

Characteristics of an effective social media toward the improve sales of frozen food for micro business

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ABSTRACT – Social media technology is regard as a very important tool to conduct a business nowadays. In Malaysia, the government emphasizes digital business as a catalyst that encourages entrepreneurs to expand globally. Many entrepreneurs agree that social media plays an important role in marketing their products to the new customers. The internet enables SME to promote their products and carry out business activities outside the city area. Hence, this research looks at how effective the Facebook as a user-friendly social media tool is utilize to help the micro business succeed in their business. The research explores the relationship between the social media characteristic on the improve sales of frozen food for micro business. From the perspective of business organizations, connectivity and community of the social media enable business activities to carry out effectively by enhancing the information, promotion, delivery and feedback process to perform better.

1. INTRODUCTION

A strategic marketing is vital for enterprises to ensure that business can become profitable and successful. In today's business environment, social media plays a significant part in the entrepreneurs' business development. With the internet access, the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission reported that in 2015, Malaysia has recorded more than 18 million active social media users with 77.3 percent comprising of households. The number suggests very encouraging social media users among small and medium enterprises (SME) [1]. Since SME play an important role as the backbone of the Malaysian economic, accordingly, frozen food (ready-to-eat, ready-to-cook, and ready-to-drink) has flourished as an eminent sector in the food industry and thus needs the right social media in enhancing marketing efforts of the micro entrepreneurs' products.

In this research, the researcher chooses Facebook as a social media-marketing tool. Based on a study [2], there are three common characteristics that underline the independent variables of the social media namely connectivity, community and content. The social media has changed in the way people live and interact between one another around the world [3]. In this sense, the social media users' worldwide has grown tremendously by 30 percent in 2010. The network should allow micro entrepreneurs to communicate with their customers as

and when needed [6].

Facebook application supports micro business to create connectivity with one another [5]. It increases brand awareness that serves as a strategic relationship between sellers and customers. The creation of two-way-communication has been realistic. There is quick response because Facebook users react almost immediately by storing and sharing information and opinions. On the other hand, Facebook is a powerful tool to form communities [2]. Customers give feedbacks and communicate about a product or a service concerns. The Facebook fan pages also allow community to own their social site. Thus, there is no doubt the social media offer a friendly avenue for transferring information and common understanding from one to another. Facebook consumers' interaction on relevance and interesting content is useful for retention by manufacturers [4]. Anyone can write interesting posts to attract relevant parties to follow-up whatever they expect to know [7]. These sharing of information encourage business to improve on their products content. Moreover, Facebook advertising also permits sharing of information about a product in a non-personal way usually as paid media content.

Apart from that, sales improvement as a single research dependent variable focuses on target market, generate leads, drive sales and align people [9]. Integrated sales mean frozen food business can increase their revenue. An improve sales of frozen food are in term of profitability, increase purchase orders, high followers, customer's loyalty, higher demand and job opportunities [8].

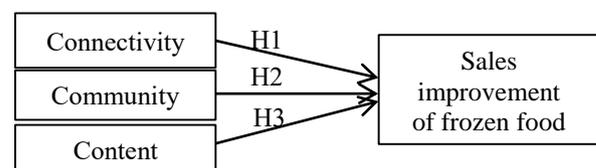


Figure 1 Research framework

Figure 1 above shows the relationship between the research variables and summarizes the research framework of the study as discussed above.

2. METHODOLOGY

The researcher used questionnaire as the survey instrument of the study. Data collection took nearly 4

months to complete. As a cross-sectional research, it involved the study of a particular phenomenon at a particular time. A simple random sampling technique as for sampling purpose provides opportunity for researchers to improve the questionnaires. Based on 384 samples as suggested by Krejcie and Morgan [10], questionnaires were email to micro entrepreneurs in which, 100 of them (22% male and 78% female) was returned for analysis. Reliability test was conducted, while, Pearson's correlation was established prior to running multiple linear regression tests to answer the research hypothesis. For this case, all data has been analysed using SPSS version 23 software.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The overall Cronbach's alpha of 0.896 indicated a high reliability of the internal data consistency. Results of correlation analysis showed all significant Pearson (r) values at 2-tails, where each independent variable has strong relationships with the sales improvement. All hypothesis testing results are shown in Table 1. Furthermore, regression analysis result indicated R square value of 0.606, indicating a high value of 60.6% variation in the independent variables has contributed positively toward the dependent variable.

Table 1 Research hypothesis results

Variables	Hypothesis	Reliability	Correlation
Connectivity	Accepted	0.861	0.741
Community	Accepted	0.807	0.726
Content	Not Accepted	0.724	0.596

Hypothesis 1 (H1): There is positive relationship between connectivity and sales improvement of frozen food. Connectivity has a significant relationship on improve sales of frozen food with $p=0.000$. Hence, hypothesis H1 is accepted.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): There is positive relationship between community and sales improvement of frozen food. Community has a significant relationship on improve sales of frozen food with $p=0.020$. Hence, hypothesis H2 is accepted.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): There is negative relationship between content and the sales improvement of frozen food. Content has no significant relationship on improve sales of frozen food. The value of $p=0.87$ or $p>0.05$. Hence, hypothesis H3 is rejected.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the research exhibits a significant relationship between the characteristic of effective social media on the improve sales of frozen food business. In short, the regression results measured well the strength of the independent and dependent variables relationship. Connectivity and community characteristic are the only significant variables found to improve sales of frozen food. Content variable in Facebook needs

further updates of its quality and the users really must be willing to upgrade their skills on creating attractive promotional and advertising posts. From the analysis conducted, it also proves significant correlation among each characteristic of the social media. Hence, for a better result, it is proposed that similar research be done at other geographical areas prior to synthesising the overall outcomes of such study in Malaysia.

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