

Analysing the Effectiveness of T-shirt Business Start-up Branding Through Online Platform at Malaysian T-shirt Business Community

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Abstract—Building a brand is a core business activity, just as important as leasing office space, recruiting the right people or developing your product or service. To provide all this involves a lot of money. Anyone who sells and owns the brand knows this is not easy. New business owners typically do not have much money to invest in the business. Therefore, this study aims to investigate how to be a product owner in the apparel industry with start-up business t-shirt branding through online platforms with low cost and risk to the customers' acceptance in the business community. From this study, it can be concluded that there has a strong relationship between online platforms that influences the Effectiveness of start-up T-shirt business branding.

Keywords—online marketing; branding start-up; the business community

I. INTRODUCTION

TODAY a social media phenomenon called "online branding" has sprung up around and become a prevalent aspect of the e-commerce scene in some parts of Southeast Asia, including Malaysia. Online branding creates and develops communications strategies for brands to have meaning and context from the virtual view [1, 25]. Online branding is a way to get more exposure for your brand on all levels of online platforms, especially search and social. Building authority for online branding to the next level by making each online presence for a brand authoritative.

It goes beyond just creating a blog or social media account. Most Malaysian entrepreneurs engage in online business because they want to make their side income; apart from that, it is also from their spirit in business. Also, technology has changed rapidly [2, 11]. Several types of businesses can be traded online, like affiliates, drop ships, sell services, digital or physical products. However, the online business trend today is to own the product. The new branding in fashion has grown very fast online. In light of this, it comes as a surprise that statistics show that clothing is one of the most common product categories purchased online [3, 20]. The business can also be improved effectively through website ads [4, 10].

The term "online boutiques" has become a familiar term among customers daily. It refers to simple online retail shops created from freely available blogging software. The arrival of Facebook as a popular social networking destination has also assisted entrepreneurs in branding their products online. This research in [2, 11] proves that even when your customers plan on visiting your store personally, they are bound to see your company website first.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The cost of living in Malaysia is a significant concern for the population and seems to arise every year. Citizens take various measures to overcome the problems to accommodate their daily lives, including starting a business online. One of the famous niches offered online is the apparel and fashion niche. The clothing and fashion sector show a big increase in profits with a year-on-year statistics

showing a rise of 24% when compared to May 2010, [5, 13]. Most of the apparel seller must have intention to build their own branding product. But it is not easy to be realized due to some problems as per below:

Capital - New businesses typically don't have a lot of cash to spend on branding whereas it should be very costly to positioning, logo, design, website design, inventory and so on.

Time - When we talk about timing, the answer lies in the importance, need and positioning of the product to solve a very real problem. The well-known brands took many years to build and make money.

Risk - Each business will have a significant risk. The difference is whether it is small or large risk. One risk is not saleable product.

Due to this statement, the general objective of this study is as per below: -

- To identify whether T-shirt business start-up branding suitable to use online platform.
- To describe the relationship between the Effectiveness of the T-shirt business start-up branding at online platforms.
- To identify the most effective online platform that influences the Effectiveness of T-shirt business start-up branding.

This study also will try to answer the following key issues question as per below:

- Does the T-shirt business start-up branding is suitable to use online platform?
- What is the relationship between the Effectiveness of the T-shirt business start-up branding at online platforms?
- What the most effective online platform that influence the Effectiveness of start-up T-shirt business branding?

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopts three factors that affecting the Effectiveness of online platform as shown in Figure 1. The three factors were online advertising, social networking and viral marketing act as independent variable and can influence the Effectiveness of online platform to start-up T-shirt business branding as dependent variable.

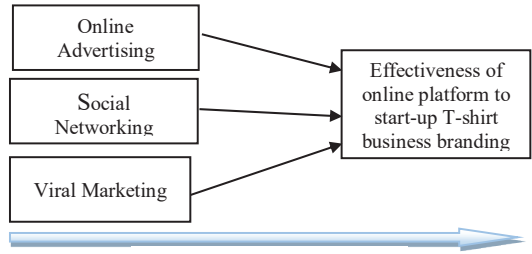


Fig. 1. Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. T-Shirt Business

Today's competitive apparel market, clothing companies must work hard to produce a profit. People are more frequently shopping for themselves than ever before, necessitating a shift in how clothing is designed and marketed. When shopping, men are loyal to brands and stores, very price conscious, and usually choose comfort over fashion, [6, 16]. Several studies agree that men ranked fit as the most important clothing selection criteria, [7, 9]. To gain that competitive advantage in the apparel market, it is important for designers, manufacturers, and retailers to know what fit issues are being encountered by people.

The study in [8, 4] explored one way of reducing time-to-market through process transformation through services globalization and also explored the question: "How can process transformation be performed more effectively, more cheaply, and more quickly" to develop time-to-market supply chain networks, so streamlining the rules of traditional process, exploring the short-supply list, and coordinating custom procedures should be amended from the traditional systems.

As the new player in T-shirt branding industry, it is often highly dependent on the owner for all major decisions. When the company reaches a certain size, this form of decision making can limit its capacity to grow further since the owner cannot possibly make all decisions properly. Additional management and documented standards of guidelines are required to allow the company to continue growing, and also establish a succession plan and train the growing employee base. Standards of guidelines are the documented processes that

a company has in place to ensure services and products are delivered consistently every time. This is a document consisting of step-by-step information on how to execute a task in T-shirt industry. An existing guideline may need to just be modified and updated. The existence of documented guidelines can increase the value of a company. It shows a buyer that the company is "process driven", rather than "founder driven".

B. Building - Brand

The successful of brand-builders consciously resist investing everywhere that their brand touches their customers. Instead, they identify and then spend aggressively only on the interactions they know will have the most impact on revenue growth and profitability, [9, 19]. Business leaders have few illusions about the challenge of building a world-class brand. But that's not the same as knowing the most effective way to do it. The challenges are to make sense of the kaleidoscope of factors in many corners of the company that contribute to brand equity.

Elements ranging from product quality and customer service to Web presence, employee behavior, and community relations all shape customer perceptions over time. How to know which elements to focus on, how much to invest, and How much longer? Human satisfaction is a far wider construct which requires that firms look for customer satisfaction in three other interacting spheres of the psyche: emotion, reason and ethics as each of these strongly affect the areas of trust and loyalty to the product. Brands are increasingly viewed as offering a crucial point of differentiation and a sustainable form of competitive advantage for business-to-business marketers and brands also play an important role in the decision-making processes of business to customers, its acting as a tool for achieving organizational consensus among the many actors involved in the buying process.

C. Online advertising

The importance of online advertising is expected to further grow in today's digital world, [10, 15], however, there is no prior studies incorporating both non-search and search advertising and

investigating their relationships with sales. The researcher believes that examining the Effectiveness of these two online advertising formats is important to enrich both academic research and industrial practice. Although multichannel advertising has been emphasized in the research agenda of integrated marketing, research on the advertising effect and Effectiveness of multichannel advertising which combines traditional and online media has been limited, [11, 3]. From the consumers' viewpoint, internet advertising comes in two broad forms; electronic ads similar to those on traditional media (e.g. billboards and banner ads), and a new type of "advertising" such as corporate web sites, [12, 18].

D. Social Network

Online social networks (OSNs) constitute one of the most paradigmatic social media technologies allowing numerous possibilities of social interaction and communication, providing an interface for establishing and managing social connections and relationships, [13, 8]. Starting as a mainly social phenomenon, OSNs are capturing an ever-growing part of companies' promotional expenditure. However, concerns have been expressed regarding the excessive commercialization of OSNs and the negative impact on the appeal of OSNs for users, [14, 21]. Nevertheless, advertising revenues are necessary for the economic survival of such sites. Thus, for OSNs to become effective advertising media, it is necessary to fully understand the determinants of consumer response to advertisements in this context.

E. Viral marketing

The term "viral marketing" was developed by [15, 26]. It was used to describe the free email service which Hotmail was providing. According to [16, 5], they defined the term simply as "network-enhanced word-of-mouth". However, the literature contains a variety of terminology used to explain what viral marketing is. According to [17, 23], some of the terminology used to describe electronic WoM includes "Interactive Marketing" [18, 14], "Internet word-of-mouth" and "word-of-mouse"

[19, 2], "stealth marketing" [20, 6] and "referral marketing" [21, 1]. [22, 22] tries to unify these ideas in the term "buzz marketing". He refers to the generation of marketing epidemics by concentrating on value added propositions. Some commentators, including [23, 24], see an analogy between viral marketing and a living biological virus. [24, 7] suggests that viral marketing is an alike to a "digitalized sneeze", one characterized by the release of "millions of tiny particles that can infect others who come into contact with them".

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND INSTRUMENT

The method used in this study is a quantitative method where questionnaire forms has been distributed online to the group of "Komuniti Industri T-Shirt Malaysia" using the Google Document at Facebook and email address. Majority of the group members are players in T-shirt industry. The data collected from this survey has been analyzed using Statistical Package Social Science (SPSS) software version 22.0. The population for this study is 70 people.

VI. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

A. Respondent background

There are four (4) stages of ages involved in this study. It shows that respondent are 25 – 29 years old with value 44.3% as a majority of the respondents which is 31 people over 70 respondents in this result. This is followed by 25.7% of respondents (18 people) among 30 – 35 years old. Furthermore, 15.7% of respondents (11 people) are 20 – 24 years old. Last but not least, only 14.3% of respondents (10 people) in range of age 36 years old and above who choose online as their platform. The respondents to this survey, 73% are male and 26% are female respondents.

B. Descriptive analysis

Table 1 shows the average response for each question. Most respondents agreed with the questions that were given. They felt that online platforms have easy and instant transaction rather than offline by using online banking. By contrast, only the third questions are less

agreed from respondents. The mean given are lowest compared with other question. Most respondents less agreed that online platforms are easy to build customer trust. It may be due to various cases about scammer in online transactions.

TABLE I. ONLINE ADVERTISING

No	Question	Mean	SD
1	I know the new comer in this industry will be more known by using online advertising	4.09	0.897
2	Have easy and instant transaction	4.20	0.910
3	Easy to build customer trust	3.43	0.861
4	The business appear better quality and up to date	3.80	0.942
5	Online advertising can reach targeted people precisely	3.79	0.976
6	Easy to build brand awareness to customers	4.04	0.859

Table 2 show he highest average amount is 4.33 at the first question. Most respondents agreed that T-shirt business start-up branding will be better known if use the social networking. The fourth question received the lowest average. Most respondent are less agreed that online platform are easy to create a good relationship with customer. As we know, the online business is a business transaction occurs without the seller or buyer meet face to face. In this case, the respondents have their opinion that it's hard to build a good relationship through online.

TABLE II. SOCIAL NETWORKING

No	Question	Mean	SD
1	I know the industry will be better known if been use the social networking	4.33	0.756
2	Social network are powerful tool capable of reaching target market	4.27	0.850
3	The way of advertisement that attracts me to buy it.	4.29	0.837
4	Easy to create a good relationship with customer	3.99	0.825
5	Social networks are the need of socialization and the sense of belonging to a community	4.03	0.868
6	Social network offers a simple way of spreading the ideas instantaneously to potentially millions of people	4.29	0.684

Table 3 below shows most respondents are agreed. This is because millions of people are now becoming aware of various advantages of viral marketing like video, and using it extensively for promoting their brand, services or products. Question number 3 gets the lowest average (3.73) than the rest. This proves that there are still a few who disagree with this platform in enhancing the performance T-shirt business start-up through online. Different with the second question, the average is 4.44 ahead the others. Most people agreed that by using this channel, it spread faster.

TABLE III. VIRAL MARKETING

No	Question	Mean	SD
1	I know the industry will be better known if they use viral marketing	4.43	0.827
2	By using this channel, it spread faster	4.44	0.792
3	Video ads like YouTube more attractive compare to the other channel	3.73	0.931
4	An effective channel to attract customer and will enhance a sales revenue	4.14	0.839
5	Cost-effective marketing strategy that drives sales in a short time	4.06	0.832
6	The marketing strategy that increases awareness of brand	4.20	0.754

Table 4 shows the average for Effectiveness of online platform to T-shirt business start-up branding. Overall, the respondents admitted that online platform is the most effective way to T-shirt business start-up. It can be proved by the average obtained on each question posed. The third question had the highest average of 4.31. It shows most respondents agreed that the using online platform is due to the requirements of the latest technology and also the latest marketing channels. The average on the whole does not differ much. This proves that the respondents agree that this channel is effective to T-shirt business start-up.

TABLE IV. EFFECTIVENESS

No	Question	Mean	SD
1	The advertising budget is more cheaper	4.03	1.215
2	This business easily found by the new customer on internet	4.27	0.815
3	An effective channel to attract customer and will increase product sales	4.31	0.733
4	Social networking are effective advertising media	4.19	0.804
5	The consumers can express their satisfaction with the brand easily	4.13	0.658

VII. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE AND HYPOTHESES ANALYSIS

Objective 1: To identify whether T-shirt business start-up branding suitable to use online platform

Table 5 below, the reliability statistics shown 0.956. So the reliability statistics are excellent and proves that the T-shirt business start-up branding suitable to use online platform. George and Mallery (2003) indicate 0.9 – 1.0 is excellent.

TABLE V. RELIABILITY TESTING

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.956	.958	23

Source: SPSS Data Analysis

Objective 2: To describe the relationship between the Effectiveness of the T-shirt business start-up branding at online platforms.

From table 6 coefficients, it shows the percentage of relationship between variables and the significant of each of variables that affected the Effectiveness to start-up T-shirt business branding through online platform. All of the factors in online platforms is significant which are online advertising ($p=0.049$), social networking ($p=0.002$), viral marketing (0.021) and the value of all factors $p < 0.05$. Based on analysis from questionnaire, all of the factors are influences the Effectiveness to start-up T-shirt business branding through online platform. So, the result shows that the online platforms fully support the objectives.

TABLE VI. MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF COEFFICIENTS

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.220	.296		.745	.459
Online advertising	.202	.101	.205	2.007	.049
Social networking	.463	.139	.436	3.319	.002
Viral marketing	.296	.125	.287	2.360	.021

a. Dependent Variable: The Effectiveness of online platforms

Objective 3: To identify the most effective online platform that influences the Effectiveness of start-up T-shirt business branding.

Analysis using the Multiple Regression where R for online platforms is R=0.865a. All of it shows the good relationship. But the most effective online platform that influences the Effectiveness of start-up T-shirt business branding is social networking. Its shows the highest R²= 69.8%. The larger R value indicated the strong relationship between the variables. R square was the coefficient of determination where it was the square value of correlation coefficient, R. (Table 7 and table 8)

TABLE VII. MODEL SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVE 3

Predictors: (Constant)	M	R	R Square
Online advertising	3.8662	0.747 ^a	0.557
Social networking	4.1970	0.835 ^a	0.698
Viral marketing	4.1742	0.803 ^a	0.644

TABLE VIII. MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF MODEL SUMMARY

Model summary	R	R square
1	0.865 ^a	0.748

Based on coefficients analysis, the result will be discussed based on the b-value. The b-value is important because it indicates the individual contribution of each predictor to the model. The b-value also indicates the degree of each predictor affects the outcome which is dependent variable. If the value is positive

and it represents positive relationship between the predictor and the Effectiveness of online platform. The larger betas are associated with the larger t-values and lower p-values.

As can be seen in table 9, the result show that the most online platform that influence the Effectiveness of start-up T-shirt business branding is social networking which b = 0.436, t = 3.319, p = .002 (significant). It means the b = 0.436 indicates the degree of predictor that affects the Effectiveness of online platform.

TABLE IX. MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF COEFFICIENTS.

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.220	0.296		0.745	0.459
OA	0.202	0.101	0.205	2.007	0.049
SN	0.463	0.139	0.436	3.319	0.002
VM	0.296	0.125	0.287	2.360	0.021

a. Dependent Variable: The Effectiveness of online platforms

Hypothesis 1

The hypotheses were tested using reliability test analysis and the results are as presented in table 10. The hypothesis tested the suitability of T-shirt business start-up branding to use online platform. The rule of thumb for the reliability test is that 0.7 or higher represents good reliability and if in between 0.6 and 0.7, the data may be acceptable. According to the analysis for this research, suitability of T-shirt business start-up branding to use online platform represent excellent reliability where the result shows 0.956. Thus, H1 is accepted.

Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis tested if there is relationship between online platforms with the Effectiveness of online platform to the t-shirt business start-up branding. The results are determined based on b-value because it shows the relationship and effect for each of independent variable (online platform) on dependent variable Effectiveness of online platform to start-up T-shirt business branding).

Thus the result shown all of the online platforms which is online advertising $b=0.202$, $p=0.049$, social networking $b=0.463$, $p=0.002$, and viral marketing $b=0.296$, $p=0.021$ are the highest b-value compare to others and the p-value is less than 0.05. So, the result shows that the online platforms are fully support the objectives. Thus, H1 is accepted.

Hypothesis 3

The first hypothesis tested that online platforms influence the Effectiveness of start-up T-shirt business branding. The results are determined based on b-value because it shows the effect for each of independent variable (online platform) on dependent variable (the Effectiveness of start-up T-shirt business branding.). Besides, the b-value also indicates the degree of each predictor affects the outcome which is dependent variable. Thus the result shows that the online platforms are fully support the hypothesis. Where, the social networking is the most online platform that influence the Effectiveness of start-up T-shirt business branding ($b= 0.463$, $p=0.002$). Thus, H1 is accepted.

start-up branding. Various approaches have been used in finding answers of objectives in this research which distributes questionnaires through online, as well as some of the methods used to analyses the data obtained. All data were obtained from a variety of backgrounds of respondents which are the member of the group of "Komuniti Industri T-Shirt Malaysia" in Facebook. Overall, it can be concluded that there have strong relationship between online platforms that influences the Effectiveness of start-up T-shirt business branding.

Objective 1: To identify whether T-shirt business start-up branding suitable to use online platform.

In the early stages of the study, researchers submit three (3) types of online platform used to prove the Effectiveness of online platform to T-shirt business start-up branding. Among them are as follows:

- a.) Online marketing
- b.) Social networking
- c.) Viral marketing

To evaluate the suitability of online platform T-shirt business start-up, the data has been analyzed through reliability analysis. The results obtained show that all three of these platforms directly involved with online platform (0.956) to prove the objective. With this proves, for many new entrepreneurs, starting an online t-shirt brand is a great and inexpensive way to start an online business, whether it's their first, second, or tenth business. With the growth in popularity of t-shirts businesses, there's no doubt been facing some stiff competition. To break through, the players in this industry need to come out with new ideas and uniqueness. Through the online platform, it's easier for beginner to realizing that ideas at the low risk and cost.

Objective 2: To describe the relationship between the Effectiveness of the T-shirt business start-up branding at online platforms.

TABLE X. SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESES

Hypotheses		Acceptable /Not Acceptable
H1 ₁	T-shirt business start-up branding is suitable to use online platform.	Acceptable
H2 ₁	There is a relationship between the Effectiveness of the T-shirt business start-up branding at online platforms.	Acceptable
H3 ₁	Online platform are influences the Effectiveness of start-up T-shirt business branding.	Acceptable

VIII. CONCLUSION

This research is about the Effectiveness of the T-shirt business start-up branding through Online Platform. The research objective is; (1) to identify whether T-shirt business start-up branding suitable to use online platform., (2) to describe the relationship between the Effectiveness of the T-shirt business start-up branding at online platforms, and (3) to identify the most effective online platform that influences the Effectiveness of T-shirt business

From the result, 74.8% relationship between the Effectiveness of the T-shirt business start-up branding at online platforms. The perceptions of respondents relatively with online platform are positively influence the Effectiveness of T-shirt business start-up branding. The result shows that the online platforms fully support the objectives. All of the platform that supports the objective is online advertising, social networking and viral marketing.

1. **Online advertising:** When building and launching a new t-shirt brand through online is relatively inexpensive and quick. If new entrepreneurs already have ideas for the types of designs to sell, it can be up and running in as little as a few hours. Seller can sell instantly with integrate of online banking for easy and fast transaction.
2. **Social networking:** For businesses in T-shirt industry, the key to success knows the audience. Social network makes this possible, and easier to accomplish than ever. It gives company instant access to positive or negative feedback, which provides with valuable insights on the customer perspective. This is the great platform for creating meaningful relationships with your customers.
3. **Viral marketing:** A viral marketing can be used to build or enhance brand awareness for the new T-shirt branding, reputation and image. They can also communicate a specific message in a way that is easy to understand as well as being enjoyable. Due to the huge amount of visitors a viral marketing can generate massive publicity for new T-shirt releases and it also helps to gather data and contact details of potential customers.

Objective 3: To identify the most effective online platform that influences the Effectiveness of start-up T-shirt business branding

From the result, the most effective online platform that influences the Effectiveness of start-up T-shirt business branding is social networking (69.8%). Social networking is

important and excellent way to introduce people to a new T-shirt brand and given the way content spreads virally to others. With platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram can get generate tremendous online exposure for T-shirt brand, allowing showcasing the new design or brand.

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