

Impacts of Social Media as Marketing Communication Tool on Digital Natives

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Abstract - Current work environment governed by technology, with social media as a platform to speed up the process of communication between its users. Users of the platform use technology to communicate, but sharing their ideas, and getting followers are other purposes of having different social media accounts. Digital Natives are the main users of social media, with all activities and elements of social media has impact on their behavior. As a result, researcher believe social media be used as a tool to influence digital native's attitude. The usage of social media is evident in commercial businesses. Brands use this platform as means to create awareness and impact their customers, which digital natives as one of the most highly impacted population. Through recent and relevant literature, the purpose of this research is to examine social media usage as marketing communication tool, and its impact on digital native's attitude. The finding of this paper has been driven from different literature, and study aims to develop future research on social media impacts on users and how brands implement their strategies by using driven impacts of social media.

Keywords - Marketing Communication, social media, Digital Natives, Attitude

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of using digital technology has a countless influence on every aspect of people's life, including young customers' daily lives over the past two decades. This new collaborative revolution has resulted from a remarkable achievement in the Information Technology, known as the Internet, which recently exceeded 3 bn users [1]. This number can mainly see in Asia (15%) following by Europe (14.8%) and Africa (12.8%). From these statistical findings, we can conclude that the number of Internet users can be mainly seen in these continents, thus there might more chances for companies to make their Internet based communication in countries that are in these continent [1]. Because of the outcome of this fast evolution in technology, social networking has become much quicker and faster, especially with the arrival of Internet and globalization. As a result of this fast evolution, there is a huge increase in advanced information communication technology channels, entitled as "Social Media" [2]. Social Media has become to tool for social networking, and it has given additional value to the nature of human being in communication and socialization with one another, as well as to recommend, comment and alert each other by

the mean of communication. As the Internet Technology users is increasing, with the increased usage of social media, this number is frequently noticed amongst younger generations who use it for more than simple communication [3]. Different ways exist to determine younger generation. They include the digital natives, the net generation, the Google generation, or the millennial [2]. All these terms can be used to demonstration and signifies the importance of how new technologies have influenced the lives of young generation. For some, new technologies have been defined as a feature in which the lives of young generations have been more dependent and changed in areas of communication, socialization, creation and learning techniques. In the world of Internet and technology, different platforms are being used continuously for the mean of communication, sharing ideas and even having followers [3]. Creation of different platforms are happening frequently, and they become trendy between young generation after a certain period. Social Media has become one of the most communicating, influential, and interactive platforms with the aim of creating network of communication between its users. The platforms have allowed young users to create personalized online pages, communicate and interact with friends, as well as exchange and share content that they have created [4]. As a result of the increased usage of social media between people, especially younger generation, companies have also taken advantage of this platform to implement new marketing strategies [5]. Not only traditional way of communication and advertising is used, but new approaches to customers with social media as a tool for marketing communication. The extent to which this platform has become strong is a subject matter that has a significant impact on customers, especially digital natives. As a result of this, marketers are now implementing strategies using social media to influence their customers' attitude, targeting digital natives as their main segment and the main users of this platform, toward their brand [4]. The purpose of this paper is to examine how social media is used as a marketing communication tool and the platform influences customer's attitude, focused on digital natives.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this paper is to understand what impact social media has on digital natives' attitude and how social media can be used as a marketing communication tool. the objective of this research is to

see if social media can be implemented as an effective marketing communication tool, influencing customer's attitude. Through literature examination the study aims to address the following key research questions:

- How social media can be used as a marketing communication tool?
- What changes social media have on marketing communication tool?
- What impacts social media have on digital native's attitudes?

This research aims to determine the impact of social media on digital native's attitude if social media can be used as an effective marketing communication tool. This study is mainly studying the young generation users of social media by using excessive literature reviews and research that has been done in this area. The research method implemented in the study examines and analyse extensive literature within the topic to identify and draw conclusions for developing conceptual framework for future research work. To address the research questions, reading several literature reviews was necessary to draw a final assumption. Thus, reviewing literatures on the topic of marketing communication and how social media can be in related to MC tools and the relation of MC and digital natives was being analysed.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the studies, from different literature reviews, below framework has been designed which the next paragraphs would discuss them more in detail.

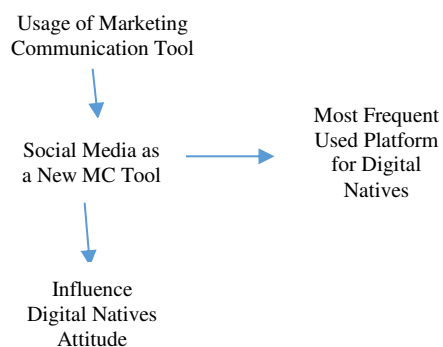


Fig. 1. Literature Review Framework

A. Marketing Communication Tools

All organisation, disregard of their business function and nature, profit or non-profit, need to communicate with different stakeholders. There are customers, individuals who can select among thousands of product or service offerings. Marketing communications provides a core activity of creating awareness and interaction, so that all interested parties can understand the purposes of a chosen product or service and appreciate the value of the goods and services offered [5]. Traditionally, there are five main

marketing communication: advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations, and direct marketing. The appropriate mix of these tools could be identified as the best exercise of marketing communication strategies. Since companies are exposing in a strong competitive environment, they must progress and advance their own ways of management which must be parallel and with correspondence with the world's changes [6]. As a result of this, communication is not the only one instrument and means for presenting and announcing an existence of a specific product or service, but in interaction with external customers, business partners, suppliers etc. Therefore, marketing communication is the tool by which company could use effectively to influence customer's behavior and creates competitive advantage. The purpose is to inform, convince and remind customers of the existence of a brand, company, and products in direct or indirect ways. Marketing communication includes both of commercial and non-commercial communication to support corporate marketing strategy [7]. With technology progress, it is possible to achieve new ways to overbid own goods and services. Companies which use traditional communication tools influence customers through corresponding groups, agents, or research agencies. That approachable method lacks enough direct interaction with customers which is crucial. According to the concept of communication, it is clear, that marketers have control of the flow of communications through the media. Technology has made and shifted the traditional marketing communication methods to a more advanced, fast, and convenient process, through a new method of communication strategy, although using technology has become a challenging phenomenon, it keeps changing every now and then [7]. Social media is one of the fast-growing tools that has converted the traditional method of marketing communication to the digitalized method and way. Companies are extensively using social media as a new tool to implement their marketing communication strategies and activities. As a result of this, social media has recently become one of the influential tools in marketing communication.

B. Social Media as Marketing Communication Tool

In recent years, social media has appeared as a topic of an interest in individuals and even companies. The incredible achievement of social media has been observed and practiced in terms of how individuals and companies adopt and use, caused by a standard shift in the way people communicate, express ideas and thought, and even how they interact with each other. Traditionally, organizations and brands-maintained control over relationship activities while customers were mainly being considered as passive "receivers" [8]. More significantly, the cultural shift in the customer-centric direction that has happened has led to a revolution in organizational focus to relationship-oriented [9]. Due to the improvement of technology which has resulted in existence of social

media, companies are using this platform as a contemporary and new way of communication with customers. This platform has been playing the role of traditional marketing communication tools in a fast and speedy way [10]. As a result of this, a new and different marketing activities have become into picture for companies which have more effect and impact on customers and is more effective and efficient for companies. Hence, social media marketing has been created as a new role which refers to “the process of wining customers’ attention through Social Media platforms” [9].

Social Media Marketing platforms usually center on efforts to create content that attracts attention and encourages readers to share it with their social network. Social Media Marketing is a form of Internet Marketing that exploits social networking websites as a marketing tool [11]. The objective of SMM is to produce content that users of this platform will share with their social network to support a company increase brand exposure and coverage and broaden customer reach and create more awareness. Accordingly, social media has become a new marketing communication that presents new challenges and opportunities for both businesses and customers, which perceive social media as a new tool for creating a better customer experience and for increasing brand awareness through creating excitement, attraction and encouragement and amplifying positive word-of-mouth. On the other hand, social media as a tool for marketing communication has created a new concept that has emerged and created a new touch point for the communications between businesses and customers specifically target markets [12]. As a result of this, since social media is playing so many different roles, and have influenced customers stronger than other traditional marketing communication tools, we can conclude that social media has become one of the strongest, fastest, and more convenient tools of marketing communication. One of the greatest examples regarding using social media as a tool for marketing communication can be Instagram [15]. Companies and brands are extensively using this platform as a mean to create awareness and interact with their customers, specifically their target market. One of the strategies that they are using is the usage of bloggers social media page. This has become a serious career for models and bloggers that they also have become a platform to advertise a specific brand. Companies use bloggers social media platform to reach customers and influence their purchase behavior [9]. We can conclude that not even a social media has become a platform and a tool for MC, but bloggers and famous users of social media can also be mentioned as a tool or a mean of marketing communication tools.

C. *Social Media and Digital Natives*

Definition of young generation, millennial and digital natives has been changed, especially during the time of

Internet usage. Today, the practice of Internet has become a new and innovative exercise to define and classified generations by the frequency of its usage. As a result of this, [13] refers to people who were born before this new digital era, which began around 1980, as Digital Immigrants. “Digital Immigrants are those who have the ability to learn new technologies, but some way located within the past, thus won’t be able to fully understand the complete and advance usage of technology like people who are born on after 20s” [13]. “*Digital Natives*” are the new definition of people born in the digital era, also referred as “iGeneration”. In contrast, the term “*Digital Immigrant*” refers to those who have been grown up in a pre-computer world. The terms “digital immigrants” and “digital natives” were promoted and become more popular and elaborated recently as the age, usage and development of technology changed and is gradually speeding up, though the age group of digital users has also been influenced [14]. It is important to comprehend that not all digital immigrants and not all digital natives are created equally. The native/immigrant division is one of generations while digital natives are tech-savvy by virtue of their being born around technology and the other group of those who are adapting themselves to the usage of technology and the adoption process is quite speedy [16]. Today, digital natives are being recognized as today’s school and college students, thus the influence of their peer friends has the main influence on their usage of technology. The reason for this speedy movement can also been seen during 2020, with the rise of COVID-19 Pandemic. Even parents started getting used to using technological devices for their children’s schooling. This can be the reason of why there cannot be an exact definition and pointing an exact age for iGeneration, Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants. Researchers consider social media in the broadest sense of the term and describe it as any online service which users can create and share a diversity of content. The usage of social media between both digital natives and digital immigrants can be seen visibly. Though digital immigrants are those who are adapting their usage behavior in respond to social media, while digital natives are defining their personality through it [15]. This means that, although a lot of children and young people use digital media in their spare time, still digital native’s usage is more noticeable. Consequently, social media usage behavior is emerging and renovating at a rapid rate. So, they are more likely to value others’ opinion in social media and to feel important when they provide feedback about the brands or products they use [17]. Companies have taken digital natives’ behavior through social media and the significance that they give to their social media as an advantage for their marketing strategy. Therefore, there has come a widespread competition between brands to either progress and develop a new target market or use social media as a marketing communication tool to influence this generation more than others [21].

D. Social Media and Digital Natives' Attitude

The impressive growth that can be visibly seen in the improvement of digital technology has not impacted only businesses, but the main impact is on young consumers' daily life since the past two decades. We can consider this interaction as a great technological revolution that has resulted from technological and informational achievements which is being called "Internet". Social networking is another platform through Internet that its growth has become quicker than globalization has also accompanied it. The users of this platform have increased, and this can be seen more on young generation. Social media networking has become a communicational tool between its members [18]. Not only individuals are using it as a mean to communicate and network with others, but companies are also using it as one of the new tools in Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC). According to research done during the time of social media's high usage, they considered different aspects of social media marketing communication that can be associated to different components of consumer's attitude. Exposed that both users of this platform and organisation's awareness have been affected by social media. This impact can be more mentioned as a positive cognitive attitudinal response among younger generation, especially digital natives, as they are the heavy users of this platform [19]. As a result of this research, social media conveys a positive cognitive attitude between digital native users. Adolescents who have started using social media for 2 years or more have exposed and revealed a favorable cognitive attitude toward social media, while digital natives and young generation exhibited greatest positive attitude, especially if they are using social media for a year or less [21]. The key reason for positivity in attitude can be the ease, comfort, and fast usage of social media. Other than the content, pictures also representing the visual aspect of the content to which people share and provide feedback. The feedbacks and comments given for posts can easily destroy or construct the image of a brand name [20]. This is mostly common between digital natives as they would like to increase their self-identity through sending their ideas and comments mainly on social media. Subsequently, an image of a brand can easily demolish or build through comments and communications that happen in social media [22]. This phenomenon fact has been called as e-WOM (E-Word of Mouth) which consist of individuals, giving and sharing comments regarding any post on social media, disregard of revealing their real self-identity [18]. From the social media users' point of view of, digital natives are highly affected by this, as they are more concerns about the number of followers, likes and other social media activities of a brand [23]. This paper highlights that to create a positive attitude toward social media for digital natives, the content and activities that brands are persuading in social media is very essential. As discussed earlier, famous bloggers activities on social media are another influential tool which affect digital native's

attitudes. This is more effective as social media bloggers are representing an ideal self; thus, it leads digital natives to follow them, and they also try to imitate them by following and checking on the brands and products that they use. As a result of this, bloggers and social media can be used as a dominant platform to influence digital native's attitude.

IV. RESEARCH DISCUSSIONS

Results from reading different literature reviews confirms that, Marketing Communication is a traditional way of approaching customers, and creating awareness regarding a specific brand. This awareness was mainly being used by traditional MC tools such as advertisements and other communication tools and the main purpose was to reach out to the main target audience. As the increase of technology and the existence of Internet, the traditional communication tools have become digitalized, as social media comes into the picture. The beginning usage of social media was mainly for the purpose of networking and personal individual communication, while after some time, companies also started using this platform as a mean to create awareness and communication. Since this platform has more effect and power, social media becomes the first marketing communication tools for companies and brands. Quite a few other international studies have measured and considered several aspects of social media marketing communications associated to different attitude components through several units and industries. Studies have concluded that individuals and organizations usage of social media has positively affected awareness and interaction of target audience and the brand. On the other hand, digital natives are the biggest and dominated users of social medias. With the rise of digital native's users, creation of bloggers in the environment of social media came into existence and it becomes a free, easy to use, fast and convincement platform to communicate with the whole world.

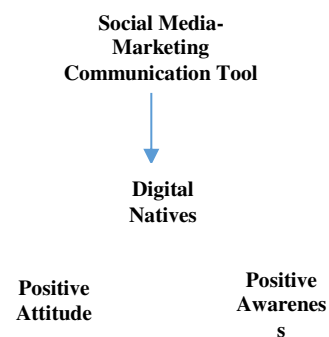


Fig. 2. Proposed Research Framework

V. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Social media has become a famous and frequent tool for both individuals and company to create networks and communication. This platform was being used as a networking tool for individuals, while companies realised

the new method and strategy to communicate with their target audiences and usage of social media as a marketing communication tool has become into picture [24]. By the increase in the usage of social media platform, most of traditional methods of marketing communication and awareness creation has faded away and has been replaced by this revolutionary tool. Since social media has conquered over traditional marketing communication tools, it has left a positive footprint in customer's mind. Easy, fast, and convenient awareness and attitude on customer's mind, especially digital natives, as the main and powerful users of this platform are the topic that started being studied. No organisations can develop without an effective marketing communication strategy to create and retain a positive and favorable brand attitude among their customers and users. This attitude can mainly build towards digital natives, giving an opportunity to brands to expand their target market and introduce new product lines.

The research aimed to address existing research on social media usage as a marketing communication tool and its impact of specific target audience of digital natives. Secondly, further studies to compare the attitude of digital immigrants and digital natives through social media can be explored. Further research on using digital natives as a sample and review and study their behavior in social media and see what aspects of their attitudes are being influenced. In addition, advance research can be done to realize the effect that social media can have on digital immigrant. The limitation of the study was mainly in the area that was not being discussed the importance of bloggers in social media platform as a medium of communication and what impacts they can have on digital natives. Finally, due recent COVID-19 pandemic, most companies have converted their regular functions online. During the quarantine period, people started using social media and online shopping more often.

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