SWITCHING INTENTION TO VEGETARIAN FOOD AMONG GENERATION Y IN KLANG VALLEY MALAYSIA

BY

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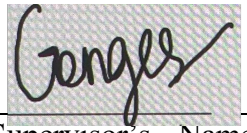

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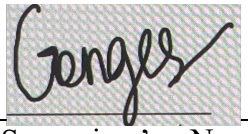

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, individuals are showing rising concern about dietary health which drives them toward selecting healthy food options including vegetarian diets. The awareness about healthy eating among Generation Y has become especially prominent in Malaysia. This study aims to investigate the switching intention to vegetarian food among Generation Y in Klang Valley, focusing on the influence of specific factors such as restaurant service failure of non-vegetarian food, health concern, and price. The role of social influence is also examined as a moderating variable to understand how peer or societal pressure may strengthen or weaken these relationships.

This research is guided by the Keaveney (1995) model of service switching behavior, focusing on three independent variables: restaurant service failure of non-vegetarian food, health concern, and price. The research incorporates social influence as a moderating variable to study how peer pressure and peer support affect the strength of identified relationships between variables. The study investigates switching intention to vegetarian food as its dependent variable while examining both personal motivations and external factors within its analytical design.

The research adopts a quantitative methodology to obtain information through structured questionnaires directed at selected respondents. The study applies judgmental sampling to intentionally select participants who are part of Generation Y, reside in Klang Valley, and show intention to switch to vegetarian food. SmartPLS 4 serves as the analytical software to process the data because of its capability to evaluate complex patterns and predictive models through structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). Both the measurement model and structural model are assessed to evaluate the reliability, validity, and significance of the proposed hypotheses.

The research findings will enhance academic knowledge about motivational and social factors which impact dietary changes. Practical implications will assist vegetarian food suppliers and restaurants in developing effective strategies to attract and retain health-conscious and service-sensitive consumers.

Keywords: *Vegetarian Food, Switching Intention, Generation Y, Keaveney Theory, Consumer Behavior, Klang Valley*

HM1176-1281 Social influence. Social pressure

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

RSF	Restaurant Service Failure
P	Price
HC	Health Concern
SocInf	Social Influence
SWI	Switching Intention
TPB	Theory of Planned Behavior
WOM	Word-of-mouth
e-WoM	Electronic Word-of-mouth
KMT	Krejcie & Morgan Table
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Model Analysis
CR	Composite Reliability
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
HTMT	Heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations
VIF	Variance Inflation Factors
RMSE	Root Mean Squared Error
MAE	Mean Absolute Error

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Vegetarian and vegan diets have been more popular recently than omnivore diets for a number of reasons, including possible health benefits (Fontes, Rodrigues and Ferreira-Pêgo, 2022). The foods in these diets are usually low in saturated fat and cholesterol and high in fibre, phytoestrogens, antioxidants, phytochemicals, and n-3 fatty acids, all of which are believed to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and obesity, among other diseases. Azhar et al. (2023) state that vegetarianism is a broad phrase that includes abstaining from eating one or more animal-based items, albeit there are several variants. Vegetarianism comes in different forms, such as lacto-ovo-vegetarianism, which permits the consumption of both dairy products and eggs, ovo-vegetarianism, which permits the consumption of eggs but not dairy products, and lacto-vegetarianism, which permits the consumption of dairy products but not eggs (Asher & Peters, 2020). Vegans are vegetarians who completely forgo animal products (and also avoid things made from animals, such as leather, silk, honey, and wool). According to The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica (2024), pescatarians are people who eat fish and shellfish but avoid land-based foods, such as vegetarians. Lacto-vegetarians and lacto-ovo vegetarians are people who utilise milk products and eggs, respectively.

1.2 Research Problem

Fruit, vegetables, legumes, nuts, grains, and soy protein are all abundant in vegetarian diets, and each of these foods may be linked to favourable health outcomes on its own (Landry & Ward, 2024). Research on the environment in Mediterranean, Asian, and African nations has shown that communities that eat mostly plant-based foods had reduced incidences of diet-related non-communicable illnesses (Ministry of Health Malaysia, 2023). Compared to non-vegetarians,

vegetarians have been shown to have a lower risk of ischaemic heart disease and cardiovascular disease (apart from stroke) (Dybvik, Svendsen and Aune, 2022; Koutentakis et al., 2023). Numerous other health disorders, including diverticular disease, gallstones, renal illnesses, cancer, type 2 diabetes, and constipation, are also less common among them (Ministry of Health Malaysia, 2023).

Despite the growing popularity of vegetarianism across the world, a significant portion of Malaysians remain reluctant to make the transition to vegetarianism (Nur Aisyah Kamal and Jasmine Lau Leby, 2023). Malaysia is one of the top consumers of chicken meat in the world, with each individual consuming an estimated 50 kilogrammes of poultry meat year (Statista, 2023). In Malaysia, beef is a staple food, particularly among Muslim consumers, who make up over 60% of the population and have a strong affinity for beef and sheepmeat (MLA, 2023). Consistent with this, a survey found that the majority (72.69%) of 227 Malaysian respondents were meat eaters, while only 14.98% were vegetarians and 2.64% were vegans, indicating that most Malaysians still prefer meat-based diets over plant-based alternatives (Hephzibah Victor, 2022). In contrast to consumers who ate a plant-based diet, Szenderák, Fróna and Rákos (2022) asserted that meat eaters with a higher connection to meat and food neophobia had a lower desire to buy and accept meat substitute items.

This reluctance is often due to concerns about the adoption of vegetarian food (e.g. meat substitute) is mostly determined by their flavour; some customers shun them out of concern that they won't like the taste (Kerslake, Kemper and Conroy, 2022). It was also mentioned that some vegans and vegetarians claimed to miss certain flavours of meat. It is challenging for non-vegetarians to explore vegetarianism because they believe that vegetarian diets are bland, monotonous, and less tasty than diets based on meat (Rosenfeld & Tomiyama, 2020).

Keaveney (1995) as cited in Stålberg (2023) revealed that pricing has a significant impact on the food service business. As the cost of meat and fish rises, more people are choosing vegetarian meals as an affordable alternative. In accordance with Kautish et al. (2024), vegetarian diets are thought to be healthier and more

environmentally sustainable, and they are associated with a decrease in the harmful effects of consuming animal-based food (Salehi et al., 2020).

Though some consumers may view healthy food as less pleasant due to a larger cultural narrative that suggests healthier foods are less tasty, the impression of vegetarian cuisine may not always match the actual taste (Wang, 2023). Moreover, while a shortage of vegetarian alternatives makes it challenging to adopt and maintain a vegetarian diet, especially when dining out, the availability of vegetarian foods at grocery shops and dining venues boosts vegetarian diet adherence (Wang, 2023). A diet that is more plant-based can result from more vegetarian alternatives. Furthermore, non-vegetarians are influenced to pick vegetarian dishes over meat ones by the availability of vegetarian choices (Parkin & Attwood, 2022).

Nafees et al. (2022) discovered that Generation Y rate health traits highest, suggesting that they are the most health-conscious generation to date. Generation Y's low brand loyalty (Wolfe, 2004) and it is also stated in the report "Trouble in Aisle 5" their openness to new food options make them more inclined to explore diverse dietary choices. They use various shopping methods, including online platforms, and view dining out as a social experience (Hudson, 2013). Hence, their interest in food trends and unique flavors makes them more willing to try and adopt vegetarian options.

Technology has a big impact on Generation Y, who mostly use social media and the internet for communication. They are the generation that spends the most of their time on technology (Forgione et al., 2024). As such, they are considered members of the "digital cohort," a generation that is well-versed in technology and has mastered its usage (Bargoni et al., 2023). Not only that, Generation Y is also clever, and dubious of traditional marketing strategies. Their media consumption is more dispersed, and their ethnic and cultural backgrounds are more varied. They are more open to embracing new habits, trends, and communication methods since they have easier access to the internet and are less familiar with brands (Zheng et al., 2021).

Generation Y frequently share meals they prepare and eat on social media, among other social media activities (Shipman, 2020). They are swayed by word-of-mouth recommendations and would rather try goods that friends, relatives, or experts suggest than those that advertise (Duffy et al. 2017). Social networks and the people one surround themselves with have a significant influence on dietary decisions (Wang, 2023). In fact, since they can act as sources of inspiration and encouragement for embracing a vegetarian lifestyle, the presence of vegetarians or people who have a favourable opinion of vegetarianism can have a significant influence on the constancy of vegetarian diets.

1.3 Academic Gap

Earlier literature has mostly concentrated on analysing differences between vegetarian and non-vegetarian diets (Pattar et al., 2023; Saintila et al., 2024; Anindya et al., 2024) and has also specifically looked into the aspects of non-vegetarian foods (Prabha, 2021; Jerome & Aruldass, 2023). The existing literature, on vegetarian food especially, is surprisingly scarce. The examination of customers' planned purchase behaviour towards vegetarian cuisine has been the main focus of prior studies (Rahim et al., 2021; Hephzibah Victor, 2022; Angwyn et al., 2022) as well as their beliefs and attitudes towards this food category (Rahim et al., 2021; Hephzibah Victor, 2022; Angwyn et al., 2022); and consumers' consumption habits (Spendrup & Hovmalm, 2022; Koh et al., 2024). Unfortunately, there aren't many studies that address the intention to turn to vegetarianism, despite the fact that this kind of conduct is a significant study area. Therefore, the goal of this study is to close the knowledge gap in a field of consumer behavioural intention that dominates the flow by better understanding Malaysian Generation Y's desire to transition to vegetarian cuisine.

Other than that, the majority of earlier research on switching behaviour in the food industry has used the Theory of Planned Behaviour framework (Hidayat et al., 2020; Hidayat et al., 2021). According to Nzowa (2021), TPB is not appropriate for examining switching intentions in the service sector since it is lacking important

variables. To improve its applicability, other elements should be included. Therefore, the Keaveney Theory (1995), which is regarded as a useful tool for researching customer switching intentions in marketing literature spanning both the food and service sectors, is employed in our study (Keaveney, 1995). Keaveney (1995) presented one of the earliest theoretical frameworks based on the critical incident approach (Flanagan, 1954) to investigate consumer switching behaviour (Hussain et al., 2022). Keaveney (1995) introduced the eight main causes of consumer switching behaviour: price, inconvenience, core service failures, service encounter failures, personnel reactions to service failures, competitive difficulties, ethical dilemmas, and involuntary variables. Using Keaveney's model, this study attempts to give a thorough knowledge of the variables driving Generation Y's desire to adopt a vegetarian diet.

Another important factor notable when it comes to the likeliness of consumers carrying out a change of attitude as regards their inclination to go vegetarian is social influence. As specified by Onwezen et al. (2014) the social norm and the behaviors of the peer group do play a large role in the decision making of the person. The current study establishes that pride and shame reflecting on meal decisions are more often than not based on social acceptability. It enriches customers' choices of meals and their willingness to switch to plant-based diets to match the norms prevalent in society, which might be due to heightened awareness of environmental and animal rights. Furthermore, Ha et al. (2024) concluded that consumers and people in general act and decide on their diets by keeping an eye on the environment and the set up of the area in which they live (social context and social environment) and other attributes that are observed from the actions and other attitudes displayed by other individuals (behavior and attitudes). This means that vegetarian diets' frequencies can be significantly influenced by the vegetarians or persons with a favorable view of vegetarianism. For instance, friends, family, or other people who maintain a vegetarian diet can be role models, which might assist some initiates start the process of changing their diets (Pankaj, 2024).

1.4 Research Objectives

The main research target of this study aims to identify the principal determinants influencing Generation Y customers' intention to switch to Vegetarian Food in Klang Valley Malaysia. The study will also investigate how these correlations are moderated by social influence.

RO1: To determine the impact of Restaurant Service Failure towards Switching Intention to Vegetarian Food in Klang Valley Malaysia.
RO2: To determine the impact of Pricing towards Switching Intention to Vegetarian Food in Klang Valley Malaysia.
RO3: To determine the impact of Health Concern towards Switching Intention to Vegetarian Food in Klang Valley Malaysia.
RO4: To examine the role of social influence between switching intention and influencing factors.

1.5 Research Questions

1. Will Restaurant Service Failure impact Switching Intention to Vegetarian Food in Klang Valley Malaysia?
2. Will Pricing impact Switching Intention to Vegetarian Food in Klang Valley Malaysia?
3. Will Health Concern impact Switching Intention to Vegetarian Food in Klang Valley Malaysia?
4. Will Social Influence moderate the relationship between Switching Intention and the influencing factors (Restaurant Service Failure, Pricing, and Health Concern) towards Vegetarian Food in Klang Valley Malaysia?

1.6 Research Significance

The study focusing on Generation Y in Klang Valley Malaysia switching intention from non-vegetarian to vegetarian food supports various stakeholder groups. The research gives important consumer behavior and preference information to practitioners focusing on vegetarian food suppliers and restaurants. Businesses must examine the reasons influencing Generation Y's decision to adopt vegetarianism in order to create strategies that appeal to this growing consumer group.

This study offers government agencies and policymakers important information about the dietary preferences of Generation Y and the variables affecting their food choices. The research results can assist government organizations in designing food-oriented policy changes which respond to consumer demands by expanding food availability and advocating nutritious diet practices. Evaluation of this research enables the government to back fresh dietary initiatives that support public health and sustainability targets.

The study provides substantial value to academic literature concerning switching behavior. The study enhances understanding of the dietary transitions behavior by expanding upon the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) through the Keaveney (1995) model together with social influence as a moderator. New theoretical models of dietary transitions together with consumer behavior can receive substantial scholarly development from this study. The obtained findings help scholars as well as practitioners understand switching behavior and the effects of social influence to develop both research and real-world applications.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Review of Theories

Keaveney (1995) established a model which defines eight vital factors that drive customers to switch their provider. These factors include: pricing, inconvenience, core service failures, service encounters failure, response to service failures, competition, ethical problem, and involuntary switching (Figure 2.1).

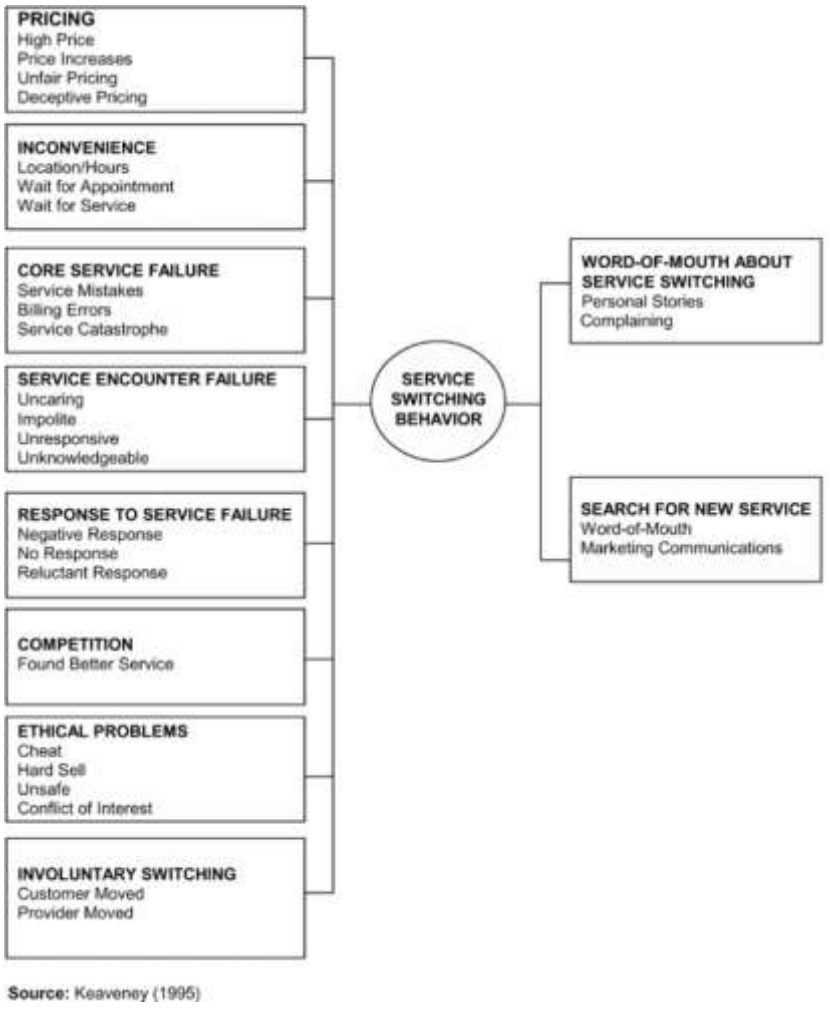

Figure 2.1 Keaveney (1995) Model. Adapted from Keaveney, S. M. (1995). Customer switching behavior in service industries: An exploratory study. *Journal of marketing*, *59*(2), 71-82.

Firstly, the "pricing" category contains issues about rates, fees, and promotional offers along with the "inconvenience" problems that include problems with location and waiting times and service hours. Next, employees who are rude, unresponsive, uncaring, or ignorant may cause customers to switch. Additionally, inadequate employee responses to service failures, such as reluctance or negativity, can prompt customers to switch. Fifth, the fifth segment of "attraction by competitors" shows customers switching to superior service providers and "ethical problems" encompass unlawful or unethical conduct. Lastly, migration or job changes are examples of involuntary switching circumstances that are outside of the control of clients or service providers.

Keaveney (1995) also identified two primary post-switching behaviors: seeking out new providers and spreading word of mouth. Word-of-mouth (WOM) significantly affects consumer choices regarding products and services. Customers often share personal stories about their experiences with both their previous and current providers through WOM communication when they switch their service provider (Keaveney, 1995). Similarly, customers mostly rely on WOMs as a means of identifying new service providers.

According to Keaveney (1995) the developed switching model proves crucial for studying consumer provider changes across different service sectors (Philip, 2004). Since it identifies the crucial components of quality of service, satisfaction with services, and switching barriers that influence consumer choices, Keaveney's model demonstrates its strength as an explanation of customer behavior. For researchers studying a particular area of the services industry, Keaveney's (1995) study serves as a stimulant.

One component of involuntary switching in the Keaveney (1995) model is excluded from this study, as the focus is on Generation Y’s intention to voluntarily remain vegetarian. Customers and service providers cannot control certain variables that lead to involuntary switching (Roos, 1999). The research conducted by Friedman and Smith (1993) as well as Ganesh, Arnold, and Reynolds (2000) shows switching behavior mainly appears by chance (Panama et al., 2023).

The lack of knowledge about vegetarian diets and the perceived inconvenience still influence meat consumption, especially among middle-aged and female individuals, despite technological advancements and the shift in the importance of inconvenience as noted by Georgiou et al. (2023) (Lea & Worsley, 2001). Many struggles with preparing vegetarian meals due to insufficient information or the belief that such meals are difficult to make, leading them to revert to meat. The shortage of vegetarian choices at dining establishments together with supermarkets leads to higher probabilities of people eating meat.

Each business competing for the same customer base falls under the term 'competitors' when referring to companies in the same industry sector. Research by Keaveney (1995) demonstrates that customers prefer moving to competitors who provide better quality services and establish higher levels of reliability even if choice options are costlier or slightly less convenient. However, since our study compares vegetarian and non-vegetarian food, distinct types of offerings, we have excluded the 'competition' component from Keaveney's model.

Whereas pricing is included in this study, as Keaveney (1995) identified price as a significant factor influencing the food service industry (Bahauddin et al., 2020). Customers believe they receive insufficient value when they perceive prices as unfair which makes them explore different options. Research conducted in finance and banking (Matzler et al., 2006; Varki and Colgate, 2001) has confirmed that price unfairness drives customer institution switching behavior.

The core service failures, failed service encounters, and responses to these failures correspond to the dimensions of service quality, which may be redefined into restaurant service failure. Failed service encounters and service failures are important characteristics of service quality that can have a detrimental effect on customer loyalty and happiness (Baier et al., 2020). To succeed in the cutthroat commercial world, the restaurant industry aims to provide high-quality services. However, accomplishing failure-free service delivery is next to impossible. After the occurrence of a service failure, a service provider’s response can either reinforce

customer loyalty or further worsen the situation and drive the customer to a competitor (Harun et al., 2018).

The ethical problem category may be redefined to health concerns. In public health, there is an ethical issue related to the potential trade-off between efficiency (overall health) and equity (health inequality). This demonstrates how ethical problems can influence the evaluation of health concerns. When ethical viewpoints affect the assessment of outcomes, it becomes more challenging to determine whether a public health error has occurred (Bavli, 2021). Non-communicable diseases develop from eating patterns with insufficient vegetable consumption and fruit intake and from inactive behavior and high exposure to salt and trans-fats (Patil et al. 2018). People in Kuala Lumpur who follow vegetarian diets practice better eating habits (Gan et al., 2018), yet their plant-based diets might not provide sufficient amounts of iron and vitamin B12 (Yusof et al., 2018). Malaysians along with people worldwide are adopting vegetarian diets to minimize health risks because of increasing diet-related ailments since the 1970s (Guyomard et al., 2012; Kearney, 2010). Plant-based diets are also linked to cancer protection and weight management (World Cancer Research Fund, 2007; Vergnaud et al., 2010).

To conclude, our framework consists of four components: pricing, restaurant service failure (core service failures, service encounter failures, employee responses to service failures), and health concerns (ethical problem).

2.2 Review of Variables

2.2.1 Independent Variables

2.2.1.1 Restaurant Service Failure

It is challenging to assess the quality of service in the restaurant business since evaluations are based on both the service outcome and the delivery method (Marković et al., 2010). According to Zhang et al. (2021), service encounters were defined as personal interactions between customers and employees of service firms. Furthermore, they also stated that service

mistakes represent a failure in delivering the promised service dependably and accurately, reflecting reliability (e.g., slow service, or rude or careless employees). Outcome failures include any food-related issues, such as subpar meals or menu items that are out of stock. Additionally, a service provider's response to a customer's complaint about a perceived service failure is referred to as service recovery (Kau & Loh, 2006). It is a process that includes all of the steps planned and carried out to address issues and alter unfavorable consumer sentiments in order to stop bad word-of-mouth and to keep customers from transferring (Miller et al., 2000; Baker, 2017).

2.2.1.2 Price

Kotler et al. (2012) noted that "the price is the amount paid for a product or service and the sum of the value exchanged by consumers for the advantages of a product or service available or being used." This definition includes not only the direct costs of the product but also any additional costs (e.g. transportation costs, service charges, taxes, etc.) involved in acquiring it. People consider a reasonable price as a balance between monetary value and product worth (Kalyva et al., 2024). According to Konuk (2019), the price obtains fairness by guaranteeing reasonable profits and matching customer expectations about value.

Ritchie et al. (2023) explain food price as the market valuation of food items that shows the relationship between agricultural production and buyer needs and enables both profit for producers and reasonable consumption affordability. True pricing according to Kalyva et al. (2024) establishes a link between product prices and manufacturing expenses to drive food sector exposure of external effects while boosting operational clarity.

2.2.1.3 Health Concern

According to Tan et al. (2021), the recent studies have shown that consumers are increasingly conscious about their health and prefer natural and healthy food products. They seek food that provides both mental satisfaction and physical nourishment, avoiding options that could harm their health. The degree to which people manage and engage in health-related behaviors is known as health consciousness. Concerns about health problems including hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and high cholesterol are major factors that lead people to think about eating healthily as a way to reduce these risks. The findings of dos Santos Vitor (2024) support that personal health concerns together with food-related disease threats and health-related self-consciousness drive people toward making healthy food choices. Additionally, Iqbal et al. (2021) support this by noting that individuals who frequently reflect on their health and are mindful of dietary choices are more likely to take proactive steps towards healthier eating.

2.2.2 Moderating Variable

2.2.2.1 Social Influence

The concept of subjective norm demonstrates social influence in behavioral frameworks. Users' influences from peers, family, friends, and other people are reflected in it (Campbell and Russo, 2003). Hsu and Lin (2008) explain that social influence greatly affects how users behave within environments like online communities where blogging occurs. People are likely to participate in blogs when those who are important to them encourage or expect their involvement, and when they feel influenced by others who shape their behavior. Besides that, According to Venkatesh et al. (2003), social impact is the extent to which a person feels that significant others think they need to utilize the new method. Furthermore, when friends or family who have moved to a different diet or who have already adopted a

different diet encourage users to adopt their current diet, this is referred to as social influence (Ye et al., 2022).

2.2.3 Dependent Variable

2.2.3.1 Switching Intention

Research demonstrates that a higher level of switching intention not only increases the likelihood of actual behavior change but also indicates a positive influence of intention on behavior (Lin & Wang, 2017). According to Satriadi et al. (2022), switching intention is the degree of likelihood or certainty that a person will switch from their present supplier of goods or services to a new one. This idea also pertains to eating behaviours, indicating a person's willingness and commitment to switching their present eating patterns to healthier ones (Lin & Huang, 2014). Furthermore, as demonstrated by their plans to concentrate more on the transition, switching intention includes the degree to which a person is committed to reallocating their resources and energy towards this transformation (Ye et al., 2022).

2.3 Research Framework

Our study framework on Malaysian Generation Y's intention to move to vegetarian food looks at how four independent factors—restaurant service, pricing, and health concerns—affect the variable that is dependent, which is the intention to switch to a vegetarian diet. Furthermore, as a moderating factor, social influence affects the direction or degree of the associations among the variables that are distinct and the switching intention.

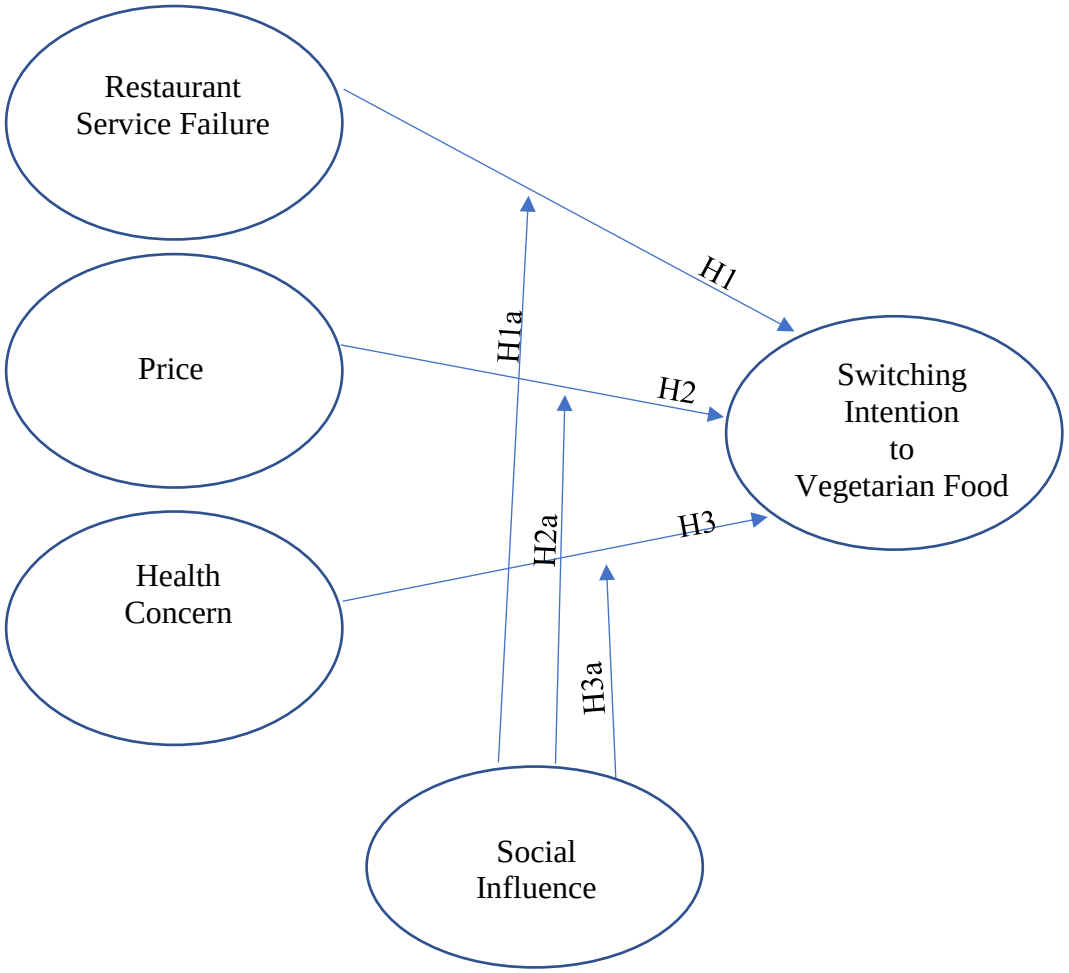

Figure 2.2 Proposed Research Framework

2.4 Hypotheses Development

According to Kau and Loh (2006), poor service at non-vegetarian restaurants such as delays in complaint resolution coupled with staff disinterest and lack of attention coupled with ineffective problem resolution behaviour leads customers' intention to switch to vegetarian food options. Consumers tend to develop negative emotions when they encounter service failures thus driving them to switch their brand loyalty (Johnson et al., 2008; Kim and Cho, 2014). Zeithaml et al. (1996) established that delays as well as slow responses from staff cause customer dissatisfaction which drives customers toward choosing alternate options. A low level of service quality also leads to unfavorable behavioral intentions and high switching intentions

(Aydin and Ozer, 2005). Customers leave their current service providers because of dissatisfaction that results from poor service (Boamah et al., 2020). A survey found that 60% of customers change their restaurant choices because of poor service experiences although most customers move to another restaurant after experiencing two such incidents (Kathylitt, 2024). When diners experience these service failures at non-vegetarian restaurants, they may become more motivated to explore alternatives where they expect a higher quality of service. As a result, service failures at non-vegetarian restaurants lead to customer dissatisfaction and can drive them to consider vegetarian food as a more appealing choice. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Restaurant Service Failure significantly affects Switching Intention to Vegetarian Food among Generation Y in Malaysia.

Restaurant service failures are unavoidable because of things like unplanned crowding (Folkes et al., 1987) and other patron disruptions like rowdy kids or intoxicated patrons (Huang et al., 2010). Customers frequently quit going to a restaurant or spread bad word of mouth (WoM) when they experience poor service (Lam & Tang, 2003). Customers are increasingly expressing their unhappiness online through negative electronic WoM (e-WoM) (Zhang et al., 2010). The reputation and customer acquisition of a restaurant may suffer as a result of these actions (Nyer & Gopinath, 2005; Lau & Ng, 2001). Since negative word-of-mouth (WoM) has become more widespread online and reaches a wider audience than just the customers' friends and family, it has become a more public response to customer unhappiness (Vilpponen, Winter, & Sundqvist, 2006).

Additionally, WOM plays a significant role in restaurant selection, especially as consumers are unable to assess intangible service products prior to consumption (Sukhu & Bilgihan, 2021). According to Zeelenberg et al. (1998), regret and disappointment have distinct effects on future actions. Zeelenberg and Pieters (1999) found that regret can directly cause customers to switch to a different service, even if they aren't entirely dissatisfied. This is because regret often involves blaming oneself for a bad experience. As a result, customers may not always express their dissatisfaction directly through complaints or negative feedback (Zeelenberg and Pieters, 2004). Zhao et al. (2024) found that switching intention and negative word-

of-mouth (WOM) are positively correlated with disappointment. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1a: Social influence positively moderates the relationship between Restaurant Service Failure and the Switching Intention to Vegetarian Food among Generation Y in Malaysia.

Non-vegetarian food prices rise due to market inflation and currency rate shifts which make these products unreasonably expensive for many consumers so they turn towards different eating options (Kapsokefalou et al., 2024). For example, Chuang and Tai (2016) noted that switching intention is strongly and directly influenced by dissatisfaction resulting from unfair prices that irritate customers. Similarly, research indicates that 37.9% of Canadians decreased their meat consumption because meat prices increased (Hargreaves et al., 2021). According to Charlebois et al. (2016), economic factors were recognized as the primary reason by 62.1% of people who reduced or stopped eating meat. Mohd Farhan Che Ariffin, a butcher, also highlighted that currency exchange rates have driven up the cost of beef, with prices increasing from RM20 to RM23 per kilogram in a year of time (Mukhtar, 2024). The research by Satriadi et al. (2022) demonstrates that unreasonable prices trigger users to consider opting for economical dietary choices such as vegetarianism. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Price significantly affects Switching Intention to Vegetarian Food among Generation Y in Malaysia.

According to Adiani et al. (2023) social media conversations about expensive prices among non-vegetarian foods make consumers believe these items are costly which drives up their preference for cheaper vegetarian meals. This effect is further evidenced by Ordabayeva et al. (2022) who found that 67% of customers would avoid buying products or services when they encounter one to three negative critiques. This suggests that when people encounter negative reviews about the cost of non-vegetarian foods on social media, they may perceive these foods is overpriced or not worth the expense, encouraging them to consider switching to more cost-effective vegetarian options. Rahman et al. (2021) indicating that when negative social influence is present, the perceived high price of non-vegetarian foods more strongly drives the decision to switch to vegetarian food. For instance,

People developed stronger intentions towards vegetarian diets as a more affordable choice after social media users continuously discussed rising meat prices during COVID-19. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2a: Social influence positively moderates the relationship between Price and the Switching Intention to Vegetarian Food among Generation Y in Malaysia.

This hypothesis looks into how the intent of individuals to select a vegetarian diet are impacted by health concerns. People who are conscious about the negative health effects of non-vegetarian diets, such as high cholesterol, cardiovascular disease, and hypertension, are more inclined to select vegetarian diets (Jedut et al., 2023). After completing a comprehensive review of eight research findings, American researchers found that vegetarian foods were associated with a lower risk of dying from ischemic disorders than non-vegetarian diets (Jabri et al., 2021). Eating non-vegetarian foods has been linked to an increased risk of heart disease, according to research. Furthermore, according to Jedut et al. (2023), a vegetarian diet can dramatically lower the 5-year death rate for people with chronic kidney disease, which is estimated to be 17%. Since non-vegetarian diets can cause a series of health problems, many non-vegetarians, driven by self-consciousness about their health, develop a strong intention to switch to a healthier vegetarian diet after experiencing negative changes in their health (Hidayat et al., 2021). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Health Concern significantly affects Switching Intention to Vegetarian Food among Generation Y in Malaysia.

The power of social influence through WOM and social media reviews enhances health-related awareness about non-vegetarian foods which leads people to choose vegetarian alternatives (Mohammed et al., 2023). For instance, social media users often post information about the health risks from eating non-vegetarian foods especially red and processed meats because they increase cardiovascular disease and cancer risk (Layik, 2022). Through reviews and social network sharing of health issues people develop concerns about unhealthy non-vegetarian diets which motivates them to choose vegetarian alternatives. Trustworthy peer discussions guided by influential persons regarding the health dangers of non-vegetarian food help steers individuals toward making dietary decisions according to Amson et al.

(2024). For example, Dr. Michael Greger, through his NutritionFacts.org platform, provides information about non-vegetarian food health risks which importantly influence people to adopt vegetarian food (Greger & Stone, 2016). Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3a: Social influence positively moderates the relationship between Health Concern and the Switching Intention to Vegetarian Food among Generation Y in Malaysia.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This project adheres to an organised framework that is based on the methods for data collecting and analysis, questionnaire preparation, research design, and sampling that are covered in the ensuing subsections.

3.1 Research Design

This study operates as a descriptive cross-sectional quantitative research. The methodology of quantitative research requires systematic natural science methods to study sample populations by using measured and observed data for answering specific questions. Numerical data outcomes emerge from this approach to demonstrate cause-and-effect connections and the research findings appear as graphic and tabular displays for better understanding (Ahmad et al., 2019). You can extend information collected from a sample group to an entire group of people through quantitative research methods (Barnes et al., 2024).

Cross-sectional descriptive research methodology requires data collection at one single static moment without any referencing to duration or time period. All collected data pertains to the research period yet researchers need to establish specific definitions for participant selection and data collection timing and measurements related to the study inquiry (Kesmodel, 2018). As an efficient research design a cross-sectional study collects data from representative samples of population dynamics at once which enables simultaneous analysis of multiple variables (Deakin, 2021). Research findings obtained from cross-sectional studies do not need a prolonged tracking of participants across time thus making surveys and questionnaires sufficient research methods. The design serves multiple research

needs specifically when observing distinct age groups and studying matters that cannot impose conditions on subjects because ethics prohibits it.

3.2 Sampling Design

The “target population” designates all people or objects through which research-based generalizations are applied (Rahman, 2023). Considering specified circumstances, a sample forms a collection of individuals which together comprises the "target population" term. Since the Klang Valley has the largest population in Malaysia, our target demographic is made up of Generation Y individuals who regularly eat vegetarian food or visit vegetarian restaurants. The research targets Buddhists since the dietary commitments in their beliefs make them more likely to adopt vegetarianism than other religious groups.

Purposive sampling functions as a type of judgmental sampling to identify elements from a population that meet the study purpose. To conduct research effectively the researcher identifies suitable participants for their study and remains aware of all involved population members (Futane & Tech, 2021). Judgmental sampling proves beneficial for initial screening because it enables researchers to pick participants who fully match the criteria for our study, which results in a tightly-focused and suitable sample population. For example, the selection criteria for the study on Generation Y's intention to switch to vegetarianism in Klang Valley, Malaysia, could be based on the following questions: "Are you born after 1980 and before 1998?" "Do you live in Klang Valley?" and "Have you consumed vegetarian food in the past month?" The research team would select participants in accordance with their valid responses to indirect questioning. People approving the study criteria via positive responses will participate as participants but those who disapprove through negative responses will not proceed. While “Are you a vegan/ Vegetarian for life?” Participation would occur only for respondents who answered "No" to the given questions but not those who answered "Yes."

The number of elements units in a sample is known as sample size (Futane & Tech, 2021). Social science and behavioural researchers widely use the Krejcie and Morgan Table (KMT, Krejcie & Morgan, 1970) to determine sample sizes (Rahman, 2023). This information can be applicable to any given population and may be used without the need for computations. According to the KMT (see Table 3.1), for our target audience of Generation Y in the Klang Valley, a sample size of 384 is enough for a population of 1,000,000 or more. With the Greater Klang Valley's 2024 population estimated at 3.4 million (Online, 2024), and 45% of this population classified as Generation Y (Hansaram et al., 2024), this sample size is appropriate for our study.

Table 3.1

Table for Determining Sample Size of a Known Population (Krejcie and Morgan Table)

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	346
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	354
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	191	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	170	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	180	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	190	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	200	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	370
65	56	210	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	220	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	230	144	550	226	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	240	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	250	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	260	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	254	2600	335	1000000	384

Note: N is Population Size; S is Sample Size *Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970*

3.3 Data Collection Method

3.3.1 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire will include a set of statements about the study's hypotheses. Respondents are asked to select the most appropriate answer from strongly agree to strongly disagree. For example, 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree. In this study, the nominal scale is used in Section A to obtain demographic information of the respondents and the screening questions while the ordinal scale is used in Section B, Section C, and Section D to obtain data for respective Independent Variables, Moderating Variable and Dependent Variable. Following is the questionnaire of Section B, Section C, and Section D:

Table 3.2

The Finalized Questionnaire Item Statements

Variable	Source of Adoption	No.	Measurement Items	Application of Items
Restaurant Service Failure	Kau & Loh (2006)	RSF1	They were very slow in responding to my complaint.	The non-Vegetarian restaurant was very slow in responding to my complaint.
		RSF2	The employees seemed very interested in helping me.	The non-vegetarian restaurant's staff seemed not very interested in helping me.
		RSF3	The employees were attentive in	The non-vegetarian restaurant's staff were not attentive

Variable	Source of Adoption	No.	Measurement Items	Application of Items
			providing good service.	in providing good service.
	Ghamry & Shamma (2020)	RSF4	My bank responds efficiently to my complaint.	Non-vegetarian restaurants respond is not efficient in responding to my complaint.
Price	Konuk (2019)	P1	The price of organic food is reasonable.	The price of non-vegetarian food is not reasonable.
		P2	Organic food price is fair.	The price of non-vegetarian food is not fair.
		P3	Organic food price is acceptable.	The price of non-vegetarian food is not acceptable.
	Wicaksana et al. (2021)	P4	Overall, the pricing options are superior to other service providers.	The price of vegetarian food is more affordable compared to non-vegetarian food options.
Health Concern	Iqbal et al. (2021)	HC1	I reflect about my health a lot.	I reflect on how my diet, including

Variable	Source of Adoption	No.	Measurement Items	Application of Items
				vegetarian food, impacts my health.
		HC2	I take responsibility for the state of my health.	I take responsibility for the state of my health, including the decision to incorporate vegetarian food into my diet.
	Jin et al. (2017)	HC3	Concern about my personal health makes me want to purchase healthy food.	Concern about my personal health makes me want to eat vegetarian food.
		HC4	Threat of food-related disease makes me choose healthy food.	Threat of food-related disease makes me choose vegetarian food.
	Kähkönen & Tuorila (1999)	HC5	I am concerned about getting a lot of cholesterol in my food.	I am concerned about consuming a lot of cholesterol in non-vegetarian food.
Social Influence	Hsu & Lin (2008)	SocInf1	People who are important to me think that I should participate in blogs.	People who are important to me think that I should eat vegetarian food.

Variable	Source of Adoption	No.	Measurement Items	Application of Items
		SocInf2	People who influence my behavior encourage me to participate in blogs.	People who influence my behavior encourage me to eat vegetarian food.
	Ye et al. (2022)	SocInf3	My friends invited me to sign up for the new e-commerce live streaming platform.	My friends encouraged me to eat vegetarian food.
	Venkatesh et al. (2003)	SocInf4	My department head thinks it is [was] a good idea to introduce speech recognition for medical record keeping.	My family members think it is a good idea for me to eat vegetarian food.
Switching Intention	Lin & Wang (2017).	SWI1	I will consider to switch SNS soon.	I will consider switching from non-vegetarian food to vegetarian food soon.
	Mannan et al. (2017)	SWI2	Probability of me switching to another	Probability of me switching to

Variable	Source of Adoption	No.	Measurement Items	Application of Items
			mobile network operator is high.	vegetarian food is high.
	Lin & Huang (2014)	SWI3	If I could, I would like to switch from the Android phone to an iPhone.	If I were able to, I would switch from non-vegetarian food to vegetarian food.
	Ye et al. (2022)	SWI4	I plan to move from the e-commerce live streaming platform to a new e-commerce live streaming platform.	I plan to switch from non-vegetarian food to vegetarian food.

3.3.2 Pretest

Following the completion of the questionnaire, the study starts its pre-test procedures to guarantee internal consistency, correctness, reliability, and comprehensiveness (Colbert et al., 2019). The purpose of this step is to fix any errors and enhance the questionnaire. The revisions adjust both typographical errors and rewrite confusing sentence structures as a result of pretest feedback pointing out grammatical errors and unclear passages.

To ensure the quality of the material, we have requested two academic specialists from UTAR's Department of Marketing to review the draft questionnaire. They said our questionnaire is enough to accomplish the goal of the study and offered suggestions for making it better. Several modifications were made to the questionnaire based on patient feedback

through addition of demographic inquiries about year of birth, ethnicity, highest educational level, and monthly income together with minor grammatical improvements for clarity. Their feedback has been included into our questionnaire, and the pre-test results are displayed in Table 3.2.

3.3.3 Ethical Clearance Approval Application

All research projects at UTAR that work with human or animal subjects or human tissues and personal data need ethical approval from the UTAR Scientific and Ethical Review Committee (SERC) before starting to follow the Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) 2010. Once all requirements are met and finalized, the university will grant the necessary ethical approval.

3.3.4 Pilot Study

After the study pre-test, the questionnaire is distributed face-to-face, allowing for direct and rapid response in a concrete manner. The research concentrates on Generation Y participants from Jenjarom where Dong Zen Temple operates as both a cultural educational hub and a growing tourist destination. Besides that, it is advised by Lackey & Wingate (1998) to acquire 10% of the total research size. Hence, for the trial analysis, 38 respondents completed a pilot research questionnaire. The responses are recruited from the same population as the research.

Moreover, Researchers often use Cronbach's Alpha to evaluate inter-item correlation levels in measurement instruments (Izah et al., 2023). For the questionnaire's final design, a score of 0.70 or above is considered appropriate. According to our research, the total Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.939, as indicated in Table 3.3.4, with values ranging from 0.740 to 0.894. As a consequence, the outcome shows that every variable is trustworthy.

Table 3.3

Pilot Study Results: Consistency of all respondents answer the questionnaire

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Item
Restaurant Service Failures	0.894	4
Price	0.844	4
Health Concern	0.740	5
Social Influence	0.808	4
Switching Intention	0.890	4
Overall	0.939	21

3.3.5 Actual Study/Field work

Questionnaires were used in a survey technique to collect data from the respondents for this investigation. Questionnaires are used because they are inexpensive and simple to administer (Siedlecki, 2020). To make it easier for us to distribute, the questionnaire will first be in the Google Form format. The surveys are delivered to the target demographic in the English language via email, other social media accounts, XiaoHongShu, Facebook, Instagram, and other online platforms. For example, we will distribute in the Facebook Group - "BuddhistsInKlangValley" (Appendix 2), requiring them to help us fill out the questionnaire. Due to this group being ideal, not all members are primarily Buddhists, not necessarily vegetarians, making it suitable for reaching our target respondents who intend to switch to vegetarian food. Additionally, we also plan to distribute our questionnaire at various vegetarian restaurants and Buddhist Temples located in the Klang Valley, such as Thean Hou Temple, Kuan Yin Temple, Batu Caves, and the list goes on. It also guarantees that we include in our sample Generation Y individuals who spend a lot of time online as well as members of culturally relevant places. By doing so, the study intends to maximize the reliability of

data to be collected in addition to ensuring maximum turnout of the intended population group.

Figure 3.1 Facebook Group "BuddhistInKlangValley"

3.4 Proposed Data Analysis Tool

The suggested tools were used to analyse the data in this area of the research. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Model Analysis (PLS-SEM), which evaluates measurement models, is used to analyse the Structural Equation Model (SEM) (Hair et al., 2019). In this study, SmartPLS 4 software is used to conduct the PLS-SEM analysis (SmartPLS, 2014).

3.4.1 Descriptive Analysis

Data analysis starts with descriptive analysis since it helps to organize data for summary purposes while avoiding strict hypothesis tests (Teng & Ang, 2024). The methodology tunes big data collections into essential points of understanding that researchers present through tables, graphs and other visual methods (Salvatore, 2021). The study applies descriptive analysis to

present the respondent demographic profile through percentage calculations which makes the data easier to understand.

3.4.2 Inferential Analysis

3.4.2.1 Partial Least Square Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM)

Hair and Alamer (2022) reveal PLS-SEM serves as the research methodology because it functions as a variance-based SEM approach that social scientists routinely use for studying complex models including multiple constructs and relationships. In light of its capacity to handle complicated models with latent variables, PLS-SEM was selected for an exploratory study on Generation Y's desire to switch to vegetarian eating in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. In our research design, PLS-SEM effectively manages the three independent variables, one moderator, and dependent variable of the Keaveney (1995) model.

As mentioned by J. F. Hair et al. (2021), this approach is advantageous as it does not impose strict data distribution assumptions and is well-suited for predictive and theory-building research. Since our study aims to predict switching intention and extend Keaveney's model in a new context, PLS-SEM aligns with our objectives. Additionally, Hair et al. (2019) highlighted how PLS-SEM works well for studies with large sample sizes which perfectly matched our research using data gathered from 384 respondents.

Following a two-step procedure to validate the measurement model, the research investigation tested the structural model to evaluate the path coefficient and determine T-values and R^2 values. Therefore, PLS-SEM was deemed appropriate as it enables a robust examination of the key determinants influencing switching intention to vegetarian food (J. F. Hair et al., 2021).

3.4.2.2 Evaluation of PLS-SEM Results

There are two steps involved in testing theory with PLS-SEM (Babin & Sarstedt, 2019). To verify the validity and dependability of the measurement models, we first test them (Hair et al., 2021). We proceed to test the structural model following the confirmation of the measurement models.

3.4.2.3 Measurement Model Assessment

A measurement model is part of a larger framework that defines hidden (latent) concepts. There are two main types: reflective and formative measures. In a reflective construct, the indicators represent the concept, meaning they are the outcomes of the construct. If the construct changes, all its indicators will change as well. In contrast, a formative construct is built from its indicators, meaning the construct depends on them. Changing or replacing an indicator will change the meaning of the construct. A reflective construct exists on its own and influences its indicators, with causality flowing from the construct to the indicators. Meanwhile, a formative construct is shaped by its indicators, and any changes to them will directly affect the construct itself.

3.4.2.4 Measurement Model Specification

Overall, Restaurant Service Failure, Price, Health Concern, Social Influence, and Switching Intention are reflective constructs as items of the variables represent the same underlying construct and are highly correlated. Removing an indicator would not change the construct's meaning, making a reflective measurement model the most appropriate choice.

3.4.3.5 Reflective Measurement Model Assessment

3.4.3.5.1 Unidimensionality

Each indicator's reliability is evaluated by calculating the variation it explains in order to assess a measurement model. In internal consistency reliability evaluation, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability are used to analyse the consistency of indicators that measure the same concept (Hair et al., 2021). If the Cronbach's alpha value is more than 0.70, the measurement model is deemed credible. Alternatively, composite reliability (CR) is much more reliable than Cronbach's alpha since this measure managed to overcome some of Cronbach's alpha deficiency (Afthanorhan, 2014). For exploratory research, a CR of 0.60 to 0.70 is ideal, and 0.70 to 0.95 is adequate (Sarstedt et al., 2014). Unidimensionality is also measured by Average Variance Extracted (AVE) (Fornell & Larcker 1981). Accordingly, an acceptable AVE is 0.5 or above (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988).

3.4.3.5.2 Convergent Validity

The degree to which a measure is related to other measures of the same phenomena is known as convergent validity (Cheah et al., 2018). Cheung et al. (2023) discovered that a number of academics have proposed using the statistical significance of standardised factor loadings to assess convergent validity. Since the square of that value shows that the construct score incorporates at least 50% of the variation of the variable, the outer loadings should be more than 0.708 (Hair Jr. et al., 2017).

3.4.3.5.3 Discriminant Validity

The assessment of construct differences across structural model components is known as discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2019). Monitoring the heterotrait-heteromethod correlations against the monotrait-heteromethod

correlations yields the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations from Henseler et al. (2015). Since a score close to 1 denotes a lack of validity, high HTMT levels may lead to issues with discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). Bootstrap confidence intervals should be employed to verify discriminant validity, making sure the 95% CI upper limit stays below 0.90 or 0.85, depending on the research environment (Franke & Sarstedt, 2019). For accuracy, researchers should use 10,000 bootstrap samples and the percentile approach. A preferred threshold for HTMT analysis is 0.85 yet researchers may adopt 0.90 as the cutoff so long as constructs reveal shared variance (Hair et al., 2022).

3.4.3.6 Structural Model Assessment

Hair et al. (2021) state that the purpose of structural model assessment is to examine the relationship between variables and constructs. The measurement model can be improved thanks to PLS-SEM's effective performance with huge and intricate structured models. Consequently, the study's PLS-SEM analysis validated the correlations between variables with strong statistical characteristics.

The study evaluated the direct path relationships and, subsequently, the indirect path of the moderating effect of the framework. Hair et al. (2011) had mentioned that path significance between the variables would be measured using the variance (R^2), with the following values for PLS path models, $R^2 = 0.75$ (significant); $R^2 = 0.50$ (moderate); $R^2 = 0.25$ (poor).

According to Hair et al. (2021), for the Collinearity Test, it is then checked using Variance Inflation Factors (VIF), ensuring that all indicators have VIFs below 5.

Next, Hair et al. (2017) explained that the bootstrapping method uses random observations from primarily collected data to generate a PLS path

model, which assesses latent variables and their relationships. By producing t-values and p-values, bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples is used to assess route significance. The crucial t-values for a one-tailed test are 2.33 (1% significance), 1.65 (10% significance), and 1.96 (5% significance). Paths are deemed significant in this study if the p-value is less than 0.05 and the t-value is more than 1.65.

Besides that, the F^2 value is used to analyse the effect of deleting a particular construct on an endogenous construct. These analyses were used in this study to examine the link between the exogenous variables of Price (P), Health Concern (HC), Restaurant Service Failure (RSF), and moderator Social Influence (SocInf) and the endogenous construct of Switching Intention (SWI) (Hair et al., 2021).

The research employs F^2 metric values to evaluate effect sizes where $F^2 > 0.35$ signifies a large size and $F^2 = 0.15 - 0.35$ demonstrates average size while $F^2 = 0.02 - 0.15$ indicates small size and $F^2 < 0.02$ indicates no effect size (Purwanto & Sudargini, 2021). The two-stage method of moderator analysis from Becker, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2018) utilizes standard indicators to evaluate exogenous variables and the Social Influence moderator through bootstrapping procedures to examine these relations.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter analyzes data regarding factors which influence Generation Y's intention to switch Vegetarian Food within Klang Valley Malaysia through inferential analysis.

4.1 Descriptive Result of Respondent Demographic Profile

A total of 384 responses were gathered, as indicated in Table 4.1. There are 225 females and 159 males among them. The corresponding percentages are 58.59% and 41.41%.

Table 4.1

Category of Gender

	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Male	159	41.41%	41.41%
Female	225	58.59%	100.00%
Total	384	100.00%	

Our target respondents, who belong to Generation Y, were born between 1981 and 1997. According to Table 4.2, of the 384 replies, 41 (10.68%) were born between 1981 and 1985, 77 (20.05%) were born between 1986 and 1990, and 266 (69.27%) were born between 1991 and 1997.

Table 4.2

Category of Born in Year

	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
1981-1985	41	10.68%	10.68%

1986-1990	77	20.05%	30.73%
1991-1997	266	69.27%	100.00%
Total	384	100.00%	

In terms of respondents' ethnicity, 72 are Indian, 11 are Malay, and 301 are Chinese. According to Table 4.3, this indicates that 78.39% of respondents are Chinese, 2.86% are Malay, and 18.75% are Indian.

Table 4.3

Category of Ethnicity

	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Chinese	301	78.39%	78.39%
Malay	11	2.86%	81.25%
Indian	72	18.75%	100.00%
Total	384	100.00%	

Among the 384 respondents, the majority (62.76%) hold an undergraduate degree (241 respondents), followed by 21.35% with a foundation or diploma (82 respondents). Additionally, 11.72% have completed postgraduate studies (45 respondents), while 4.17% attained only secondary education (16 respondents). No respondents selected "Other," as shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Category of Education Level

	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Secondary	16	4.17%	4.17%
Foundation/ Diploma	82	21.35%	25.52%
Undergraduate	241	62.76%	88.28%
Potgraduate	45	11.72%	100.00%
Other	0	0.00%	100.00%
Total	384	100.00%	

As shown in Table 4.5, the largest group of respondents (39.06%) earn between RM3,500 and RM4,999 (150 respondents), followed by 25.78% earning RM5,000–RM6,999 (99 respondents). Additionally, 15.63% earn RM2,000–RM3,499 (60 respondents), while 8.85% earn above RM9,000 (34 respondents). Meanwhile, 7.03% fall within the RM7,000–RM8,999 range (27 respondents), and 3.65% earn below RM2,000 (14 respondents).

Table 4.5

Category of Monthly Income

	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Below RM2,000	14	3.65%	3.65%
RM2,000-RM3,499	60	15.63%	19.27%
RM3,500-RM4,999	150	39.06%	58.33%
RM5,000-RM6,999	99	25.78%	84.11%
RM7,000-RM8,999	27	7.03%	91.15%
Above RM9,000	34	8.85%	100.00%
Total	384	100.00%	

To conclude, our research obtained responses from 384 members of Generation Y mostly comprising female Chinese respondents, and born between 1991 and 1997. They hold an undergraduate degree earning between RM3,500 to RM4,999. The majority of survey participants possess undergraduate qualifications and fall into the income bracket of RM3,500 to RM4,999. These demographics offer comprehensive representation of the target demographic for examining the desire to switch to vegetarianism.

4.2 Inferential Analysis

4.2.1 Measurement Model Assessment

4.2.1.1 Unidimensionality

The Composite Reliability values exceeded 0.7 for all constructs which indicates strong internal consistency (Hair et al., 2019). Specifically, the measurement items within RSF (0.934), P (0.953), and HC (0.855) show high composite reliability and SocInf (0.900) and SWI (0.946) exhibit an even higher level of consistency in representing their constructs. Besides that, in terms of Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Restaurant Service Failure (0.805), Price (0.837), Social Influence (0.700), and Switching Intention (0.814) demonstrate strong convergent validity. The Health Concern measure (0.546) satisfies minimum requirements as it accounts for at least 50% of its construct variance. The research confirms that the measurement model detects the essential constructs in their desired form.

Table 4.6

Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted

Constructs	**Cronbach's Alpha**	**Composite Reliability (CR)**	**Average Variance Extracted (AVE)**
Restaurant Service Failure (RSF)	0.919	0.934	0.805
Price (P)	0.935	0.953	0.837
Health Concern (HC)	0.790	0.855	0.546
Social Influence (SocInf)	0.848	0.900	0.700
Switching Intention (SWI)	0.924	0.946	0.814

4.2.1.2 Convergent Validity

In order to guarantee convergent validity, the outer loadings of every item were evaluated using the 0.70 threshold suggested by Hair et al. (2017). The majority of indicators surpassed the threshold which validated robust item reliability. However, factor loadings of HC5 and SocInf1 came in at 0.562 and 0.558 respectively while still remaining above 0.40 but below 0.70. This indicates these variables slightly weakened their association with their respective constructs.

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) served as the indicators to evaluate the variables' influence. Convergent validity was deemed good when the Health Concern (0.546) and Social Influence (0.700) AVE values surpassed the 0.50 level (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Since AVE is calculated using factor loadings, a good AVE means the construct still has enough validity. Additionally, CR scores over 0.80 for both instruments demonstrated the constructions' internal consistency.

Besides that, HC5, "I am concerned about consuming a lot of cholesterol in non-vegetarian food", measures an individual’s health concern regarding cholesterol intake from non-vegetarian foods. Since high cholesterol is linked to cardiovascular diseases, individuals with this concern may be more inclined to reduce or avoid cholesterol-rich foods and instead adopt a vegetarian diet as a healthier alternative. Sun (2021) highlighted vegetarians experience lower cholesterol levels which diminishes their chances of developing cardiovascular disease that stands as a major cause of fatalities. This makes HC5 a crucial indicator of health-related motivations for switching dietary choices.

For SocInf1, "People who are important to me think that I should eat vegetarian food", evaluates perceived social pressure to switch to vegetarian food, reflecting the influence of important individuals in one’s social circle. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), social influence significantly shapes behavioral intentions. This item helps measure the extent to which social norms and expectations impact an individual’s decision to switch to vegetarianism.

Table 4.7

Outer Loadings Value

	HC	P	RSF	SWI	SocInf	SocInf x RSF	SocInf x HC	SocInf x P
HC1	0.715							
HC2	0.748							
HC3	0.799							
HC4	0.840							
HC5	0.562							
P1		0.915						
P2		0.921						
P3		0.932						
P4		0.891						
RSF1			0.868					
RSF2			0.934					
RSF3			0.931					
RSF4			0.854					
SWI1				0.897				
SWI2				0.909				
SWI3				0.899				
SWI4				0.905				
SocInf1					0.558			
SocInf2					0.929			
SocInf3					0.886			
SocInf4					0.916			
SocInf x RSF						1.000		
SocInf x P								1.000
SocInf x HC							1.000	

4.2.1.3 Discriminant Validity

The HTMT values in Table 4.8 were assessed to determine discriminant validity. The HTMT threshold commonly accepted in the literature measures 0.90 (Gold et al., 2001) whereas Henseler et al. (2015) propose a stricter threshold of 0.85. All the obtained HTMT values in this research fall under 0.90 thereby demonstrating that constructs have distinct attributes leading to adequate discriminant validity. Therefore, the measurement model effectively differentiates between the constructs, ensuring that each construct measures a unique concept.

Table 4.8

Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations

	HC	P	RSF	SWI	SocInf	SocInf x RSF	SocInf x HC	SocInf x P
HC								
P	**0.716**							
RSF	**0.624**	**0.849**						
SWI	**0.574**	**0.797**	**0.774**					
SocInf	**0.846**	**0.835**	**0.767**	**0.860**				
SocInf x RSF	**0.027**	**0.136**	**0.234**	**0.023**	**0.044**			
SocInf x HC	**0.406**	**0.075**	**0.045**	**0.022**	**0.174**	**0.449**		
SocInf x P	**0.120**	**0.037**	**0.135**	**0.020**	**0.089**	**0.738**	**0.566**	

4.2.1.4 Conclusion for Measurement Model Assessment

In our study, measurement model assessment shows that all constructs maintain high reliability and validity throughout. The unidimensionality

evidence passes the test since all constructs show Composite Reliability greater than 0.7, ensuring internal consistency. Most factor loadings surpass the 0.70 threshold which establishes convergent validity through strong item contributions to their constructs. Although some loadings are slightly lower, the AVE values remain above 0.50, justifying their retention. The confirmation of discriminant validity occurs through HTMT values which stay under the strict threshold of 0.85 thus demonstrating unique conceptual elements between constructs. This evaluation reinforces the measurement model's reliability and stability, making it suitable for further structural analysis.

4.2.2 Structural Model Assessment

4.2.2.1 Collinearity Issue

Hair et al. (2019) established that values up to 5.0 work effectively but state that the preferred threshold for VIF should be below 3.3 to avoid collinearity problems. All Variance Inflation Factors in Table 4.9 remain below 5.0 thus indicating minimal presence of collinearity in the data.

Certain variables in the study exhibit higher VIF readings because they tend to group with other related variables. The VIF values of P1, P2, and P3 at 3.707, 4.077, 4.360 respectively indicate these variable clusters because they contain overlapping variance within the P construct. The RSF2 and RSF3 variables demonstrate clustering behavior because their calculated VIF values are 4.742 and 4.582 respectively. The values of VIF 3.851 and 3.509 for SocInf2 and SocInf4 indicate that these variables tend to cluster together which suggests they share variance within the SocInf construct. The stability and reliability of the structural model remain intact according to the VIF values which stay below 5.0 during the analysis.

Table 4.9

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

	VIF
HC1	1.762
HC2	1.914
HC3	1.878
HC4	1.694
HC5	1.223
P1	3.707
P2	4.077
P3	4.360
P4	2.804
RSF1	2.730
RSF2	4.742
RSF3	4.582
RSF4	2.483
SWI1	2.972
SWI2	3.289
SWI3	3.062
SWI4	3.156
SocInf1	1.232
SocInf2	3.851
SocInf3	2.531
SocInf4	3.509
SocInf x RSF	1.000
SocInf x P	1.000
SocInf x HC	1.000

4.2.2.2 R^2 Value

The R^2 value shows how much variance in Switching Intention (SWI) the independent model variables collectively explain. According to Hair et al. (2011), the predictors in this study account for 70.4% of the variation in switching intention, with an R^2 value of 0.704 falling within the moderate

to considerable range. This implies that the model's ability to predict the desire to switch to vegetarianism is highly explanatory.

In comparison, similar studies have reported R^2 values ranging from 0.609 to 0.611. The switching intention research on Indonesian halal cosmetics (Widiastuti et al., 2024) and digital banking switch behavior study (Tanuwijaya & Oktavia, 2023) produced almost equivalent R^2 values at 0.611 and 0.609 respectively. An R^2 value of 0.704 in this study demonstrates a higher predictive power than most previous research studies thus establishing robust model performance in vegetarian food switching behaviors.

Table 4.10

R^2 Value

	R-square
SWI	**0.704**

4.2.2.3 Effect Size (F^2)

The evaluation of F^2 values followed the standards proposed by Purwanto and Sudargini (2021) with $F^2 > 0.35$ indicating a significant effect and $F^2 = 0.15 - 0.35$ indicating a moderate effect while $F^2 = 0.02 - 0.15$ indicated a small effect and $F^2 < 0.02$ indicating no effect. In the structural model with the moderator, Social Influence (SocInf) showed a moderate effect of 0.255, while Restaurant Service Failure (RSF) which is 0.023, and Health Concern (HC) which is 0.017 had small effects, and Price (P) with 0.002 had no significant effect. Compared to the model without the moderator, the effect sizes of RSF and P which are 0.067 and 0.066 respectively were higher, while HC which is 0.011 remained insignificant, suggesting that Social Influence influenced these relationships.

When Social Influence was factored into the analysis the influence of Price on switching intention decreased from 0.066 to 0.002. This implies that consumers who were previously affected by Price may now rely more on social factors when making decisions. Additionally, a reduction from 0.067 to 0.023 was observed in RSF's effect size after exposure to Social Influence which indicates Social Influence acts as a buffer to minimize negative service experiences' impact on the outcome. Social Influence demonstrates significant importance for consumer choices because it appears to reduce both service failures and price considerations in consumer decisions.

Table 4.11

F^2 value

Constructs	**Structural model with moderator (Social Influence)**	**Structural model without moderator**
RSF	0.023	0.067
P	0.002	0.066
HC	0.017	0.011
Social Influence	0.255	

4.2.2.4 T-value

Bootstrapping results indicate that Health Concern (t = 2.002, p = 0.023), Price (t = 4.940, p = 0.000), Restaurant Service Failure (t = 4.349, p = 0.000), and Social Influence (t = 8.308, p = 0.000) significantly affect Switching Intention. Additionally, the interaction effects of Social Influence with Restaurant Service Failure (t = 2.636, p = 0.004) and Social Influence with Health Concern (t = 2.283, p = 0.011) are also significant. However, the relationship between Price and Switching Intention receives no substantial

effect from Social Influence because the t value is 0.838 with a p-value of 0.201.

Table 4.12

T-value and P-values

Constructs	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P-values
HC → SWI	2.002	0.023
P → SWI	4.940	0.000
RSF → SWI	4.349	0.000
SocInf → SWI	8.308	0.000
SocInf x RSF → SWI	2.636	0.004
SocInf x P → SWI	0.838	0.201
SocInf x HC → SWI	2.283	0.011

4.2.2.5 PLSpredict

The PLSpredict approach was developed by Shmueli et al. (2016, 2019) as a way to quantify the strength of PLS-SEM out-of-sample predictions outside the constraints of Stone-Geisser's Q^2 criteria. The prediction error estimation within PLSpredict occurs through k-fold cross-validation where 10-fold methods determine the outcomes (Guenther et al., 2023). These results are then compared to basic benchmarking calculations including mean value prediction and linear model (LM) assessment. A positive Q^2_predict value indicates superior predictive power whereas model performance identification depends on comparing RMSE or MAE with the LM benchmark to obtain high, moderate, weak or no predictive capability (Shmueli et al., 2019).

In our study, the Q^2_predict values for SWI1, SWI2, SWI3, and SWI4 are 0.549, 0.577, 0.537, and 0.582, respectively, all of which are positive and exceed the threshold of 0.5. When Q^2_predict is greater than zero, the

model's out-of-sample predictive relevance is demonstrated since it can make accurate predictions outside of its estimated data. Higher Q^2_predict values exceeding 0.5 confirm that the model demonstrates powerful predictive accuracy while maintaining its capability to identify the patterns that drive consumption changes to vegetarian food. Additionally, prediction errors from PLS-SEM continuously demonstrate lower values than those from the LM benchmark which indicates PLS-SEM offers superior ability to forecast vegetarian food switching intention.

Table 4.13

PLS-Predict

	Q^2predict	**PLS-SEM_RMSE**	**PLS-SEM_MAE**	**LM_RMSE**	**LM_MAE**
SWI1	0.549	0.806	0.628	0.821	0.649
SWI2	0.577	0.816	0.654	0.843	0.676
SWI3	0.537	0.831	0.651	0.840	0.657
SWI4	0.582	0.807	0.662	0.822	0.672

4.2.2.6 Moderation Effect

The moderation effect analysis in Figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 demonstrates that Social Influence (SocInf) increases the influence of key switching factors on Switching Intention (SWI). Figure 4.1 shows that higher SocInf increases the positive impact of Restaurant Service Failure (RSF) on SWI, indicating that individuals are more likely to switch due to service failure when social influence is strong. Figure 4.2 demonstrates that the positive influence of Price (P) on SWI becomes stronger as SocInf levels increase which means pricing concerns show more influence on switching behavior when social influence exists. Conversely, Figure 4.3 indicates that SocInf reduces the negative effect of Health Concern (HC) on SWI, implying that strong social influence can mitigate resistance to dietary changes. Overall, these findings

highlight social influence serves as a major driver for individuals to adopt vegetarian diets.

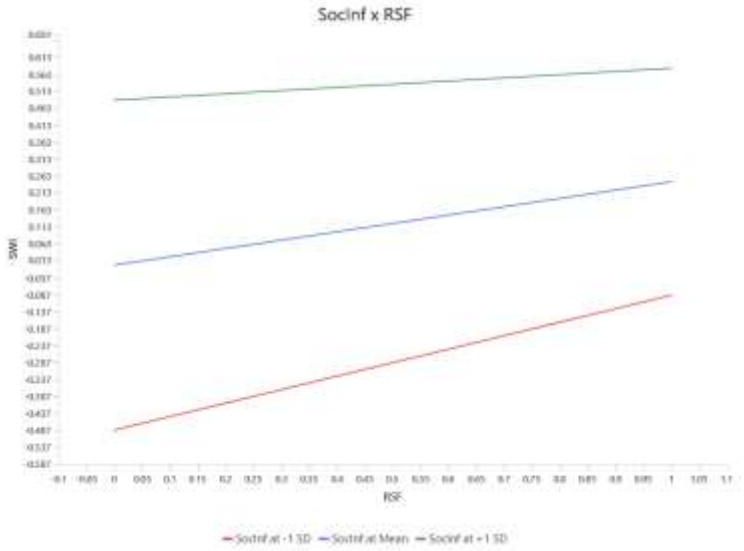

Figure 4.1 SocInf x RSF moderation effect

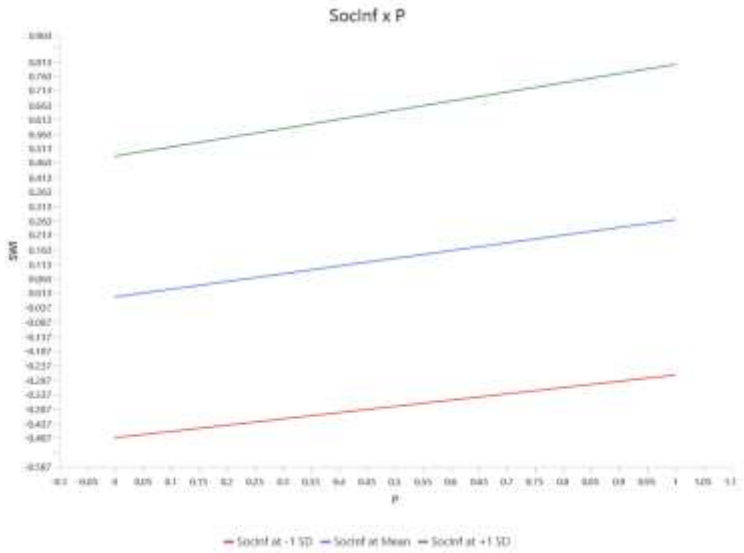

Figure 4.2 SocInf x P moderation effect

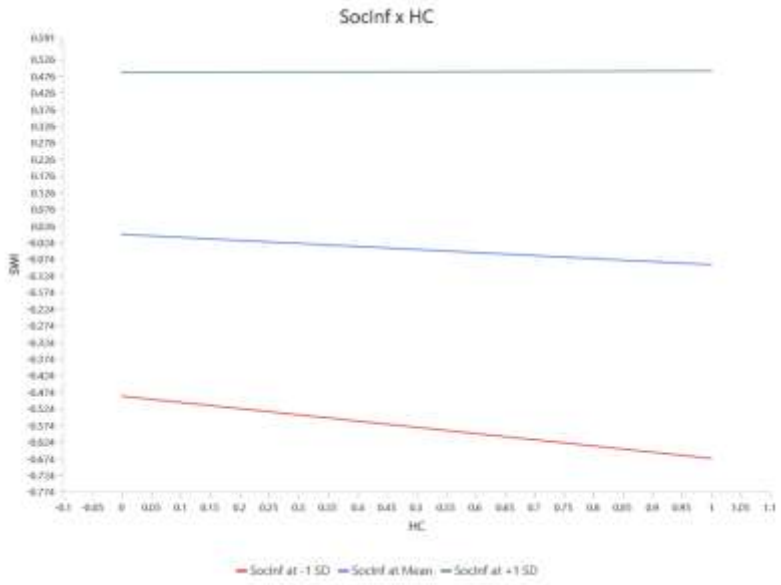

Figure 4.3 SocInf x HC moderation effect

4.3 Conclusion

Hypothesis Testing Results

H1: Restaurant Service Failure (RSF) to Switching Intention (SWI):
Supported by the bootstrapping results, which demonstrate a substantial beneficial impact of RSF on switching intention with a t-value of 4.349 (p = 0.000).

H1a: Social Influence (SocInf) moderates the relationship between RSF and SWI:
Supported. Results from the moderation effect analysis reveal that social influence makes RSF more impactful on SWI (t = 2.636, p = 0.004). This suggests that following a service breakdown, customers are more likely to switch when social influence is higher.

H2: Price (P) to Switching Intention (SWI):
Supported. Given that the t-value reached 4.940 at p = 0.000, the statistical evidence indicates that price has a considerable influence on switching intention.

H2a: Social Influence (SocInf) moderates the relationship between Price and SWI:

Not supported, social influence does not significantly moderate the association between price and switching intention, as seen by the lack of a statistically significant moderation effect between price and social influence ($t = 0.838$, $p = 0.201$).

H3: Health Concern (HC) to Switching Intention (SWI):
Supported, as the bootstrapping results show a significant t-value of 2.002 ($p = 0.023$), indicating that Health Concern significantly affects Switching Intention, though the effect is negative.

H3a: Social Influence (SocInf) moderates the relationship between HC and SWI:
Supported. The moderating effect analysis's findings show that social influence reduces the negative effect of health concern on switching intention because it can help with resistance to dietary changes ($t = 2.283$, $p = 0.011$).

To get the study's results, a variety of data analysis techniques were used. The descriptive analysis provides the features of the demographics that were gathered. Using inferential relationship analysis, the factors influencing Generation Y's decision to choose vegetarianism were also investigated. The final chapter will present complete information about study implications, limitations and findings with recommendations.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The conclusions from this study appear in this chapter followed by proposed development and research recommendations. Additionally, in order to investigate the study's remarkable findings, it evaluates the desire of Generation Y in Klang Valley, Malaysia, to transition to vegetarian diet using a variety of factor drivers. The section highlights the study's limitations and provides practical recommendations to improve the standard of next studies.

5.1 Discussion on Key Findings

The R^2 value of 0.704 as shown in Table 4.10 indicates a substantial explanatory power, meaning 70.4% of the variation in switching intention (SWI) is explained by RSF, P, and HC, with SocInf as a moderator. The path coefficient shows that P (0.267) and RSF (0.246) positively influence SWI, while HC (-0.091) has a weak negative impact. However, SocInf strengthens the effect of HC on SWI (0.096, p = 0.011), making HC more influential when social influence is high. Meanwhile, SocInf weakens the impact of RSF (-0.152, p = 0.004), and its interaction with P is not significant (0.050, p = 0.201). These results demonstrate that RSF and P directly influence customers to switch but SocInf functions both as a relationship moderator and establishes direct dietary choice impacts through enhanced health concerns and reduced importance of negative dining experiences as switching factors.

5.1.1 H1: Restaurant Service Failure and Switching Intention

Our PLS-SEM analysis reveals RSF has a significant positive effect on Switching Intention (SWI) (path coefficient = 0.246, p = 0.000), thus indicating poor service motivates customers to explore vegetarian options. The outer loadings for RSF2 (0.934) and RSF3 (0.931) demonstrates that staff inattention and staff disinterest act as major triggers which validate H1 and illustrate negative service experiences leading to switching intentions.

A study by Kathylitt (2024) confirmed that disengaged customer service practices damage brand reputation and promote customer losses mainly because frontline staff hold limited decision-making authority. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2021) showed that restaurants that delivered inadequate service combined without personalized interactions during COVID-19 created dining satisfaction issues along with enhanced customer intentions to shift their dining preferences. The research discovered that relationship-based trust represented by guanxi acts as a protective mechanism against service failures. Insufficient restaurant trust makes customers transition toward different diets such as vegetarianism.

5.1.2 H1a: Social Influence as a Moderator Between RSF and SWI

With a p-value of 0.004 and a path coefficient of -0.152, Social Influence (SocInf) functions as a powerful mediator between RSF and Switching Intention. In contrast, the negative coefficient indicates that greater social influence reduces rather than increases the effect of restaurant service failure on the propensity to switch.

This result contradicts the hypothesis that the impact of service breakdown on switching intention would be amplified by social influence. Kurtoğlu et al. (2021) and Sukhu & Bilgihan (2021) demonstrate that consumer peer opinion often prompts switching behaviors particularly in negative service

contexts. The current research backs up Cislaghi and Heise (2019) who maintain that robust social connections block adverse experiences from creating service establishment disloyalty. Social connections likely promote both trust and routine eating habits which cause customers to stay loyal even after service disappointments.

Moreover, social influence functions as a modifier which determines how customers understand service breakdowns (Çeliker et al., 2023). In certain cases, peer-based recommendations together with societal trends have the potential to overshadow negative personal experiences thus reducing the probability of customer shift. External social influences affect consumer decisions by strengthening or weakening service failure effects on restaurant switching behavior.

5.1.3 H2: Price and Switching Intention

Price serves as a fundamental driver which shapes customer product selection choices especially when purchasing food. The study results indicate Price (P) establishes itself as a strong influence on SWI (0.267, $p = 0.000$) because consumers base their switching decisions on price affordability and product value perception. The P3 (0.932) and P2 (0.921) items from the outer loading show that price-sensitive consumers steer toward vegetarian options if they view them as reasonably priced.

Research by Hargreaves et al. (2021) has revealed that consumers conduct analyses about vegetarian diet affordability in relation to non-vegetarian options since plant-based choices deliver better value for money in multiple regions. Those planning dietary modifications recognize affordability as a principal consideration according to the authors studying this aspect. Similarly, Miguel et al. (2023) established price sensitivity as a factor that determines consumer engagement in plant-based products but especially among future vegetarian adopters. Plant-based foods which show good

value for money persuade consumers to start eating vegetarian and continue with this diet. Financial factors stand with health and ethical aspects as essential drivers of customers who intend to switch to vegetarian food.

5.1.4 H2a: Social Influence as a Moderator Between P and SWI

As shown in the result, Social Influence (SWI) does not significantly moderate the relationship between Price and Switching Intention (path coefficient = 0.050, p = 0.201). This indicates that consumers' price-based switching decisions are not strongly influenced by social pressure or peer recommendations.

This finding contrasts with previous studies, such as Verma and Kapoor (2025), which suggested that social influence increased food price sensitivity but this study produced different results. However, Bhukya and Paul (2023) found that price continues to be a private concern for consumers despite social influences being limited. This is because price-related decisions are often shaped by consumer perceived price, where individuals rely on their own cost-benefit evaluations that are less affected by peer pressure or social trends. Malika et al. (2021) further argued that price-driven switching principally depends on individual financial factors rather than social norms since customers prioritize cost-efficiency and their budgets above following community behaviors or recommendations (Zhou et al., 2022).

5.1.5 H3: Health Concern and Switching Intention

The rising health concerns among people drive them to shift their diets toward healthier alternatives. The PLS-SEM analysis demonstrates Health Concerns (HC) exhibit a weak negative statistical relation to Switching

Intention (-0.091, p = 0.023) although this might not prompt consumers to adopt vegetarian diets effectively. An evaluation of Health Concerns (HC1 to HC4) showed outer loadings between 0.843 to 0.902 with HC3 at 0.902 and HC2 at 0.896 exhibiting the highest importance in motivating consumers through health benefits and disease prevention.

The negative influence of Health Concerns (HC) on Switching Intention (SWI) remains weak at -0.091 because consumers hold doubts regarding the health qualities of vegetarian food. The connection between mock meats and unhealthy nutritional profiles has prevented people from changing their diets because they doubt the benefits of such replacements (Radcliffe, 2024). A path coefficient lesser than 0.1 is usually viewed as statistically negligible in PLS-SEM analysis because it leads to minimal practical effect (J. Hair & Alamer, 2022).

5.1.6 H3a: Social Influence as a Moderator Between HC and SWI

Social Influence (SWI) acts as a significant moderator between Health Concerns and Switching Intention because PLS-SEM results show a path coefficient of 0.096 with a p-value of 0.011. Consumers with health concerns become more active in their behavioral responses after receiving input from societal trends or peer social influence.

Thompson et al. (2025) established that social networks create fundamental effects on dietary changes which pursue health goals. Similarly, Nezlek and Forestell (2020) discovered that people become more disposed towards vegetarian diets when social influence validates their health concerns. However, the study conducted by Pilli et al. (2024) demonstrated that social influence builds health consciousness but individuals base their behavior changes on personal drive.

5.2 Research implications

5.2.1 Theoretical Implication

This study enhances knowledge about consumer behavior changes by applying Keaveney's (1995) model within the context of service industries and its significant elements such as price and service inadequacies alongside ethical concerns. In this study, we build upon the original model to evaluate dietary choice transitions toward vegetarianism by analyzing pricing, restaurant service failures (which include core service failures, service encounter failures, and response to service failures), and health concerns as key factors that drive intention to switch to vegetarian food. These findings reveal that Generation Y switching intentions derive significant impact from the studied factors since their R^2 value reaches 0.704. Moreover, social influence with its components of peer opinions and societal trends functions as a moderating element of these determinants' strength. Keaveney's model receives expansion which demonstrates how social environment exerts decisive influence on purchasing decisions during major life transitions such as becoming vegetarian. This study supports Social Norms Theory as social pressures originating from communities and friendships exert influence on personal behavior choices. This study also implements social influence analysis to effectively understand how group effects influence dietary choices thus creating research groundwork for future food preference behavior investigations (Cislaghi & Heise, 2019).

5.2.2 Managerial Implications

Health Concern

The study findings indicate that Generation Y strongly bases their vegetarian dietary choices on health considerations because many respondents understand plant-based foods protect them from heart disease and diabetes. The advantages of vegetarian diets for health should form the

basis of marketing strategies for these businesses. Marketing partnerships between businesses and healthcare professionals and dietitians along with fitness experts deliver credibility to enhance consumer trust. People tend to test vegetarian food when such products receive support from healthcare experts they trust. To further attract health-conscious consumers, vegetarian restaurants could offer personalized meal plans tailored to different dietary needs, such as high-protein vegetarian meals for fitness enthusiasts or low-carb plant-based options for individuals managing weight or blood sugar levels.

Price

The research demonstrated that cost represents a fundamental obstacle that stops Generation Y customers from adopting vegetarian eating habits because they believe plant-based food typically costs more than their non-vegetarian alternatives. Consumer price awareness presents a barrier for dietary change because people will only adopt vegetarian diets if suitable price alternatives become available. The solution to this challenge presents itself through competitive pricing strategies which vegetarian food businesses need to adopt. For example, the introduction of combined meal packages together with price reductions for students and a customer loyalty system lets vegetarian food become more reasonably priced. Brands like Salad Atelier has built a budget-friendly Malaysian customer base through their affordable set meal promotions and discounted offers. Besides that, maximum affordability is achieved when businesses build relationships with suppliers to get lowered costs on ingredients that enable quality retention and price competitiveness. The use of local ingredients in production fosters expense reduction which enables businesses to offer more affordable vegetarian food to the wider public. Implementing these strategies can encourage more consumers to switch to vegetarian food and sustain their purchasing behavior.

Restaurant Service Failure of Non-Vegetarian Restaurants

Service quality at non-vegetarian restaurants was identified as a critical factor influencing Generation Y's switching intention to vegetarian

establishments. The study found that respondents encountered service-related issues at non-vegetarian restaurants, such as delays, order inaccuracies, and staff unfamiliarity with vegetarian preferences. This dissatisfaction with service quality at non-vegetarian restaurants increases the likelihood of consumers switch to alternative dining options like vegetarian restaurants. Vegetarian restaurants can capitalize on this by ensuring superior customer service. Training staff members properly will ensure successful accommodation of dietary requirement needs while they also deliver expert advice regarding vegetarian food options. Singaporean restaurant VeganBurg maintains an outstanding service reputation through its customer-focused operations throughout Malaysia and Singapore. Respective restaurants need to build order management systems which both shorten customer wait times and reduce mistakes during service. Additionally, restaurants should implement efficient order management systems to minimize wait times and errors. For instance, leveraging digital ordering platforms and self-service kiosks can enhance operational efficiency and improve customer satisfaction. The combination of individualized dining services including adjustable menu choices and prompt staff assistance helps maintain customer devotion while establishing plant-based restaurants as consumers' top choice instead of meat-based facilities.

Vegetarian food businesses who implement these strategies will effectively solve health problems and affordability challenges and service quality issues thus leading Generation Y consumers in Malaysia to adopt plant-based diets.

5.3 Limitations of Study & Recommendations for Future Research

Although this study provides insightful information about the variables influencing Generation Y’s intention to switch to vegetarian food in Malaysia’s Klang Valley, it has some significant limitations.

The main drawback of our research emerges from the homogenous character of our participant group. Although we aimed to include respondents from different religious backgrounds, a large portion of our participants were Chinese. The research results might not accurately represent the beliefs of various ethnic groups throughout Malaysia. Future research would need a wider diversity of participants to yield deeper insights into the subject.

The age distribution within Generation Y is another drawback in this study. Even though we categorized respondents into three different age groups, most of our participants were on the younger end of the spectrum. Since older individuals in Generation Y may have different experiences or motivations when it comes to switching to vegetarian food, their perspectives might not be fully captured in our study.

To improve future research, it would be helpful to include a more diverse range of participants, especially from different ethnic backgrounds and age groups. Such a sample would provide broader understanding of what drives consumers to change eating behaviors. The study requires further research to monitor changes in switching behavior throughout different time periods and determine which elements motivate or obstruct vegetarian diets.

5.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study found that Generation Y in Klang Valley, Malaysia, is strongly influenced by restaurant service failures, price, and health concerns when deciding to switch to vegetarian food. Additionally, the decisions of consumers about vegetarian food choices depend significantly on social influence which can both amplify or minimize other elements influencing this choice. The research results give important understandings about how customers behave which explains opportunities for attracting new vegetarian food consumers. Businesses and policymakers can construct improved plans for healthy eating promotion among

Klang Valley young adults by comprehending their factors for plant-based diet conversion.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1.0: Research Instrument

Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman

Switching Intention to Vegetarian Foodamong Generation Y in Malaysia

Instructions:
There are FOUR (4) sections in this questionnaire. Please answer ALL questions in ALL sections.
Completion of this form will take you less than 15 minutes.
The contents of this questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. There is no foreseeable risk of harm or discomfort in answering this questionnaire. This is an anonymous questionnaire; as such, it is not able to trace response back to any individual participant. All information collected is treated as strictlyconfidential and will be used for the purpose of this study only.

I have been informed about the purpose of the study and I give my consent to participate in thissurvey.
YES ( ) NO ( )

Note: *If yes, you may proceed to next page or if no, you may return the questionnaire to researchers and thanks for your time and cooperation.*

Section A- Demographic Question and Screening Questions

This section serves to collect essential background information from survey respondents,which is vital for data analysis purposes.

Screening Questions

1. Are you born after Year 1981 and before Year 1997?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Do you live in Klang Valley?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Have you consumed vegetarian food in the past one month?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Are you a Vegan/ Vegetarian for life?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

Demographic Question

5. What is your gender?

   ☐ Male ☐ Female

6. Born in Year:

   ☐ 1981-1985 ☐ 1986-1990 ☐ 1991-1997

7. Ethnicity

   ☐ Chinese ☐ Malay ☐ Indian

8. Highest Educational Level:

   ☐ Secondary

   ☐ Foundation/Diploma

   ☐ Undergraduate

   ☐ Postgraduate

   ☐ Others: ___

9. Monthly Income:

☐ Below RM2,000

☐ RM2,000-RM3,499

☐ RM3,500-RM4,999

☐ RM5,000-RM6,999

☐ RM7,000-RM8,999

☐ Above RM9,000

Section B - Factors that affect the intention to switch to vegetarian food among Generation Y in Klang Valley Malaysia:

No	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
B1	Restaurant Service Failure of Non-Vegetarian Food					
RSF1	The Non-Vegetarian Restaurant was very slow in responding to my complaint.	1	2	3	4	5
RSF2	The Non-Vegetarian Restaurant's staff seemednot very interested in helping me.	1	2	3	4	5
RSF3	The Non-Vegetarian Restaurant's staff were notattentive in providing good service.	1	2	3	4	5
RSF4	Non-Vegetarian Restaurants respond is not efficient in responding to my complaint.	1	2	3	4	5
B2	Price of Non-vegetarian Food					
P1	The price of non-vegetarian food is not reasonable.	1	2	3	4	5
P2	The price of non-vegetarian food is not fair.	1	2	3	4	5
P3	The price of non-vegetarian food is notacceptable.	1	2	3	4	5
P4	The price of vegetarian food is more affordablecompared to non-vegetarian food options.	1	2	3	4	5
B3	Health Concern					

HC1	I reflect on how my diet, including vegetarianfood, impacts my health.	1	2	3	4	5
HC2	I take responsibility for the state of my health, including the decision to incorporate vegetarianfood into my diet.	1	2	3	4	5
HC3	Concern about my personal health makes mewant to eat vegetarian food.	1	2	3	4	5
HC4	Threat of food-related disease makes me choosevegetarian food.	1	2	3	4	5
HC5	I am concerned about consuming a lot of cholesterol in non-vegetarian food.	1	2	3	4	5

Section C – The role of social influence moderate affects the intention to switch tovegetarian food among Generation Y in Klang Valley Malaysia:

No	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
C1	Social Influence					
SocInf1	People who are important to me think that I should eat vegetarian food.	1	2	3	4	5
SocInf2	People who influence my behaviour encourageme to eat vegetarian food.	1	2	3	4	5
SocInf3	My friends encouraged me to eat vegetarianfood.	1	2	3	4	5
SocInf4	My family member thinks it is a good idea for me to eat vegetarian food.	1	2	3	4	5

Section D - The intention to switch to vegetarian food among Generation Y in KlangValley Malaysia:

No	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
D1	Switching Intention					
SWI1	I will consider switching from non-vegetarian food to vegetarian food soon.	1	2	3	4	5
SWI2	Probability of me switching to vegetarian foodis high.	1	2	3	4	5
SWI3	If I were able to, I would switch from non-vegetarian food to vegetarian food.	1	2	3	4	5
SWI4	I plan to switch from non-vegetarian food tovegetarian food.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 2.0: Raw Data (384 sets)

RSF1	RSF2	RSF3	RSF4	P1	P2	P3	P4
1	1	1	2	2	1	1	3
3	1	1	3	3	3	3	3
3	3	2	2	2	5	4	3
2	2	2	3	2	3	2	2
1	1	1	3	2	1	2	2
3	3	2	2	4	4	4	3
1	1	1	4	1	4	5	5
1	1	1	3	1	2	1	3
3	2	3	3	3	4	4	3
1	1	1	3	3	3	3	3
3	4	3	2	5	5	5	5
3	1	1	3	3	1	1	2
5	4	4	5	5	5	5	5
2	2	1	1	2	2	1	2
1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1
3	3	4	4	3	4	3	4
2	1	2	2	1	1	1	1
1	2	3	3	4	4	4	4
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Appendix 3.0 Reliability Test (Pilot Test)

Restaurant Service Failure of Non-Vegetarian Food

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
RSF1	10.26	7.659	.828	.846
RSF2	10.11	7.178	.784	.856
RSF3	10.18	7.830	.672	.896
RSF4	10.11	6.637	.799	.852

Prices of Non-Vegetarian Food

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
P1	10.58	7.548	.701	.792
P2	10.45	7.876	.690	.798
P3	10.58	8.088	.614	.830
P4	10.63	7.374	.715	.786

Health Concern

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
HC1	16.34	5.961	.445	.715
HC2	16.47	5.067	.626	.646
HC3	16.21	5.576	.474	.705
HC4	16.45	5.443	.562	.674
HC5	16.42	5.169	.437	.729

Social Influence

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SocInf1	11.37	5.752	.675	.733
SocInf2	11.18	5.722	.681	.730
SocInf3	11.53	5.661	.655	.744
SocInf4	11.08	7.318	.500	.813

Switching Intention to Vegetarian Food

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SWI1	11.50	7.122	.767	.855
SWI2	11.47	7.121	.746	.863
SWI3	11.37	6.888	.817	.836
SWI4	11.53	7.229	.704	.879

Overall Cronbach's Alpha

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.939	21

Appendix 4.0 Turnitin Report

Switching Intention to Vegetarian Food

ORIGINALITY REPORT

15%	12%	8%	6%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

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7	Jianming Wang, Tan Vo-Thanh, Yi-Hung Liu, Thac Dang-Van, Ninh Nguyen. "Information confusion as a driver ofconsumer switching intention onsocial commerce platforms: amulti-method quantitative approach", Information Technology & People, 2023 Publication	<1%
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