

Social media in present day



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Social media is a compilation of online platforms that allows public to communicate through different type of online features. These connective features can be sharing of knowledge and idea, networking, online discussion, and other content of communicating (Heesters, as cited in Schets, 2010, p. 22).

The concept of social media just about existed ten years ago. However nowadays, social media are the fastest growing websites online and can be see there is a rapid and continuing increase in their audience and reach. By catching up with this online trends, there are increasing number of nonprofit organizations are using social media as aims to increase outreach, fundraising and recruitment capacity. Nonprofits exploit the online social networks to offer exponential possibilities for developing personal relationships. Once an organization established a good connection to an individual, that person can leverage his or her personal contacts (Tetrick, 2010).

Today, there were about half a billion people around the world have Facebook accounts and nearly 200 million have Twitter accounts. These two social networking sites will be the most popular among internet users worldwide. Statistics illustrated public who are younger, wealthier and better educated in demographic segments use social media more than other groups (Beribe, as cited in Berube, 2010, p. 1).

Social media able to reach more consumers globally as it continues to grow, especially with social networking and microblogging sites. These are the most commonly sites used for socialization and connecting with friends,

parents, relatives, etc. Among all the Social Networking Sites that used by the nonprofits, Facebook and blogging got the most attention from public. There were also recent studies indicated that old generations are using social media frequently. Therefore, social media has the potential to widen audience for nonprofits (Pierce & Wood & Smith, as cited in Hovey, 2010, p. 2).

The chart below shows how Schets (2010) illustrated social media's key social platforms.

A chart of the key social platforms (Source: Adapted from Schets, 2010)

The Importance of social media

The social media is an unpaid media, it is created by an individual and company on the internet. (Weber, as cited in Kichatov & Mihajlovski, 2010, p. 6). Over last few years, social media has become universal and even more significance for social networking and content sharing. The emerging of social media has directly affect traditional media and broadcast media as the main promotional tools. (Asur & Huberman, 2010)

The main role of social media in an organization is to facilitate communications either with the organization and with one another, or on their own terms. The communications will only be more effective if the organization's target audience is already comfortable with social media tools (Tetrick, 2010). Social media is believe to has more opportunities than traditional media. For instance, blogs allow two-way dialog between an organization and its public (Seltzer & Mitrook, as cited in Hovey, 2010, p. 2).

Moreover, social media platforms allow organizations to freely take advantage of existing social networks and virally spread their messages.

For nonprofit organizations, social media sites, such as blogs and Twitter, provide new ways to engage publics in, fundraising, activism, and publicity (Kanter, 2007; Mattson & Barnes, Waters, Burnett, Lamm & Lucas, as cited in Tetrick, 2010, p. 15). Through social media, non profits organizations share the work of publicity and advocacy with volunteers. Their organizational information is open to public too (Cronk, Fine, Waters as cited in Tetrick, 2010, p. 12).

Undeniable, it can be clearly seen that both the organizational communication and public relations have a rapid change due to today's internet technologies (Curtis, as cited in Tetrick, 2010, p. 1). The previous public relations studies indicate that social media is widely being use in public relations sector, especially the phenomenon of blogging have the potential to bring dramatic changes to many aspects of public relations. However, they do not use it to the fullest mean (Eyrich & Padman & Sweetser & Kent & Xifra & Huertas, as cited in Hovey, 2010, p. 1)

Accoding to the other public relations studies, the role of social media mainly help the organization to cultivate the relationships with their publics.

Moreover, it allows the organizations to react immediately to the problem from their public (Wright & Hinson, as cited in Hovey, 2010, p. 2).

Furthermore, the internet technologies has become a publicity tool after President Barack Obama's election campaign. By the use of social media, he successfully raise around \$750 million. Not only that, he able to mobilize

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more than 13 million supporters during his 2008 election (Scearce, as cited in Tetrick, 2010, p. 6).

After reviewing the previous research studies, it can be conclude that social media is an essential tool which play the role in facilitating the overall communication process. By using social media, it can gain fresh support for the organization. Moreover, by making them more immediate, open an avenue to a new audience, it can strengthen an organization's existing communication attempts.

Social Media and Youth

It can be say that young generations today grow up with the internet. Our young generations have the whole globe at the point of their finger tips. The emerging of the social media somehow is shaping and changing the way our young generations is communicating with others. Social media become their daily ' partner' on the internet world. Through social media, youth able to get their relationship, friendship, information, entertainment, education, etc. It can be seen clearly that there were an obvious changing pattern of media use among young generation in present day (Jalil & Jalil & Latiff, 2010).

The importance of charity awareness

Charity awareness plays a key role in which it will create a desire for people to help others. Individual who has charitably aware instigates a sense of fulfilment to those who translate their desire to actions and thus improve the lives of those who are in need (Soft Power Education Blog, 2008).

In this study, the awareness towards charity work refers to the capability to have an in-depth knowledge which will educate people more about charity work and encourage more people to be involved in charity work. By having charity awareness, it will indirectly create a desire to aid others. Individuals who have charity awareness will try to think of ways and means to build bridges to deliver the task. As a consequence, it will reach a certain goal of fulfilment with oneself through the advancement of the lives of those less fortunate people who are the object of that charitable desire.

Link between Social Media & Charity Work Awareness

Not surprisingly, all charities associations raise funds and need donations in order to sustain their causes. Without those funds, they will hardly survive in society. All the money received by charities is used for the cause each charity is committed to. The received funds used to help needy children and families and even protecting animals from human abuse, while a small amount is used for future fundraising activity. It is very significant for charity organizations to invest in fundraising so that it can attract new supporters and to inform the public about the updated events and activities as well as the latest information about the campaign. In this study, the public who have charity awareness will automatically lend their hands to help those who are in need.

In present day, there are more and more charities using social media to promote their good cause. Basically, social media is a good promotional tool for charities to increase awareness among the public. Many charities use social networking such as Facebook, Twitter and other online platforms in promoting

their causes. Previous research shows that by using social media to promote, it can make the campaign to be successful once done in the right way.

CASE STUDY

World vision Malaysia

World Vision has been established in Malaysia for 14 years. It serves as the support office of World Vision International. It is a charity organization that assists the poor especially children to help themselves. It will collect fund from public then donate to people that in backward countries. There are three main programs in World Vision. They are Child Sponsorship program, 30- Hour Famine program and Gifts of Hope program. These programs aim to help child that is in need. Through Child Sponsorship program, public can sponsor needy children by just donate RM50 per month to provide them education, food and others. For 30- Hour Famine, participants are require fast for food for 30 hours in order to get them experiences the hunger that those children and families endure everyday. Besides, through Gifts of Hope program, public can sent gifts to the needy children or families that select from the catalogue such as school uniforms, livestock for families and others (World Vision Malaysia, 2006).

30-hour Famine

30-Hour Famine began in Malaysia since 1997. It is known as a global movement against poverty and hunger worldwide. Its main purpose is to encourage public to donate and help children as well as families in need. The fund which collected will be able to help feed and care for tens of thousands

of kids all over the world. Since famine intend to motivate ordinary people to care and assist for those unlucky and needed people, therefore participants will get to experiences hunger for 30 hours through the 30-Hour famine campaign that will be conducted once a year. During the fast for 30 hours, participants undertake different activities while learning about some global issues. They also learn what it takes to stop hunger in its tracks. The fast can be done with a group or individually, it is depend on the participants themselves. Due to 30-Hour Famine is powered by World Vision, the donors are not just feeding kids for a day but are helping them overcome poverty for a lifetime.

30-Hour Famine History

World Vision was established in Malaysia in 1997. The first 30-Hour Famine in Malaysia was organized by The Sin Chew daily. It was successfully raises for around RM2. 6 million. Although the crisis strikes was happened on 1999, but the 30-Hour Famine still continue to roll in. During this period, Fish Leong started to join the Famine and had her first performance. After this, Silvia Chang and Sally Woo become the ambassadors of the Famine at year 2000. The first off- site Famine was held in Penang in this year too. At the following year, HELP University College appeared to be the headquarters of the Famine after the Sin Chew. The Famine was held all together in KL, Johor and Penang. Their sponsor will be E-Excel and Nesh. In 2002, the Famine camp which is with English version was held. Its headquarter, HELP University College is assigned to be the host of both the English and Chinese Famine Camps.

At 2003, the SARS epidemic is very serious and forced the Famine have to be postponed from May to July. Due to this reason, the Famine was held in Stadium Juara, Bukit Kiara KL for the first time. In order to show their caring to the community, the English campers visited local charities and presented proposals on their causes at 2004. After that, the first " Volunteer Training Camp" was held. On the other hand, due to campers from Johor began and ended their fast on the train, therefore, the " Famine Express" was born.

In 2006, the Famine camp continue to gain a lot of enthusiastic responses from the public, an unprecedented number of newcomers join both the Chinese and English Famine camps. The media also play an important role in promoting the camps. During its 10th year anniversary at 2007, it was reported the Famine has been break the record whereby about 10, 000 sponsors, donors, volunteers and campers took part in its largest camp ever. Furthermore, the Famine started to spread its wing to East Malaysia for the first time.

In 2008, the " Do it Yourself" (DIY) camps were held across the nation. The Famine was also decentralised in order to widen its reach and empower its supporters. Since the issue of global food crisis is getting serious day by day, therefore, World Vision offices in Malaysia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and Australia decided to focus on the Global Food Crisis. In Malaysia, it gain a good response from public in which there are about 100 DIY camps with the more than 10, 000 campers joined the cause of fighting global hunger and raise awareness on the food crisis among public.

Identity

30-Hour Famine Logo

World Vision's vision statement

" Our vision for every child, life in all its fullness"

" Our prayer for every heart, the will to make it so"

World Vision's mission statement

The mission of World Vision is to follow our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in working with the poor and oppressed to promote human transformation, seek justice and bear witness to the good news of the Kingdom of God.

World Vision's core values

The World Vision Partnership shares a common understanding bound together by six core values. With these core values, World Vision able to live and work towards because it treat the core values as the fundamental and guiding principles that determine World Vision's actions. The six core values as below:

We are Christian

We value people

We are partners

We are committed to the poor

We are stewards

We are responsive

Uses and gratifications Theory (U&G)

Uses and Gratification theory is a time-honored media use theory. It is a theory which is based on the concept that a person cannot influence by media unless he or she has some use for that media or its messages.

(Ruggiero, as cited in Stafford & Schkade, 2004, p. 226). Through this theory, it can help to understand consumer motivations for media use.

U&G theory was started in the 1940s when researchers interested to find out the reasons why audiences engaged in different types of media behavior (Wimmer & Dominick, as cited in Ruggiero, 2000, p. 4). U&G Theory illustrate how “ people actively seek out specify media and specify content to generate specify gratifications” (West & Turner, ac cited in Chasse, 2009, p. 2). Furthermore, it worked to explain media need for individual and individual involvement. Beginning in the 1920’s and continue on into the 21st century, some media scholars have practised an in-depth understanding of human interaction with mass media, what effects media will on the audiences and how audiences use media. There are strong connections between media selection and the gratifications consumers seek. (Bantz, Blumler, McQuail, Mcleod, Becker, Rubin & Ruggiero, as cited in Ancu & Cozma, 2009, p. 569)

There are 5 basic assumptions in U&G theory. Firstly, the audience is considered active. Second, audience uses media with goal-oriented. Not only that, audience have self- awareness to know and understand well the purpose for using certain media. Third, different people own different type of

communication behaviours. They are based upon psychological and social factors. Fourth, these two factors will influence how good media can serve and satisfy people's needs and wants. People will select which media they like the most. Finally, people are sometimes more influential than media. People will chose other media to get information when they were not satisfy with the current media they chose (Rubin, as cited in Pornsakulvanich, 2005, p. 14)

By view from the psychological perspective, U&G basically emphasized the active role of individual in choosing media to fulfil their needs. This theory normally focused on to explain the way why and how people use the media rather than the way media influence people (Klapper, as cited in Pornsakulvanich, 2005, p. 13).

Previous research assumes that audience are actively involved in the media consumption (Rubin, Ruggiero, Severin, Tankard, Windahl, as cited in Ancu & Cozma, 2009, p. 569). Some scholars stated that the social media is pull-media in which it aims to provide information that is interest to certain audience, users have to be actively click and type to access those information. It can make user become more goal-oriented and aware in their everyday consumption (LaRose, Eastin, Lin & Jeffres, as cited in Ancu & Cozma, 2009, p. 569).

U&G theory has been applied to different types of online content due to different media fulfil different needs (Perse, Courtright, Dun, as cited in Ancu & Cozma, 2009, p. 569). Online media play the same role as television, radio in order to provide entertainment, satisfaction and social interaction needs

(Ferguson, Perse, Kaye, Papacharissi & Rubin, as cited in Ancu & Cozma, 2009, p. 569). However, there are still some differences between online media and traditional media. For example, online media enable audience to control over content. By using search engine, internet users able to search for specific issue compared to less interactive media such as television and radio (Kaye, as cited in Ancu & Cozma, 2009, p. 569).

Nowadays, most of the mass communication scholars point out the U&G theory normally is identified to be a sub tradition of media effects research (McQuail, 1994). As Ruggiero (2000) state, the emergence of computer-mediated communication has revived the important of U&G theory. Practically, it provided a cutting edge theoretical approach at the beginning stages of each new mass communications medium such as television, radio, newspapers, and now the Internet. According to U&G theory, the audience is selective when using media and mostly is encouraged by rational self-awareness of the individual's own needs and an expectation that those needs will be satisfied by particular types of media and content (Katz, as cited in ruggiero, 2000, p. 18). According to few recent researchs, it stated research who has U&G involvement which focuses on more advanced communication technologies such as uses of the Internet found few gratifications, which were information seeking , entertainment and diversion, exploration and relationship building (Charney, Greenberg, Kuehn, Tewksbury, Althaus, as cited in Melanie Grellhesl, 2010, p. 24). Television and internet hold the same roles as to entertain, to provide escapism, and social interaction (Ferguson, Perse, Kaye, Papacharissi & Rubin as cited in Ancu & Cozma, 2009, p. 569).

Explanation

In this study, those undergraduate students are actually applying the U&G approach when they are deciding to look for more information about 30-Hour Famine. Students choose the medium that could satisfy their needs to find out for information that they wanted to know about 30-Hour Famine campaign, and that they are able to recognise their reasons for making media choices by choosing social media.

The uses and gratifications approach use to test how the audience uses mass media to satisfy psychological and social needs. As an active audience, they chose their favour media based on their ability to satisfy their needs. In this study, people who are interested to be involved in charity work such as 30-Hour Famine will try to find out more information about the organization through their favour media. Most of the undergraduates students select social media to satisfy their need as they are active internet users.

Internet is suited well to the U&G approach (Kaye & Johnson, as cited in Stark, 2009, p. 21). Audience is active due to the internet create a two-way communication. In this study, those undergraduate students are active audience. There were a two-way communication when students posted comment and asked questions on the 30-Hour Famine official website, it can help students to be even more understand about the campaign. Additionally, students who were using the web will actively look out for more information about the campaign by clicking on links and using search engines, hence showing that the web is goal oriented and those undergraduates students

were aware of the needs they were attempting to satisfy (Lin & Jeffres, 1998, as cited in Stark, 2009, p. 21).

As a conclusion, the advanced communications technology nowadays did benefits user a lof in communication. User can have have more choices to select when communicate with others, it also allowed new ways for users to communicate (Ruggiero , as cited in Melanie Grellhesl, 2010, p. 22) For example, social media is a new way for internet users to communicate with each other. By using social media, internet users able to post, view, comment anything in the internet.