



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***ROLE OF STORE IMAGE AND CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING IN  
HYPERMARKET VISIT INTENTION***

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HYPERMARKET VISIT INTENTION**

By

**HONG KAY TZE**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**January 2018**

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

## **ROLE OF STORE IMAGE AND CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING IN HYPERMARKET VISIT INTENTION**

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**January 2018**

**Chairman : Associate Professor Ng Siew Imm, PhD**  
**Faculty : Economics and Management**

As the number of hypermarket outlets in Malaysia increase substantially each year, they become more sophisticated in their marketing strategies and more competitive in their products quality, price and services, resulting in an intense competition to attract patrons. Hence, apart from possessing strong store image, this study addresses the issue of high competitiveness by looking at how hypermarkets may draw more consumers to them by involving Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) aspects as part of their marketing strategy. Cause-Related Marketing (CRM) is a type of CSR technique that allows companies to boost sales while simultaneously contribute to a worthy cause. By drawing on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model, this study follows a positivist research paradigm which proposes a conceptual framework that include store image factors and CRM factors to understand their relative influence on visit intention. Questionnaires were distributed to Malaysian consumers using a mall-interception technique throughout the states of Selangor, Johor and the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya. A total of 460 consumers completed the questionnaire. In this study, two statistical software were used to analyze the data collected, namely: i) Statistical Package for the Social Science Window software (SPSS) and ii) Structural Equation Model (SEM) using SmartPLS 3.2.3. The outcome of this study revealed that i) respondents had significant intention to participate in the cause of “supporting underprivileged individuals”, ii) all store image factors had a positive direct relationship with overall store image which in turn had a significant relationship with hypermarket visit intention, iii) CRM factors (i.e. consumer-company identification, perceived CSR image and perceived company-cause fit) were related to consumers’ attitude towards CRM, iv) attitude and perceived behavioural control were positively significant towards CRM participation intention, and lastly, v) CRM participation intention was positively associated with hypermarket visit intention and this leads to a significant relationship with hypermarket patronage behavior. The study extends the S-O-R

model to the context of hypermarket and enhances the study of store image. Besides that, it extends the TPB model by adding antecedents to attitude to assess their influence on CRM participation intention and hypermarket visit intention. This study indeed found that CRM paired with a good store image contributed to a higher increase of hypermarket visit intention compared to just having a strong store image alone. On the practical side, hypermarket managements could use CRM as a differentiation strategy to attract more consumers to their hypermarkets. Furthermore, hypermarket managers should consider factors such as consumer-company identification, perceived CSR image and perceived company-cause fit when designing a CRM campaign.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

## **PERANAN IMEJ STOR DAN PEMASARAN BERSEBAB DALAM NIAT LAWATAN PASAR RAYA BESAR**

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Apabila bilangan pasar raya besar di Malaysia meningkat dengan ketara setiap tahun, mereka menjadi lebih canggih dari segi strategi pemasaran dan lebih berdaya saing dalam bentuk kualiti dan harga produk serta perkhidmatan mereka, mengakibatkan persaingan sengit di antara pasar raya besar untuk menarik pengunjung. Oleh itu, selain memiliki imej stor yang kukuh, tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk menangani isu daya saing tinggi pasar raya besar dengan mengkaji cara pasar raya besar boleh menarik lebih ramai pengguna dengan melibatkan aspek Tanggungjawab Sosial Korporat (CSR) sebagai sebahagian daripada strategi pemasaran mereka. Pemasaran Bersebab (CRM) adalah sejenis teknik CSR yang membolehkan syarikat-syarikat untuk meningkatkan jualan dan pada masa yang sama menyumbang kepada tujuan yang berkelayakkan. Berdasarkan teori tingkah laku yang dirancang (TPB) dan Model Rangsangan-Organisme-Tindak Balas (S-O-R), kajian ini mengikuti paradigma penyelidikan positif yang mencadangkan suatu rangka kerja konseptual yang merangkumi faktor imej stor dan faktor CRM untuk memahami pengaruh relatifnya terhadap niat lawatan. Soal-soal selidik telah diedarkan kepada pengguna Malaysia menggunakan teknik pemintasan di pusat membeli-belah di seluruh negeri Selangor, Johor dan Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur dan Putrajaya. Sejumlah 460 pengguna telah mengisi soal selidik tersebut. Dalam kajian ini, dua perisian statistik digunakan untuk menganalisis data yang dikumpulkan, iaitu: i) *Statistical Package for the Social Science Window software (SPSS)* dan ii) *Structural Equation Model (SEM)* menggunakan SmartPLS 3.2.3. Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa i) responden mempunyai niat untuk menyertai kempen "menyokong individu yang kurang bernasib baik", ii) semua faktor imej stor mempunyai hubungan langsung yang positif dengan imej stor keseluruhan dan ini mengakibatkan imej stor keseluruhan mempunyai hubungan dengan niat lawatan pasar raya besar, iii) Faktor-faktor CRM (iaitu pengenalan syarikat-pengguna, andaian pengguna terhadap imej CSR syarikat dan andaian pengguna terhadap kesesuaian syarikat-sebab) mempunyai kaitan dengan

sikap pengguna terhadap CRM, iv) sikap dan andaian kawalan tingkah laku mempunyai hubungan positif terhadap niat penyertaan CRM, dan akhirnya, v) niat penyertaan CRM berkait positif dengan niat lawatan pasar raya besar dan ini membawa kepada hubungan yang signifikan dengan tingkah laku langganan pasar raya besar. Kajian ini melanjutkan model S-O-R kepada konteks pasar raya besar dan meluaskan skop kajian imej stor. Di samping itu, kajian ini melanjutkan model TPB dengan menambah faktor pendahuluan kepada sikap pengguna terhadap CRM untuk menilai pengaruh mereka terhadap niat penyertaan CRM dan niat lawatan pasar raya besar. Kajian ini mendapati bahawa imej stor yang baik ditambah dengan CRM menyumbang kepada peningkatan niat lawatan pasar raya besar yang lebih tinggi berbanding hanya memiliki imej stor yang baik sahaja. Secara praktikal, pengurusan pasar raya besar boleh menggunakan CRM sebagai strategi pembezaan untuk menarik lebih ramai pengguna ke pasar raya besar mereka. Tambahan pula, pengurus pasar raya besar harus mempertimbangkan faktor-faktor seperti pengenalan syarikat-pengguna, andaian pengguna terhadap imej CSR syarikat dan andaian pengguna terhadap kesesuaian syarikat-sebab ketika merancang kempen CRM.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADHD	Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
AHA	American Heart Association
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
ATM	Automated Teller Machine
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CADS	Cerebral palsy attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism, dyslexia, down syndrome and slow learners
CASE	The Center for Advancement of Business, Innovation and Social Entrepreneur
CB-SEM	Co-Variance-Based method
CCI	Consumer-Company Identification
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CMV	Common Method Variance
CR	Composite Reliability
CRM	Cause-Related Marketing
CRY	Child Relief and You
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CVR	Cross-Validated Redundancy
$f^2$	Effect Size
GNI	Gross National Income
GOF	Goodness of Fit
GST	Goods and Services Tax
HTMT	Heterotrait-Monotrait

IJN	Institut Jantung Negara
IKEA	Ingvar Kamprad Elmtaryd Agunnaryd (Swedish home furnishings retailer; derived from founder's initials and hometown)
KFC	Kentucky Fried Chicken
MANOVA	Multivariate Analysis of Variance
ML	Maximum Likelihood
MNC	Multinational Company
NCCS	The National Center for Charitable Statistics
NCSM	National Cancer Society Malaysia
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NKEA	National Key Economic Area
NPO	Non-Profit Organization
PEMANDU	Performance Management and Delivery Unit
P&G	Procter and Gamble
PKM	Persuasion Knowledge Model
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Square
PMA	Promotion Marketing Association
Q <sup>2</sup>	Predictive Relevance
R <sup>2</sup>	Coefficient of Determination
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SIM	Single Item Measurement
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
S-O-R	Stimulus-Organism-Response Theory
SPCA	Society for the Prevention of Cruelty on Animals
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Science Window software

SRMR	Standardised Root Means Square Error
TPB	Theory of Planned Behavior
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
U.K.	United Kingdom
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
U.S.	United States
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor
WAO	Women's Aid Organisation
WP	Wilayah Persekutuan (Federal Territory)
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the study. Firstly, the chapter starts with the background of the study where issues related to retailing industry are highlighted. Next, it discusses the problem statement and underlines the objectives of the study. Research questions are then developed based on the problem statement and objectives of the study. Besides that, the significance and scope of the study is explained. Lastly, this chapter also describes the organization of the thesis and the operational definition of key terms used in this study.

### 1.2 Background of the Study

As business environments grow more challenging, stakeholders grow more complex, and the call for corporate transparency and social responsibility grows ever louder, companies these days have to devote more resources to a variety of social initiatives simply to ensure business sustainability and maintain a positive corporate reputation (Du, Bhattacharya & Sen, 2010; Saeidi, Sofian, Saeidi, Saeidi & Saeidi, 2015). Thus, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has surfaced as a popular concept (Becker-Olsen, Cudmore & Hill, 2006; Pirsch, Gupta & Grau, 2007). CSR encompasses corporate social deeds that fulfil the social needs of stakeholders exceeding the legal obligations of a company (Lii, 2011). CSR plays a fundamental role in a company's marketing strategy as it addresses consumer's expectations and perceptions, which eventually translate to higher satisfaction, trust and loyalty (Park, Kim & Kwon, 2017). In short, CSR enhances corporate performance and reputation (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001; Saeidi *et al.*, 2015). For instance, for the second year in a row, Google tops in the Reputation Institute's rankings by being a company that is carbon neutral since 2007. Google has put into practice various CSR programs such as Google Green, which is an environmental friendly scheme. Furthermore, they are the first tech company to fully encourage workplace diversity (U.S. News, 2015). In Malaysia, many companies are also actively involved in CSR. In 2012, PKT Logistics Group Sdn Bhd was awarded the silver honour for Best in CSR by the Star Outstanding Business Award. PKT not only takes good care of its employees but also does various communities development programmes such as the "Children Study Mother Work" programme and the "Career Day" programme to reduce unemployment (The Star Online, 2015).

There are many ways to carry out CSR. Polonsky and Speed (2001) asserted that the philanthropy, sponsorship, and cause-related marketing (CRM) are among the three types of CSR initiatives which companies usually use. In the first type of philanthropy, a firm will make a contribution of money or in kind, such as people or equipment, to

a worthy cause (Lii & Lee, 2012). Lii and Lee (2012) pointed out that such firms usually desire to become a good citizen and do not anticipate any benefits from their action or effort. Similar to philanthropy, sponsorship is where cash or resources, such as human resources or equipment, are invested in an activity by a firm (Lii & Lee, 2012). However, the participating firm has a clear objective to gain the possible exploitable commercial benefits that is linked to sponsoring an event or entity (Lii & Lee, 2012). Unlike philanthropy and sponsorship, CRM is a strategic CSR program that involves the customer. It is the combination of a marketing program of a for-profit organisation with fund raising necessity of a not-for-profit organisation (Hajjat, 2003). In other words, a CRM campaign attempts to convince consumers to purchase the products of a firm by agreeing to contribute a certain amount of funds to a designated cause.

This study focuses on CRM as it is identified as an essential and popular marketing strategy that has been used by numerous retail companies such as KFC, Body Shop, and Proctor and Gamble (Galan Ladero, Galera Casquet & Singh, 2015). Due to the highly competitive market and strong consumer support, the use of CRM as a business strategy has been gaining in popularity in recent years (Singh, 2014). To illustrate, Body Shop partnered with World Land Trust to plant one million native tree seeds in degraded areas of the Cerro Blanco Protected Forest (The Body Shop International PLC, 2016). To fund this project, Body Shop channelled 10 pence from the product sale of their Oils of Life™ Skincare launch (The Body Shop International PLC, 2016). To give a local example, QL Poultry Farms Sdn Bhd and IJN Foundation supported heart health and raised awareness of heart wellness across Malaysia (QL Resources Bhd, 2015). According to QL Resources Bhd (2015), for every 30 QL eggs purchased, 50 cents was donated to IJN Foundation. Besides that, ANTABAX in collaboration with Giant and Guardian ran a two-months-long campaign, in which 5% sales of Antabax antibacterial range products sold in Giant or Guardian outlets in Malaysia were donated to the Women's Aid Organisation (WAO) to support their refugee and child care centre (Lam Soon Group, 2015). Likewise, MAY products partnered with the National Cancer Society Malaysia (NCSM) to support and increase cervical cancer awareness by running a campaign for two months (Lam Soon Group, 2013). As stated by Lam Soon Group (2013), 5% of MAY product sales in any Giant outlets was channelled to NCSM.

Relying on CRM alone to increase sales performance is insufficient. Retailers also need to maintain a decent store image as their store image is identified as a vital determinant of retail success. The store attributes offered by a retailer will lead to satisfaction if the attributes meet the consumers' expectation (Theodoridis & Chatzipanagiotou, 2009), only then will customers consider participating in activities such as the firm's CRM. Store image is mostly defined by the various retailing mix (Ghosh, 1990) such as merchandise, advertising, price, store atmosphere, services attributes, store location, and other inferences that arise from the store's attributes. Store image has been found to explain visit intentions for all kinds of retail formats, including hypermarkets (Carpenter & Moore, 2006). To more effectively engage consumers, companies have to go beyond store image and step up their marketing



strategies (Gupta & Pirsch, 2008). CRM has been found to effectively increase patronage to shops like IKEA, Pizza Hut, and Guardian Pharmacy (Anuar & Mohamad, 2012). In short, store image coupled with CRM may bring greater levels of patronage as the store image meets the expectations for products and services while CRM exceeds consumers' expectations by allowing consumers to participate in a social cause through their purchases. This leads to the purpose of the study, which is to examine whether the combined effort of store image and CRM will give hypermarkets a competitive advantage as indicated by higher patronage.

### **1.3 The Malaysian Retail Industry**

According to Mohd-Said (1990), retailing implies the selling of small amounts of goods and services to end consumers for personal consumption at a profit. Lim, Badarulzaman and Ahmad (2003) listed four types of retailers. The first type are the informal retailers such as hawkers and peddlers who sell fresh produce and cooked food in markets. Secondly, we have small retailers who are the single-proprietorship business owners. They are usually located in shophouses and can sell items ranging from jewellery, spices, clothing apparel, handbags, personal items, and medicinal herbs. Large-scale department stores or supermarkets that sport a modern architectural style are the third kind. Such stores have existed since 1970s. The last in the list are shopping centres that contain various department stores and small-scale shops under one roof. Shopping centres have been around since the 1980s. Shopping malls also meet our leisure and social needs. The last two categories of retailers (large-scale department stores and shopping centres) are significant contributors of jobs (PEMANDU, 2013).

The retail sector in Malaysia is the main contributor to the nation's gross national income (GNI) (Economic Transformation Programme, 2010; New Straits Times, 2015). According to the Department of Statistics, the retail sector has contributed about RM57 billion to GNI in 2009 and approximately 300,000 jobs. Table 1.1 shows the performance of services sector in second quarter 2017 as reported by the Department of Statistics Malaysia. Services are the outcome of a production activity that transforms the conditions of the consuming units or facilitates the exchange of products or financial assets. The service sector consists of sub-sectors such as Wholesale and Retail Trade, Information and Communication, Transportation and Storage, Food and Beverages, Professional, Private Health, Private Education, Accommodation, Arts, Entertainment and Recreation, and Real Estate Agent (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2017). Table 1.1 shows that among the sub-sectors in the services sector, wholesale and retail trade, food and beverage, and accommodation have the highest revenues (RM 303.8 billion) and engages the most people (2,683,654 million). Table 1.2 shows the number of employment provided in retailing from 2008 till 2013 as reported by Euromonitor International (2014). We can observe that the number of employment in the retail industry increased steadily from 313.3 thousand people in 2008 to 367.2 thousand people in 2013. Hence, the retail industry is identified as the key provider of jobs according to Economic Transformation Programme (2013).

**Table 1.1 : Performance of Services Sector, Second Quarter of 2017**

Sub-sector	Revenue			Number of persons engaged		
	RM Billion	% Changes (Year-on-Year)	% Changes (Quarter-on-Quarter)	Number (Million)	% Changes (Year-on-Year)	% Changes (Quarter-on-Quarter)
Services	383.5	9.6	2.3	3,603,252	3.4	1.1
<b>Wholesale &amp; Retail Trade, Food &amp; Beverages and Accommodation</b>	303.8	9.6	1.9	2,683,654	3.7	1.2
Information & Communication and Transportation & Storage	57.1	8.5	4.7	467,983	0.2	0.5
Health, Education and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	14.2	7.5	-1.4	271,426	2.1	0.2
Professional and Real Estate Agent	8.4	22.7	6.0	180,189	11.0	3.2

Note: Revenue for Wholesales & Retail Trade sub-sector refers to sales value  
(Source: Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2017)

**Table 1.2 : Employment in Malaysia Retailing 2008-2013**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total employment ('000 people)	10,716.9	11,020.6	11,850.8	12,226.8	12,540.8	12,900.3
Employment in retail ('000 people)	313.3	324.1	334.1	342.7	355.9	367.2
Employment in retail (%) (% of total employment)	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8

(Source: Euromonitor International, 2014)

Retail performance in Malaysia has improved significantly over the years. Table 1.3 shows the increase of sales from 2011 till 2016, in which the total sales of retail has increased progressively from RM148,086.2 million in 2011 to RM173,560.3 million in 2016 (Euromonitor International, 2017). Due to this, many international brands (e.g. IKEA, Marks & Spencers and Tesco) have entered Malaysia to seize this market potential (PEMANDU, 2013).

**Table 1.3 : Retail Sales by Channel: Value 2011-2016 (RM million)**

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Store-based Retailing	148,086.2	153,929.0	160,206.7	165,036.6	169,010.2	173,560.3
Non-Store Retailing	8,088.5	8,471.4	9,049.5	9,549.9	9,996.1	10,648.2
Retailing	156,174.8	162,400.3	169,256.2	174,586.5	179,006.3	184,208.5

(Source: Euromonitor International, 2017)

To help the industry further flourish, the government has included the retail sector as one of the National Key Economic Area (NKEA). One of their initiatives is to increase the number of large format stores in Malaysia. Large format stores are referred to as large one-storey floor outlets, usually owned by national or multi-national chains, are located along major roads with high visibility, not in traditional shopping areas, and are generally equipped with large parking lots (Greater Oliver SGOG Foundation Research Bulletin, 2006).

As a result of government interference, major growth of hypermarkets, superstores, and departmental stores were recorded. Malaysia has 121 hypermarkets (stores of 5,000 square metres and larger), 113 superstores (stores of 3,000 to 5,000 square metres), and 133 departmental stores (stores of 2,000 to 3,000 square metres). They may be run by local and foreign players. Tesco, Giant, Mydin, Econsave, AEON, and The Store are examples. To move towards the modernization of the domestic distributive trade, the development of hypermarkets, superstores, and departmental stores are essential to the nation. These large format stores generate quality, product availability, choice, product cost reduction, new retailing technology, and skills to the sector (Economic Transformation Programme, 2010). The development of retail sector would eventually drive down prices and create jobs when retail stores are able to carry large number of stock and expand the number of their outlets. To further stimulate the development of retail sector, Malaysia through the Ministry of Domestic Trade, Co-operatives and Consumerism has been easing up its policies relating to the distributive trade sector to enable internationally competitive retailers to set up their presence here.

Parallel to the increase in larger stores, traditional retailers, such as local sundry shops, are being phased out slowly. According to Table 1.4, the number of traditional retail outlets has been decreasing from 2011 to 2016. It went from a total of 69,376 outlets to a total of 68,306 outlets. For survival, some of the traditional retails evolved into modern grocery retailers such as convenience stores, hypermarkets, and supermarkets (i.e. TUKAR stores and 1Malaysia stores). Table 1.4 shows that the modern grocery retail outlets have increased substantially from a total of 5,157 outlets in 2011 to a total of 7,621 outlets in 2016.

**Table 1.4 : Grocery Retail Outlets by Channel: Units 2011-2016**

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Modern Grocery Retailers</b>	5,157	5,723	6,310	6,946	7,316	7,621
- Convenience Stores	1,743	1,961	2,261	2,532	2,870	3,105
- Discounters	26	85	130	162	179	190
- Forecourt Retailers	2,043	2,283	2,498	2,784	2,756	2,776
- Chained Forecourt Retailers	2,043	2,283	2,498	2,784	2,756	2,776
- Independent Forecourt Retailers	-	-	-	-	-	-
- Hypermarkets	154	158	158	170	176	174
- Supermarkets	1,191	1,236	1,263	1,298	1,335	1,376
<b>Traditional Grocery Retailers</b>	69,376	69,007	68,657	68,482	68,368	68,306
- Food/Drink/Tobacco Specialists	31,780	31,890	31,943	32,105	32,300	32,540
- Independent Small Grocers	26,900	26,870	26,815	26,735	26,600	26,440
- Other Grocery Retailers	10,696	10,247	9,899	9,642	9,468	9,326
<b>Total Grocery Retailers</b>	<b>74,533</b>	<b>74,730</b>	<b>74,967</b>	<b>75,428</b>	<b>75,684</b>	<b>75,927</b>

(Source: Euromonitor International, 2017)

The Malaysian retail landscape was quickly dominated by hypermarkets since they were introduced. In 1993, Makro became the first hypermarket introduced in Malaysia (Lee, 2004). Subsequently, more foreign-owned hypermarkets, such as Tesco and AEON, were set up in Malaysia (Business Monitor International Ltd, 2007). In 2010, Kuala Lumpur has over 66 shopping malls and while Selangor has 58. The total retail space in these two states is estimated to occupy 3.37 million square metres. According to Table 1.5, supermarkets and hypermarkets account for the largest fraction of sales in this industry. \$5.7 billion to be precise. In other words, this amount is equivalent to 56.3% of the retail industry's overall value.

**Table 1.5 : Malaysia Retail Industry Distribution (% share, by value, 2013)**

<b>Channel</b>	<b>% Share</b>
Supermarkets/Hypermarkets	56.3%
Independent and Specialist Retailers	32.0%
Convenience Stores	10.3%
Others	1.5%
Total	100%

(Source: MARKETLINE, 2014)

Regardless of the grocery retail format, retailers are competing for consumers' patronage to their store. This becomes more challenging because personal consumption may have reduced since the government's implementation of the Goods and Services Tax. To further stimulate consumer spending, store-based retailers

implement assertive price promotions, which intensify the competition in the retail industry. To be sustainable, store-based retailers are also consistently improving their products to meet consumers' needs (Euromonitor International, 2014).

For instance, hypermarkets such as Mydin are catering to consumers who demand low priced products like locally produced goods. However, hypermarkets such as Giant and Tesco continues to be the key channel for consumer's grocery shopping due to their wide product offering (Euromonitor International, 2014). These hypermarkets also engage in aggressive price promotions as they face fierce competition from convenience stores and supermarkets which have fast checkout queues. Premium supermarkets such as Cold Storage enjoy sustained interest from the middle-to-high-income consumers while convenience stores' 24/7 opening hours continue to attract consumers who prefer to shop at their convenience. However, consumers today prefer hypermarkets because supermarkets and convenience stores commonly charge a premium price (Euromonitor International, 2014).

There are numerous hypermarkets operating in Malaysia, as can be seen in Table 1.5. There are four main hypermarkets and GCH Retail (M) Sdn Bhd is the leading grocery retailer with a 9.3% value share in 2016 (refer Table 1.6). GCH Retail (M) Sdn Bhd (2016) reported having a total of 124 outlets. Among these outlets are Giant hypermarkets, supermarkets, and superstores (GCH Retail (M) Sdn Bhd, 2016). Giant grew because of their low-priced products and weekly promotion which was able to lure consumers away from competing players. Thus, Giant has established itself as the top brand in retailing and enjoys a large base of loyal consumers in Malaysia (Euromonitor International, 2016). However, when economic conditions became dreary, Cold Storage's premium position was affected as consumers began look for better deals in other supermarkets and hypermarkets (Euromonitor International, 2017).

Tesco Stores (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd was the second leading grocery retailer with 7.0% value share in 2016 (refer Table 1.6). This could be due to competition from Giant, which owns more outlets and has lower priced products (Euromonitor International, 2017). To compensate for their lower number of outlets (59 Tesco outlets), Tesco introduced online shopping to meet the needs of consumers with hectic lifestyles and constantly offer competitive prices, high-quality, and quick checkout queues. Thirdly, we have Aeon Big (M) Sdn Bhd with a value share of 2.8% in 2016. It operates 21 outlets in Malaysia. To compete with the wider network of hypermarket brands such as Giant and Tesco, Aeon Big offers customer convenient facilities (e.g. free parking at selected outlets) and low prices on a variety of fresh produce and non-food categories. Besides that, Aeon Big also offer consumers 100% refund policy which could protect consumers from defective goods (Aeon Big (M) Sdn Bhd, 2016).

Domestic grocery retailers have also emerged as they compete aggressively on prices to cater to consumers in the low-to-middle income level (Euromonitor International, 2016). As a leading Muslim wholesaler retailer, Mydin Mohamed Holdings Bhd



gained popularity because of its Halal business practices which is applied in all its businesses. Mydin Mohamed Holdings Bhd operates 23 hypermarkets, 16 emporiums, 49 minimarkets (MyMydin), 11 convenience shops (MyMart), three bazaars and five franchise outlets (Mydin Mart) nationwide (Mydin Mohamed Holdings Bhd, 2016). Mydin is ranked first in discounters as it is the only discounter owned by a Malaysian (Euromonitor International, 2015). However, in 2017, Mydin only enjoyed a value share of 1.2% as it faces intense competition and also inevitable price wars (Euromonitor International, 2017).

Although not captured in Table 1.6 as a main retailer in Malaysia, NSK Trade City is an upcoming hypermarket brand often chosen by Malaysians to get a large selection of fresh produce even at the wee hours of the night (Mini Me Insights, 2016). NSK Trade City is a family business which started from a small kiosk selling groceries and household goods. Since its establishment, NSK has grown to a retail store that sells a wide range of groceries and household items. NSK currently operates 13 outlets in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. NSK's vision is to be the largest wholesaler in Malaysia. To compete in such a competitive retail environment, one of NSK's outlets operates for 24 hours a day. This is to fulfil consumers' requirements and market demands to shop during non-peak hours or at the convenience of consumers (NSK Trade City, 2016).

**Table 1.6 : Grocery Retailers Company Shares: % Value 2012-2016**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Dairy Farm International Holdings Ltd (Giant, Guardian &amp; Cold Storage) *</b>	10.6	10.0	10.1	9.8	9.3
<b>Tesco Plc*</b>	8.3	8.2	7.7	7.5	7.0
Seven & I Holdings Co Ltd	2.9	2.9	3.2	3.3	3.4
<b>AEON Group (AEON &amp; AEON Big)*</b>	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	2.8
Econsave Cash & Carry Sdn Bhd	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.6
Royal Dutch Shell Plc	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.2
<b>Mydin Mohamed Holdings Bhd*</b>	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.0
Petronas Dagangan Bhd	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9
99 Speedmart Sdn Bhd	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7
KK Supermart Holdings Sdn Bhd	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.7
Petron Corp	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.7
The Store Corp Bhd	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Chevron Corp	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3
Suiwah Corp Bhd	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Boustead Holdings Bhd	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1
Billion Shopping Centre Sdn Bhd	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
QSR Brands Sdn Bhd	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Carrefour SA	-	-	-	-	-
Exxon Mobil Corp	-	-	-	-	-
Foong Foong Emporium Sdn Bhd	-	-	-	-	-
Others	67.2	67.4	67.3	67.4	68.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\*Owned Hypermarkets (5,000 square metres or larger)

Source: Euromonitor International (2017)

As hypermarket players (e.g. Tesco, Giant, Aeon Big and Mydin) increase outlet numbers aggressively, it becomes more difficult to outperform others. Although hypermarket managements have been capitalising on store attributes such as product assortment, convenience of the location, pricing policy, marketing promotion, and store atmosphere in trying to engage customers (Theodoridis & Chatzipanagiotou, 2009), retailers find it harder and harder to rely on customer loyalty as Malaysian consumers are becoming progressively smart shoppers (Euromonitor International, 2017). As such, despite constantly focusing on areas of improvement, the advantage reaped from such efforts are disheartening (Euromonitor International, 2017). Therefore, to further enhance engagement, retailers can gradually revert their resources to CSR-related activities with the intention of being perceived as a good corporate citizen. A combination of a strong store image and CSR strategies will result in greater consumer engagement (Drumwright, 1996; Gupta & Pirsch, 2008).

Tesco's Projek Shelter, which aims to rebuild homes for flood victims in the East Coast, is an example of CSR activities by hypermarkets (Tesco.com, 2015). Furthermore, Tesco, in its community food surplus donation programme, partnered with Kechara Soup Kitchen and Food Aid Foundation to donate edible unsold food to local charities on a daily basis (The Sun Daily, 2016). Another example would be Giant's "My Kasih, Love My Neighbourhood" programme which has helped 160 poor and needy families by crediting allowance into their MyKad so they may budget and acquire groceries at Giant without using cash (GCH Retail (M) Sdn Bhd, 2015). Tesco has a list of CSR projects under its belt. It has contributed various schooling merchandise to underprivileged children in Selangor, Perak and Penang, funded Agarwood seed planting by charging for plastic bags on the No Plastic Bags Day, and organised the Walk for Life 2013 fundraising to aid 100 underprivileged children with leukaemia within three years (Tesco.com, 2015). Besides that, Giant training and hiring Malaysians with disabilities program (GCH Retail (M) Sdn Bhd, 2017).

Moreover, hypermarkets have also been implementing CRM as one of their CSR strategies. For instance, Procter and Gamble (P&G) together with Mydin raised funds for Cerebral palsy CADS, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism, dyslexia, down syndrome, and slow learners) through the sales of any P&G products at Mydin outlets nationwide within two months (CSR Vision, 2017). Additionally, TOP, the number one detergent brand in Malaysia, together with Aeon Big and Mydin offered 30 cents from the sales of selected TOP products to 400 underprivileged children from 16 charity homes to buy new school uniforms and school kits (Southern Lion Sdn Bhd, 2016; Ipoh Echo, 2016). Similarly, Giant has donated 30 cents from the proceeds of selected Nestle products sold at any Giant stores in Malaysia to several charities in their 2009 "Spend and Perform Good Deeds" Campaign (Anuar & Mohamad, 2012). A total of RM120,000 was collected through this campaign (Anuar & Mohamad, 2012).

Thus, there are evidences that hypermarkets can go beyond store attributes factors, like price, promotion or quick checkout services, and adopt CRM strategies to engage consumers. However, the earlier examples of CRM plans are lacking in a number of

ways. Firstly, only selected products were tied to their CRM. Secondly, the CRM only lasted a for a short duration (e.g. two months), and thirdly, social cause tied to CRM was not in line with the core business of the hypermarkets. Literature proposes that these elements (i.e. CRM related products, cause duration, and company-cause fit) are important to design effective CRM (Cui, Trent, Sullivan & Matiru, 2003; Bigné-Alcañiz, Currás-Pérez, Ruiz-Mafé & Sanz-Blas, 2012). The combined effort of maintaining store image and introducing CRM to appeal to customers is likely to draw more patronage to the hypermarket. Thus, an empirical study verifying these relationships is pertinent.

#### **1.4 Problem Statement**

The retail sector is recognised as a key factor in helping the nation to achieve its 2020 vision (Economic Transformation Programme, 2010). Hypermarkets, as a component of the retail sector, started making its presence known in Malaysia since the early 1990s (Lim *et al.*, 2003). Since then, the number of hypermarkets in Malaysia has increased substantially. Hypermarket outlets rose from a total of 130 outlets (2010) to a total of 174 outlets in 2015 (Euromonitor International, 2016). Besides that, being a developing nation, it is predicted that the number of hypermarket outlets will consistently increase from year to year (Hassan, Rahman, & Sade, 2015).

Nowadays, hypermarkets have become more sophisticated in their marketing strategies and are getting more competitive in their product quality, price, and services. For instance, Giant Malaysia is known for their low-priced products and weekly promotion, while Tesco launched its online shopping for consumers with busy lifestyles. Similarly, the Malaysia-owned hypermarket, Mydin has attracted customers via its halal business model (Euromonitor International, 2014).

However, it is becoming more difficult for hypermarkets to sustain simply through adjusting ordinary marketing factors such as prices, products, promotion, and retail networking (Alias, Roslin & Kasuma, 2014). Porter (1985) highlighted that the differentiation strategy is an effective competition reducing strategy as it differentiates one firm from another. Therefore, hypermarkets such as Giant or Tesco are implementing product differentiation strategy. For example, in-store brands such as “Tesco Brand Choices” or “Giant Brand, priced only at RM1.99 each” allows them some degree of differentiation by utilising the hypermarket brand name as the point of differentiation (Amateur Management Review, 2009). This strategy is not as effective now as most hypermarkets are doing the same thing (Amateur Management Review, 2009). Differentiation based exclusively on functional attributes only becomes more challenging when competition increases (La Ferle, Kuber & Edwards, 2013). Most hypermarkets are now carrying a similar assortment of products to the consumers, making it tougher to compete based on the common marketing mix elements (O'Cass & Grace, 2008). Therefore, hypermarkets need more innovative strategies to attract customers, other than competing on price, promotions, products and place.



Currently retailers are giving more attention to the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as they acknowledge the importance of developing a distinctive and favourable image through CSR (Yusof, Musa & Rahman, 2011). Social responsibility is a concern for many companies and consumers (Lii & Lee, 2012), however consumer's personal financial allocation for charity has reduced these days due to the economic slowdown and the implementation of GST. Consumers may think that buying from hypermarkets that are engaged in CSR initiatives is a good strategy to get their groceries while fulfilling their obligations for the well-being of society. Therefore, Cause-Related Marketing (CRM) could be used as a differentiation strategy by the hypermarkets and consumers who believe in the cause championed by the hypermarkets. Consumers will then be attracted to buy from such hypermarkets. In other words, CRM gives consumers a reason to visit the hypermarket that supports a social cause.

CRM is a subset of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). CSR refers to the manner of running a business that sustains or enhances both the consumer's and society's well-being (Kotler, 1991). Better reputation and competitive advantages are the outcomes that companies may gain after engaging CSR (Saeidi *et al.*, 2015). There are arguments that CSR may not translate to corporate goals in terms of financial performance (Paul & Lydenberg, 1992). However, CRM allows firms to achieve both social responsibility and corporate goals (File & Prince, 1998). CRM is a marketing strategy that links corporate individuality with social causes, non-profit organisations, or non-government organisations through joint marketing and fund-raising programs (Varadarajan & Menon, 1988). CRM is reported to increase sales, enhance corporate image, and improve customer loyalty (Chattananon, Lawley, Supparerkchaisakul & Leelayouthayothin, 2008). Thus, it is likely that CRM is also applicable in the hypermarket context to create a competitive advantage. Furthermore, CRM that has been run by hypermarkets previously were initiated by specific products brands that the hypermarkets carried. Examples include TOP detergent in AeonBig and selected Nestle products in Giant. However, the hypermarkets' own corporate brands (i.e. Tesco, Giant, AeonBig) have yet to introduce CRM representing their own brand name. The results may be different because loyalty towards a specific product brand and loyalty towards hypermarket brands are different, thus resulting in different CRM participation levels. Therefore, it is pertinent to examine CRM in a hypermarket context to uncover whether consumers will increase visit intention towards the particular hypermarket stores when CRM is implemented.

There are a few gaps in CRM literature that need to be addressed. First, the social cause of supporting the underprivileged individuals has not been used in CRM literature. Underprivileged individuals refer to individuals who are from rural, urban, semi-urban or vulnerable areas, lack the resources or support, mostly single mothers or school dropouts in poverty and facing social issues, who wish to improve their living standard or survive by starting small businesses in their community (The Centre for Advancement of Business, Innovation and Social Entrepreneur, 2014). The cause of supporting underprivileged individuals is crucial to a developing country like Malaysia as income inequality is still high (The Star Online, 2013) and lower income

groups are affected by the recent increase of living cost in Malaysia (New Straits Times, 2015; The Star Online, 2016). Hence, it is important to help the underprivileged to support themselves and help the country reduce the number of people living below the poverty line as a whole. Besides that, focus group interview respondents asserted that they will favour a CRM campaign if the campaign is deemed trustable and the social cause involved is locally based, is handled by a NGO and fits with the hypermarket core businesses. Hence, these respondents have given the idea of a “supporting underprivileged individuals” cause managed by a NGO - The Centre for Advancement of Business, Innovation and Social Entrepreneur (CASE). Therefore, the cause of supporting underprivileged individuals is chosen to examine its effectiveness in this study’s CRM.

On the other hand, social causes that are used to investigate CRM occurrence in literature has been focusing on the physically and mentally disabled, those with health concerns (Chang & Liu, 2012), diseases such as Alzheimer, lung diseases and cancer (Robinson, Irmak & Jayachandran, 2012), providing safe drinking water for school children (Singh, 2014), women abuse (Bigné-Alcañiz, Currás-Pérez & Sanz-Blas, 2010), wildlife and environmental issues such as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty on Animals (SPCA), World Wildlife Fund (WWF), protests against animal lab testing, and rainforest protection (Vaidyanathan & Aggarwal, 2005; Che’ron, Kohlbacher & Kusuma, 2012). Thus, it is relevant to assess if supporting underprivileged individuals is an appropriate CRM in the hypermarket context.

Second, factors forming the perception of store image in Malaysia is under-researched. Past research on Malaysia grocery stores concentrated on factors affecting customer satisfaction. For example, Al-Ali, Bazin & Shamsuddin (2015)’s study attempts to identify the factors of consumer satisfaction, where the authors proposed an integrative model in determining consumer satisfaction. Focusing on customer satisfaction, the outcome loses the information of the cognitive and emotional components of evaluation towards the situational factors like store ambience and store layout. Customer satisfaction measures past experiences that focus on limited factors like service quality, monetary value, and availability of stocks, while store image allows non-customers’ evaluation as it does not tie to past experience. According to Mehrabian and Russell (1974)’s S-O-R theory, environmental stimuli (S) affects a person’s emotional state (O) and subsequently influences responses (R). S-O-R theory proposes a process on how cognitive evaluation of situational factors lead to emotional states that eventually drives them to visit or not to visit. There is a gap to identify a more holistic store image factors following the S-O-R model, that includes the major marketing “stimulus” (merchandise attributes, location, price, advertising, and store ambience), which may affect consumers’ “emotions/organism” (store image), and lastly will impact their behavioural “responses” (visit intention).

Third, it is not known if CRM would increase a hypermarket's visiting intention in addition to that explained by store image. Store image studies and CRM researches are always conducted separately. For example, there is a study that investigated the impact of store image dimensions on retailer equity of hypermarkets in China without

including CRM (Jinfeng & Zhilong, 2009). On the other hand, CRM researchers such as Chen, Su & He's (2014) studied consumers' response to CRM and examined the effect of cause congruence on different corporate associations without considering store image factors. In fact, it was suggested that future studies should consider incorporating CSR factors to store factors in order to gain a deeper insight on consumers' re-patronage intentions (Nezakati, Hui & Jofreh, 2014). Thus, there is a gap to response to Nezakati's call to examine hypermarkets visit intention by including store image factors and CRM factors. Furthermore, by incorporating store image factors and CRM factors on hypermarket visiting intention within the same framework, respective variance explained by store image and CRM factors towards hypermarket visit intention can be identified. In other words, this study may discover the relative improvement on hypermarket visiting intention as a result of CRM factors.

Fourth, CRM research has yet to use an underpinning theory to explain CRM participation intention. Most of the CRM studies used supporting theories such as social identity theory which uses construct like consumer-company identification and social cause involvement (He & Li, 2011; Bigné-Alcañiz *et al.*, 2010, 2012; Vanhamme, Lindgreen, Reast & Popering, 2012), attribution theory which uses construct like donation situation and type of cause (Ellen, Mohr & Webb, 2000; Cui *et al.*, 2003) and information integration theory which uses construct like familiarity of the cause and importance of the cause (Lafferty & Goldsmith, 2005; Gupta & Pirsch, 2006; Lafferty & Edmondson, 2009; Samu & Wymer, 2009) to explain individual construct's relationship with CRM. Although these theories may provide an understanding on the relationship between factors and consumers' response to CRM, they do not explain holistically on how such factors are translated into CRM participation and visit decisions. Hence, to describe this process and to develop a comprehensive theory of consumer behaviour, this study looks in the direction of social psychological research in attitude formation (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) can be used as a theoretical basis in CRM participation intention model, which have yet to be used in the CRM context.

The TPB is used in the theoretical framework of this study because it presents an evidently defined model that allows the investigation of the influence that attitudes, personal determinants and volitional control have on consumers' intentions to participate in CRM and visit a hypermarket. Besides that, the TPB has been broadly employed in explaining behavioural intention in multiple consumer behaviour contexts such as online group-buying behaviour (Cheng & Huang, 2013), visiting green hotel behaviour (Teng, Wu & Liu, 2015), senior citizen's physical activity behaviour (Wu, Li & Sung, 2016) and purchasing fashion counterfeits good behaviour (Kim & Karpova, 2010), all of which the model has offered strong evaluations.

Although, TPB has been reportedly validated in Western cultures, it is not apparent that the assumptions supporting TPB are suitable in the Asian culture (Hogg, Askegaard, Bamossy & Solomon, 2006). It is asserted that behaviour of consumers from individualistic cultures can be consistently predicted from their attitudes towards a product or a brand and a purchase likelihood is a result of a positive attitude.

However, in collectivistic cultures, the relationship between attitude and future behaviour is not consistent (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). This may even be a converse relationship, where behaviour (i.e. product usage) can come first before attitude is defined (Chang and Chieng, 2006). Hence, this suggests that measurements of the TPB constructs (attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control) towards CRM participation and visit intention will not work the same way in collectivistic cultures as it does in individualistic cultures. Thus, there is a gap in applicability evaluation of TPB in the context of Asia (i.e. Malaysia).

Furthermore, so far, CRM studies have not pinpoint a solid theory in justifying the constructs selection and out of the three TPB constructs (attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control), research found attitude explained the most variance in intention (Lam & Hsu, 2006; Pookulangara, Hawley & Xiao, 2011), thus identifying antecedents to attitude may add more values to the framework. Hence, there is a gap in identifying antecedents to attitude towards CRM. These antecedents such as altruistic firm motives, consumer-company identification, perceived CSR image and perceived company-cause fit emerged from a preliminary study through a focus group interview (refer to Chapter 3), where it was identified exclusively in a Malaysian hypermarket context. By adding these four antecedents of attitude that derived in this study context, TPB offers an alternative model that permits a comprehensive understanding of consumers' motivation of participating in a CRM and its influence on hypermarket visit intention formation process.

Fifth, TPB proposes that intention leads to actual behaviour (Verbeke & Vackier, 2005; De Cannière, De Pelsmacker & Geuens, 2009; Cheng & Huang, 2013) in which the relationship is usually significant and positive, but the strength of relationship varies according to study context (Gollwitzer, Sheeran, Michalski & Seifert, 2009). For instance, Hsu and Huang (2012) studied China tourist motivation context and reported weak strength but significant intention-behaviour relationship. However, Al-Debei, Al-Lozi & Papazafeiropoulou (2013) applied TPB in their study of social networking context from a Jordan's students' perspective and found significant and strong intention-behaviour relationship. The inconsistencies of these two studies may be due to the different context of study (i.e. area of study, country, and culture) as the differences in people's surroundings, particularly regarding past habitual behaviour, past decisions behaviour and obstacles may impact the prediction of actual behaviour (Verbeke & Vackier, 2005; Arnold, Loan-Clarke, Coombs, Wilkinson, Park & Preston, 2006). Thus, there is a gap to examine the strength of intention-behaviour relationship in the Malaysian hypermarket context.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

The focal research question of this study is to examine the factors that will impact consumers' visit intention and patronage behaviour to a hypermarket in Malaysia, which consists of the following questions:



1. Is the social cause of “supporting underprivileged individuals” appropriate to be used in the context of Malaysia’s hypermarket?
2. What are the factors that explain store images in Malaysia?
3. What are the factors that explains CRM participation intentions in Malaysia?
4. Does store image and CRM participation intentions influence visiting intentions of hypermarkets in Malaysia?
5. Is visiting intentions positively related to the patronage of hypermarkets in the Malaysian context?

## **1.6 Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of the study is to identify the predictors that influence consumers visiting intentions and patronage behaviour to hypermarkets in Malaysia. The specific objectives include:

1. To evaluate the appropriateness of “supporting underprivileged individuals” as a social cause in the Malaysian hypermarket context.
2. To determine the influence of merchandise attributes, advertising, location, price, and store ambience on store image in Malaysia.
3. To assess the relationship between store image and hypermarket visit intentions in Malaysia.
4. To determine the influence and motives of an altruistic firm, consumer-company identification, perceived CSR image, and perceived company-cause fit on consumers’ attitude towards CRM in Malaysia hypermarket context.
5. To determine the influence of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control on CRM participation intention in the Malaysian hypermarket context.
6. To assess the relationship between CRM participation intention and hypermarket visit intentions in Malaysia.
7. To assess the relationship between hypermarket visit intention and patronage behaviour in a Malaysian hypermarket context.

**Table 1.7 : Gaps, Research Questions, Research Objectives and Hypotheses**

Theoretical Gaps	Research Questions	Research Objectives	Hypotheses
- Social cause for CRM in a hypermarket context is yet to be identified.	- Is the social cause of “supporting underprivileged individuals” appropriate for use in the Malaysia hypermarket context?	- To evaluate appropriateness of “supporting underprivileged individuals” as a social cause in the Malaysian hypermarket context.	-
- There are limited studies that examine factors forming store image perception of hypermarket customers. - Customer satisfaction is more popularly researched in the hypermarket. Customer satisfaction measures past experiences while store image is a broader concept that captures multiple evaluative indicators not limited to past experiences.	- What are the factors that explain store image in Malaysia?	- To determine the influence of merchandise attributes, advertising, location, price and store ambience on store image in Malaysia.	H1: Merchandise Attributes →Store Image. H2: Advertising →Store Image. H3: Location →Store Image. H4: Price →Store Image. H5: Store Ambience →Store Image.
- Store image and CRM research were conducted separately, it is not known whether CRM could increase visit intention beyond that explained by store image.	- Does store image and CRM participation intention influence visit intention of a hypermarket in Malaysia?	- To assess the relationship between store image and hypermarket visit intention in Malaysia. - To assess the relationship between CRM participation intention and hypermarket visit intentions in Malaysia.	H6: Store Image → Visit Intention. H14: CRM participation intention → Visit Intention.
- CRM research lacks solid theory in construct selection. The use of TPB (attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control) provides stronger theoretical basis in selecting predictors to CRM participation intention. - Research found attitude explains most variance in intention as compared to subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. Thus, this study extends TPB by including antecedents to attitude in addition to using three TPB components (attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control) in understanding CRM intention.	- What are the factors that explain CRM participation intention in Malaysia?	- To determine the influence of altruistic firm motives, consumer-company identification, perceived CSR image and perceived company-cause fit on consumers’ attitude towards CRM in Malaysia hypermarket context. - To determine the influence of attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control on CRM participation intention in Malaysia hypermarket context.	H7: Altruistic firm motives →Attitude. H8: Consumer-Company Identification →Attitude. H9: Perceived CSR Image →Attitude. H10: Perceived Company-Cause Fit →Attitude. H11: Attitude →CRM participation intention. H12: Subjective Norms →CRM participation intention. H13: Perceived Behavioural Control →CRM participation intention.
- TPB proposes that intention leads to actual behaviour, but the strength of relationship varies according to study context.	- Is visit intention positively related to patronage behaviour in the Malaysian hypermarket context?	- To assess the relationship between visit intention and patronage behaviour in Malaysia hypermarket context.	H15: Visit Intention → Patronage Behaviour.

## 1.7 Significance of Study

The study of consumers' visit intentions to a hypermarket in Malaysia brings about both theoretical and managerial implications. In terms of theoretical contribution, this study contributes to the literature relating to CRM particularly in the aspects of using a unique social cause championed by a Malaysian NGO (i.e. CASE) in the hypermarket context. The social cause of supporting underprivileged individuals has not been used in CRM literature as most of the existing social causes focus on diseases, the homeless, wildlife, and environmental protection (Robinson *et al.*, 2012; Chang & Liu, 2012; Che'ron *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, this study contributes to CRM research by identifying additional "causes" potentially used in research and evaluating whether this "cause" of supporting underprivileged individuals is perceived appropriate in hypermarket CRM in Malaysia.

This study also contributes to the literature by extending the Stimulus-Organism-Response theory in the case of hypermarket. According to Mehrabian and Russell (1974)'s S-O-R theory, the stimulus (S) from external environment affects a person's internal developments of regulating choice (O), which in turn influence the person's behaviours comprising choice (Bagozzi, 1986). S-O-R theory proposes the process on how cognitive evaluation of situational factors lead to emotional state that eventually drives them to visit or not to visit a hypermarket. Thus, this study adds value to S-O-R theory by bringing in more holistic store image factors that include the major marketing stimulus (merchandise attributes, location, price, advertising and store ambience), which may affect consumers' emotions (store image), and lastly will impact their behavioural responses (visit intentions).

This study also provides evidence on the applicability of the Theory Planned Behaviour (TPB) in the context of hypermarket visit intention in Malaysia. TPB proposes that human behaviour is determined by his or her own intent to perform that particular behaviour, where beliefs and attitudes influence a person's intention to act upon a specific action (Alam & Sayuti, 2011; Kim, Ham, Yang & Choi, 2013; Chen & Tung, 2014). This study adopts TPB's idea into the context of hypermarket visit intention in Malaysia. When consumers have positive attitudes and beliefs towards the hypermarket's CRM, they are more likely to visit the hypermarket and eventually lead to increase in patronage to the hypermarkets. In addition, recognising that intention does not always translate to the actual behaviour (Gollwitzer *et al.*, 2009). This study, provides more evidences on the strength of the relationship between hypermarket visit intentions and patronage behaviour in Malaysia context.

Additionally, this study also adds value to the literature by integrating both store image and CRM in the same framework to understand if CRM contributes to visit intentions significantly beyond that which is explained by store image. It is not known if CRM would increase hypermarket visit intentions. Store image studies and CRM research are always conducted separately. Thus, this study will examine the effect of hypermarkets visit intentions by combining both store image factors and CRM factors

within the same framework. Furthermore, a preliminary study using a focus group interview method was adopted in this study to identify store image and CRM factors which accurately reflect the exclusiveness of a Malaysian hypermarket context. These factors are then included in the study framework to examine its predictive power on CRM participation and visit intention.

In terms of managerial significance, the study provides ideas on increasing consumers' patronage intentions towards hypermarkets. This is vital for hypermarkets' management as they face intense competition from various hypermarkets in Malaysia. In order to attract more consumers to their stores, hypermarket managements need to design innovative strategies to compete against their competitors. Therefore, discovering the significance of CRM towards consumers' visit intentions can provide information on whether adopting CRM programs prove to be an effective strategy. Besides that, this study may also offer information to hypermarkets on which store image factors is perceived essential to Malaysian consumers. Hypermarkets are thus able to enhance the particular store image attribute to attract more patrons to the hypermarket.

Besides that, the study also provides assistance to NGOs and underprivileged individuals in Malaysia. The cause championed in the CRM campaign relates to the "support of underprivileged individuals in Malaysia". This study provides information to the NGOs on whether hypermarkets are potential sponsors to the cause of "supporting underprivileged individuals". Funds collected from the campaign will be channelled to a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) to run programs that help underprivileged individuals to manage their own micro-businesses, such as providing them with entrepreneurial skills training. Thus, this will benefit the NGOs as they will receive more funding and in return be more able to help the underprivileged individuals gain greater entrepreneurial skills.

Lastly, this study also offers information on government policy makers in initiating programs that support retailers' implementation of CRM campaign. For example, collaboration between NGOs and retailers may be encouraged by giving tax exemptions to retailers, should the result indicate that consumers are more convinced with CRM that involves a third party (NGO) in handling the fund. Also, policy makers for social welfare may design programs that helps NGO's systematically operate and manage funding so that funds received from CRM collaborators are not misused. This is important to ensure long-term collaboration success.

## **1.8 Scope of the Study**

The overarching aim of this study is to examine the factors that will impact consumers visit intention and patronage behaviour to a hypermarket in the Malaysian context. Firstly, this study focuses on storewide products of hypermarkets, as storewide products of hypermarket tied to a single CRM have not been introduced. So far, only



single brand products were involved in CRM such as QL Poultry Farms Eggs (QL Resources Bhd, 2015), ANTABAX antibacterial range products, and MAY products (Lam Soon Group, 2016). Secondly, this study seeks mainly to investigate store image attributes (Merchandise Attributes, Advertising, Location, Price and Store Ambience) and CRM participation intention towards consumer's intention to visit as well as patronise a hypermarket in Malaysia. Although other factors like customer satisfaction and loyalty are likely to influence visit intention, they are well-researched and are thus not the focus of this study. Thirdly, the coverage of this study is in the area of the retail industry, specifically hypermarkets in Malaysia. This is because the retail industry in Malaysia is a major contributor to the nation's gross national income and hypermarkets are consistently increasing in numbers, which make them more difficult to compete and outperform others. Therefore, this area is pertinent to be ascertained.

Fourth, this study only focuses on CRM in the subject of CSR. Generally, there are three types of CSR initiatives, namely philanthropy, sponsorship, and CRM (Polonsky & Speed, 2001). However, this study only covers CRM due to the fact that CRM has been known to be the most inventive and cost-effective marketing strategy in solving issue of financial returns (Smith & Alcorn, 1991). This study applies the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model to examine consumers' intention to visit and patronise a hypermarket in Malaysia. Fifth, this study only focuses on consumers as respondents because consumers, those that exchange capital for the company's products, are considered as the most vital stakeholder group that is able to influence a company's success (Freeman, 2001). Lastly, a quantitative approach is employed and statistical tools such as the One-sample T-test and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) are performed for data analysis in this study.

## **1.9 Organisation of the Thesis**

This thesis consists of seven chapters. The first chapter is the introduction of the research with a brief description of the current trend in Malaysia's retailing industry. The chapter then discusses the specific practical problems that are faced by retailers, specifically hypermarkets, as well as the theoretical gaps in the existing literature. The chapter also includes research questions, objectives of the study, and the significance of the study.

The second chapter provides an in-depth review of the existing literature on the studies' in cause-related marketing and store image. In addition, the theories and variables that are included in this study are also discussed. The third chapter explains the qualitative research methodology that was used in this study to validate the constructs for inclusion in the research framework. It comprises the results found from the focus group interviews that were conducted.

The fourth chapter presents the hypotheses of this study which are developed based on theoretical support and focus group interview results. Chapter five describes the quantitative methodologies and techniques that are used to collect and analyse data. It includes the instruments to gather data for the study. It also provides details on the design and population of the study, sample size, sampling procedure, measurement scales data collection, and analysis methods. Chapter six discusses the results derived from the analysis using the statistic software such as SPSS v.22 and PLS-SEM v.3.0. Finally, chapter seven concludes the overall research and findings. This includes the discussion of the study, implications as well as limitations, and suggestions for future research.

### 1.10 Operational Definitions

There are 16 main terms employed throughout this thesis that are crucial and specific to this study. They are defined according to well-known definitions adopted by previous researchers. The detailed definitions are summarised in Table 1.8.

**Table 1.8 : Definition of Main Variables**

No.	Construct	Author (Year)	Definition
1.	Cause-Related Marketing	Hyllegard, Yan, Ogle and Attmann (2010)	A marketing strategy designed to promote the purchase of a consumer good or service that simultaneously results in a contribution to a social cause, where there is a direct relationship formed between the sale of a company's product or service and its support of a social cause.
2.	Altruistic Firm Motives	Szykman, Bloom and Blazing (2004)	The degree in which the actions of firms are regarded as other-serving.
3.	Perceived CSR Image	Lacey, Kennett-Hensel and Manolis (2015)	Consumers' view of how capable and how genuine a company is able to meet its stakeholder expectations and societal responsibility by involving in various CSR activities.
4.	Consumer-Company Identification (CCI)	Bhattacharya & Sen (2003)	The degree to which a consumer's self-definition has similarities with the company's traits.
5.	Perceived company-cause fit	Varadarajan and Menon (1988)	The perceived link between the social cause and the company's brand image, product line, target market, and its position.
6.	Attitude	Graham-Rowe, Jessop and Sparks (2015)	The degree in which the performance of the behaviour is valued positively or negatively by the individual.

7.	Subjective Norms	Ajzen (1991)	The perceived social influences or pressures to perform or not to perform in a given behaviour.
8.	Perceived Behavioural Control	Ajzen and Madden (1986)	The individual perceptions of the resources availability or lack of opportunities necessary to engage in a behaviour.
9.	Store Image	Martineau (1958)	The way in which the store is defined in the shopper's mind, partly by its functional qualities and somewhat by an impression of psychological attributes.
10.	Merchandise Attributes	Wel, Hussin, Omar and Nor (2012)	Product variety and quality that the customer seek from the store.
11.	Store Ambience	Hsu, Huang and Swanson (2010)	The environment that is presented by a coordinated visual display of merchandises and the ease of mobility within the store.
12.	Location	Wel, Hussin, Omar and Nor (2012)	The store distance from customers' home and time taken to reach the store.
13.	Price	Theodoridis and Chatzipanagiotou (2009)	Refers to the monetary costs, the costs of goods purchased or to be purchased.
14.	Advertising	Wel, Hussin, Omar and Nor (2012)	External communications made by the store in attracting customers to visit their outlets.
15.	Patronage Behaviour	Verbeke and Vackier (2005)	The frequency of consumers visiting the store.
16.	Intention	Ajzen (1985)	An individual's motivation in his or her conscious plan or decision to exert an effort to perform a behaviour.

### 1.11 Conclusion

This chapter provides an overview of the overall research and act as a stepping stone for the following chapters. The content covers the background of the study, highlights the problem statement, and draws the reader's attention to the research objectives and research questions. Besides that, the significance of the study and scope of the study are also provided to raise the interest of the reader. Finally, the organization of the thesis and operational definition used in this study were also specified. The next chapter will focus on the reviewing of the related literature.

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