an opportunity
Brand Popularity (Wu & Lee, 2016)
BPOP1: Brand XXX is widely recognized BPOP2: I have known Brand XXX BPOP3: I often see Brand XXX's identity (logos, images, advertisements, etc.)
News Content (Kupor et al., 2021)
I am more interested in news that contains: 1) Good News. For instance, the sales surpassed the set target; there were successful launches of new products, the company found success in exporting, and renowned brand ambassadors were recruited 2) Negative News. News encompasses various events such as staff redundancies, sales falling short of the objective, plant shutdowns in multiple locations, subpar service, and customer grievances. 3) Controversial News. For instance, news reporting may involve endorsing specific ideologies or political beliefs, partnering with contentious political parties, or exploiting social or ethnic concerns in advertisements

Discriminant Validity

Hair et al. (2016) assessed discriminant validity using three criteria that cover cross-loading, HTMT, and Fornell and Larcker's. Comparing the square roots of AVE with correlations between latent constructs is how Fornell and Larcker's criterion is evaluated (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Discriminant validity had been established, as indicated by the fact that the square root of AVE for this construct was greater than the square correlation of the other constructs. The square roots of all average values (AVEs) are presented in Table 4. HTMT serves as an additional criterion for evaluating discriminant analysis. Hair et al. (2016) define it as "an approximation of the true correlation that would exist between two constructs under ideal measuring conditions." HTMT ratio must be below 1.00 (Ogbeibu et al., 2018). As shown in Table 4, discriminant validity was attained because every value met the criterion. Partial least squares do not precisely depict the fit quality, as the covariance-based matrix predominantly determines the model fit. However, for PLS path modeling, SmartPLS 3 incorporates the SRMR as a model suitable criterion; it is advised that this metric be below 0.08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Table 3. Indicators, Validity, and Reliability Test

Parameters	Item	Loading				α				CR				AVE			
		FULL	POS	NEG	CONT	FULL	POS	NEG	CONT	FULL	POS	NEG	CONT	FULL	POS	NEG	CONT
Media Exposure (MEDX)	MEDX1	0.889	0.880	0.866	0.918	0.844	0.849	0.828	0.857	0.906	0.908	0.897	0.913	0.762	0.768	0.744	0.779
	MEDX2	0.879	0.878	0.887	0.875												
	MEDX3	0.850	0.870	0.834	0.852												
Curiosity (CURS)	CURS1	0.842	0.834	0.862	0.834	0.714	0.735	0.701	0.708	0.839	0.848	0.832	0.837	0.635	0.650	0.625	0.632
	CURS2	0.802	0.830	0.806	0.774												
	CURS3	0.745	0.752	0.693	0.776												
Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)	FOMO1	0.761	0.762	0.786	0.746	0.752	0.758	0.745	0.758	0.858	0.861	0.854	0.861	0.669	0.675	0.662	0.674
	FOMO2	0.827	0.830	0.804	0.842												
	FOMO3	0.862	0.869	0.850	0.870												
Seeking Behavior (SEEK)	SEEK1	0.807	0.830	0.772	0.817	0.797	0.830	0.747	0.814	0.881	0.898	0.856	0.890	0.712	0.746	0.665	0.729
	SEEK2	0.864	0.892	0.814	0.885												
	SEEK3	0.859	0.868	0.858	0.859												
Brand Popularity (BPOP)	BPOP1	0.862	0.872	0.809	0.881	0.803	0.799	0.760	0.826	0.884	0.882	0.862	0.896	0.718	0.713	0.676	0.743
	BPOP2	0.814	0.830	0.836	0.798												
	BPOP3	0.864	0.831	0.821	0.903												

Notes: FULL: Without Moderation Effect, POS: Positive News, NEG: Negative News, CONT: Controversial News, α: Cronbach's Alpha, CR: Composite Reliability, AVE: Average Variance Extracted

Table 4. Discriminant Validity Assessment

	Fornell–Larcker Criterion								Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) Correlations							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
(1)	**1.000**															
(2)	-0.014	**1.000**							0.014							
(3)	0.483	-0.088	**0.847**						0.538	0.097						
(4)	0.505	-0.147	0.428	**0.797**					0.582	0.167	0.540					
(5)	0.644	-0.027	0.462	0.509	**0.818**				0.740	0.102	0.588	0.660				
(6)	-0.323	-0.158	-0.121	0.018	-0.130	**1.000**			0.323	0.158	0.136	0.055	0.150			
(7)	0.477	-0.041	0.497	0.393	0.439	-0.065	**0.873**		0.517	0.054	0.604	0.487	0.549	0.072		
(8)	0.899	-0.094	0.562	0.593	0.655	-0.382	0.554	**0.844**	0.607	0.104	0.700	0.777	0.842	0.428	0.674	

Notes: (1)=Addictive, (2)=Ages, (3)=Brand Popularity, (4)=Curiosity , (5)Fear of Missing Out, (6)= Gender, (7)=Media Exposure, (8)=Seeking Behavior, Bold figures are square root of average variance extracted (AVE), Figures below the AVE line are the correlations between the factors

Standardized Root Mean Square Residual

The standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) values for the final structural model were standardized to 0.075, indicating a satisfactory model fit (refer to Table 5). The absolute goodness-of-fit measure known as SRMR, which is calculated as the discrepancy between the anticipated and observed correlations, is deemed particularly suitable for PLS-SEM-based models, according to Henseler and Sarstedt (2013). A conservative threshold of values between 0.10 and 0.08 indicates a satisfactory fit (Hair Jr et al., 2014).

Common Method Bias

A multicollinearity check was conducted on the latent constructs (Kock, 2015), representing one approach to evaluate common method bias. According to Kock (2015), it is strongly advised that the inner construct VIFs (variance inflation factor) should be below a value of '5'. The VIF values from '1' (smallest value) to '2.243' (largest value) are presented in Table 6. Each value is less than the minimum acceptance value of '5'. Hence, multicollinearity does not pose a significant concern in this study.

Table 5. Model Fit

	R^2	SRMR
Seeking Behavior	0.876	0.075
Brand Popularity	0.315	

Coefficient of Determination

We examined cross-validated redundancy (Q^2) and the quantity of variance explained (R^2). The coefficient of determination (R^2 value), which ranges from 0 to 1, represents the structural model's predictive accuracy and signifies the variation in the dependent variable or variables that can be accounted for by one or more predictors, as stated in prior research. Chin (1998) says that threshold values of 0.19, 0.33, and 0.67 denote a weak, moderate, and strong coefficient of determination. In this study, brand popularity had an R^2 of 0.315 (moderate), whereas seeking behaviour had an R^2 of 0.876 (strong). The specifics are in Table 5.

Table 6. Common Method Variance Test: Inter-Construct Collinearity (VIFs).

	Seeking Behavior	Brand Popularity
Curiosity	1.573	-
FoMO	1.898	-
Media Exposure	1.383	-
Addictive (control var)	2.243	-
Ages (control var)	1.049	-
Gender (control var)	1.206	-
Seeking Behavior	-	1.000

Predictive Relevance Q2

Cross-validated redundancy is another crucial factor in assessing model accuracy (Q^2). Determining Stone-Geisser's Q^2 values to evaluate the predictive significance of exogenous constructs on endogenous constructs involves a blindfolding procedure (Merli et al., 2019). Regarding seeking behaviour and brand popularity, the corresponding values of (Q^2) in this research were 0.615 and 0.223. The Q^2 value, as defined by Geisser (1974) and Stone (1974), indicates predictive relevance or power. Our path model has a high degree of predictive significance, as evidenced by the Q-values in Table 7 being more significant than 0.

Table 7. Predictive Relevance Q^2

	Sum of Squares of Prediction Errors (SSO)	Sum of Squares of Observations (SSE)	Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)
Seeking Behavior	1074.000	413.954	0.615
Brand Popularity	1074.000	834.459	0.223

Hypothesis Measurements

The PLS approach to structural equation modelling was used to analyze the structural model. The PLS algorithm and bootstrapping resampling approach evaluated the structural model. The evaluation was conducted with 358 examples and 5,000 resamples. The results of the model estimation, which include standardized path coefficients, the significance of the routes, and effect size (f^2), are presented in Table 8. Cohen (2013) and Lowry and Gaskin (2014) state that f^2 values 0.02 for significant independent variables suggest a modest effect, while 0.15 and 0.35 imply moderate and robust effects, respectively. We displayed the results of the hypothesis test in Table 8. The act of actively seeking information has a significant and positive impact on the popularity of a brand ($b=0.562$, $p<0.001$). Hypothesis 1 has been confirmed. The second hypothesis posits a positive correlation between media exposure and seeking behaviour. The results supported Hypothesis 2, with a significant coefficient of 0.133 ($p<0.001$). The third hypothesis posits a positive correlation between curiosity and seeking behaviour. The results supported Hypothesis 3, with a coefficient of 0.168 and a significance level of $p<0.001$. Hypothesis 4 asserts that the fear of missing out favours seeking behaviour ($b=0.067$, $p<0.001$), and this hypothesis was also confirmed.

Table 8. Structural Model Path Analysis

Parameters	FULL	Effect Size (f^2)	Moderation					
			POS	Effect Size (f^2)	NEG	Effect Size (f^2)	CONT	Effect Size (f^2)
SEEK – BPOP	0.562**	0.461	**0.652****	0.740	0.527**	0.384	0.542**	0.416
MEDX – SEEK	0.133**	0.104	0.118*	0.067	**0.172****	0.149	0.117*	0.099
CUR – SEEK	0.168**	0.145	0.178**	0.151	0.152**	0.112	**0.181****	0.177
FoMO – SEEK	0.067**	0.019	0.077 ns	0.027	0.027 ns	0.003	**0.085***	0.032
Control Var								
AGE – SEEK	-0.079**	0.048	-0.095*	0.062	**-0.074***	0.040	-0.038 ns	0.012
GND – SEEK	-0.170**	0.193	-0.167*	0.204	-0.181**	0.212	**-0.153****	0.154
ADDT – SEEK	0.652**	1.525	0.638**	1.530	0.653**	1.347	**0.665****	1.663

Notes: **Significant at p<0.001, *Significant at p<0.05, ns: Not Significant, POS: Positive News, NEG: Negative News, CONT: Controversial News, BPOP: Brand Popularity, SEEK: Seeking Behavior, MEDX: Media Exposure, CUR: Curiosity, FoMO: Fear of Missing Out, AGE: Age, GND: Gender, ADDT: Media Addictive

Multi-Group Analysis

The news content was divided into three groups: positive news, negative news, and controversial news. News content boosts the relationship between media exposure and seeking behaviour, leading to a more significant effect than when news content is absent. Hypothesis 5 has been supported. The impact of negative news was significantly higher (b=0.172, p<0.001) than the impact of the unmoderated conjunction (b=0.133, p<0.001). The effect of positive news (b=0.118, p=0.024) and controversial news (b=0.117, p=0.001) was slightly less significant.

News content boosts the relationship between curiosity and seeking behaviour, leading to a more significant effect than when news content is absent. Hypothesis 6 has been confirmed. The impact of controversial news was significantly higher (b=0.181, p<0.001) compared to the effects of the unmoderated conjunction (b=0.168, p<0.001). The impact of positive news (b=0.178, p<0.001) and negative news (b = 0.152, p<0.001) was somewhat less significant.

The presence of news content moderates the relationship between fear of missing out (FoMO) and seeking behaviour. Specifically, the effect has a more substantial impact when news content is present than when it is absent. Hypothesis 7 has been confirmed. The implications of controversial news were significantly more significant higher (b=0.085, p=0.015) compared to the unmoderated conjunction (b=0.067, p<0.001). The effect of positive news (b=0.077, not necessary) and negative news (b=0.027, not significant) was relatively weak.

Adding news content boosts the relationship between seeking behaviour and brand popularity, resulting in an increased impact. Hypothesis 8 has been confirmed. The impact of positive news was significantly higher (b=0.652, p<0.001) compared to the unmoderated conjunction (b=0.562, p<0.001). The effect of controversial news (b=0.542, p<0.001) and negative news (b=0.527, p<0.001) was comparatively less significant.

Table 9. Multigroup Analysis

Parameters	Multigroup		
	diff (POS – NEG)	diff (NEG – CONT)	diff (CONT – POS)
SEEK – BPOP	0.125 ns	-0.015 ns	-0.110 ns
MEDX – SEEK	-0.054 ns	0.056 ns	-0.002 ns
CUR – SEEK	0.026 ns	-0.029 ns	0.003 ns
FoMO – SEEK	0.050 ns	-0.058 ns	0.008 ns
Control Var			
AGE – SEEK	-0.021 ns	-0.037 ns	0.057 ns
GND – SEEK	0.014 ns	-0.029 ns	0.014 ns
ADDT – SEEK	-0.015 ns	-0.012 ns	0.027 ns

Notes: ns: Not Significant, POS: Positive News, NEG: Negative News, CONT: Controversial New, BPOP: Brand Popularity, SEEK: Seeking Behavior, MEDX: Media Exposure, CUR: Curiosity, FoMO: Fear of Missing Out, AGE: Age, GND: Gender, ADDT: Media Addictive

Although the news content group significantly impacts the relationship between variables, the PLS-MGA test results indicate no singular difference in effect between groups. As an explanation, the correlation between interest and seeking activity, controversial news has a notable additional impact of 0.181, but positive news has a substantial effect of 0.178. However, a direct comparison of negative and positive news reveals no significant difference, as indicated by a diff (CONT - POS) value of 0.003. Table 9 displays the comprehensive statistics.

Control Variables

To assess the sensitivity of the study findings, we used control variables to mitigate any potential bias in calculating the results. This study uses three control variables: age, gender, and media addiction. The age distribution is classified into four distinct levels, with a minimum age range of 17-25 years and a maximum age range of over 58 years. According to the results, age is inversely correlated with seeking behaviour (b=-0.079, p<0.001). A negative correlation (b= -0.170, p<0.001) between gender and seeking behaviour was observed between males and females, as indicated by the measurement results. Media addiction is classified according to the frequency of daily platform utilization, which ranges from 1-2 times (at the lowest level) to more than eight times (at the highest level). Seeking behaviour is positively impacted by increased media addiction, according to the measurement results (b=0.652, p0.001). The verified proposed model is shown in Figure 3.

Table 10. Importance-Performance Index Result

Parameters	Brand Popularity	
	Importance (Total Effect)	Performance (Index value)
Seeking Behavior	0.675	62.835
FoMO	0.214	68.313
Curiosity	0.209	57.371
Media Exposure	0.156	60.276

Importance-Performance (IPMA) Analysis

We utilized importance-performance map analysis (IPMA) to identify potential enhancement areas in brand popularity and bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples to demonstrate the statistical significance of some path coefficients. IPMA is a method that enhances path modelling and regression analysis via an evaluation based on index values. By identifying regions of low and high performance according to PLS-SEM results, IPMA offers academicians valuable insights (Hock et al., 2010; Ogunmokun et al., 2020). Predominantly, all scales should be metric or quasi-metric (Ringle & Sarstedt, 2016; Sarstedt & Mooi, 2014). Initially, rescaling the latent variable scores should encompass a range of 0 to 100. Additionally, ensuring that all scales utilized in the research are coded identically (ranging from lowest to maximum value) is crucial (Ringle & Sarstedt, 2016). Another prerequisite is that all scales must have positive outer weights. Finally, verifying that the variance inflation factor (VIF) does not introduce a collinearity problem is necessary. According to (Hair et al., 2016), all indicators must be below 5 to rule out collinearity. In this study, the IMPA analysis was effectively executed by satisfying all the criteria above.

Seeking behaviour is the most significant predictor of brand popularity (0.564), followed by curiosity (0.164), fear of missing out (0.217), and media exposure (0.154), according to the IPMA findings. Regarding the performance of these variables to predict brand popularity, fear of missing out (68.313) is the highest, followed by seeking behaviour (62.835), media exposure (60.276), and curiosity (57.371), as shown in Table 10. According to these results, fear of missing out should be regarded as the most significant determinant of brand popularity, whereas seeking behaviour is the most critical predictor (Figure 4).

Discussion

As digital media continues to advance, the competition among brands intensifies. Brands employ several tactics to optimize their outreach to a wide range of potential consumers to maximize the

sales potential of their products. This study investigates the determinants of brand popularity linked to the distribution of news and information via online media platforms. This study employs constructs derived from the theory of planned behavior (TPB) to investigate the correlation between brand popularity and seeking behavior, which is influenced by factors such as media exposure, curiosity, and fear of missing out (FOMO). To determine the factors influencing impact and the possibility of expanding the study, this research uses importance-performance analysis (IMPA).

Seeking behavior influences brand popularity positively. This supports the findings of Wilson (2000). Brand popularity is shaped in large part by information-seeking behavior, which marketers can use to their advantage to gain a competitive edge. The interplay between brands and consumers is ever-evolving in this fast digital era. Consumers exhibit 'seeking behavior' when actively searching for information and engaging with brands. Individuals are actively involved in seeking information, as evidenced by this conduct. Favorable news can enhance the correlation between consumer behavior and the popularity of a company. Brand awareness increases when more individuals become aware of a product or service due to the dissemination of positive news. Popular brands tend to capture consumers' interest and elicit a more substantial surge in their pursuit of information. Positive news can propagate rapidly in the digital age. This may enhance the impact, given that consumers frequently engage in discourse and sharing of positive news. Expanding the reach and stimulating more significant interest in the renowned brand can be achieved through this approach.

Widespread media exposure connects individuals with accessible information and unbridled curiosity. A revolution in the distribution and reception of information has occurred with the emergence of several media platforms. Human psychology, social requirements, and technology all contribute to the intricate interplay between media exposure and information-seeking behavior. The findings of this study, media exposure positively influences seeking behavior. This supports the findings of Bernstein et al. (2007), Holman et al. (2014), and Garfin et al. (2020). Interactions with media elicit distinct psychological reactions, incite inquiry, and motivate individuals to retain the information presented and pursue additional knowledge, according to recent research. An important shift in the dynamics of contemporary communication is reflected in this phenomena, as audiences are now active participants in the pursuit of knowledge rather than merely passive users. When negative news is present, the impact of media exposure on seeking behavior can be strengthened. Constant attention is paid to contentious or conflict-ridden events in negative news, which has a profound effect on how individuals seek and evaluate additional information in an effort to validate or confirm their beliefs. One effect of bad news is a rise in people searching for knowledge about the story's history, underlying issues, or future events. Frequently, negative news necessitates a deeper comprehension of the context.

Curiosity significantly influences individuals' pursuit of knowledge and experience in the contemporary era of information and innovation. This finding supports the study of Loewenstein (1994). Humans are motivated to investigate, comprehend, and pursue resolutions to the inquiries that elude their intellects by virtue of their inherent curiosity. It is noteworthy that curiosity inspires inquiry and compels us to pursue resolutions. Diverse sectors, including education and the creative industry, where the inquisitive frequently emerge as trailblazers and innovators, attest to the beneficial effects of this correlation between curiosity and seeking behavior. According to the findings of the study, controversial news strengthens the correlation between inquiry and seeking behavior. Controversial news that pertains to themes of sensitivity, religion, politics, ethnicity, or social issues frequently incites fervent public discourse due to its ability to evoke strong emotions and interests. Controversial news will motivate individuals to pursue additional information in order to form personal opinions regarding its support or opposition. Controversial news has the potential to intensify curiosity, thereby reinforcing seeking behavior. Furthermore, the dissemination of content that aligns with one's personal views can result in a bubble effect caused by controversial news.

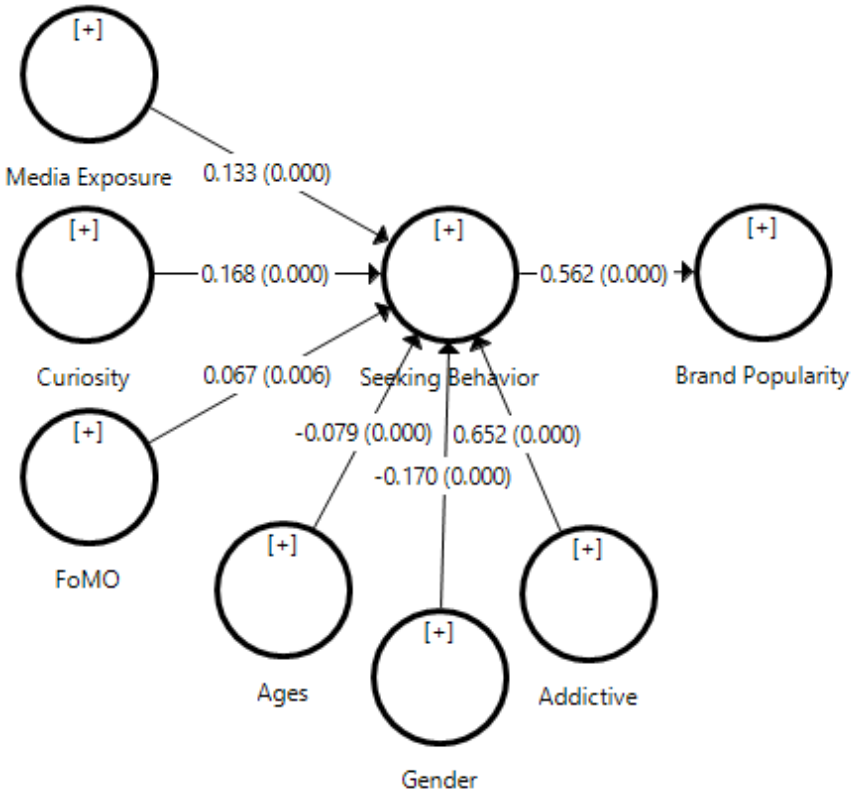

Figure 3. Validated Research Model

There are positive effects associated with FoMO behavior despite its association with negative emotions such as anxiety, depression, and impulsivity. This finding supports the study of Rautela and Sharma (2022) and Zendle and Bowden-Jones (2019). One example is information-seeking behavior involving fresh products, services, or experiences. Individuals seek new knowledge and information out of concern about missing out on crucial opportunities or information. This may result from positive discoveries, such as discovering new products or opportunities. Controversial news may exacerbate the effect of FoMO on seeking behavior. Controversial news occupies the spotlight as it often sparks heated debate and discussion on social media and online news platforms. Individuals are motivated to seek additional information concerning controversial news to comprehend the various points of view and arguments. They want to participate in the discussion and complete all the most recent information. As a result, they may be prone to seek current information to maintain a sense of engagement with the ongoing topic.

The seeking behavior of an individual is negatively correlated with age. Less motivation to discover new things declines with age. Possible explanations include time constraints resulting from complex physical, cognitive, and repetitive circumstances encountered daily. Furthermore, this study shows that women show stronger seeking behaviors than men. This might result from women communicating more openly and having greater empathy than men. Information-seeking behavior is influenced by the degree to which consumers are engaged with the content presented in the media. News platforms and social media algorithms frequently exhibit trending content, which may catch users in a vortex of information spreading among the general public. Repetitive information exposure has the potential to stimulate additional information-seeking behavior in individuals.

Importance-performance analysis (IMPA) was employed to determine the components that impose influence and show potential for development. According to this study, seeking behavior is the most significant predictor of brand popularity. Additionally, the fear of missing out is a substantial factor in clarifying the occurrence of brand popularity. Fear of missing out and seeking behavior are among the predictor variables with the highest performance index. According to this finding, these two factors should be prioritized to explain brand popularity.

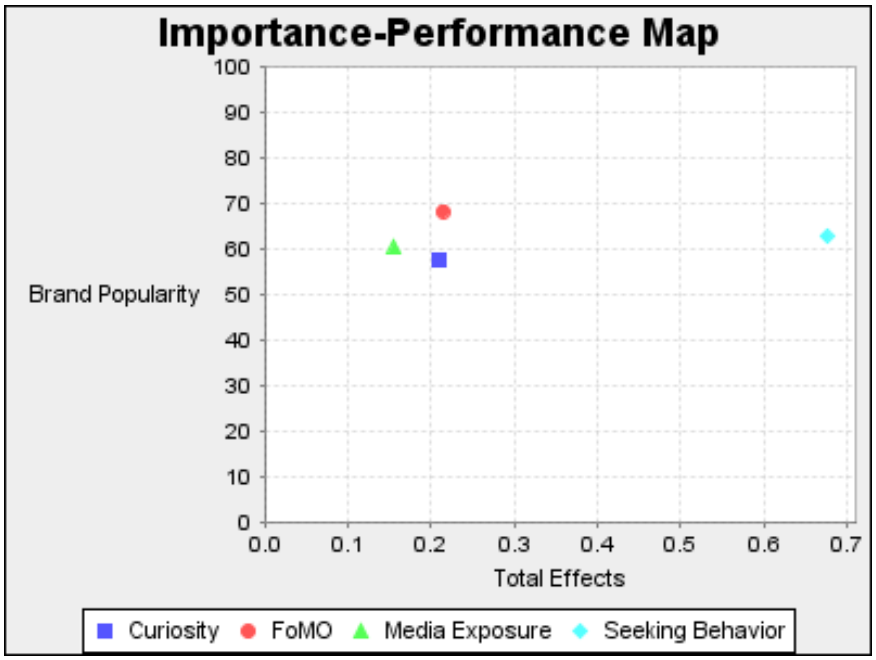

Figure 4. IMPA Factors Affecting Brand Popularity

Implication and Conclusion

Competition for consumer attention is fierce, especially in today's online environment where new entrants are constantly emerging. The first step to getting the attention of potential consumers is to make the brand widely known. Consumer behavior towards a brand will be greatly influenced by its level of popularity. Therefore, we must understand the variables that can influence the surge in brand popularity. Due to the importance of this, our research begins by incorporating the constructs of search behavior, media exposure, curiosity, and fear of missing out into a theoretical model based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Our research examines the variables that influence brand popularity by analyzing individual actions related to news content. Therefore, our results can provide valuable insights for brand owners and marketers to identify the most influential determinants to increase brand popularity. Our research shows that each factor influencing brand popularity is affected by the type of news (including search behavior, media exposure, curiosity, and fear of missing out), whether it is positive, negative, or controversial. Therefore, in regard to the gradual increase in brand popularity, brand managers and marketers ought to consistently consider pertinent news articles that are trending in the media. Our conceptual model is expected to make theoretical and managerial contributions by providing future research opportunities.

This study has several limitations. Therefore, the authors suggest several things that can be taken into consideration by future researchers. Future researchers can add other variables as an influence on brand popularity. In this study, we only used the seeking behaviour variable. This research does not consider the influence of mediation, so future research can use mediation variables to improve a more complex model to gain a better understanding. Many factors can influence the increase in brand popularity, so research on this theme needs further development.

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