

Building Your Brand Through Social Media: How Communication and Money Work Wonderfully

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ABSTRACT

Building brands at social media are challenging as consumers are easily swayed away to through a click; therefore, marketers need to gravitate the 3.196 billion of social media users based on Statista reports that the total spending might thrive at USD 4.5 trillion. Facebook's community is a force to recognize whether the brand is unable to catch the world's attention, which means that the brand is about to lose the business opportunities that may be worth billions. Previous research is about social media's influence on purchase decision in the automobile industry with German-speaking respondents and it had created a research gap for Malaysian respondents towards a Malaysian textile brand on the consumers' perception, brand building challenges and remedies for digital brand building. The exploration will be qualitative with interviews, transcribe using thematic analysis whereas the findings are crucial to the trade policies drafting and brand owners in transforming to the thrive stage.

Keywords: Social media, Facebook, communication, branding, Malaysia

1. INTRODUCTION

The 3.484 billion of social media users in 2018 were in digital market where it has led to a new gateway of influencing power for consumers in perceiving a brand, buying's decision and interaction among individuals; in short, it's about people to discover new connections in just seconds. It is undeniable that social media today is the key to unlock the interest of future consumers as it supports interaction through numerous mediums regardless geographically whereby the golden rush for all companies in making their mark on the digital world and significantly altering the marketing strategies (Katja Hutter *et. al.*, 2013). As in the Malaysia's context; Facebook is one of the frequently visited social website in Malaysia with monthly traffic of 163,300,000 visits. It is hard to ignore that social media had become one of the influential powers in brand building besides the main stream media like TV, radio and newspaper. Another triggering fact is referring to ASEAN UP Report, Top 10 eCommerce sites in Malaysia May, 2019 mentioning that online e-commerce is destined to growth with consumers look beyond pricing. In another word, when consumers like a post, commenting and sharing a product picture, the conversion to sales and becoming a loyal customer will happen. Therefore, brand building at social media is the gateway to business that worth billions as well as trend-setting.



Figure 1 Active social media users around the world's statistic

Source: <https://wearesocial.com/blog/2019>

Problem Statement

To a business, investments are about dollars and cents, and return of investments in social media will be the topic of interest for the company where this raises the question of: The decision in investing brand building, the challenges and how consumers perceived towards the brand at the social media. Previous research has been done in measuring the effect of social media advertising on consumers; Katja Hutter *et. al.*, (2013) in automobile industry, customer's recognition on the brand (Lee & Tan, 2003), perceived risks over the internet (Barnes *et. al.*, 2007), however none of those researches is touching the brand among textile industry in Malaysia.

Getting consumers to interact with the brand is quite unique as it needs both sides in having the "good" chemistry, but however things might not happen as expected whereas according to Lewis (1899), an advertisement is successful when it can generate interest, convince and trust-generating. As such, it has raised the question of; how does it take in

brand building in social media? The challenges are in content creation and how consumers perceive the brand in digital world.

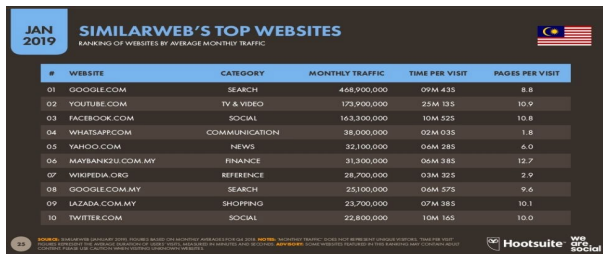


Figure 2 The monthly traffic of various social media platforms
Source: Hootsuite (2019)

Research Objective

Business today is no longer depending on bricks and mortars as it is facing closure as well; for example Forever 21 has filed for bankruptcy where it will soon halt the operations in 40 countries and close down to 350 stores globally (Business Insider, 2019). In reality, companies need to create high octane in brand building in digital world as it is a platform for consumers and non-consumers to share their common interest and awareness. Jahn & Kunz (2012), expressed that, individuals tend to make friends with each other and communicate on the brand and products. Nevertheless, brands tend to neglect this opportunity and it turns out where the brand is forgotten or has negative perception; Wetzler et al., (2007) relates that annoyed consumers tend to take vengeance by constructing negative online reviews while unhappy consumers will dramatize the negative reviews in seeking happiness while negative online reviews will weaken the brand's value (Ho-Dac et al., 2013) and it will also impact negatively their excitement to purchase (Fagerstrom and Ghinea, 2011). Therefore, this research objective is to explore the challenges in brand building and consumers' perception towards a brand among textile manufacturing industry in Malaysia.

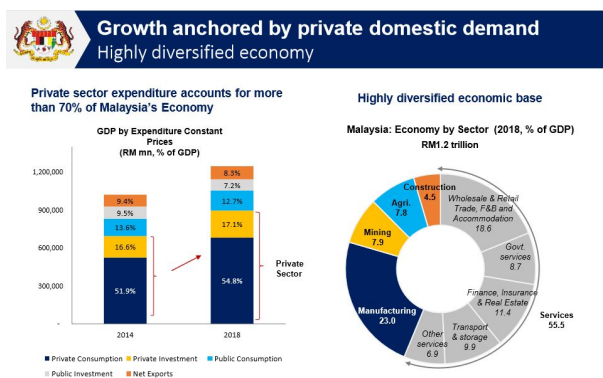


Figure 3 Malaysia's highly diversified economic base in 2018
Source: Ministry of International Trade and Industry

Research Questions

In achieving the objectives, there are few questions needed to be explored:

- i. What are the challenges in influencing textile brand building on Facebook?
- ii. How do consumers perceive about textile brand on Facebook?
- iii. What are the available solutions for improvement of social media marketing?

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

Brand building is happening everyday with the transactions that worth millions of dollars, where it can be done by using internet as Zhang et al., (2017) mentioned that digital world and internet technology is a norm for almost all businesses whereas social media is so crucial that it is able to influence almost every decision made and with the increase of usage of smartphones making social media more important (Yang, 2012). The aim of this study is for; Malaysian Economic Ministry policy makers in understanding the relationship between a brand and consumers through the dimension of social media, industry practitioners in strategizing the challenges in building a brand equity through social media where allowing marketeers to strategize the digital marketing blueprint and scholarly research of factors influencing purchase decision on the solutions to gravitate consumers' interest toward a brand in digital world. The qualitative study will be able to unearthing consumers' perception towards the textile brand through one-to-one interview through the semi structured questions and the results will be processed through thematic analysis. The study is crucial to the country in developing the business support chain in the digital world as to expose the brand globally, and in return, bringing growth to stakeholders and the currency.

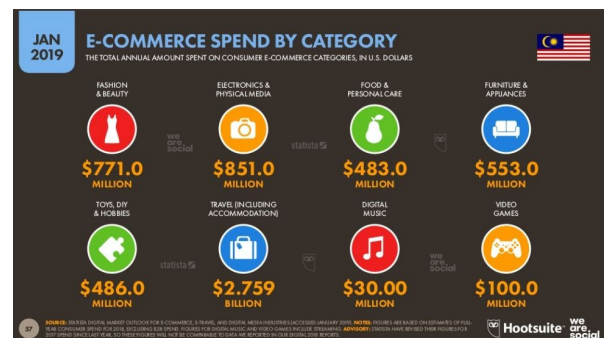


Figure 4 E-Commerce spending by category by Malaysians
Source: Hootsuite (2019)

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The method of this research will be qualitative as it is to explore consumers' perception and a clear understanding on brand building in social media through interviews either by face-to-face or via Skype, observations and journal review,

business magazines and the brand’s website. As the exploration is an inductive approach basically, it is not having any boundaries of consumers’ inputs (consumers’ perception on brand), suggestions (solutions to improve) and most important is a close bonding between interviewer and the interviewee as to explore even further as interviews are the important part of the case study’s proof (Yin, 2003 and Remenyi *et. al.*, (2003). For this study, the unstructured interview will be adopted in encouraging consumers to express whatever they have in mind as Yin (2003) named unstructured interview as open-ended key informant interview as well.

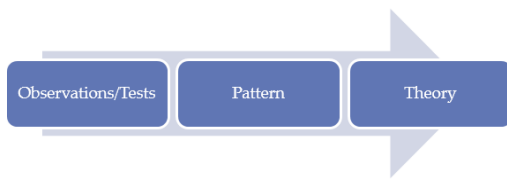


Figure 5 Inductive Research diagram

Referring to the inductive approach, the exploration on brand building will involving interviews from individuals with the boundaries of:

Time and place (Creswell, 2003)	For the case study, it is focusing on consumers with Facebook accounts from Malaysia and textile brand’s stakeholders.
Time and activity (Stake, 1995)	During interaction with textile brand on Facebook.
Definition and context (Miles & Huberman, 1994)	Textile brand’s communication and the context of consumers’ excitement to purchase.

Figure 6 The boundaries of respondents

The exploratory interviews are crucial in exploring new ideas, feelings, recording non-bias perception from the respondents in this study; consumers express their perception on textile brand while the brand executives on their findings get the impact from social media. The content will be analyzed by using word-based analysis in finding the key points which are having the relationships based from their opinions (Krippendorff, 2004).

For the exploration, interviews will be performed in collecting data from open-ended questionnaires in which respondents are free to give their opinions. In this approach, the study will be using word-based analysis as to identify the repetition of data and according to Silverman (2007), examining the frequency of words is a method in textual investigation and categorize the frequency of words into categories.

For data analysis strategies, the research will be adapting from Creswell (1998)’s general data analysis strategies:

Display of Data:	Interpreting and forming patterns upon data collection from respondents.
Identify Codes:	Developing of codes and textile brand & product’s images sorting into categories.
Information Reducing:	Material sorting into categories.
Frequency Counting:	Frequency of codes.

Figure 07 General Data Analysis Strategies (Creswell, 1998)

4. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

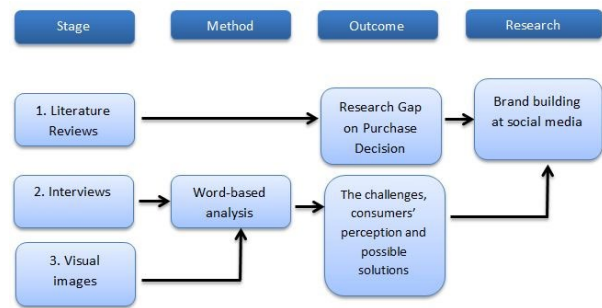


Figure 8 the Research Framework

For the stage mode, the researcher will focus on literature reviews in finding the research gaps; Katja Hutter *et. al.*, (2013) discussed on purchase intention in automobile where the research gap was on factors influencing purchase decision and deepen the study in social media, while Shahizan *et. al.*, (2014) focused on strategic use of social media for small business based on AIDA model where the research gap was on enhancing social media’s research in different environment setting. Upon finding the gap, the researcher will finalize on research instruments for the case study of consumers’ excitement to purchase that is indicated by Creswell (1998) mentioning that qualitative research is an exploration to society or individual’s matters. Hence, the researcher will build the whole picture and study it through respondents in their natural environment. Therefore, the interview questions will be crafted for those respondents in getting the information and opinions in tackling the research questions where the questions will be developed through reference to the guidelines for consumers & brand’s stakeholders:

Consumers’ interview:

- i. Section 1: Consumers’ background & purchase history
- ii. Section 2: The textile brand’s content
- iii. Section 3: The available solutions for textile brand’s social media enhancement

Brand’s stakeholders’ interview:

- i. Section 1: The challenges in brand building for textile brand
- ii. Section 2: The textile brand’s content on Facebook
- iii. Section 3: Ideas for enhancement

Finally, the researcher will need to decide who shall be the candidate for interview as only 17 of respondents are needed and according to Myers (2009) & Rowley (2002), the candidates shall be having the interest and passion to the study. As conclusion, qualitative research is about sharing the story whereas researchers’ experiences are crucial and able to have a general understanding of the business or phenomenon as supported by Yin (2009) stating that drafting the case study is to write a connecting story with supportive facts.

5. CONCLUSION

With the advancement of social media, having active interaction are becoming more important yet technical as the brand needs to attract and get the consumers' fingers talking. The case study of Malaysian textile brand through the qualitative research is unique as it is the first exploration study towards a soft garment brand in this country. However, we must take note that findings come from soft garment industry and it might not be proper in representing all businesses in Malaysia. In order to have a more holistic approach, future researches could be conducted on different brands in social media's platforms, such as transport (AirAsia), automobile (Proton), education (USM), F & B (Chicken Rice Shop) as well as other sectors.

Bigger brands had already make themselves well known in social media, such as Nike for sports, Rolex for watches, Gucci for fashion, Starbucks for coffee, Apple for technology and many more with the objective of capturing the market and gaining trust as well as reputation as it has significant relation with consumers to accept online purchases (McDonald & Slawson, 2000). Hence, the Malaysian textile brand needs to build a good reputation with stronger brand building with the aim in turning lookers into consumers in social media and digital world.

This case study is able to open the possibility of future studies as the study is only focusing on soft garments, which it is unable to reflect other industries in Malaysia. For future studies, researchers can have option for more respondents, expansion to consumers who originate from ASEAN countries and reveal the factors creating annoyance in social media through qualitative research method as well.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Associate Professor Dr. Salmi Mohd Isa;
Associate Professor Dr. Elisha Nasruddin;
Ms. Koay Sui Sen (Susan), The COO of Eastern Decorator Sdn. Bhd;
The Management of Eastern Decorator Sdn. Bhd.;
AKEMI's stakeholders;
Ms. Wong Cheah Ling;
My Parents.

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