

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**THE MODERATING EFFECTS OF
ATTITUDE ON THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN SOCIAL NETWORKING
SITES FACTORS AND COVID-19
VACCINE ACCEPTANCE IN
MELAKA TENGAH**

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ABSTRACT

The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic has devastated the economic and social sectors globally. Vaccines are the most effective way to overcome the crisis. However, the acceptance of vaccination is a major obstacle. Clinical tests conducted in a short and limited time frame have raised concerns about the product's validity. Previous research has shown the significance of attitudes towards vaccination behaviours. Furthermore, the effect of utilising social networking sites on people's attitudes and behaviours is either overlooked or less examined. This study aims to determine the moderating effects of attitude on the relationship between social networking site factors of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived religiosity, amount of information, and social affiliation and COVID-19 vaccine acceptance in Melaka Tengah. A purposive sampling method is employed in an online, cross-sectional study with a self-administered questionnaire to 411 social networking site users, aged 18 and older, who are vaccinated and knowledgeable about the COVID-19 vaccine. The data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 and Hayes Process Macro version 4.1. This study uses the technology acceptance model, the tri-component model (ABC model), and the health belief model as foundational theories for conceptual framework development. The multiple regression results indicate that social affiliation ($\beta=.68$) and perceived religiosity ($\beta=.17$) are the stronger indicators for COVID-19 vaccine acceptance, with a suggestive model accounting for 67.5% of the variance. Furthermore, when attitude moderates the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, perceived ease of use ($b = -.05, \rho < 0.04$), amount of information ($b = -.06, \rho < 0.02$), and social affiliation ($b = -.06, \rho < 0.02$) statistically had significant relationships with COVID-19 vaccine acceptance. The findings are crucial to promote vaccination and gaining public trust in national immunisation and vaccine programmes. Issues with safety and halal vaccines are priorities. Authorities are encouraged to create a closed community network application, or MyCCN, or to use WhatsApp media to reach out to specific groups of people, such as families, religious groups, vulnerable individuals, and working groups. This study also contributes knowledge on social networking site factors, attitudes, and COVID-19 vaccine acceptance.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The growth of the internet has altered many parts of modern culture and social interaction. The development of social media was closely related to the expansion of business-oriented technology. One of the most significant developments connected to social media is the rise of social networking sites. The social networking site first appeared in 1997. During that time, many did not understand their value and importance (Shikati, 2017). However, it became a phenomenon in 2003, when Friendster first gained media attention. The emergence of LinkedIn, MySpace, Facebook, YouTube, CyWorld, Bebo, and Twitter came after that. In less than ten years, social networking sites have attracted millions of users of all ages around the globe, and many have incorporated these sites into their daily routines (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Ellison, 2013; Shikati, 2017).

Boyd and Ellison (2007) and Ellison (2013) define social networking sites as: “Web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site.”

Based on the definition by Kenton (2021), social networking sites are web-based social networking sites that allow users to communicate with their family, friends, customers, or employees. Social networking sites are a modern form of communication that provides users with a proper channel to communicate and share their ideas and interests in a long-term relationship on the site (Dhiraj, 2017; Melovic et al., 2020; Waheed et al., 2017).

The platform is a two-way communication channel where family and friends connect and users build relationships with new partners (Rahman & Hassan, 2015). The websites are user-friendly. Hence, anyone can use it regardless of their age or location (Dhiraj, 2017). According to Yoo et al. (2016), the development of social networking