

**ENHANCEMENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT  
MARKETING FOR INHART: TARGETING MUSLIM  
MALAYSIAN MILLENNIALS IN IIUM**

**BY**

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degree of Master of Halal Industry Management

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## ABSTRACT

Millennials bring potential futures to the halal industry. Being the tech-savvy generation, the method of approach applied must be coherent with their preference. Although there are abundant of information in regard to the preferences of the Millennials, however, not so in the context of local Muslim Millennials. This stays true even so for halal learning institute, which holds many information, discoveries, and knowledge that possibly being the element that might trigger the Millennials curiosity. With that, it is a market opportunity that INHART can truly capitalize. This can be done through the enhancement of INHART's current content marketing strategy through acquiring contextualized information of the Malaysian Muslim Millennials, and positioning the content to the preferences of the Millennials. The research aims to discover the IIUM Muslim Millennials' preferences in using the social media and which of the known platforms are favoured by them to formulate appropriate strategy in approaching the generation. The research applied a qualitative approach by interviewing the local Millennials within the IIUM Gombak compound. The research discovers five themes of gratifications which the Millennials seek from the platform. They are connectivity and networking, entertainment and leisure, news and information, education, and transaction. The research also shows that the targeted group highly prefers Facebook. Through the data analysis, the research also extracts three main strategies on approaching the Millennials. The first strategy is to use the three most preferred platforms to cater to their gratifications; Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. Second is to use their curiosities and questions as a module for content production. Third is to focus on producing video format contents in which as mentioned by the informants as their most favoured format.

## خلاصة البحث

إن جيل الألفية يحمل فرصة مستقبلية لصناعة الحلال، ولكونهم جيلاً خبيراً بالتكنولوجيا فينبغي أن يكون المنهج المطبق متنسق مع تقضيلهم. ولو أن المعلومات عن اختيار جيل الألفية متوفرة، لكنها لم تتطابق على جيل المسلم المحلي. وهذه القضية ظاهرة في معهد التعليم الحلال الذي عنده المعلومات، والاكتشافات، والمعرفة التي قد تستدعي إلى حرص جيل الألفية. يهدف البحث إلى اكتشاف اختيار طلاب جيل الألفية من الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية بماليزيا في استخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، وأي الوسائل يفضلونها، لتكوين الاستراتيجية المناسبة لانفتاح هذا الجيل. ونهج البحث على منهج الدراسة الميدانية بإجراء المقابلات مع جيل الألفية المحليين في الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية بماليزيا في كومبوك. فتكتشف من خلال هذه الدراسة خمسة عوامل مهمة في اختيارهم لوسائل التواصل الاجتماعي وهي؛ الاتصال وتوصيل الشبكات، والترفيه والتسلية، والأخبار والمعلومات، التعليم، والمتاجرة. وتظهر من الدراسة أن المشتركين يفضلون فيس بوك على سائر الوسائل. ويستخلص من البحث ثلاث الاستراتيجيات الرئيسية في التعامل مع جيل الألفية، أولها استعمال ثلاث الوسائل الاجتماعية المفضلة لقضاء حوائجهم، وهي فيس بوك، ويوتيوب، وانستقرام، وثانيها الاعتماد على حرصهم وأسئلتهم لإنتاج المحتويات، وثالثها التركيز على إنتاج المحتويات في الشكل المفضل لدى المشاركين كما أجابهم في الاستمارة.

## APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this research and that in my opinion; it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for Master of Halal Industry Management

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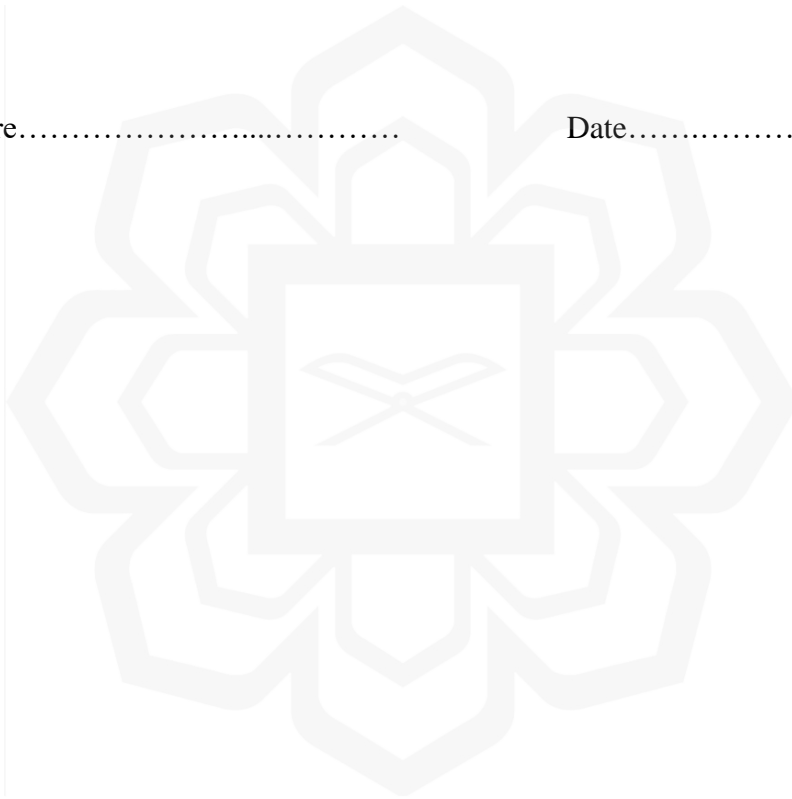
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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. BACKGROUND OF RESEARCH

In this chapter, an overview of the research will be presented. Divided into several parts; the first part of the chapter aims to describe the problem of the research, bringing light into the significance of the research. Following the problem statement, research questions and objectives are given. The need of using digital platforms becomes even greater with the rise of Millennials. The purchasing power that this generation brought is \$170 billion per year, proving the importance for any functioning organization to invest significantly in seeking to understand this generation and to communicate with them effectively especially in social media (Murdough, 2016). In Malaysian context, Shee-mun (2019) explained that the Millennials influence over social media and purchasing market as follows, *“In Malaysia, Millennials form 74% of 28.7 million internet users making them the biggest social media influencer in content sharing, and product and service promotion.”* Millennials as consumers can be an opportunity or a great challenge to businesses. This is due to the differences in their purchasing behaviour and brand preferences from the previous generations (Kilian, Hennigs, & Langner, 2012). To cater to the present opportunities and challenges, social media content marketing strategies have gained popularity (Min Fui Tom, 2017). The mentioned strategies are executed by providing information to solve problems of the targeted audience, this is to give a positive image in the audiences’ mind on the company and create attachment or bond between the two. With the positive image in mind, the audience will also proceed to share with their friends of the solution that they have

found, redirecting the friend to the company's social media. In time, the company's presence will grow and sustain given that they continuously give out value in social media and serve the community that they have built (Ahmad Fadzil & Yusoff, 2015). Digital tools and platforms have since influenced the changes in the business world. Many businesses have started to have pages in social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, which is made possible through Web 2.0.

Not wanting to be left behind, the halal-based businesses have entered these platforms as well. Being one of the stakeholders of the halal industry, halal learning institutes have a great role in its sustainability due to them being centres for discoveries and knowledge refinement that can benefit the industry. Halal learning institutes have the potential of taking the role as the arbiter between the business of halal industry and the consumers in general. In the case of INHART, a halal learning institute in Malaysia under IIUM, their revenue is generated mainly through research, consultation, training, and education. Being a business entity, the company's presence in society must be at its optimum condition for it to maintain the demands of their service.

## **1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

A social media content marketing strategy that has the attributes that are appealing to the Millennials is vital in grabbing the opportunity that lies with the given generation. It is even more so with the Millennials due to their non-loyalist behaviour that really challenges the marketers to come up with contents in the social media that have precise understanding of the Millennials nature in social media (Mafas & Kuppusamy, 2019).

Currently, from surface observation, INHART's utilisation of social media serves as an archive of their activities. It has yet to venture into a more personalised social media content marketing strategy and has yet to fully venture into the given

opportunity that lies within the Millennials. Hence room of enhancement is indeed present yet if the opportunity is approached without considerable amount of contextualised information of Millennials, it might be hindered. This due to the fact that Millennials from different countries vary from each other and differences in terms of their social media behaviour as it might differ due to cultural and societal influence (Duffet & Wakeham, 2016). Meaning that there might be differences between the potential target audience of INHART, the Malaysian Muslim Millennials as compared to the general information known about Millennials. This proves to be even more problematic when considering the general information on Millennials are considered anecdotal (Magni & Manzoni, 2020). With those problems in mind the social media behaviours of the Malaysia Muslim Millennials might have unique aspects that might be vital to the effort of enhancing INHART social media content marketing strategy. However, to target the whole Malaysian Muslim Millennial in Malaysia might prove to be daunting for the institute due to limited resources. Targeting immediate surrounding is more viable, in this case, the Malaysian Muslim Millennials in IIUM. It is a more favourable strategy as well for INHART because it has been proven that once Millennials have been won over, their social media sharing behaviour will serve as initial WOM (words-of-mouth) marketer and ambassador for companies or products that they support (Matthews, Hair, & Matthews, 2018). Another problem that INHART might face is competition, the sheer numbers of organisations that are currently flooding the social media platform with their own advertisement campaign is expected to grow even more (Shah et al., 2019). The IIUM Malaysian Muslim Millennials' attention, although within IIUM territory are not an exception to their campaign. An enhancement to the current INHART's marketing strategy needs to be looked upon for the halal learning institute to be able to compete in winning the Malaysian Muslim Millennials.

### **1.3.PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

The research sought to enquire the social media behaviour of the Malaysian Muslim Millennials in IIUM. A research must be conducted to enquire on the local Millennials because if a strategy is developed solely using the western description of Millennials, the applied strategy might not be precise or even ineffective due to differences in social media behaviour (Duffet & Wakeham, 2016). A contextualize information of the Malaysian Muslim Millennials must be enquired first so that information such as preferred platforms and contents can be extracted. With the information, precise and effective strategies can be applied as an enhancement to the currently used strategy of INHART. Few researches were done aimed to produce unique description of the local Millennials, even more, Malaysia Muslim Millennials. The researcher has yet to find any reference that connects Malaysian Muslim Millennials and social media content marketing strategy. Without the information, an improvement to social media content marketing strategy of INHART will not be based on contextualized information but instead based on assumptions. Hence the research aims to cater to these problems by answering three research questions.

### **1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What needs of the Malaysian Muslim Millennials studying at IIUM are gratified with in the Social Media?
2. Which social media platform gratify the Malaysian Muslim Millennials studying in IIUM the most?
3. How can INHART enhance its social media strategy to better attract the Malaysian Muslim Millennials studying in IIUM?

### **1.5. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

1. To identify what gratify the needs of the Malaysian Muslim Millennials studying in IIUM in social media.

2. To identify which social media platform gratify the Malaysian Muslim Millennials studying in IIUM the most.
3. To enhance INHART's social media content marketing strategy to better attract the Malaysian Muslim Millennials studying in IIUM.

#### **1.6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

The research will add the contextualized description of the Malaysian Muslim Millennials in IIUM which will be useful in future enhancement of INHART's social media marketing strategy targeted towards the group. This description will also prove that there are minor details that are vital and should be considered by other entities aiming to enhance their social media strategy onto specific target groups.

#### **1.7. LIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH**

The research, as for now, is only limited to IIUM grounds. It is recommended, if the nature of Malaysian Muslim Millennials to be deeply understood, bigger ground should be covered. Millennials perhaps from each city or each state must be researched thoroughly to formulate a definitive content marketing strategy with deep understanding of the local Millennials.

#### **1.8. SUMMARY**

With the stated problem, the research at its core aims to provide fundamental information of the Malaysian Muslim Millennials in IIUM so that it can be used to enhance the current content marketing strategy of INHART. To do so, qualitative research through interviews must be done to extract underlying information in order to understand the Millennials.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW PART ONE**

#### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

It has been established how significant it is to gain data that can give deeper understanding of the local Millennials. This chapter will go through the literature that covers the important variables that are going to be involved in this research. The chapter is divided into five subtopics. The subtopics are generation, the web, content marketing, social media, and how these variables are connected.

#### **2.2. MILLENNIALS**

The study of generation has been critically discussed since the time of Plato, in which he commented:

*“The children now love luxury; they have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for elders and love chatter in place of exercise. Children are now tyrants, not the servants of their households. They no longer rise when elders enter the room. They contradict their parents, chatter before company, gobble up dainties at the table, cross their legs, and tyrannize their teachers.”*

(Caraher, 2014, as cited in Troksa, 2016)

Arguably, negative notions are clearly attached to Plato’s statement in describing the new generation in his society, in which until this day, the phenomenon of the older generation having a negative perception towards the younger generation, is still apparent. What contribute to this is because of the generation gap that exist between

two different generations, which also proves that each generation have their unique description based on our understanding of historical and cultural context (Troksa, 2016).

The current existing generations are baby boomer from 1946 to 1964, Generation X from 1965 to 1976, Generation Y from 1977 to 1987 (Norum, 2009), and Generation Z.

### **2.2.1. Generation Baby Boomer & Generation X**

The name baby boomer is derived from the drastic increase of birth rate in the United States right after World War II. They were born between 1946 to 1964 and are known to be the largest generation in history. Interestingly the Baby Boomers brought anxiousness to the previous generation, Silent Generation, worrying for the future of the country due to the changes that the Baby Boomers made to the post-war society. It is worth noting in the context of the United States by 2008, more than 80% of them are CEOs and senior manager (Manager & Knight, 2015).

Generation X is the generation that comes after the Baby Boomers. They were born between 1963 and 1978. This generation is prominently known to be independent and action-oriented (Tulgan & Martin, 2001). Interestingly, even though they are not as savvy as the Millennials, a good portion of them do adapt effectively to the digital world hence are dubbed as digital immigrants (Prensky, 2001).

### **2.2.2. Generation Z and Alpha**

Before indulging into who Millennials are, it is noteworthy to minimally be introduced to the generation that were born after the Millennials, beyond 1997 in the context of the United States are Generation Z. While other generations either adapt to the digital world or receive early exposure towards it, Generation Z were born in the digital world making them more technology-centric (Dimock, 2019).

Another interesting generation that has come into the limelight is the Generation Alpha, born beyond 2010 (Santos & Yamaguchi, 2015, as cited in Augusto et al., 2018). Though current studies seem to be only discussing the potentials of Generation Alpha, considering the incredible open access to knowledge that this generation is going to receive as the internet devices are just at their fingertips. And being born into a world in which its inhabitants have adapted in using digital technology, especially parents and teachers, the effects to Generation Alpha will be amplified without a doubt (Tootell, Freeman, & Freeman, 2014).

### **2.2.3. Generation Y/Millennials**

In the commonly used western context, Millennials, coined by Howe and Strauss (2000), are those who were born between 1980 to 2000 (Kaifi, Nafei, Khanfar, & Kaifi, 2012). The term Millennial is not the only name that this generation has been labelled as. Numbers of scholars have labelled this generation with other names in their work, each with different focuses in order to capture the time and value that this generation has experienced and adapted (Rissanen & Luoma-Aho, 2016). Before going deeper into the Millennial description, below is a chart with a brief fundamental description of each generation mentioned.

Table 1: List of mentioned Generations

	<b>Baby Boomer</b>	<b>Generation X</b>	<b>Millennial</b>	<b>Generation Z</b>	<b>Generation Alpha</b>
<b>Birth Period</b>	1946 to 1964	1963 to 1978	1980 to 2000	Beyond 1997	Beyond 2010
<b>General Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Largest Generation in History.</li> <li>• 80% of them are now CEO and Senior Managers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prominently known to be independent and action oriented.</li> <li>• A good portion of them do adapt effectively to the digital world hence are dub as digital immigrant.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Versatility in using digital technology.</li> <li>• Early adopters of digital technology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Born into the digital world.</li> <li>• Technology-centric.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Born into environment which has fully assimilated with digital technology.</li> <li>• A generation which is currently still being studied.</li> </ul>

#### **2.2.4. Millennials, Digital Technology and Social Media**

Despite the difference in years of birth, the majority of Millennials from different countries share similarities in terms of their interaction and relationship with technology (Kilian et al., 2012). Dutton & Blank (2011) describes them as a generation that embrace digital technology more fluidly than the previous generation due to them being less cynical and can be savvy with the digital technology in shorter time, allowing versatility in using the internet making them the most resourceful generation in hoarding information. Due to their comfortability with the internet environment, they are also keen users of social media platforms, sharing information through writing, profiles, and videos. Being named as Digital Natives by Prensky (2001), he further describes the Millennials as those who are able to use the “digital language”. The older generation, who although try to adapt and somehow able to adapt, might still not be as efficient or “fluent” as the Millennials, hence termed by Prensky as “Digital Immigrants”. Making the Millennials faster adopters to the new digital world compared to the previous generation (Lee, 2005). This is because previous generation were introduced to the digital world in the later part of their lives, the Millennials literally grew up in the changing digitization environment which shapes their values, behaviours, thinking patterns in which influences on how they interact with the world (Rissanen & Luoma-Aho, 2016). This environmental effect towards the Millennials can be supported through a research done by Bales and Parsons (2014), in which they discover that the main influencer of someone’s future behaviours is the way he or she was raised, socialized, and educated. Adapting to the new technology is not limited to mere consumption of digital platforms and social media, the Millennials familiarity towards it are also defined by their active involvement in producing contents for platforms that they subscribed to (Dutton & Blank, 2011).

The changes that the Millennials experience has been described by Prensky (2001) as ‘singularity’, in which the fundamental changes that happened made it impossible to turn back to the previous state.

When looking at Millennials from business perspective, they are highly engaged consumers bringing value to the company in multiple ways including reputational benefits, WOM (word of mouth), trust and loyalty (Vivek et al., 2012; Kumar et al., 2010; Roberts and Alpert, 2010; van Doorn, 2010 as cited in (Rissanen & Luoma-Aho, 2016). Millennials, being empowered consumers, can cause reputational damage to organizations and businesses which they deemed mistreating them or contradictory to their conformity (Leslie, 2010; Neuborne & Kerwin, 1999). Being so made this generation to be tendered carefully by companies in maintaining a positive image. Even with that treatment, it will not give a hundred percent guarantee that Millennials would develop strong loyalty towards the brand. They are open to change their brand loyalty accordingly to the offers that benefit them the most (Parment, 2013).

#### **2.2.5. Malaysian Millennials**

It is worth noting that the description of tech savvy Millennials is more prominent in the western settings and do not represent the whole population of Millennials around the world because of the degree of technological exposure and accessibility vary for every country (Livingstone and Helsper, 2007, p. 690; Palfrey and Gasser, 2008 as cited in Rissanen and Luoma-Aho 2016). Another factor is that each country goes through different historical experiences that later will define a generation that will fit in the role of which a country needs (Neil Howe & Strauss, 1992).

In the need of contextualized definition of Malaysian Millennials, a research has been done in 2015 to give a more specific and distinguish definition to the local Millennials. 1983 to 2004, known as the Golden Years of Malaysian Development

(Sukirno, 2004) is a period in which the Malaysian Millennials were born, or in a more specific Malaysian generational term, the Developers Generation (*Generasi Pemaju*) (Tung & Comeau, 2014). In this research, the Millennials are defined more by transformations that the country went through. These changes include employment rate, formal education entries, population growth, and political activities. *Generasi Pemaju* in particular, experienced the rapid growth of formal educational entry. This is due to the emphasis of education especially by the prime minister of that time Tun Dr. Mahathir. This growth of educational entry is very apparent mainly in the university level.

#### **2.2.6. Muslim Millennials**

*“Of the reported USD 1.8 billion Muslim consumers, 40 per cent are the young generation under the age of 25”* (Zainudin, 2019)

It is obvious from the cited sentence above that the Millennial Muslim market is one that should not be taken lightly. It was also emphasized in the Global Islamic Report 2016, how the Millennials will contribute up to \$3 Trillion by 2021 to the food and lifestyle market (Reuters & Standard, 2016).

The description of Muslim Millennials also differs from country to country. In American context, the Muslim Millennials version is boldly named as generation M by the author Shelina Janmohamed (2016). This generation of Muslims are described being similar to the Cheetah Generation of Africa who have taken entrepreneurship and consumption as a means of empowerment, rather than letting themselves being used as a political issue in non-Muslim countries (Alemany Oliver, 2017).

Research are continuously being done for deeper understanding on the Muslim Millennials to capitalize the big opportunity that this generation presents (“Muslim

millennials offer opportunities | WARC,” n.d.). It is even more so important for Malaysian context, in the effort to establish Malaysia as the leading Halal Hub.

## **2.3. SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT MARKETING**

### **2.3.1. Emergence of the Web**

During the political sparring between US and USSR after the second world war to the 1980s, many advancements were made by both to be steps ahead than the other. Research was done extensively, and it became even more pressuring when the USSR launched their Sputnik satellite in 1957. In response, in 1958, the US initiated an effort with ARPA within the Department of Defence to produce the premature form of the connecting network that is known today, which is the ARPANET, connecting knowledge resources between only four universities at that time (Leiner et al., 2001). Since then, the development continued until the development made it possible in the 1970s for large hosts to hold databases to keep enormous amounts of research literature and later into what is known as web 1.0 (Keefer & Baiget, 2001).

### **2.3.2. Web 1.0**

The web was invented by Sir Tim Berners-Lee in 1989 (“Introduction to Web Accessibility | Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) | W3C,” n.d.). In its infant stage, it was considered as the read-only web, meaning that users are only limited to searching for information, to read devoid of interactions and content production. This however was not necessarily a problem during that time, due to the fact that web owners' concerns were solely on getting the information out for people to read (Getting, n.d.).

Web 1.0 lacks the dynamics that the current one has. Being a read-only web, the model for many businesses using the web 1.0 was the “Push Model”. In which it is a