# THE IMPACT OF THE FACEBOOK WEBSITE QUALITY ON USER'S PERCEIVED ATTITUDE, INTENTION AND LOYALTY AMONG STUDENTS OF UTM

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A dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Management and Human Resources Development

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**August 2013** 

This dissertation is dedicated to my family for their endless support and encouragement.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Thanks to be given to the almighty Allah most gracious most merciful for giving me the strength, guidance, perseverance, and wisdom in his abundance throughout my study time.

Although this dissertation has my name on it, it is undeniably the result of teamwork. Individuals who played a part in the completion of this work are many.

At UTM, I am extremely thankful to my supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Saif-Ur-Rehman Khan, for his support and encouragement throughout the candidacy, field research and dissertation writing phases of my program of master degree. His insights and experience were invaluable in helping me take my research in directions that I had neither considered nor expected. Dr. Saif, thank you for providing me with autonomy and latitude in conducting my research, for your constant support, for being consistently confident that I could make it through, and for all of your constructive comments on the manuscript during the final 'push' towards completion. Without your support, I'm certain that I would not have completed this dissertation.

I am also greatly appreciative of the tireless support provided by committee members Dr. Noriza Mohd Jamal and Dr. Inda Sukati. Dr Noriza gave generously of her time by providing substantial comments on the final draft, comments which proved indispensable. I thank you for your thoroughness, innovative ideas and patience throughout the years. I give special thanks to Dr. Inda Sukatifor for providing constant support and making himself available for my ongoing queries. I am grateful that you shared your experience in management field and for your encouragement of my own

research at online website quality. Many thanks for your enthusiasm and for your faith in my ability to complete this work.

This research was spiritually supported by a heartfelt sympathy from my family in Malaysia, my father Mr. Ayah Abdul Wahab Yahya and my mother Madam Ibu Roshadah Ishak as friends and informants. I do not forget my young brother Alif Abdul Matin Bin Abdul Wahab and the little brother Nufael Bin Abdul Wahab. The same goes to my two sisters Nabilah Binti Abdul Wahab and Lina Khalida Binti Abdul Wahab.

In the Department of Human Resources Development at Faculty of Management, I wish to warmly thank Assoc. Prof. Dr Khalil Md Nor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nur Naha Abu Mansor, and Dr Ahmad Jusoh for always being there for everything related to academic and Admin duties. And to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mohd Zin bin Kandar from Faculty of Build Environment-UTM, for sometimes being the only contact I had with "planet UTM". You are assured of my sincere thanks. Also, I am deeply and truly indebted to uncle Mr. Azhari Bin Mustapha who served as an incredibly supportive, mentor and a dear friend. Special thanks are also in order to Dr. Muhammad Shakil Ahmad, who helped me in a way he could especially on how to use SPSS for data analysis and who has become dear friend. I also take this opportunity to thank the wonderful human being Dr. Noor Aireen Ibrahim - Language Academy - UTM who took the time to talk to me and provide constant encouragement. This especially made me closer to the desire of getting near to the ending of writing up of this thesis. It was a privilege to learn from and work with you, and I wonder where and when I will be able to see you all again.

To this day, I sincerely thank dear colleagues whom I met at UTM for their friendship and moral support: Ibrahim, Sanwoolu, Helena, Sujanthi, Farah, Shiraz, Sulaiman, and Malihe. Also, I thank dear friends and neighbors for domesticating the life inside the campus: Patrick, Henry, Adesina, Mustafa, Suhail, Saber, Merwan, Sanwoolu, and Sulaiman. Thank you all personally. I dream of the day when we can get together again!

I have a word for my aunt Heidi Ajrami, an Associate Professor of English in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences Division of Victoria College, for adding her rich flavors to my thesis \_ "Shukran!"

My deepest appreciation goes to my family. I would like to thank my father, my sister "Amal" and also my brothers, Hamada, Hatem, Samer, and Ahmed for their support and for always stand by my side. To my mother who is a special person "I love you". Furthermore I would also like to acknowledge with much appreciation the crucial role of my beloved friend Reem.

#### **ABSTRACT**

Loyalty of patrons, especially online ones, is an essential, effective and dynamic factor not only for development of social community but also for the development of a nation. Loyalty of the Facebook users is the most obvious one among loyalty of other websites. This research investigates the association between the criteria of the Facebook website's quality and online users' loyalty. It focuses on the development of an evaluation model that is not only responsible for the generation of a robust set of evaluation metrics but also highlights the influential constraints, success criteria and tangible outcomes of influence of the Facebook website's quality on users' loyalty. To develop this model, a paper-based questionnaire was used. A total 236 responses were collected among students of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. Analyses were performed to test the data such as descriptive analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and hierarchical multiple regression analysis. This study found that, General Content Quality, Appearance Quality, and Reputation were significantly influenced an individual's attitude. Also, both of Appearance Quality and Attitude influenced an individual's intention to use the Facebook website. In addition, this study found that Intention is a strong predictor of social media loyalty. However, all of the Technical Quality, Specific Content Quality, and Information Quality had no significant influence on the Facebook user's attitude and intention. Based on the findings of this study, implications of this study are classified into academic research and field practices. For academic implication, it contributes to the historical contributions on the theory of Technology Acceptance Model in explaining the relationship between an individual's beliefs and actual behavior in the information system context. On the other hand, the practical implication of this study recommends the website quality criteria in the electronic service industry. In the end, future research is recommended with respect to the limitations of the study.

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## **ABSTRAK**

Kesetiaan pengguna, terutama dalam kalangan media atas talian, merupakan faktor yang penting, efektif dan dinamik bukan sahaja untuk pembangunan sosial tetapi juga untuk pembangunan negara. Kesetiaan pengguna facebook kelihatan lebih ketara dalam laman web yang lain. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk melihat hubungan antara kriteria kualiti laman web facebook dengan kesetiaan pengguna atas talian. Ia memfokus kepada pembangunan model penilaian yang bertanggungjawab mengenai generasi set teguh dalam matrik penilaian dan mengenengahkan halangan-halangan utama, kriteria kejayaan dan hasil yang diperolehi daripada kualiti laman web facebook dalam kalangan pengguna setia. Instrumen soal selidik telah digunakan untuk membangunkan model tersebut. Seramai 236 responden diperolehi untuk kajian ini dalam kalangan mahasiswa di Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. Analisis dibuat untuk menguji data seperti analisis deskriptif, pengesahan analisis faktor, dan analisis hirarki regresi berganda. Kajian ini mendapati bahawa Kualiti Keseluruhan Kandungan, Kualiti Penampilan dan Reputasi adalah signifikan yang mempengaruhi sikap individu. Selain daripada itu, Kualiti Penampilan dan Sikap dipengaruhi oleh tujuan (niat) individu terhadap penggunaan laman web facebook. Tambahan pula, kajian ini mendapati bahawa tujuan (niat) adalah peramal yang paling kuat dalam menentukan kesetiaan individu dalam media sosial. Walau bagaimanapun, kesemua elemen berkaitan Kualiti Teknikal, Kualiti Kandungan Spesifik, dan Kualiti Informasi tidak signifikan dengan sikap dan tujuan (niat) pengguna facebook. Berdasarkan dapatan kajian, implikasi kajian boleh diklasifikasikan dalam kajian akademik dan amalan di lapangan. Dari segi implikasi akademik, ia menyumbang kepada aspek pensejarahan dalam Teori Model Penerimaan Teknologi dalam menghurai hubungan antara kepercayaan individu dengan tingkah laku sebenar dalam konteks sistem maklumat. Daripada segi yang lain, implikasi praktikal dalam kajian ini mencadangkan kriteria kualiti laman web dimasukkan industri perkhidmatan elektronik. Akhirnya, kajian lanjut perlu dijalankan dengan mengambilkira batasan kajian.

#### **CHAPTER 1**

#### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical research background, problem statement, objectives of the study, research questions, and significance of the study. It also presents the structure of the thesis. Finally, the researcher discusses the impact of social media websites quality, the Facebook in particular, on online users' loyalty; which in turn gives advantages to organizations. This can be noticed in the online relationship between an organization and its customers.

The internet is pervasive, it is everywhere. It has made the world from a "global village" years back to a "global closet" today where most information go viral within seconds. Relying on the strength of the Internet, the social media has made the global village a global living room. In this closet, corporations and individuals separated by distance and time are now connected and remain connected by a single click. This is the story of online social media.

Leveraging on the strength of the social media websites, organizations now connect with their numerous customers/dealers, seeking aggressively their most coveted loyalty. Hence, the website of the organization becomes a strategic tool. The Facebook website presents organizations with both opportunities and threats. Now, although many business and political analysts overestimated the effect of these media when they were first introduced, the researcher perceived that the existence of these media has molded- and continued to shape -social and business practices for years to come. One aspect that has witnessed a significant influence of usage of the Internet is the Facebook.

The Facebook, the most popular social media website, is a virtual place where many people from all ages meet online. Social media websites not only facilitate sharing one's experience on some services and products, but also inform users about promotions, special offers, new products and their advantages. Furthermore, users become fans and followers of a particular brand name.

A mutual study by Marketing Sherpa and Survey Sampling (2010) examined the intention of the fans in following a particular brand. It discovered that two thirds of the social media users liked to follow new promotions and products or services. The rest, one third, of the social media users are engaged to a company's culture and environment responsibilities. It is obvious that customers easily reach needed information by using social media websites wherever these sites are accessible not only on computers but also on cellphones.

## 1.2. Background of the study

The latter part of the twentieth century witnessed the rise of the internet and is probably the most influential invention in regards to its effects on how consumers

communicate and interact with each other and with businesses than any other technological advancement (Leão, and Mello, 2007). The internet has become an essential part in so many areas of life, including shopping, banking, socializing, entertainment, and reading, that it has become its own form of a social medium (Eley and Tilley, 2009).

Humans naturally form social networks; these can be centered around people that are important to their lives (family members, friends, co-workers) or around shared characteristics (religious views, social status). "Social media are any kind of information we share with our social network using social media websites or services. Examples are blogs, forums, photos, audio, profiles and status updates" (Eley and Tilley, 2009. p. 78). Therefore, social media allows people with no special knowledge, to post and share contents with the world instantly. Through social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, millions of novice users worldwide are able to share contents and materials with each other (Eley and Tilley, 2009).

While these social networks may have started up as the typical geek hangout, just like the Internet did in the 1990s, they have now become main streams. "Everyone from college students to business people to celebrities to politicians has embraced this new channel." (Eley and Tilley, 2009, p.79).

The social media is even thought to have played a major role in helping the US President Barack Obama win the election in 2008 (News Blaze, 2009). "The Internet and social media contributed to transcend geographical and socio-economic disparities and provided the basis to construct a national collective identity supportive of protest action against an increasingly unpopular regime" (Breuer et al., 2012, p.30).

Therefore, Facebook, within a short time, played an instrumental role in the political activities which protests did in Tunisia between December 2010 and January

2011 and also the same happened in Egypt in February 2011 (Iskander, 2011). Also, from a different angle; Stelzner, (2011) demonstrated that use of social media are very obvious in marketing as seen from the table below. The table next page shows also the most popular social media sites.

**Table 1.1:** Rank of social media as a marketing tool.

Adapted: Stelzner, (2011)

## Companies use social media as a marketing tool

Item	Percentage
Yes	93%
No	7%

Here are the 15 Most Popular Social Media Websites, (Source: eBizMBA Rank, January, 2013).

Table 1.2: List of 15 most popular social Media sites

#	Social Media Website /Logo		Website Address	Estimated Monthly Visitor
1	facebook	Facebook	www.facebook.com	750,000,000
2	9	Twitter	www.twitter.com	250,000,000
3	Linked in.	LinkedIn	www.linkedin.com	110,000,000
4	mv <u>,                                    </u>	MySpace	http://www.myspace.com	70,500,000
5	the Google+	GooglePlus+	http://www.plus.google.com	65,000,000
6	deviantART	DeviantArt	http://www.deviantart.com	25,500,000
7	S LIVEJOURNAL	LiveJournal	http://www.livejournal.com	20,500,000
8	TAGGED	Tagged	http://www.tagged.com	19,500,000
9	SLRN?	Orkut	http://www.orkut.com	17,500,000
10	Pinterest	Pinterest	http://pinterest.com	15,500,000
11	cafemom	CafeMom	http://www.cafemom.com	12,500,000
12	Ning	Ning	http://www.ning.com	12,000,000
13	meetup	Meetup	http://www.meetup.com	7,500,000
14	mylife	MyLife	http://www.mylife.com	5,400,000
15	bod⊙o	Badoo	http://badoo.com	2,500,000

In the field of electronic service, one aspect seems particularly important in this context: How will the behavior of this new online shopper/dealer/consumer be processed? Might it be that the characteristics of access to news, use of services and purchasing in the physical world will be carried over to cyberspace (as the virtual space of the Internet is known)? Or, rather, will the interaction within a new medium affect people's buying behavior? Or, even if that is not the case, will the possibilities the medium offers influence the intention? And also will it influence the process?

#### 1.3. Problem Statement

Though the media being a restricted environment in Malaysia, the online social media could be used as a medium for citizens in Malaysia to create and utilize a new social network instead of the more restricted avenues (Smeltzer and Keddy, 2010). The most popular social media website is the Facebook among its many features, Facebook groups are a particularly widespread and popular application that support unique forms of social interaction and generate discussions based on common interests

Besides, the variety of online services offered, website loyalty among the Facebook users is a competitive issue among online social media websites. Furthermore, some studies discussed the significance of loyalty concept in the social media websites context (Sylviane, 2012; Xevelonakis and Som, 2012; Gu, Oh and Way, 2011; Nitzan and Libai, 2011; Westling, 2007). Hence, social media websites providers should concern on providing users with useful, convenience and achieve competitive advantage through the other media avenues and strive to retain it overtime.

In addition, Ranaweera et al., (2003) discussed the impact of attitudinal and behavioral dimensions on loyalty. Two behavioral results of loyal users are found as word of mouth and willingness to reuse the website (Jeon, 2009 and Srinivasan et al., 2002). Hence, it is important for social media providers to retain social media users and to acquire prospective ones. As social media websites providers may have concerns on the quality of website.

The social media researchers added further concerns to the quality concept which can be performed on the Facebook website characteristics. However, Jeon (2009) argued that achieving loyalty in the "click environment" is not simple. The Facebook users must perceive on the quality of the Facebook website to keep using it for long run. Furthermore, Kim and Lee (2004); Jeon (2009) and Wolfinbager and Gilly, (2003) argued the consequences of users' perception towards a particular website on users' loyalty.

Hence, the social media providers should focus on users' attraction, current users' experience and loyalty by improving the way of offering products and services. Therefore, organizations should concern on getting the most benefit out from the Facebook advantages to make their customer's loyalty goes high and strong. According to Yean and Yeow (2009) if an organization offers online service without a clear understanding of factors influence customer adoption. Thus the question resides on that is what features that the Facebook website should adopt in order to influence users' loyalty or what makes the Facebook different?

Furthermore, Bai, Law, and Wen, (2008) and Al-Qeisi, (2009) argued the influence of the website quality characteristics on users' intention towards the website. This point is being supported by Choi et al., (2004); Jeon, (2009), and Aladwani, (2006) with respect to the impact of website characteristics on users' perceptions which is a cognitive phase that comes before building propensity towards a particular reaction.

In addition, some studies recognized an individual's attitude as a strong determinant of his or her intention in the context of technology usage (Davis et al., 1989; Djamasbi et al., 2009; and Chion, 1998) and in the context of website usage (Jeon, 2009; Kim et al., 2009 and Shin, 2004). Besides, some other studies highlighted users' intention as an indicator of an individual's actual reaction when estimating users' loyalty (Jeon, 2009; Chen et al., 2008; Ghazizadeh et al., 2010; Tsou and Liao, 2010 and Luo et al., 2010).

Unluckily, most of social media providers have a limited understanding on designing users based portal. This portal can help them create a better relationship and interactivity with users in order to secure their success overtime. Aside from that, literature shows that that not only there was a great interest in designing the criteria of website quality, but also there were studies investigated the Facebook website quality in the technology acceptance model are limited.

Previous studies can be a source of supportive resources although, they are unsuccessful in providing multi-dimensional insight for examining the Facebook website quality linking to users' loyalty. These studies are (Sylviane, 2012; Xevelonakis and Som, 2012; Gu, Oh, and Wang, 2011; Nitzan and Libai, 2011; Breuer, Landman, and Farquhar, 2012; Valenzuela, Park, and Kee, 2009; Martin-Consuegra, Molina, and Esteban, 2007; Clottey, Collier, and Stodnick, 2011; Westling, 2007).

Hence, this study is trying to extend a previous research by Aladwani (2006) which investigated the impact of four dimensions of website quality on customers' attitude and intention towards loyalty. A study by Jumman (2012) added "reputation" to the previous four dimensions. Here, the researcher adopts and extends these both two studies which are based on Technology Acceptance Model by adding the sixth

dimension which is "information quality". This new dimension is adapted from Ahn *et al.*, (2007) and Lin (2007).

## 1.4. Research questions

According to the problem statement and extant literature, the present study is going to answer the following research questions:

- 1. What is the inter-relationship between the Facebook Website Criteria, Attitude, Intention, and Loyalty?
- 2. To what extent Facebook Quality Criteria factors influence on users' Attitude?
- 3. To what extent Facebook Quality Criteria factors influence users' Intention?
- 4. To what extent Facebook Quality Criteria factors influence on users' Loyalty?

Note: The Facebook website quality criteria mean the particular factors that are taken into account in the researcher's framework as given at page 90.

## 1.5. Objectives of the study

The present study is aimed to achieve the following main objectives:

- 1. To investigate the relationship between the Facebook Website Quality Criteria, Attitude, Intention, and Loyalty.
- 2. To investigate the effects of the Facebook Quality Criteria on users' Attitude.
- 3. To investigate the effects of the Facebook Quality Criteria on users' Intention.
- 4. To explore the effects of the Facebook Quality Criteria on users' loyalty.

## 1.6. Scope of the study

This study focuses on Facebook users at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. What is more, it focuses on users' perception of factors influencing their loyalty toward the Facebook portal's features. Also it investigates six major criteria of website quality that influence customers' loyalty which are Technical Quality, General Content Quality, Specific Content Quality, Appearance Quality, Reputation and Information Quality.

## 1.7. Contribution of the study

The contribution of the present study can be viewed regarding the issue of the impact of the social media portal characteristics on social media users' perception towards loyalty. Thus, the contribution of the present study can be viewed on both academic and industry perspectives.

#### 1.7.1. Academic contribution

The present study is a meaningful research related to the Facebook as the most popular social media website quality. Obviously, Website Quality become the more important issue than ever, since website can affect customers' satisfaction with online service and furthermore increases their loyalty (Jeon, 2009 and Asikhia, 2011). This study helps to increase the wide spread application of the website quality studies.

## 1.7.2. Industry Contribution

This study could assist an organization in building customer-base attention and acquisition. It also helps in understanding the perception of users and customers towards the website quality and in providing guidelines to build online user relationship. Thus, the present study provides guidance for organizations which interested in getting deep understanding of website characteristics which support a website of an organization. As a result, it might help organizations to formulate effective, attractive, and more impressive website that supports its presence in the online environment.

## 1.8. Key Concepts Definition

This section describes the main elements of this research: Social Media, Facebook, Social Media Website Quality Criteria, Attitude, Intention, and Loyalty.

 Table 1.3: list of Key concepts Definition

Variable	Definition	Sources	Year
Social Media	Is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content.	Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. Business horizons.	Kaplan and Haenlein (2010)
Facebook	Facebook launched in 2004. Similar to other social media, Facebook is a Web-based service that allows people to build public profiles and establish explicit connections with others in their social network.	Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. Journal of Computer Mediated Communication.	Ellison, N. B. (2007).
Social Media Website Quality	A set of features of social media and interactions that can be applied to the task of content quality identification. They are intrinsic content quality, interactions between content creators and users, as well as content usage statistics.	Finding high-quality content in social media. In Proceedings of the international conference on Web search and web data mining (pp. 183-194).  ACM.	Agichtein, Castillo, Donato, Gionis, and Mishne, (2008).
Technical Quality	Technical quality (TQ) is defined as the website overall technical features such as security, navigation, availability, search facilities, valid links, page loading speed, personalization, interactivity, and the website accessibility	An empirical test of the link between web site quality and forward enterprise integration with web consumers. Business Process Management Journal.	Aladwani, (2006)
General Content Quality	a feature of all content on the website to create something that perfect, interest rate, currency, accuracy, precision and concise.	An empirical test of the link between web site quality and forward enterprise integration with web consumers. Business Process Management Journal.	Aladwani, (2006)

Variable	Definition	Sources	Year
Specific Content Quality	Is involved characteristics in any website such as "finding contact information, finding firm general information, finding products/services details, finding customers' policies, and finding user support"	An empirical test of the link between web site quality and forward enterprise integration with web consumers. Business Process Management Journal.	Aladwani, (2006)
Appearance Quality	Refers to the website's presence or face quality such as "attractiveness, organization, proper use of fonts, proper use of colors, and proper use of multimedia".	An empirical test of the link between web site quality and forward enterprise integration with web consumers. Business Process Management Journal.	Aladwani, (2006)
Information Quality	Information quality is best defined as the quality of information given by the online services.	An application of fuzzy AHP for evaluating course website quality. Computers and Education.	Lin, (2010)
	is defined as "the degree to which the system information is free of errors"	Development and validation of an instrument to measure user perceived service quality of information presenting web portals. Information and Management.	(Yang et al., 2005)
Reputation	Is "a positive or negative statement by the client or former, the person or institution on the product	User orientation of service employees: Its impact on user satisfaction, commitment, and retention. International Journal of Service Industry Management.	(Thurau et al, 2004).

Variable	Definition	Sources	Year
Intention	Is an indication of people's willingness to achieve particular behavior. Therefore, it can be considered as the immediate antecedent of loyal behavior.	User acceptance of computer technology: a comparison of two theoretical models. Management science.	Davis et al. (1989)
	is defined as "an individual's self-reported subjective probability of his or her performing a specified behavior based on his or her cognitive appraisal of volitional and non-volitional behavioral determinants"	Disentangling behavioral intention and behavioral expectation. Journal of experimental social psychology.	(Warshaw and Davis, 1985)
Loyalty	Is defined in the individual context as the customer's favorable attitude toward the e-retailer which results consistently in repeat buying behavior	User loyalty in e- commerce: an exploration of its antecedents and consequences. Journal of retailing.	Srinivasan et al., (2002).

## 1.9. Structure of Thesis

This thesis includes five chapters. The first chapter introduces an introduction of the present study, while chapter two reviews literature related to technology acceptance models / theories and website quality. Chapter three presents the research methodology used in this study. Chapter four discusses the data analysis. Finally, chapter five provides a discussion on the findings before concluding this study.

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