Social Media Usage Among Businesses: A Website Content Analysis

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Abstract: This study attempts to investigate the social media usage among Malaysian business organizations using web content analysis method. A total of 7910 business organizations were investigated and it was found that only 664 of them have some form of social media presence. Further analysis revealed that the most popular social media presence was the Facebook and that organizations started to have a Facebook presence in 2008 but the bigger percentage of organizations have the Facebook presence in 2010 and 2011. The study also revealed that in terms of level of usage the percentage is still relatively low as many organizations have <10000 likes. Finally, the purpose of Facebook usage was examined based on the disclosure, dissemination and interactivity framework and it was found that there are a higher percentage of organizations that use the Facebook for interactivity with stakeholders than the other two.

Key words: Social media, facebook, interactivity, two-way communication, Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

Social media includes various online platforms and tools such as social networking, user-sponsored blogs, multimedia sites, company-sponsored websites, collaborative websites, podcasts, etc. Social Networking Sites (SNSs) which fall under the umbrella of social media, have recently become prominent. SNSs such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter, attract >90% of young adults and teens and represent over a quarter of all internet traffic (Hollenbeck and Kaikati, 2012; Trusov et al., 2010). Nowadays, organizations are beginning to use social media as a tool to develop and maintain relationships with customers (Greenberg, 2010; Men and Tsai, 2011) for Word of Mouth (WOM) marketing (Kozinets et al., 2010) for customer to customer communications (Kozinets et al., 2010; Rybalko and Seltzer, 2010) for innovation co-creation (Sawhney et al., 2005) to advance their organization's mission and programs (Waters et al., 2009) and for branding (Smith et al., 2012). More and more organizations are investing in resources that integrate social data into their existing customer databases as part of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) upgrades (Van Boskirk et al., 2011; Trainor, 2012). Evidence of the usage of social media among organizations is available in the literature. For example, Hsu (2012) and Escobar-Rodriguez and Carvajal-Trujillo (2013) studied the usage of social media in the hotel industry in Taiwan and Spain, respectively, Kavanaugh et al. (2012) studied the usage among several

government agencies while Rybalko and Seltzer (2010) studied the use of Twitter by Fortune 500 companies. In Malaysia, there is little empirical evidence that illustrates the usage of social media by organizations. Most studies on social media in Malaysia focuses on individual usage (Din and Haron, 2012; Sin et al., 2012). This may be because statistics show that Facebook penetration in Malaysia is 46.28% compared to the country's population and 81.83% in relation to number of internet users. The total number of Facebook users in Malaysia is reaching 13085000 which make it number seventeen in the ranking of Facebook usage by country. The high number of Facebook users provides an opportunity for organizations particularly businesses to capitalize and sell their products and services via the media. The question that arises here is: Do Malaysian businesses use the social media to conduct their daily businesses? If yes, since when and which social media tools are they currently using?

Past studies have shown that organizations use social media for many purposes. For example, Waters et al. (2009) studied how Facebook is used to advance the mission and programs of 275 nonprofit organizations while McAllister (2012) examined how the world's top universities use Facebook as an interactive forum. Thus, it would be worthwhile to find out what is the level of social media usage among Malaysian businesses and what do they use the social media for? To answer the research questions, this study objectives are

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four pronged: to analyze whether Malaysian businesses use the social media in their daily business (and since when), to identify which social media channels do they use, to examine their level of usage as well as investigate the purpose of usage. The analysis for the study was conducted using the content analysis approach whereby social media websites of the businesses would be analyzed based on the relationship cultivation strategies framework which emphasizes on disclosure, information dissemination and interactivity strategies of the social media websites. Since, it has been said that the main usage of social media by businesses is to disclose company's information and products and services offered and to communicate with customers (Men and Tsai, 2011), this framework is seen as the most appropriate to adopt. The study proceeds by reviewing the relevant literature followed by the methodology used. Subsequently, the results and analysis of the findings are presented and the study concludes with several implications, future research and some limitations.

Literature review: There are many models that are used to evaluate the level of websites usage including social media sites. The following paragraph highlights the more commonly used ones. Griffiths (2000) proposed a model to evaluate the website usage based on five criteria: brochureware (corporate publicity and structures, news updates, copies of corporate documents and public relations), interaction (download forms, give feedback to the website and searching information), advanced interaction (return the forms through online, carry out transaction through e-mail and advanced searching information), transaction (can interact with databases, transactions conducted and tracking the state of an order) and advanced transaction (online accounts are available and information updated regularly).

On the other hand, Teo and Pian (2003) proposed a web adoption model in terms of levels of characteristics, based on a company's objectives in using the Internet: level 0 is when there is no website or just an e-mail account; at level 1 the company wants to occupy a web address or simply establish an initial online presence; at level 2 the company is prospecting, delivering actual information about products; level 3 entails business integration, online links to clients and suppliers; level 4 is business transformation. The instrument was applied to 159 companies in Singapore and some relationships between adoption levels and company size or strategy were tested using one-way ANOVA (Schmidt *et al.*, 2008). Zwass (1996, 2003) meanwhile categorized the level of usage in terms of sharing of business information, maintaining of business relationships and conducting of

business transactions by means of telecommunications networks for the business purposes. Similarly, Nambisan and Wang (1999) suggested that there are three levels of web adoption: information access (dissemination information about products, services and organizational policies and to channel feedback), work collaboration (to facilitate real time work collaboration and document flow) and core business transactions (directly integrate with core business processes or transactions).

Burgess and Cooper (1999) developed the Model of Internet Commerce Adoption, abbreviated as MICA, which consists of three layers such as promotion that concerns information about the company; provision which is associated with interactivity and processing, related to online transactions. Similarly, Overby and Min (2001) proposed four categories to describe the functions of the internet application namely information (to provide information about the organization, products, business image), interaction (to interact with the customers, suppliers, competitors, etc.), transaction (exchange information, products or services and arrange for distribution), integration (flow of information between multiple parties for the relationships establishment). Perhaps a more suitable framework to measure websites was introduced by Men and Tsai (2011). They studied the usage of the Social Network Sites (SNS) based on the organizations' disclosure or openness, information dissemination and interactivity.

Disclosure or openness refers to the willingness of the organization to engage in direct and open conversation with publics. Complete description of the organization and its history, mission and goals use hyperlinks to direct users to its web site and use logos or other visual cues to provide intuitive identifications in their social media page (Waters *et al.*, 2009). Secondly, the information dissemination, addresses the needs, concerns and interests of publics while disseminating organizational information. Photos, videos, announcements and publicize information about products, promotions or companies should be posted by organizations (Men and Tsai, 2011). Interactivity, where organization create opportunities for the customers or public to contact the organization, make a suggestion to a friend or to share the content on one's own social media page and allow public to comment on organizational post and respond to their comments (McMillan *et al.*, 2008; Men and Tsai, 2011).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Web content analysis was used to gather data from Malaysian business organizations' website and their

social media pages. Content analysis is a technique to replicate and make inferences from texts (or meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use. Web pages have been recognized and used for content analysis. This useful method provides new insights and increases a researcher understanding of particular phenomena or informs practical actions (Krippendorff, 2004). The analysis was carried out in four steps. The first step involves gathering the lists of Malaysian business organizations.

Five main source was used, i.e., Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange (list of public listed companies), SME corporation (list of small and medium sized enterprises), MSC Malaysia (list of Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) status companies) and MARTRADE, the national trade promotion agency of Malaysia (listed companies) and the top 1000 companies directory. The listing is compiled and cross referenced to avoid duplication. The reason for using these sources in particular is that these are government initiated/supported institutions which have the list of large number of organizations that are registered under them. Therefore, it can be assured that the information and website link of the organizations that are obtained from these sources are reliable.

After obtaining the listing, the second step was to identify whether the organization is using any type of social media. In order to do so, their websites were searched for the presence of social media usage. Each of these websites homepages were searched and screened for the social media presence. For example, the presence of the Facebook was identified from the symbol "f" or with the tagline "Find us on Facebook".

To facilitate the analysis, a table was created in the Microsoft excel worksheet with the following headings: Name of the Organization, Industry, Facebook, Facebook Likes, Facebook level of interaction, Twitter, Twitter followers, YouTube, Flickr, Blog, other Social Media Sites (SMS). Data is entered in the excel sheet whereby if the organization website has a social media presence it is coded as 1 otherwise as 0. The third step of the analysis is studying the social media sites itself. For example, on the organization's fan page, there is an important feature called "Likes". Facebook defined "Like" as a way to give positive feedback or to connect with things users care about on Facebook. "Like" is an easy way to let someone know that users enjoy it without leaving a comment. Brands are displayed through the symbolic act of liking a brand (Hollenbeck and Kaikati, 2012). Customers or public can express their liking towards the organization/brand by clicking the Like option. After entering the Facebook fan page of the organizations, the number of Likes on the wall was identified and entered in the excel file under the Facebook likes section.

The final step involves more in depth analysis on the organizations' social media page. The level of usage was examined from the organizations' social media sites by searching for various information based on the disclosure or openness, information dissemination and interactivity strategies as suggested by Waters *et al.* (2009) and Men and Tsai (2011). The disclosure or openness strategy is identified by the presence of detailed description of the organization and its history, mission statements, use hyperlinks to connect to the organization's website, provide logos and visual cues to establish the connection and list the individuals who are responsible for maintaining the social networking site profile as suggested by Waters *et al.* (2009) and Men and Tsai (2011). In addition, the presence of house rules (e.g., privacy policies) is also observed.

Next, the information dissemination strategy was investigated by investigating whether the organizations have posted any information about their products and services, posted links to external news items about the organization or its causes; posted photographs, video or audio files and used the message board or discussion wall to post-announcements, press releases, favorite pages and campaign summaries. These criteria are based on Carrera *et al.* (2008), Waters *et al.* (2009) and Men and Tsai (2011) studies.

Lastly, the level of interactivity and involvement of the organization with the public was identified by the presence of opportunities to contact the organization such as email address, telephone numbers, to make a suggestion to a friend or to share the content on one's own page on social networking site, to comment on organizational posts and to respond to other users' posts, hyperlink to external content and calendar of events (Waters *et al.*, 2009; Men and Tsai, 2011). Apart from this, the existence of a store in the fan page (which enables organizations to sell their product via Facebook) is also examined. Based on the evaluation of the social media sites, the presence of each strategy is coded and recorded: 1 for its presence and 0 for non-presence. Subsequently, the count (frequencies) and percentages were calculated to identify the level of social media usage. The data was collected over a period of three months, i.e., from October to December 2012.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After obtaining the listing of business organizations, their websites were browsed to search for their social media presence. A total of 8020 business organizations' websites were browsed. Out of that 110 organizations' websites were not functioning properly due to reasons

Table 1: Summary of organizations investigated under web content analysis

Sources	No. of organizations browsed	No. of organization with social media presence
Top 1000 directory, KLSE	1934	144
MSC status companies	2339	137
SME Corp Malaysia	2295	132
MARTRADE	1342	251
Total	7910	664

such as link broken and website under construction. Thereafter, 7910 websites were browsed and it was found that only 664 organizations are using some kind of social media (Table 1). Thus for the research question do Malaysian organizations use social media, the answer is yes but the percentage is still relatively low (8.39%).

The presence of social media was discovered from the organization's website homepage. Following Slover-Linett and Stoner (2011), a social media presence was considered official if it linked from the institutional website, directly from the homepage or from the secondary level of the website (Lovari and Giglietto, 2012). Therefore, each of the organizations' homepages were screened for the Facebook, Twitter, Blog, YouTube, Flickr, RSS (Really Simple Syndication) and other social media sites presence. The presences of these tools were identified by their symbol or icon for example the Facebook icon represents either with a symbol "f" or sometime with the tagline "Find us on Facebook".

The results showed that among the 664 organizations that are using social media, Facebook was the most popular social media used. This answers the question which social media tools they are currently using. Nearly 91% of the organizations were using Facebook, followed by Twitter (49%) and Google+ (25%). Approximately 14% of the organizations post videos and photos on YouTube and Flickr and nearly 12% of the organizations had their own corporate blog. The least used social media are RSS feed (5%) and other social media tools like Instagram, LinkedIn, etc. (3%).

It was discovered that among the 664 organizations, 606 have a Facebook presence. However, 39 organizations were using individual Facebook account or community pages for their business activities. Opening a Facebook page is a common marketing strategy for business, brands and institutions. Creating a personal profile for an organization is, in fact, forbidden by Facebook policy (Lovari and Giglietto, 2012). Therefore, these organizations were omitted from further analysis.

Although, <10% of the organizations have some form of social media presence, the length of usage differs. The analysis indicated that Malaysian organizations started to use Facebook in the year 2008; however the percentage was only 3%. Nevertheless, the usage increased tremendously in 2009 whereby nearly 20% of the
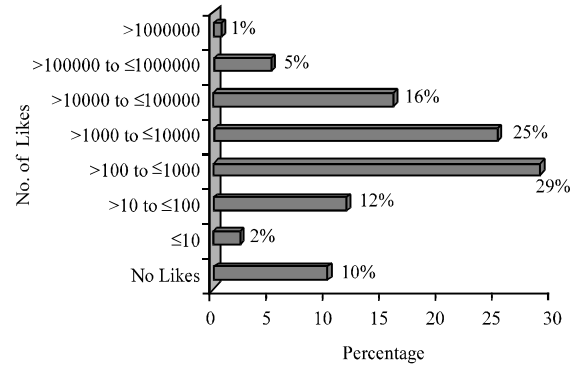

Fig. 1: Numbers of Likes

organizations began to have a Facebook presence. The analysis also showed that most of the organizations had a presence on Facebook beginning the year 2010 (32%) and 2011 (30%). About 14% of organizations started to use Facebook in the year 2012. The percentage for 2012 was up till first quarter of 2012.

Subsequently, the number of Likes on the Facebook page was analyzed. "Like" is defined as a way to give positive feedback or to connect with things users care about on Facebook. Like and comment options in Facebook are the most heavily used features on the site (Ayu and Abrizah, 2011). The results showed that nearly 29% of the organizations had likes between 100 and 1000 followed by 25% of organizations had likes between 1000-10000 and 16% of organizations had likes between 10000 and 100000. This illustrates that the level of Facebook interactivity is relatively moderate. Figure 1 illustrates the number of likes in organizations' Facebook pages.

After analyzing the number of likes, the organizations' uses of disclosure, information dissemination and interactivity and involvement strategies were investigated appeared on the corporate pages on Facebook. It was found that the frequencies of certain strategies were higher than the other. Under the disclosure strategy, logo, URL to websites and description about the organizations were commonly used by most of the organization. Nearly 89% of the organization had the company's logo on their Facebook page. About 84% of the organization had the URL to their corporate website and about 74% of the organization had the description about the organization.

In terms of the mission statements and history disclosure, about 40% of the organization included the mission statement in the Facebook page and about 21% of the organizations' Facebook displayed the history of the organization. The information about the person in charge of Facebook administration and the privacy rules

for the usage of organizations' Facebook page was very less. Only 6% of the organization had the administrators listed on the page and just 3% of the organizations had mentioned about the rules for posting information on the corporate pages under house rules. Thus, it can be summarized that organization normally would disclose information which are crucial such as logo, URL, company description, etc.

Next the information dissemination strategy was examined and it was found that most of the organizations posted items and photos on the page. Nearly 89% of the organizations had posted photos and 88% of the organizations posted items on the page followed by 69% of the organizations had links to their favorite pages. About 46% of the organizations had news links and 39% of the organizations posted video files on the page. Moreover, 32% of the organizations had posted campaign summaries and only 17% of the organizations had posted announcement and press release on the corporate Facebook pages. Therefore, it can be concluded that most organizations disseminate information via photos or items which are the easiest way to disseminate information.

With respect to interactivity or involvement strategy, the intrinsic attributes of social media such as sharing features for publics, commenting opportunities and navigation to external media content appeared on most corporate Facebook pages. About 89% of the organizations had the sharing and commenting features on their pages and about 80% of the organizations had hyperlinks to external content. In terms of creating a complete interactivity with public, nearly 58% of the organizations responded to user posts. More than half of the organizations are more likely to provide contact information such as telephone numbers (54%) and email address (51%). Apart from these, about 39% of the organizations had displayed calendar of future events in their pages and only 4% of the organizations had the store feature where they sell products and services via social media page. Thus, it can be summarized that the organizations relatively have a high level of interactivity with their stakeholders.

Based on the results above, it can be seen that in general (Table 2), the interactivity/involvement strategies features (58%) are widely used by organizations in Malaysia where the organizations provide various interactive features to the public and also respond to user comments, followed by information dissemination (54%) which addresses the needs, concerns and interests of publics while disseminating organizational information. Kent and Taylor (1998) argued that such information allows publics to engage with the organization as informed partners (Men and Tsai, 2011). Finally, only an average of 45% of the organization discloses organizational information to publics which is less compared to the other two strategies.

The content analysis results showed that the social media tools that are currently used by the organizations are Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Blogs and RSS. Other social media tools like LinkedIn, Foursquare, etc. are also used but limited. Among the tools that are used by organizations, the most commonly used one is the Facebook. The result is obvious because the Facebook is the most popular social media site in Malaysia. A premier ranking website ranked Facebook as number one most visited site among 100 sites in Malaysia (Ayu and Abrizah, 2011). The result implies that all the organizations want to have a presence in a place where the public spend their time.

Secondly, even though organization in Malaysia started to use social media from 2008. Many organization began its presence in the year 2010 (32%) and 2011(30%). Although, they may have the presence in the last couple of years, the number of likes in Facebook fan page shows that among 567 organizations that have an official Facebook page, nearly 29% of organizations have likes between 100 and 1000, 25% of organizations had likes between 1000-10000 and 16% of organizations had likes between 10000 and 100000. This illustrates that the level of Facebook interactivity is relatively moderate. The organizations must work harder to increase the number of likes as it enables them to reach more people which in turn create opportunities to convert them into potential customers.

Table 2: Strategies used by organizations

Disclosure	Percentage	Information dissemination	Percentage	Interactivity/Involvement	Percentage
Description	74	Posted items	88	Commenting opportunity	89
History	21	Announcement and press release	17	Sharing to one's own page	89
Mission	40	Campaign summaries	32	Response to user posts	58
URL to website	84	News link	46	Company email id	51
Logo	89	Photos posted	89	Telephone	54
Administrators listed	6	Video files	39	Calendar of events	39
House rules	35	Favorite pages	69	Hyperlinks to external contents	80
				Store	4
Average	45		54		58

For the level of usage, the disclosure, information dissemination and interactivity and involvement framework was used as a basis for analysis. Overall the average use of all the strategies showed that interactivity /involvement strategy features (58%) are widely used by organizations in Malaysia where the organizations use various interactive features to communicate with the public and also respond to user comments followed by information dissemination (54%) which addresses the needs, concerns and interests of publics while disseminating organizational information.

Finally, only an average of 45% of the organization discloses organizational information to public which is less compared to the other two strategies. This shows that organizations that are using social media are trying to use more interactive features of social media in order to get benefit out of it; however organizations should start using social media more interactively by answering customer queries and for customer service activities as well. Moreover, the disclosure level of the organizations in social media is still relatively low, therefore organizations must open up and disclose more details and deliver more information to the public which enhance the relationship between the public and organizations.

CONCLUSION

Not many studies have been conducted on organizational usage of social media in Malaysia thus this study contributes to the field of knowledge in the Malaysia context. Moreover, some previous studies on organizational perspective of social media have concentrated on only one industry like education or hotel but this study investigates the use of social media among organizations that belongs to various industries. Despite of the growing importance of social media for business purposes, in Malaysia the organizational usage of social media is still in its growing stage. Furthermore, the result shows that most of the organizations that have a social media presence, still have not completely disclosed more information about their organization to public as these organizations might not realize the complete benefits from social media usage because of their limited use.

Organizations must understand the full potential of social media tools like Facebook and Twitter which will enhance the relationship with existing customers and make them as loyal customers at the same time, usage of these tools will help to reach new customers through interactive communications. Therefore, efforts must be taken to increase the awareness about the benefits of social media. The government and other business enhancement authorities should provide several awareness campaigns to increase the usage of social media. There are various social media tools available, each has its own functionality and advantages. Based on the industry and businesses, the organizations should select the appropriate social media tool and use it effectively. It is not enough just to have a Facebook or Twitter presence as from the results it can be seen that the Likes for the corporate Facebook pages are very low. Proper staffs should be employed by the organizations to monitor the functions of social media and update the page in a smart and timely manner.

This study also has certain limitations. Firstly the research method used in the study is content analysis which helps to provide an overview of the social media usage but to investigate in detail; future studies should use other methods such as survey and case study approach to get complete insight of the social media usage and its impact on organizational performances. Secondly this study investigated the social media usage among organizations regardless of the size. Future studies might investigate the differences between the usage of social media among large, medium and small organizations and usages of organizations from different industries. Finally even though there are many social media tools available, this study had provided an in-depth analysis on only one social media tool 'Facebook', further studies might investigate the level of usage of other social media tools as well and make comparisons between them.

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