




THE ROLES OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN PROMOTING HEALTH PRODUCTS AMONG WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN MALAYSIA



 Siti Zanariah Yusoff⁺

 Yusma Fariza Yasin²

¹Centre of Modern Languages and Communication, Faculty of Language and Communication, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Terengganu, Malaysia.

Email: zanariah Yusoff@umisza.edu.my

²Centre for Islamic Development Management Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.

Email: yusmafazayasin@gmail.com



(+ Corresponding author)

ABSTRACT

Article History

Received: 9 August 2019

Revised: 17 September 2019

Accepted: 21 October 2019

Published: 3 December 2019

Keywords

Social media
Social networking sites
Entrepreneurship
Health products
Technology development
Business
Women entrepreneur.

Social media is a distinguish channel in promoting products and services for individuals and large corporations as well. The significant impact of the power of social media undeniable in today's landscape, as there are evidences of successful entrepreneurs using the medium. Among all products in the market, health products also received bombarded attentions from targeted customers due to strategic marketing, primarily through social media such as Facebook and Instagram. This paper intends to identify how social media plays its roles in promoting health products among women entrepreneurs in Malaysia. Furthermore, this paper also aims to observe the factors of women entrepreneur predominant in this field. Based on immense literature on this topic, this paper applied content analysis on past and current studies to attain the objectives. Furthermore, an in-depth interview was conducted with selected ten entrepreneurs to get information on the usage of social media in their business. The results revealed that social media is the best network for entrepreneurs to promote their business through YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and websites.

Contribution/ Originality: This study contributes to the literature by examining the entrepreneurship and social media with the integration of both fields.

1. INTRODUCTION

The competition in the health products industry urges entrepreneurs to be more creative in promoting their business. A radical shift in technology development affected how business is carried out and how people communicate. Due to this fact, entrepreneurs need to familiarize with the new style of business to stay competitive in the market. Social media is one of the dominant platforms in the world and being used widely by billions of users all over the globe since its existence in early 2000. The new purpose of social media was to connect people through various devices from a personal computer to a handled gadget such as smartphones or any other wireless devices. Social media is an umbrella term that comprises of different types of websites and applications that can be categorized into social networking sites (SNS). SNS like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and WhatsApp has its specialty, and it attracts users differently. Baruah (2012) stated that, apart from being cost-effective in comparison to traditional media, it also provides real-time content consumption and creation, therefore manage to reach mass audiences (Ampofo *et al.*, 2011). Social media are allowing communication to happen in any possible

ways. Entrepreneurs need to move from the old channel that provides only one-way communication such as television and print media to promote their business for the high price.

Nowadays, social media has become one of the most valuable platforms for marketing. One of the significant advantages of social media is that it enables businesses to reach the worldwide customer and allowing them to survey, select, and purchase the products (Al Kailani and Kumar, 2011). Entrepreneurs who grab this opportunity know that the medium is not only reliable than the conventional way of marketing. It is for the fact that checking on social media is a new daily routine for everybody. Pütter (2017) outlined that through SNS, entrepreneurs can build rapport with customers and communicate about their brand. Companies that use these platforms are likely to be most successful in reaching, engaging, and maintaining a customer base moving forward. Social media marketing (SMM), allowing entrepreneurs to create and sharing content such as posting text and image, videos, and other content to the customers. It also has paid social media advertising to achieve marketing goals. Two-way communication through SNS develops the connection between an entrepreneur with customers, and this technique also greatly influence the image conception of the corporation and the entrepreneur themselves. Murdough (2009) stated that social media, as online channels, represent an increasingly important way for brands to communicate with attractive audience segments. Advantages that offered by this platform need to learn through, if not they will squander the opportunities provided.

Competitiveness in the business industry can be seen through countless products in the market, and it varies in terms of types, size, usage, and functions. All of these products can be promoted through social media, including service businesses. Among all these products, this study will be focusing on health products as it seems to create overwhelming demands from the customer. Hence, the entrepreneur takes these opportunities by manufacturing a variety of products and claim the benefits to the users. This study is also only focusing on women entrepreneur to make it focus in terms of findings. The question is, how are women entrepreneur marketing their products in the competitive era? Is it social media marketing help in enhancing their business expansion? This paper aims to answer those two questions by applying in-depth interview with selected women entrepreneur. The contribution of this study will lead to the development of knowledge in marketing, business, and communication literature. Hence, the findings will be useful to entrepreneurs by knowing how powerful social media marketing in promoting their businesses. The following sections will highlight on related review of literature, methodology, findings and discussion, and conclusion.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The word entrepreneur was derived from the French word *entreprenre*, which means task or attempt (Hisrich and Peters, 1995). The word was then translated into English as an entrepreneur. In Malay, entrepreneurs are the ones who work on a business and take risks in the industry it enters (Young Entrepreneurship Site, 2017). Additionally, entrepreneurship is an ongoing process of business continuity and development that contributes to the economic development process of a country. Besides, entrepreneurship is also a professional career field. The field of entrepreneurship is considered one of the career branches that promises excellent work opportunities and profits (Azimullah, 1968). In Malaysia, entrepreneurship is an area that can enhance the quality of life of women. This is in line with the potential of women because entrepreneurship is among the field of interests for women (Banna, 2012). Additionally, entrepreneurship promotes the involvement of women as one of the strategies to increase women engagement in all aspects of national development regardless in urban or rural areas.

Many women choose entrepreneurship as a career to avoid unemployment. This usually happens when women want to go back to work after taking a career break to raise their families. For women, the field of entrepreneurship allows them to use their time efficiently for family and at the same time, remain responsible for the job (Kariv, 2011). Furthermore, entrepreneurial activity is also considered as an activity that can alter the status of poverty among women. Entrepreneurship is one of the strategies that can eliminate poverty among women, especially for

women who are the heads of their households (Idris, 2008). Therefore, this phenomenon has encouraged the involvement of women in entrepreneurial activities, especially towards health products. According to Griffin and Ebert (2006) product means merchandise, services, or ideas marketed to meet the needs and wants of consumers. Penner (2004) defines the product as a program, service, or other proposed intervention to clearly describe certain products so that readers know what is being planned.

For the concept of health, Hoyman (1962) defines health as the optimum health condition for a perfect, productive, and creative life. It is shown in a hierarchy that starts with optimal health and ends with death. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), health means healthy from physical, mental, and social aspects. Moreover, health is not just free from any illness, disability, and injury (Geocities, 2009). Therefore, in short, health products are products offered in the market to be observed, owned, used or required to satisfy a person's needs and wants and are able to provide physical, mental and social health. Goods offered include beverages, food, and all kinds of equipment that can benefit consumers.

In Malaysia, all pharmaceutical products, including health supplements and traditional preparations, need to be registered with the Drug Control Authority (DCA) before being marketed in Malaysia. Besides, the assessment of health products should be carried out to ensure the safety of its use to the public. This is important to ensure that every product registered with the DCA is safe to be taken and used by the public. To confirm that health products are registered with the DCA, consumers need to look at genuine registration numbers and holographic stickers. The registration number usually starts with 'MAL' and followed by eight numbers and then ends with letters. To ensure the authenticity of the holographic sticker, Malaysian users need to use a Meditating decoder available at pharmacies (Official Portal of Ministry of Health Malaysia, 2019).

In Malaysia alone, there are many women entrepreneurs who have successfully expanded their respective businesses. Moreover, the role of Muslim women around the world, whether in the fields of economy, politics, or society has been accepted by the international community. According to Datuk Dr. Norraesah Mohamed, the Chairman of the Women's Business Network in the World Islamic Economic Forum (WIEF), women involvement in the corporate, political and administrative sector as leaders has been accepted in Malaysia. She added that women who work in the working world should also work on the basis as prescribed by the shariah (Sarabatin, 2016). Hence, the involvement of women in various occupational activities is allowed under Islamic law which is outlined, including in the field of entrepreneurship.

Through entrepreneurial activity, women can multitask. Examples of work that women can accomplish are as follows. Firstly, women can find revenue to contribute to family income; secondly, women can use existing knowledge to benefit the community; thirdly, women can offer a product or service for community use; and fourth, women can contribute to the country's economy without leaving home and their children (Hamid, 2006). At present, the world is progressing with the sophistication of technology. This progress has greatly impacted the entrepreneurial field. Most people are too busy working, and this results in a lack of time to purchase essential items. This phenomenon gives entrepreneurs an excellent opportunity to trade online through social media such as Facebook or Instagram. Among the businesses that can be carried out online is the sale of physical products, information products, services, and consultancy (Masrol, 2011). Additionally, buyers also choose to online shop due to the efficiency of the business, and as it is time-saving (Ghazali, 2016).

Today's technological advancement has shown much progress in entrepreneurial activity. This phenomenon can be proved with the increasing number of entrepreneurs who have carried out online businesses on various health products. The proof is that there are many ads featuring various brands of health products through social media such as Facebook and Instagram accounts. Sales through social media have provided many benefits to healthcare people in the business. The profits gained by these female entrepreneurs have shown that social media has a strong influence on promoting various items, especially when it comes to health products. Furthermore, this occurs because people are interested in health products as they have a high awareness of maintaining good health.

Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Foursquare, YouTube, and others are considered an accessible and easy way of promoting businesses as it can be done at home or anywhere else. Advertising methods through social sites are also easy to implement, as this method is free and useful. Women entrepreneurs can introduce their health products by sending pictures and listing its benefits to gain the confidence of friends on social media. Furthermore, women entrepreneurs can promote health products through advertising in various waiting areas, in magazines and even take advantage of free advertising.

Based on the following examples of social media use, it can be seen that social media influence has a positive impact on promoting health products for women entrepreneurs. Among the popular brands of health products in Malaysia include Pamoga, Sendayu Tinggi, Natasya, Jamu Mak Dara, and many other best-selling brands in the market. Most of the entrepreneurs working on health products in Malaysia are women. Examples of successful women entrepreneurs are Hasmizah Othman or better known as Dato 'Seri Vida. Dato Seri Vida is the founder of Pamoga and is a successful health product entrepreneur in Malaysia (Azhan, 2016). She has an extensive business market and successfully penetrates the international market. Similarly, Rozita Ibrahim, the founder of Sendayu Tinggi was awarded as a successful female entrepreneur in 2005 by Malay Chamber of Commerce Malaysia (MCCM) (Usahawan.com, 2018).

3. METHODOLOGY

An in-depth interview with ten women entrepreneurs was conducted to gather information on the issue studied. Among the characteristics are; women entrepreneur that sells health product, the products are suitable for all level customers, the products are distributed to all over the region in Malaysia, the informant is the owner of the corporation, the period of business must be four years and above and corporation size. Interview data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis to get the result that will lead to further discussion on this topic.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table-1. Media social usage among women entrepreneur in promoting health products in Malaysia.

No.	Social Media	Women entrepreneur									
		UW01	UW02	UW03	UW04	UW05	UW06	UW07	UW08	UW09	UW10
1.	Website	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
2.	Facebook	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
3.	Instagram	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
4.	YouTube	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	-	/	/

Source: Personal interview (2019).

The findings revealed that social media is the best network for entrepreneurs to promote their business through email, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and website. Based on the analysis of the interview with ten women entrepreneur, findings showing that the majority of the informants sell both health and cosmetic products. Results revealed that all women entrepreneur in this study engage with social media in promoting their business even though it is varied in terms of preferences. According to Junus (2016) the most outstanding social media in this era are Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Osman (2016) added another one to the list, which is the website. Table 1 provides information on social media usage among women entrepreneur in promoting health products in Malaysia.

Table 1 displays the analysis of social media usage among women entrepreneur in Malaysia on health-related products. All informants informed that they are actively using social media to promote their products, whether in the website, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. According to UW01 (2019) she preferred to promote her products through her Facebook page due to her target group that favors Facebook compared to other social media. She also

mentioned that her products focusing on working women that have their outcome. However, they still emphasize the importance of the products to all women, especially the mother group. UW03 (2019) also stated that promotion on the Facebook page had been chosen since she started her business in 2011. Being highly active in Facebook make her number of followers increasing every single day compared to another medium such as Instagram. Currently, she has more than 200 thousands of Facebook followers and 115 followers of Instagram. These findings support the view of Curran *et al.* (2011) on Facebook as an excellent marketing tool for business.

Women entrepreneurs are encouraged to create a Facebook product page instead of using their accounts. It is to ensure that other Facebook users will not be distracted by ads that are often displayed by women entrepreneurs on the status space (wall). Most internet businesses also start with Facebook, and the majority of internet entrepreneurs build relationships with customers through it Zahar (2013). The other function on Facebook is "Facebook advertising." It can be beneficial for entrepreneurs to promote their products through Facebook ads. Facebook ads is a paid marketing method to market their products or services to a more extensive and more accurate prospect. Furthermore, Facebook ads can serve as a medium that displays ads to opportunities that are suited to the budget allocated for advertising purposes.

The other three informants, UW02 (2019); UW04 (2019) and UW05 (2019) explained that they use the website as their promotional tool compared to other social media. The reason is, their products are already established in the market, not only in Malaysia, yet across the globe. For example, UW04 (2019) mentioned that they already have a few branches in Australia, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. Besides that, her products being export to Australia, Japan, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, and the Middle East country due to high demand from customers in the stated country. They believe that they have gained customer's trust and their brand image are in the proper place. Another reason that can be associated with is maybe of their era in starting the business. UM02 began in 2003, UM04 in 2006, and the epic one is UM05 in 1992.

A different approach has been made by UW06 (2019) that utilize all four stated SNS. However, she also stressed on that she highly engage with traditional media such as television and radio in promoting her products despite the fact that it costs a lot of money. This entrepreneur feels comfortable and satisfied whenever her face and products appear in this two-channel. Started her business in 2006, UW06 (2019) allocating a lot of money in doing sponsorship in popular TV shows. She did not deny that this is one of the factors why her products well-known to the public out there. Other than that, communication skills also one of the crucial factors to promote the products to the audience, and UW06 (2019) said, she is a competent communicator, especially when it comes to promotional activities.

With the existence of great smartphones with an equally powerful camera feature, Instagram has been an excellent communication and marketing tool. It enables to upload products with visual descriptions (Ting *et al.*, 2015). Based on the findings, all of the informants highly engage in Instagram. Instagram not only enhances online presence and identity, but it also allows more effective interactions for both personal and business purposes. Women entrepreneurs can promote sales by incorporating product pictures and placing promotional prices for the latest products as well as promoting items for stock clearance sales. In the case of Instagram, hashtags are relevant to social networking. The use of hashtags in Instagram can find groups that include pictures of specific subjects among existing users. Women entrepreneurs create more than one hashtag to connect businesses for each image, and popular hashtags will increase efficiency (Entrepreneur.com., 2016).

YouTube is one of the popular choices among many entrepreneurs in the world as it offers enormous positive impacts on the business. According to Mohamad (2009) YouTube is the fourth most visited website by Malaysians daily. Through YouTube, entrepreneurs only require the internet and a handled gadget to update the videos and use effective techniques to capture the attention of viewers or consumers of health products. For example, product tutorials can be shown by uploading videos to demonstrate how to consume the products correctly to consumers. Furthermore, when entrepreneurs have numerous followers on YouTube, the potential for other users to become

advertising agents will also increase (Azis, 2010). By having a YouTube channel, entrepreneurial aspirants to involve in self-branding practices, which lure upon the codes, processes, and market logics of mainstream culture industries (Hearn, 2008). Based on the findings, only one informant did not use YouTube as a medium to promote her products due to lack of knowledge in managing the account and limitations of devices. This entrepreneur produces 150 types of homemade products and advertised her products through WhatsApp. According to UW08 (2019), she did not familiarize with other SNS except for WhatsApp as it is user-friendly, and it offers free messaging services. However, it still requires an Internet connection to enable the application to function (Gon and Rawekar, 2017).

Most of the organizations have their official website to portray all the information regarding their main products, owner, location, contact number, and many other significant features. The findings showed that all of the women entrepreneurs have their website to promote their products. Promoting sales through the website can be implemented by women entrepreneurs by posting attractive offers with a variety of useful information. They need to ensure that unique taglines and posts are used to attract more visitors (Osman, 2016). Even though Twitter is not in the top option for the interviewed informants, but entrepreneurs may consider this SNS to boost their product via the "retweet" function. Mishori *et al.* (2014) suggested that retweeting can increase existing contents to grow one's brand.

Based on the discussions, all of the informants agreed that social media play an impactful role in promoting business, primarily health-related products. They are aware of the significance of using social media as a business marketing platform as they can expand their business to a broader audience. Those who not engage in any social media is making a mistake as it provides so many benefits to the users. This statement is supported by Paquette (2013) that said SNS had become a new avenue for entrepreneurs where they can reach to a broader range of the population.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The roles of social media cannot be denied in today's world as it is one of the most influential media to expand any businesses. Findings showed that the entrepreneurs that engage in social media as their marketing tool have positive impacts on their sales of health products. Their products are well known in the market through the utilization of social media. Therefore, it significantly increases their sales and profits. This study will help in opening the eyes of new entrepreneurs to utilize all of the social media. It is not only cost-effective, yet it serves as a ready market for the entrepreneurs to explore. This study contributes to the literature of entrepreneurship and social media with the integration of both fields. It is hoped that future research can study the other aspects of the issue by increasing the sample size and the scopes of business. This study also contributes to the knowledge for all the entrepreneurs, specifically health-related products entrepreneurs.

Funding: This study received no specific financial support.

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Acknowledgement: Both authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study.

REFERENCES

- Al Kailani, M. and R. Kumar, 2011. Investigating uncertainty avoidance and perceived risk for impacting internet buying: A study in three national cultures. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 6(5): 76. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijbm.v6n5p76>.
- Ampofo, L., N. Anstead and B. O'Loughlin, 2011. Trust, confidence, and credibility: Citizen responses on twitter to opinion polls during the 2010 UK general election. *Information, Communication & Society*, 14(6): 850-871. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118x.2011.587882>.

- Azhan, 2016. Biodata and profile Datuk Seri Vida founder of Pamoga and Qu Puteh. [Accessed 28 Desember 2016]. Available at: <http://www.azhan.co/biodata-dan-profile-datuk-seri-vida-pengasas-pamoga-dan-qu-puteh/>.
- Azimullah, A., 1968. The secret to career success. Kuala Lumpur: Enterpreneur Development Institute.
- Azis, A., 2010. Become a celebrity through youtube. Selangor: PTS Professional Publishing SD. Bhd.
- Banna, M., 2012. Women can also have sex. Selangor: Kemilau Publika Sdn. Bhd.
- Baruah, T.D., 2012. Effectiveness of social media as a tool of communication and its potential for technology enabled connections: A micro-level study. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 2(5): 1-10.
- Curran, K., S. Graham and C. Temple, 2011. Advertising on Facebook. *International Journal of E-business development*, 1(1): 26-33.
- Entrepreneur.com., 2016. This business produces the most millionaires in Malaysia. Available from <http://www.usahawan.com/umum/perniagaan-ini-melahirkan-paling-ramai-jutawan-di-malaysia.html> [Accessed 22 Januari 2017].
- Geocities, 2009. The concept of health. Available from <http://www.oocities.org/mef2c/kesihatan.htm> [Accessed 18 February 2017].
- Ghazali, M., 2016. Make money with facebook and instagram. Selangor: PTS Publication.
- Gon, S. and A. Rawekar, 2017. Effectivity of e-learning through WhatsApp as a teaching learning tool. *MVP Journal of Medical Science*, 4(1): 19-25. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.18311/mvpjms/0/v0/i0/8454>.
- Griffin, R.W. and R.J. Ebert, 2006. Business. Australia: Pearson Education.
- Hamid, A., 2006. Muslim woman and self-employed. Selangor: MPH Group Publishing.
- Hearn, A., 2008. Meat, mask, burden: Probing the contours of the branded self. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 8(2): 197-217. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540508090086>.
- Hisrich, R.D. and M.P. Peters, 1995. *Entrepreneurship: Starting, developing, and managing a new enterprise*. 3rd Edn., Chicago: Irwin.
- Hoyman, H.S., 1962. Our modern concept of health. *Journal of School Health*, 32(7): 253-264. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1746-1561.1962.tb00361.x>.
- Idris, N., 2008. Women and economic development. Selangor: National Library of Malaysia.
- Junus, M., 2016. 10 effective ways to promote business goods. Available from <http://www.pelaburanemaspublicgoldmalaysia.com/10-cara-berkesan-promosikan-perniagaan/> [Accessed 11 Mac 2018].
- Kariv, D., 2011. *Entrepreneurship an international introduction*. New York: Routledge.
- Masrol, M., 2011. *A home-based business guide*. Kuala Lumpur: Djrizal Enterprise, Inc.
- Mishori, R., L.O. Singh, B. Levy and C. Newport, 2014. Mapping physician Twitter networks: Describing how they work as a first step in understanding connectivity, information flow, and message diffusion. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 16(4): e107. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2196/jmir.3006>.
- Mohamad, Z., 2009. Make money with youtube. Kuala Lumpur: PTS Professional Publishing Sdn. Bhd.
- Murdough, C., 2009. Social media measurement: It's not impossible. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 10(1): 94-99. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2009.10722165>.
- Official Portal of Ministry of Health Malaysia, 2019. How to identify a true medicine that is registered with the KKM? Available from <https://www.pharmacy.gov.my/v2/ms/soalan-lazim/bagaimana-mengenalpasti-sesuatu-ubat-itu-adalah-ubat-berdaftar-dengan-kkm.html> [Accessed 18 April 2019].
- Osman, A., 2016. Using social media platforms. Available from <http://azizanosman.com/tips4marketing-menggunakan-social-media-platform/> [Accessed 11 Mac 2018].
- Paquette, H., 2013. Social media as a marketing tool: A literature review.
- Penner, S.J., 2004. *Introduction to health care economics & financial management: Fundamental concepts with practical applications*. United States: Lippincot William Alberti.

- Pütter, M., 2017. The impact of social media on consumer buying intention. *Marketing*, 3(1): 7-13.
- Sarabatin, M., 2016. The role of muslim women. Available from <http://www.bhplus.com.my/node/199585> [Accessed 15 Januari 2017].
- Ting, H., W.W.P. Ming, E.C. de Run and S.L.Y. Choo, 2015. Beliefs about the use of instagram: An exploratory study. *International Journal of Business and Innovation*, 2(2): 15-31.
- Usahawan.com, 2018. 5 business tips on instagram. Available from <https://www.usahawan.com/perniagaan/5-strategi-perniagaan-melalui-instagram.html/> [Accessed 13 Mac 2018].
- UW01, 2019. Personal interview. [Accessed 2019, January 18].
- UW02, 2019. Personal interview. [Accessed 2019, January 18].
- UW03, 2019. Personal interview. [Accessed 2019, January 24].
- UW04, 2019. Personal interview. [Accessed 2019, February 7].
- UW05, 2019. Personal interview. [Accessed 2019, February 21].
- UW06, 2019. Personal interview. [Accessed 2019, April 22].
- UW08, 2019. Personal interview. [Accessed 2019, January 18].
- Young Entrepreneurship Site, 2017. Definition of entrepreneur. Available from <https://forumusahawanmuda.wordpress.com/artikel-2/media-2/>. [Accessed 9 Januari 2017].
- Zahar, A., 2013. Facebook explosion. Selangor: Jootawan Group Sdn. Bhd.

Views and opinions expressed in this article are the views and opinions of the author(s), International Journal of Asian Social Science shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability etc. caused in relation to/arising out of the use of the content.