

Design and Content Analysis of a Hypermarket Website in Malaysia

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Introduction

With the improvement of lifestyle and purchasing power, Malaysians have shifted their shopping preferences from small retail stores to the hypermarkets. One of the reasons is that these hypermarkets offer a complete array of merchandises under one roof. According to a research, Malaysian has spent 37% the most money in hypermarkets as compared with other supermarkets, convenience stores and personal cares stores (Nielsen Hong Kong, 2010) . Perrigot and Cliquet (2006) argue that a hypermarket covers “everything under the same roof” which combines supermarkets and department stores with respect to wide floor space for the broadest category of products linked to discount price policy of self-service and networking techniques based on sales promotion methods and effective merchandising, and large parking space. This is further supported by Farhangmehr et. al (2000) who argued that hypermarket is the preferred type of retail store for consumer for regularly purchased packaged products, due to its low prices and suitable one-stop shopping.

Hypermarkets in Malaysia

The hypermarket industry is a highly regulated industry in Malaysia (Ministry of Trade and Consumerism, 2004). It is put under the supervision of the Ministry of Domestic Trade, Consumerism and Cooperative through a Committee on Wholesale and Retail Trade since 1995 (Trade Chakra, 2008). The role of this committee is to regulate and supervise the industry in wake of rapid entry from international industry players. According to a report by Pricewaterhouse Coopers (2004), since April 2004, the Malaysian government has enforced a new set of guidelines for applications to set up new hypermarket in Malaysia:

- The minimum capital requirement has increased from RM10 million to RM50 million
- Application must be submitted 2 years in advance
- New hypermarkets cannot be built within 3.5 km radius of housing areas or city center
- Hypermarket must operate in their own buildings
- A socio-economic impact study has to be conducted by the local authorities

Table 1 illustrates the ownership composition of major hypermarkets in Malaysia (Abu, 2008).

| Store Name | Ownership |
|------------|--|
| Giant | Dairy Farm International (DFI), Hongkong |
| Mydin | The Mydin Family |
| Carrefour | Magnificent Diagraph, France |
| Tesco | Tesco UK 70%, Sime Darby Berhad (30%) |

The intention of the rules set up by the Malaysian government under the supervision of the then Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry, came shortly after Tesco announced its entry into Malaysia, we to stop the death of local sundry shops (Ganesan, 2012).

History of Mydin

Mydin is a well-known Malaysian chain of hypermarket founded in 1959 in Kota Bharu, Kelantan by Mydin Mohamad under the name of Syarikat Mydin Mohamed (Nik Muhammad, Muhamad, & Md Taib, 2009). Mydin has emerged as one of the top players in Malaysia's competitive hypermarket industry along with Tesco and Carrefour by providing local and overseas products at affordable prices. Despite their humble beginning, Mydin has expanded both in scope and size of its business. After 54 years of business, Mydin sells a broad range of domestic goods and its stores provide everything ranging from food-line, soft-line, hard-line, and household items to cater a large segment of Malaysian population. They currently own 94 outlets nationwide consisting of 7 hypermarkets, 18 emporiums and 3 superstores (bazaar), 10 mini-marts (MyMydin), 9 convenience stores (MyMart), and 6 franchises outlets (Mydin Mart) (Omar, Mohd Sanusi, Abdul Aziz, & Ismail, 2010).

Websites and Hypermaket

Changes in technology have a great impact on the development of the global economy. The global progression of electronic commerce shows that people are becoming dependent on the Internet for communications and services (Winnie & John, 2002). Many industries, including hypermarket industry was not spared. Table 2 illustrates leading hypermarkets in Malaysia and their websites addresses.

Table 2: Lists of Hypermarkets in Malaysia 's Website Addresses

| No | Hypermarket | Website Address |
|----|-------------|----------------------|
| 1 | TESCO | www.tesco.com.my |
| 2 | Giant | www.giant.com.my |
| 3 | Carrefour | www.carrefour.com.my |
| 4 | Mydin | www.mydin.com.my |

In this respect, the Internet transforms the way of trading, but the essence of the marketing remains invariable (Miryam Martinez-Martinez, 2008). According to Chai Lee (2010), web site performance and analysis is a crucial factor in determining today's online business's success. Many elements of design and graphic art can be used to convey the content of the web (Lee G. C., 2010).

Objectives

The reason for the authors to choose Mydin as the center of this research is that Mydin is the only local hypermarket listed as the top four hypermarkets in Malaysia. As listed in Table 1, the other hypermarkets are owned or partially owned by international players. The purpose of this research is to evaluate Mydin's websites. The specific objectives of the study are as stated follows:

- a) To evaluate the design and content of Mydin's website
- b) To identify strengths and weaknesses of Mydin's website

Method

In order to evaluate these websites, there are several fundamental assumptions that should be made clear. They are (EETAP Resource Library, 1999):

1. Evaluation will involve personal judgment
2. Not all information are created equal
3. There is good information on bad sites, and bad information on good sites
4. Information on the Web should be viewed as no more or less than information from other sources
5. An individual who evaluates the website will have certain degrees of biasness in viewing the information
6. Authorship on the Web does not mean ‘authority’
7. Evaluation of a website is a process and not the ultimate goal
8. There are two types of website evaluation; content and design

According to Ongus et. al (2006, p. 63), a website evaluation is necessary in order to enable planners and developers to keep up with the increasingly diverse nature of site that are posted on the internet. For the purpose of this paper, the authors have decided to adopt WWW Cyberguide Ratings for Website Design and Content (Joseph, 2008). This web evaluation method was introduced by Karen McLachlan in 1996 and further refined to keep abreast with the changes in technology in 2002 (Whitten, Smith, Munday, & LaPlante, 2006). She developed the evaluation tools as means of introducing the World Wide Web to novice users in 1996 (NA, 2009). The tools have been widely used by researchers to evaluate content and graphic design of home pages

(Yei-sook, NA; NA, 1997). In the case of Malaysian websites evaluation, the tools have been used to gauge the best practices used by Malaysian environmental websites and also used to evaluate e-banking websites (Aida, Hanipah, Hazmilah, Kalthom, & Aziz, 2010; Lee G. C., 2010; Aida, Kalthom, & Noraini, 2009; Goi, 2005). The evaluation components are categorized as follows:

a) Design

i. Speed

This section evaluates the efficiency of homepage downloading time

ii. Home page

This section provides information on the attractiveness of the homepage, the clarity of the homepage content, and also whether the copyright date is clearly established.

iii. Ease of navigation

The section provides information on the clarity of the direction given in order to navigate the website.

iv. Use of multimedia

The section discusses the use of multimedia in the website.

v. Browser compatibility

The section examines the compatibility of the website with different available browsers in the market.

vi. Content presentation

The section provides information on the format used in the website, the sufficiency of information, and also the roles played by the links provided by the website.

vii. Currency

This section explores the currency of the information provided in the website.

viii. Availability of further information

This section provide information on whether link for other useful websites are provided and also a working link is provided to contact a person or address for further information.

b) Content

i. First look

In this section, the authors analyzed the content based on the first impression assumption. In other words, based on the first glance, the web site should be able to tell the audience the basic content and the intended audience of the site.

ii. Information providers

This section provides the author with the basic idea on the availability of the author of the site, information of the site's author and whether the author is qualified to present the information on the topic presented on the site.

iii. Information currency

This section provides the authors with information on whether the information provided on the set is up to date.

iv. Information quality

In this section, the authors analyzed whether the content has achieved its purpose. Apart from that, items that were also analyzed ranges from the organization of the site, interactivity issues, content accuracy up until the issues on the grammar and spelling correctness and appropriateness of the site.

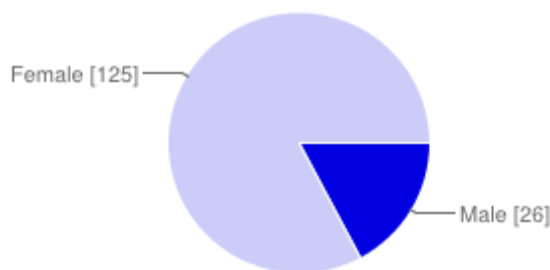
v. Further information

This section provides information on the availability of further information provided by the sites to fulfill the audience needs.

Characteristics of Respondents

The questionnaires were distributed online to the respondents from 11th of March 2013 until 26th of March 2013. For the purpose of evaluating this websites, the authors have recruited 151 respondents who are mainly 3rd year students from Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, Bandar Baru Nilai. All of the respondents have at least once become Mydin's customers. Chart 1 describes the distribution of respondents based on gender.

Chart 1: Gender Distribution



Basically, 83% (125) of the respondents are female while the remaining 17% (26) are male students. All of the respondents are 3rd year students from four faculties; Faculty of Economics and Muamalat (40%), Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah (44%), Faculty of Science and Technology

(11%), and Faculty of Syariah and Law (5%). All of the respondents fall under the 21-25 year old age category.

Analysis and Discussion

Ongus et. al (2006) provided with a solution to evaluate the website using McLachlan's method (Joseph, 2008) by assigning the respond 'Yes' with 1 mark and 'No' with 0 mark. Based on this exercise, they rated the websites' design attribute according to the following schema:

(16-24 marks) - Very well designed website, easy to use

(11-15 marks) – Website design needs to be improved but site is usable

(0-10 marks) – Poorly designed website, difficult to use

On the other side of the coin, they rated the websites' content attributes according to the following schema:

(16-24 marks) – Very useful website for users' information needs

(11-15 marks) – Website worth bookmarking for future references

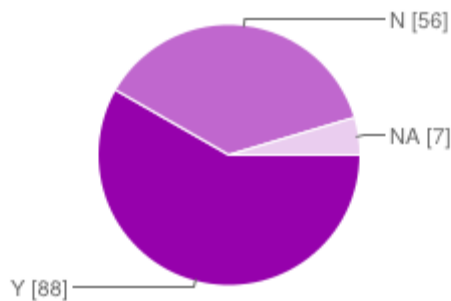
(0-10 marks) – Website not worth coming back to

Table 3: Design Evaluation Attributes and Scores

| HYPERMARKET/ QUESTION CATEGORIES | 1.Speed | 2.Home page | 3.Ease of navigation | 4.Use of multimedia | 5.Browser compatibility | 6.Content Presentation | 7.Currentcy | 8.Availability of further information | Total Mark |
|-------------------------------------|---------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|------------|
| Mydin | 0.77 | 4.22 | 4.06 | 1.48 | 0.85 | 4.08 | 1.26 | 1.62 | 18.34 |

Based on Table 3, the design evaluation score for Mydin’s website is 18.34 which fall under the (16-24) category, which is described by Ongus et. al (2006) as being very well designed and easy to use. However, based on Chart 2, only 58% (88 respondents) believe that Mydin’s website is attractive and has strong eye appeal. The authors believe that the website can be further improved through the use of colors and multimedia.

Chart 2: Homepage Attractiveness



Apart from that, only 60 % of the respondents believed that Copyright date or date site was established clearly by the webmaster and easy to find. This is very crucial because the customers

would like to know whether the information provided in the homepage is updated frequently. Furthermore 77% of the respondents believed that the homepage can be downloaded efficiently. Apart from that, 85% of the respondents agreed that as users, they are able to move around within the site with ease. This is further supported from the responses from the respondents who felt that the directions for using the website are provided (76% of the respondents) and they are easy to follow and understand (84% of the respondents). In terms of browser's compatibility, 85% of the respondents (128 respondents) believe that the site is equally effective with a variety of browsers such as Netscape, Mozilla Firefox and Internet Explorer.

In terms of content presentation, 76% of the respondents believed that there is sufficient information to make the site worth visiting while 85% agreed that the information is clearly labeled and organized. Furthermore 87% of the respondents felt that the same basic format is used consistently throughout the site while 81% thought that the information in the site is easy to find.

Table 4: Content Evaluation Attributes and Scores

| HYPERMARKET/ QUESTIONS CATEGORIES | 1.First Look | 2.Information Providers | 3.Informati on Currency | 4.Informati on Quality | 5.Further Informatio n | Total Mark |
|---|--------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| Mydin | 1.55 | 3.17 | 3.11 | 8.6 | 1.48 | 17.91 |

Based on Table 4, the design evaluation score for Mydin's website is 17.91 which fall under the (16-24) category, which is described by Ongus et. al (2006) as being a very useful website for users' information needs. However the authors believed that it falls on the lower side of the

category continuum. All the question employed in gauging the content scores for Mydin fall into five distinct categories; first look, information providers, information currency, information quality and availability of further information.

In the First Look category, 86% of the respondents agreed that user is able to quickly determine the basic content of the website while 69% of them agreed that user is able to determine the intended audience of the site. The information provider category is very crucial because hypothetically, anybody can publish a Web page, thus the credential of the site's author is very important (NA, 2012). This is reflected in the survey by only 55% of the respondents believed that the information about the author(s) is available. Furthermore, only 68% of the respondents felt that according to the info given, author(s) appears qualified to present information on this topic. In terms of the currency of the information provided in the site, 82% of the respondents believed that the content is updated frequently. This is very important because users do not want to be left out in case that there are any promotions that will benefit them.

In terms of information quality, the average marks of 8.6 out of the total 11 marks provided seemed to be on the low side of the category continuum. 83% of the respondents felt that the information in this site is easy to understand while 75% believed that that this site provides interactivity that increases its value. Finally for the availability of further information, 74% of the respondents believed that there are links to other sites that are related to their needs/purposes while 75% felt that the content of linked sites is worthwhile and appropriate to their needs/purposes.

Conclusion

Information is very important in the era of globalization. By having a website, it offers Mydin an alternative to disseminate information not only on its company, but also on other promotion, contests, events, corporate social responsibilities activities and other information which is deemed appropriate for its existing and potential customers. In order to do that, Mydin has to recalibrate some of the features in its websites such as the issue of copyright of the site and also the information on the author or moderator of the website.

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