

**THE INFLUENCE BETWEEN FACEBOOK
CONTENT STRATEGIES AND ONLINE ENGAGEMENT
ON E-RETAILER FASHION COMPANIES IN
MALAYSIA: FASHIONVALET VS ZALORA**

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by

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**PENGARUH ANTARA KANDUNGAN FACEBOOK DAN PENGLIBATAN
SECARA ATAS TALIAN TERHADAP SYARIKAT FESYEN E-PERUNCIT DI
MALAYSIA: FASHIONVALET VS ZALORA**

ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk menentukan pengaruh kandungan hantaran Facebook terhadap penglibatan secara atas talian bagi laman sosial *Facebook* syarikat fesyen e-peruncit. E-peruncit yang dipilih iaitu FashionValet dan Zalora. Kandungan hantaran *Facebook* bagi syarikat ini digunakan sebagai data yang telah dipilih antara 1 Februari 2019 hingga 1 Februari 2020. Sebanyak 1,280 kandungan hantaran Facebook diperoleh dan dikodkan secara manual menggunakan kaedah penyelidikan analisis kandungan, diikuti dengan analisis statistik menggunakan perisian SPSS. Hasil analisa ANOVA menunjukkan bahawa jenis kandungan hantaran *Facebook* dan tempoh penjualan secara atas talian memberi kesan yang signifikan terhadap tahap penglibatan secara atas talian. Ciri bagi kandungan hantaran *Facebook* seperti ‘suka’, ‘komen’, dan ‘kongsi’ digunakan sebagai kayu ukur terhadap tahap penglibatan secara atas talian. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa tahap penglibatan secara atas talian sangat dipengaruhi oleh maklumat, imbuan, dan jenis kandungan hantaran sosial. Selain itu, kandungan hantaran *Facebook* syarikat fesyen juga dipengaruhi oleh tempoh penjualan secara atas talian, yang menyumbang kepada peningkatan penglibatan dalam kalangan pengguna *Facebook*, terutamanya bagi peminat *Facebook* syarikat ini. Kajian ini juga menyediakan rancangan strategik bagi syarikat untuk memanfaatkan dan meningkatkan tahap penglibatan secara atas talian psda catatan Facebook mereka,

dengan memberi tumpuan kepada jenis catatan kandungan dan tempoh penjualan dalam talian. meningkatkan tahap penglibatan secara atas talian pada catatan *Facebook* mereka, dengan memberi tumpuan kepada jenis catatan kandungan dan tempoh penjualan dalam talian.

**THE INFLUENCE BETWEEN FACEBOOK CONTENT AND ONLINE
ENGAGEMENT ON E-RETAILER FASHION COMPANIES IN MALAYSIA:
FASHIONVALET VS ZALORA**

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of the type of content post on online engagement in the chosen e-retailer fashion companies Facebook pages which are FashionValet and Zalora. The Facebook posts of these companies were used as the data which were selected between February 1, 2019, until February 1, 2020. A total of 1,280 Facebook posts were obtained and manually coded using the content analysis research method, followed by statistical data analysis using SPSS software. The results from the ANOVA analysis showed that the type of content post and online sales period exert a significant effect on the level of online engagement. Features of Facebook posts such as ‘likes’, ‘comments’, and ‘shares’ were used as measurements towards the level of online engagement. The findings showed that the level of online engagement is highly influenced by informational, remuneration, and social type of content post. Moreover, the Facebook posts of the fashion companies were also influenced by the online sales period, which contributed to the increased engagement on Facebook pages, mainly for FashionValet and Zalora. This study also provides a content strategy for companies to utilise and increase the level of online engagement on their Facebook posts, focusing on the type of content posts and online sales period.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the background of the study and presents a broad outline of the current research. Then, the problem statement is discussed in detail, and the research questions and objectives are specified. Further, the chapter addresses the significance and scope of the study with the definition of key terms used. Finally, the chapter concludes by discussing the organization of the study.

1.2 Background of the Study

The widespread of the internet today has changed the way people live their daily lives worldwide. Whether it is to send an email, connect with friends online, watch a movie, or engage in online shopping. The internet has impacted the activities users conduct online. More than 4.9 billion internet users worldwide were recorded in 2020 (Internet World Stats, 2020). As the internet is constantly advancing, the number of internet users is increasing every year. In the Malaysian context, in 2019, the total population is recorded at 32.68 million (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2019). With the increase of population in Malaysia yearly, the number of internet users has also increased. Based on the number of internet users recorded in Malaysia, from the year 2016 until 2018, there has been an increase of 10.5% or a total of 25.68 million internet users (Communications and Multimedia Commission, 2018). This shows in two years, the number of internet users has increased as much as 4.2 million users.

In 2020, from the population in Malaysia, the total number of internet users was recorded at 29.3 million (Internet World Stats, 2020). The increasing number of

internet users in Malaysia was driven by the growth in the mobile broadband segment, providing users wider and convenient access to internet coverage such as 3G and LTE/4G (MCMC, 2018). Internet users access the internet from various types of devices such as computers, laptops and mobile devices. According to research conducted by the Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission, the number of mobile devices or smartphone users in Malaysia is 93.1% of the population, whereby users subscribed to mobile broadband is 36.2 million (MCMC, 2018). Since Malaysia records a high number of mobile device users, the exposure to internet access is high, motivating users to participate in accessing the internet.

Nowadays, internet users meet and interact with their friends through the internet, particularly social media. Social media can be defined as a group of internet-based applications that are built on the ideological and technological foundation of web 2.0 which allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). On social media, there is an online environment that connects a large number of people together where they interact, shares, and discuss ideas (Tafesse, 2015). Social media allows users to create, share and exchange information in an online community, which has facilitated to shape connections with other users via different social media platforms (Ngai et al., 2015; Oyza & Edwin, 2015). Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have at least one billion users on the platform while Twitter has 326 million users (Guadagni, 2019). Due to the ability of social media that connect people from various backgrounds for free, social media are rapidly growing in popularity around the world. In Malaysia, the top three most active social media platforms are Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube (Kemp, 2020). It goes without saying that the number of social media users in Malaysia is growing and companies are noticing an

opportunity to extend their business activities on social media. Thus, this will give an upper hand for companies to create a relationship with customers online.

In Malaysia, social media is used by individuals to communicate and interact with friends online. On the other hand, companies use social media platforms to reach customers online. Among the e-retailing industries that use social media in Malaysia, fashion has become the most popular industry to conquer the e-retailing business (“Malaysia Country Commercial Guide,” 2019). E-retailing is defined as the selling of goods and or services through electronic media, which requires the internet (Hooda & Gupta, 2015). In 2019, the Malaysian e-commerce landscape identified top companies from various industries that are actively engaging in the selling of products and services online (Ruth & Katrina B., 2014). Among the online companies listed are such as Adidas, Watson, Tesco, Mydin, Courts, and others. From the list, FashionValet and Zalora are the only Malaysian companies. Therefore, the popularity of the e-retailing fashion industry in Malaysia is gaining a wide audience.

The e-retailing fashion industry is a booming industry in Malaysia, and companies such as FashionValet and Zalora are not only gaining customers from their official website but are also utilizing social media to expand their customer base. In 2021, FashionValet and Zalora are categorised among the top ten leading e-commerce companies in Malaysia (Tiwari, 2021). These two companies are popularly known for setting the trend in the fashion industry. Moreover, in 2018, FashionValet and Zalora were also listed as the top ten fashion companies online (Wong, 2015). This shows the two successful fashion companies are conquering the e-retailing fashion industry in Malaysia. A local company like FashionValet has shown its capability of competing with other international companies such as Zalora

by tapping into markets where Zalora is also based. FashionValet, which started in 2010, identified the goals that the company wanted to achieve, making the local company well known in the fashion arena.

With the advancement of social media, e-retailer companies that focused on selling their products on their official website pages have realized the true potential of implementing social media as part of their business strategy. With billions of users on social media platforms, companies like FashionValet and Zalora have declared their social media presence making it possible for the companies to reach their products and services not only in local markets but worldwide. Social media platform such as Facebook has 2.6 billion active users' as to date (Mohsin, 2020). This shows that Malaysian e-retailing fashion companies have the opportunity to compete in an international arena. Moreover, since Facebook is the most active social media platform in Malaysia, this study will focus on the context of Facebook for e-retailer fashion companies. Although, having a social media presence is crucial for companies to garner sales. Unless companies invest in learning how to use social media as a business strategy properly, it will determine the success of their business. Thus, companies understand the importance to attract users which can encourage them to be fans of their social media pages. Being fans, users are updated with the new products, information, and services companies provide. Thus, with the right formula for social media, these fans can eventually be converted to paying customers.

1.3 Problem Statement

Nowadays, companies are actively using social media as a means of creating an advantage for their business. Figure 1.1 shows several social media platforms with

a percentage of users. Facebook with 97.3%, Instagram 57.0% and YouTube 48.3% users (MCMC, 2018). From the figure, the percentage shows the number of social media users per social media platform from 24.6 million users. Categorising the most used social media platform in Malaysia based on most number of users. It is undeniable, most of the Malaysian population is on social media. For companies online, social media engagement with customers is important for business. Successful social media engagement is measured by the number of likes, comments, and shares companies obtain online. Companies will benefit from social media engagement by attracting receptive users and an increase brand awareness. As social media is developing into a crucial strategic tool for business, companies are joining the social media bandwagon to expand their potential sales (Reynolds et al., 2014). Successful companies known for their social media strategies such as Dominos, Nike, Dove, Coca Cola, and many more companies understand how to provide the right content that can attract users to their social media pages (Davis, 2018). These companies are from various industries such as f&b, apparel, toiletries, and other well-known industry worldwide. Therefore, other companies from various industries can aspire to run a successful social media page.

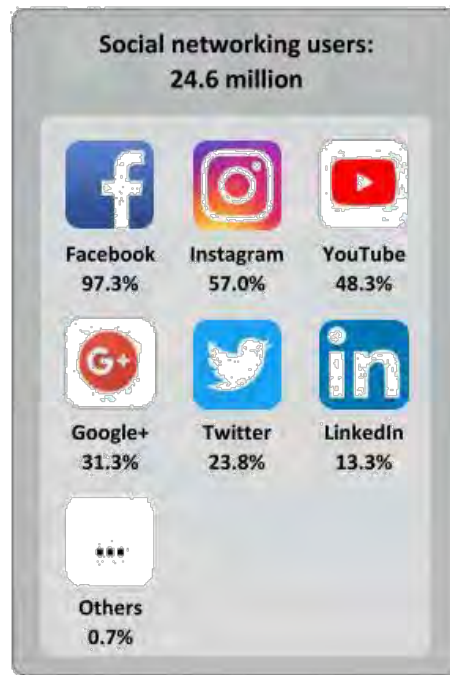


Figure 1.1: Percentage of social networking users
(Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission,2018)

Companies must invest to understand and learn new skills to connect with users and fans online (Wok & Mohamed, 2017). As many companies realise the benefits of social media as a business strategy to expand their target audience. In Malaysia, companies whether big or small are also adopting social media as a marketing strategy to reach potential customers (Parveen et al., 2015). However, despite having a social media page there are still companies that are facing difficulties to create content that can attract users' attention to their social media page (Luarn et al., 2015; Coursariset al., 2016). Being able to provide the right content that will spark users' interest to willingly spend their time reading and engaging with the posts is a challenge for companies in Malaysia (Wok & Mohamed, 2017). Moreover, providing the right type of content is important for social media strategies because it can help companies to increase brand loyalty by strengthening the relationships companies have with customers. This will motivate customers to repeat

sales and help businesses establish a powerful brand image. At the same time, many local companies are new to technology and have little knowledge of the usage of social media for business. A good understanding of the type of content companies must share online will create an advantage for the business. However, companies with little skills in providing interesting content that can attract users' attention to companies' social media pages will be at a disadvantage.

As the population of social media users is increasing, users are becoming more active than passive. Users are turning from product receiver customers into active 'empowered' knowledge partners (Valacherry & Pakkeerappa, 2018). They were making their role as users more significant with companies through social media. Users that follow companies' social media pages are also known as fans, where users can view companies' posts and engage with the posts by liking, sharing, and commenting (Luarn et al., 2015). Therefore, companies are focusing on creating customer relationships with users through social media which can facilitate companies to increase the level of online engagement, brand awareness, and an opportunity in creating two-way communication with users (Mohr & Nevin, 1990). Companies that acquire skills to create online engagement with users will determine the success of the company's social media pages. Such as Facebook, customer engagement can be analysed based on the number of likes, shares, and comments companies can get on their Facebook posts (Luarn et al., 2015). Moreover, comments from users on Facebook posts are a leading factor for online engagement (Tafesse, 2015). Moreover, companies can control the level of online engagement on company social media platforms. Despite so many companies implementing social media as part of their business strategy, the challenges confronted by companies are identifying the effective type of content post that can influence the online

engagement level and understanding how users interact (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013; Tafesse, 2015; Saad, 2019). The type of content post referred to in the business strategy is the information companies share on their social media page. Each content type has its purpose, whether it is to inform users of new products, encourage online participation, or the sharing of information among users. The content type of post will be determined by the type of online engagement companies wish to pursue whether companies focus on increasing the number of likes, encouraging users to participate in comments or sharing. As we can see, interaction on social media can come from various features and tools such as likes, comments, and comments. Therefore, few companies have little knowledge of fully utilizing the online engagement features. Based on previous scholars' work, research focuses more on the usage of social media for business, however, a study on the type of content used that can influence online engagement is given less attention. This will be difficult for companies to create an online community, which interacts with the company's social media pages and among users themselves.

Nowadays, traditional companies are also implementing social media as a business strategy. Traditional companies for this study is referred to as business which initially are shops that require customers to come to their physical stores to buy a product or service. Traditional companies are increasingly using social media to engage with customers and to create value, while still upholding their traditional business strategies (Fraccastoro,2021). Traditional companies such as Nike, Dominos, Starbucks, McDonalds show that social media is important to be implemented as a part of a business strategy. Traditional companies which started operating before social media existed showed business is mostly through bricks and mortar by physical stores and buildings. Globalisation has made the world smaller,

the fast and dynamic development of businesses has changed the consumers' culture of shopping at the traditional business being replaced by shopping online, such as on social media (Bytyçi, 2020). As social media has advanced, any company can grow their business through social media, whether it be in the food & beverage, apparel, or any other industry. For new start-up companies that are venturing into business, implementing social media at an early stage will be an advantage. Despite companies joining the social media bandwagon, previous scholarly work focuses more on the users' behaviour and content shared on social media, while studies on the content strategy of companies on social media are relatively low (Reynolds et al., 2014). To our best knowledge, no research work has been published on the influence of the content type of post and online sales period on online engagement related to the fashion industry in Malaysia. However, there are several works on the content type of post that has been published but focused on other industry such as food & beverage, toiletries, and automotive on an international scale. This study differs from previous studies by providing a comparison on the influence of the content type of post and online sales period between two top Malaysian companies within the same industry, which is fashion. Moreover, this study also includes an effective content strategy for e-retailing fashion companies in Malaysia which little study has touched on. In 2014, there are over 30 million active pages operated by big and small companies on Facebook (Ha, 2014). Now, there are more than 200 million Facebook pages run by companies (Facebook, 2021). There are still many companies in Malaysia especially small companies with minimal knowledge in creating an effective Facebook content strategy. This can potentially jeopardise the companies' opportunity to gain benefits for their business from the usage of online platforms. Lastly, as the numbers of social media users are increasing, users are shifting their

shopping experience online (Chua & Banerjee, 2013). Users can purchase products and services through online websites and shopping applications. Although, companies are now paving the way for users to buy products through the companies' social media pages. Companies use their social media pages as a place to promote and inform users about their products and services. However, companies should not only implement social media as a place to sell their products but as a platform to create their social media presence. Aside from the content type of post, the online sales period of the post also play a crucial factor in influencing online engagement. Companies taking advantage of the time of shopping events throughout the year to promote their products on their social media page will facilitate the company to boost their sales. Therefore, despite having social media pages, companies have little knowledge-creating posts during shopping events throughout the year to promote their products. As users are increasing their purchasing activities, companies must consider the time of shopping events to maximise their profit.

1.4 Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is:

1. To investigate the content type of post that influences online engagement in Malaysian e-retailer fashion companies via Facebook.
2. To investigate the online sales period of posts that influence online engagement in Malaysian e-retailer fashion companies via Facebook.
3. To compare the Facebook content type of post and online sales period of post for FashionValet versus Zalora.

1.5 Research Question

The research question in this study to be answered is:

1. What is the content type of post that influences online engagement in Malaysian e-retailer fashion companies via Facebook?
2. What is the online sales period of posts that influences online engagement in Malaysian e-retailer fashion companies via Facebook?
3. What is the difference between the content type of post and the online sales period of post for FashionValet and Zalora?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study will be discussed from two perspectives: the theoretical contribution and the managerial contribution.

1.6.1 Theoretical Contribution

Firstly, from the theoretical point of view, this study provides a contribution to the literature of management based on the theoretical model developed in the study particularly in the uses and gratification theory (UGT). Not only that, but the study also contributes to the social media branding body of literature with a focus on the content design in company-consumer communication. The contribution focuses on the theory development and advancement of the existing scholars. Previous studies have shown efforts in understanding content strategies via social media platforms in various industries from food and beverage, airlines, retail corporations, and the fashion industry (Coursaris et al., 2016; Saad, 2019). For this study, a model was developed that explains the relationship between the content type of posts and the level of online engagement from two e-retailer fashion industry Facebook pages.

The model was constructed based on existing scholars that implement similar research, however, this study contributes a new component towards the existing framework which is the “reposting post” type of content. Second, since social networking sites are increasingly being used, information available regarding the companies' online activities are accessible for researchers. This can also facilitate future research to enhance the results of the existing study. Besides, while the likes, shares, and comments represent the level of online engagement, the study proposes various measures that correspond with every possible activity. Moreover, the findings from the content analysis enabled the study to determine how content created by company Facebook pages influenced the level of online engagement. As content analysis focuses on understanding the content of the Facebook post, identifying the type of content which influences the online engagement facilitated the study in achieving their objectives.

Moreover, research data on FashionValet and Zalora will be able to provide the findings on using Facebook as a marketing strategy, insights, and influence. These findings can provide the foundation to future researchers and scholars in designing a good framework for future enhancement on marketing strategies and development in the social media marketing strategy using social networking platforms including Facebook.

1.6.2 Managerial Contribution

For the managerial contribution in this study, findings provide a guide for companies to choose which characteristics or content to put in the Facebook posts. The main managerial contribution in this study highlights the need for implementing a systematic content strategy on Facebook brand pages to have an influence and

boost the level of online engagement. The results indicate that the different type of content influences the level of online engagement. Therefore, companies can determine which type of content to use to encourage a certain type of engagement on the company's Facebook page. Second, companies that have a Facebook brand page and use it for disseminating information to customers must perform continuous monitoring on their Facebook posts to determine the characteristic of the brand page. Third, the findings of this study should encourage companies to prepare an effective content strategy that can trigger the activities of fans and customers for brand adoption in the long run. This study shows various types of content posts that can influence the level of online engagement for companies. Besides, this study facilitates companies to explore in understanding the content that users share and interact with their Facebook pages. It also highlights the importance of content analysis among companies that have a Facebook page, in understanding the type of content being shared on their Facebook page and the level of online engagement. Moreover, as companies are enhancing their skills in developing a good content strategy, this also facilitates in understand the user behaviour on their Facebook pages. Understanding how the users' attitudes towards their Facebook brand pages will help companies to be aware of how to interact and engage with them. Lastly, this study contributes findings to the e-retailer fashion industry in Malaysia as other companies in the industry can adopt similar strategies.

For companies, this will facilitate the decision-making process. Decision-making in the context of marketing will facilitate companies to create an effective social media marketing strategy that will be accepted by customers online. Moreover, this research will contribute to companies by recommending the use of the qualitative data analysis tool, known as NVivo to obtain a better understanding of

their customers online. Companies that are willing to learn and implement the software will be able to create an advantage for themselves and be able to compete more effectively. Thus, companies will be able to understand customers better online and be able to provide for the wants and needs of customers. Moreover, the findings also show how local fashion companies can capture the world market and provide their products on a global scale such as FashionValet and Zalora. Consequently, companies not only improve their content strategy but their social media marketing strategy as a whole.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

The table below shows the key terms and definitions in this study.

Table 1.1: Definitions of key terms of the study

Terms	Definition
1. E-retailer	E-retail or online retail is defined as the sales of goods and retailing activities conducted through the internet (Nair, 2015).
2. Social media	Defined as a group of internet-based applications that are built on the ideological and technological foundation of web 2.0 which allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Valacherry & Pakkeerappa, 2018).
3. Informational content	Defined as informational posts containing information about specific products, brands, companies, and related marketing activity (Luarn et al., 2015).
4. Remuneration content	Defined as posts contain information that is directly or indirectly associated with benefits; they include content featuring promotions, trials, coupons, special offers, and other offers intended to attract

	attention (Luarn et al., 2015)
5. Entertainment content	Defined as a type of post that does not refer to the brand or a product, particularly posts such as; humorous videos, anecdotes, teasers, slogans, or wordplay (Pletikosa Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013).
6. Social content	Social content construct is referred to as messages designed to motivate the participation of users; they include questions and statements and allow users to respond, facilitating online engagement (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013).
7. Reposting content	Reposting content on social media can be referred to as the willingness of users to take action by sharing the message or content from others with their friends and providing feedback on the message content (Wirtz et al, 2013).
8. Online engagement	Online engagement is referred to as a psychological state of users characterised by interactive, co-creative user experiences with a focal agent and object (Luarn et al., 2015).

1.8 Organisation of the Thesis

The study is divided into five chapters. The current chapter provides some introduction to the background of the research. Then, the study further continues to discuss the problem statement. Next, the research problem and the objectives of the study are further explained. The study then continues with the significance of the study and the definition of key terms. Finally, closing chapter one with the organisation of the thesis.

In chapter two, an intensive literature review about social media is discussed. Which then further talks about the types of social media and social media platforms. Then, the study continues with the social media marketing strategies which then

provides a table of previous scholars that have implemented the framework used for this research. Moreover, a description of the framework is given which then further discusses the theoretical framework for this research.

In the third chapter, the methodological framework is discussed followed by the methodological approach of the study. Next, the research design is then presented which continues with the explanation of the data collection, data analysis process, and data cleansing process. Then, the study goes on to describe the tool used for the study referring to NVivo and additional features that will be used for the study.

Chapter four presents an interpretation of the research findings and further discusses the results. Besides, it also includes the key findings outlined in the previous study and then continues with the conclusion for the study. Finally, the study concludes the thesis with the implication of the research for managers.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter can be concluded by discussing the introduction of the thesis. Moreover, the study continues with the background of the study to provide an in-depth reason for the worth of the study. Next, the problem statement is discussed, pointing out the issues that arise in the study topic. Further, the study then states the research objective and research question. The objective the study aims to achieve and questions that are planned to be answered. The significance of the study is then discussed, where the study contributes to the theoretical and managerial perspectives. While the definition of key terms is then explained, stating the key terms that the study will use throughout the thesis. Finally, followed by the organisation of the thesis which explains the chronology of the whole thesis.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into many parts where, the first part discusses the introduction of social media, social media worldwide, and social media in Malaysia. Then, the study further talks about the types of social networking sites and social media platforms. Next, it further explains social media marketing strategy. Moreover, it then presents a table of previous scholars that has adopted the theoretical framework for this study. Then, the study continues to discuss the theoretical framework. Lastly, the study explains the components that make up the theoretical framework.

2.2 E-retailer Fashion Companies in Malaysia

The usage of the internet in the daily lives of Malaysians has been widely spread that it has turned into a business tool, used to conduct business activities via computer-mediated communications. Particularly in Malaysia, the internet has served as a platform to conduct business for online retailing or also known as e-retailing. The Malaysian government has introduced the 10th Malaysian Plan to develop the delivery and efficiency services by maximizing the usage of Information and Communication Technology, ICT (Helmie et al., 2016). In the field of business, the advancement of ICT is advancing swiftly around the world which plays a crucial role in the development of a country through competitiveness and sustainable economic growth (Wood, 2004). E-retailing in Malaysia has been a growing phenomenon and an attractive market due to its rapid economic growth developed enrapture for digital technologies, qualified talented pool, and sizeable young population (Murugiah,

2020). The e-retailing market in Malaysia has increased in size since 2015 exceeding US\$3 billion in 2019 and is expected to achieve US\$11 billion in 2025 (Yusof, 2021).

Companies which has the advantages of conducting business online provide an impact on the online fashion industry such as FashionValet, Zalora, Lazada, Taobao, and Mimpikita which have been growing extensively in Malaysia (Teing, 2014). With various brands and products in the e-retailing fashion industry, consumers online prefer to purchase products via the internet because they can compare the different types of products or services for a good bargain (Harn et al., 2006). According to the State of Global Islamic Economy Report (Gier) stated that the increasing popularity of fashion modest wear women spent has contributed to US\$ 44 billion in the fashion industry in the year 2015, fashion industry from Malaysia is considered among the global trendsetters in fashion modest wear worldwide (Rodzi, 2018). As a whole in the fashion industry, it has shown to be one of the booming and successful industries in the world with total revenue of US\$ 3,000 billion, making up 2 per cent of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) (FashionUnited, 2020)

In 2017, it was recorded that FashionValet and Zalora are the only top two e-retailer fashion companies in Malaysia leading the fastest-growing fashion industry (Salikha, 2017). Moreover, FashionValet and Zalora are the only top two fashion e-retailer companies that are listed in the top ten most visited e-commerce sites in Malaysia for the year 2019, with a total of 1.5 million monthly traffic hits for Zalora while 400 thousand monthly traffic clicks (AseanUp, 2019). Therefore, this shows that the two e-retailer fashion companies are conquering the online market and the e-retailer fashion industry in Malaysia.

2.2.1 FashionValet

FashionValet is Southeast Asia's leading premium multi-label e-commerce site and amongst the first online company in the Malaysian fashion industry (www.fashionvalet.com). Founded by the popular blogger (Figure 1.1), Vivy Sofinas Yusof, and her husband Fadzarudin Shah Anuar in 2010, FashionValet is a hub proudly carrying home-grown brands and designers. FashionValet creates opportunities for up-and-coming designers from Southeast Asian countries to compete on an international scale with other top international fashion online sites such as Zalora (Wong, 2014).



Figure 2.1: FashionValet founders, Vivy Sofinas Yusof, and Fadzarudin Shah Anuar

FashionValet offers a wide selection of ready-to-wear garments for men, women, and kids. As a well-known top endeavor company, it has conquered the fashion industry in Malaysia. In the beginning, starting with only 10 brands, FashionValet now offers over 500 Southeast Asian brands with over 180 Indonesian designer brands (FashionValet, 2020). FashionValet products vary from modest to contemporary attire and accessories. Its fast delivery provides the best-in-class user experience for consumers worldwide.

During their studies in the United Kingdom, Vivy and Fadzarudin were actively involved in online consumerism whereby they were used to the habit of buying online, even groceries, with just a click of a button. Upon returning to Malaysia after finishing their studies, they realized that they could not have the convenience of shopping online due to the lack of e-commerce around the year 2010 (“*Vivy Sofinas Yusof*,” 2016). They were forced to change their shopping habits due to the non-existence of online shopping in Malaysia and experienced the struggle of having to be stuck in a traffic jam to go shopping. The idea of FashionValet came into existence when they have decided to fill in the gap, to provide an alternative for Malaysian online shoppers, and simultaneously help to promote the local designers and showcase their talents. With all the hard work to overcome all the challenges, FashionValet started, focusing only on the online platform, whereby customers can purchase their products via their main website. As years passed by, FashionValet has developed its brand and focused on both online and offline markets (Singh, 2015). For the offline market, FashionValet now has five outlets of their stores located at Bangsar Village II, Pavilion Kuala Lumpur, Publika Shopping Gallery, IOI City Mall Putrajaya, and Orchard Road Singapore (Sue-Ann, 2017).

FashionValet has come a long way to where it is now today. Starting with only a capital of RM100,000, it has proved the capability of a local brand to compete with other top international brands. Now, with more than four investments and support, FashionValet has become competitive in the e-commerce fashion industry. The first investment of RM 1 million (US\$326,580) was secured from MyEG, Southeast Asia’s well-known publicly-listed internet company (Singh & Asohan, 2012). In the “Make the Pitch” knockout competition, the owners of FashionValet have won the investment by overcoming 40 other competitors (Singh & Asohan,

2012). MyEG has invested in FashionValet and became a 30% stakeholder of the company. Next, FashionValet managed to secure the Series A investment from Elixir Capital. Being the first Malaysian company to close a deal with Silicon Valley, such investment has shown how FashionValet and Elixir Capital shared a mutual interest in developing the brand and the company (Singh, 2015). The third investment was Series B from Zozotown, Japan's leading online fashion mall. With this investment, FashionValet has highlighted that Zozotown's contribution is more than a financial investment. It is an opportunity to help FashionValet to grow around the region while increasing its potential consumers in Japan (Singh, 2016). The fourth investment is the Series C investment from Khazanah Nasional Berhad, Malaysia's sovereign wealth fund of the Malaysian government. Through this investment, Khazanah Nasional Berhad helps FashionValet to develop and improve the way of running the business and helps to execute their strategic plans in expanding the business to a greater height ("Series C round from Khazanah," 2018). The investments for Series A, B, and C are named so by FashionValet to monitor the investors they managed to obtain from the start of their fashion business.

In the beginning, the FashionValet owners have faced many challenges in convincing the local designers to make ready-to-wear clothing that will be sold on their online site. Many were sceptical about the idea, but eventually, FashionValet managed to convince a group of designers with this idea. The chronological achievement of FashionValet is shown in Figure 2.2.

Eight years after their establishment, FashionValet has 200 staff, operating in two offices, warehouses, and stores. Not only has FashionValet opened physical stores but it has also launched a new brand which is a subsidiary of FashionValet known as dUCK, the purple-colored cult brand which started as a scarf label

(duckscarves.com). Now the stocks have expanded into cosmetics, stationaries, accessories, and body care. FashionValet has also raised its brand reputation through several collaborations with Downy, the world’s leading fabric brand (Mustapha, 2019) with Disney and with Neelofa’s brand for the dUCk scarf.

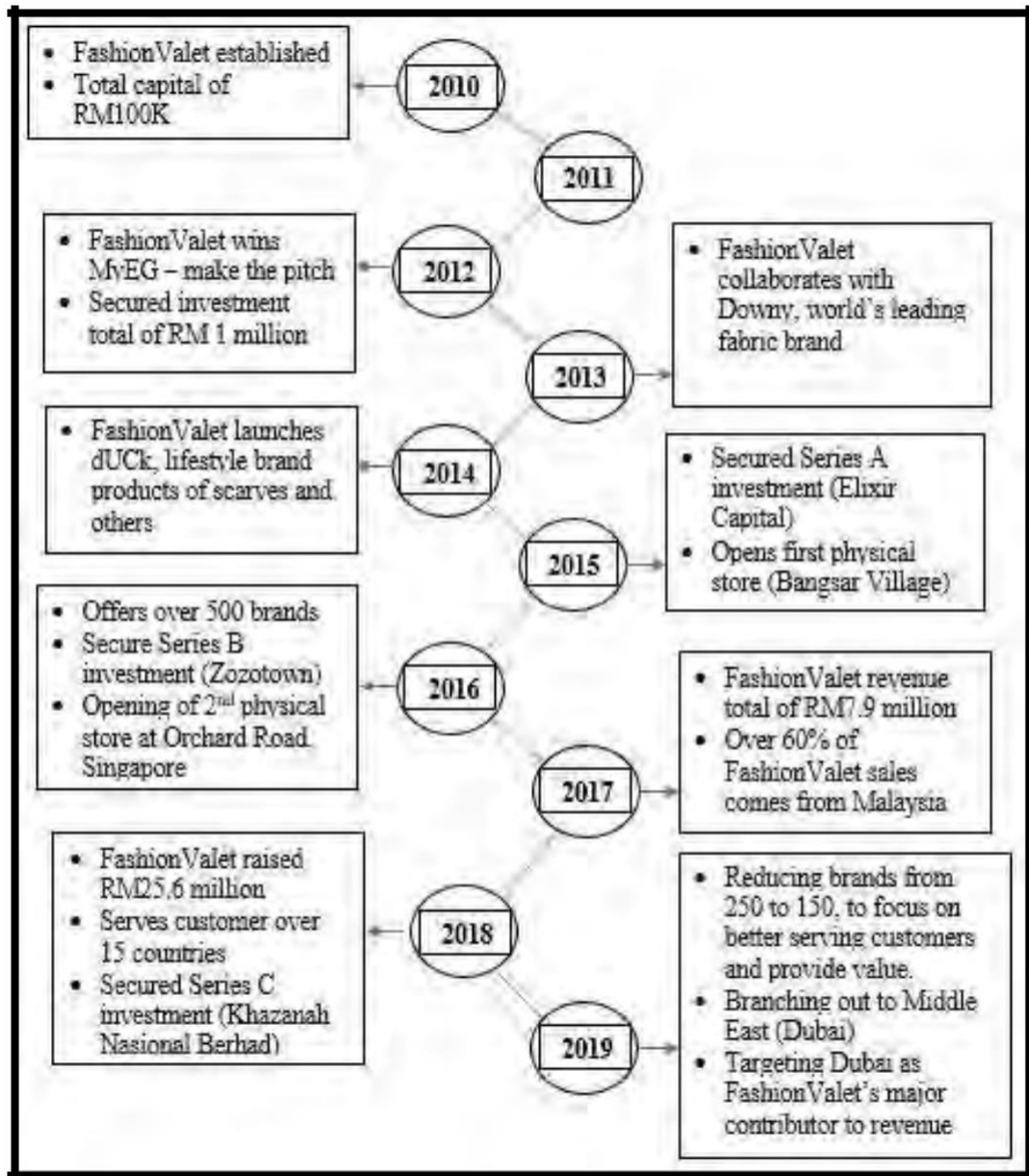


Figure 2.2: Chronological establishment of FashionValet

2.2.2 Zalora

Founded by Kinnevik AB, Zalora is a company originating from Sweden which is active in the investment towards digital consumer brands. Together with Rocket Internet, a European internet company that helps build online start-ups while holding numerous shares in internet retail business has created the Zalora Group (Cosseboom, 2014). Zalora's e-commerce website was first launched in 2012 in eight countries concurrently which are Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Brunei. The establishment of the Global Fashion Group (GFG) in 2014 is the world's leading fashion group comprised of Dafiti, Namshi, Lamoda, Jabong, and Zalora. The purpose of GFG is to help these online fashion companies to emerge in the e-commerce fashion market.

Zalora offers accessories and beauty products for men and women, over 50,000 local and international products and brands such as Nike, American Apparel, New Look, River Island, and more brands to be released ("About ZALORA," 2020). Zalora is a one-stop hub with thousands of new products weekly which keeps the fashion consumers engaged on their online platform. Zalora not only boasts about the extensive collections of products but offers consumers the 30-day free return policy, 1-3 working days for product delivery, free delivery at certain spend while providing multiple payment methods including cash on delivery. Moreover, Zalora's success is also contributed by its investors, Kinnevik AB, and Rocket Internet, known as the two main investors and shareholders of Zalora. Other investors include Summit Partners, Verinvest, Tengelmann Group, and Len Blavatnik's Access Industries (Abdulaziz, 2017).

Zalora is a big corporate company that is proven to be financially secured by investors. In 2013, it managed to gain financial support from Rocket Internet,

Summit Partners, Verlinvest, and Tengelman Group where it managed to raise a total of US\$ 100 million in May (Phneah, 2013). The second-round investment Zalora managed to raise from new investors Len Blavatnik's Access Industries a total of US\$ 112 million ("*Asian online retailer Zalora gets \$ 112 million in new funding,*" 2013). With these investments, Zalora does not face any financial problems. However, the current issue for Zalora is to reduce the amount of financial investment spent to develop and expand Zalora. Unlike FashionValet, Zalora does not have any physical store although. In March 2017, YCH Group and Zalora announced the opening of a regional e-fulfilment hub located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (Kandasivam, 2017). Storing and allocating supplies are to be kept in a warehouse to be ready to fulfil the high demands online. According to Asia's largest Tech media platform, e27, Global Fashion Group has named Gunjan Soni as the new CEO for Zalora Malaysia ineffective in 2019 (Abudheen, 2018).



Figure 2.3: Zalora Malaysia CEO Gunjan Soni

Coming from Myntra, where she was CMO (Chief Marketing Officer) and head of Jabong business (Abudheen, 2018). Gunjan brought into Zalora her 13 years