Message Strategies To Increase Facebook Engagement

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MESSAGE STRATEGIES TO INCREASE FACEBOOK ENGAGEMENT

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Abstract

The current marketing trend demanded the Food Safety and Quality Division Ministry of Health Malaysia to explore relevant social media strategies to be incorporated into the division marketing mix to encourage social media user engagement with a post posted during the Food Safety Campaign in 2017 and 2018. Thus, a study was conducted to explore the message strategy incorporated in the post. The study used quantitative content analysis to collect data from forty Facebook status that related to the social media campaign. The study appointed two coders during the data collection process to minimise the reliability issue. The data were analysed descriptively to identify relevance message strategies embedded in the post. The study divided message strategy into four different categories namely the posting format, posting strategy, tone of a post, and prompting engagement. The results indicated that appealing video and photo could increase Facebook user engagement such as comment, share, likes, emojis, and tagging the post. Also, source credibility is found contributed to increase Facebook user engagement. Besides, emotional posts, either in a video, photos, or text will encourage the Facebook user to engage. The study also discovered that motion or static info graphics are highly contributed to Facebook user engagement.

Keywords: Message strategy, posting strategy, posting format, social media, tone of a post, user engagement

1. Introduction

Social media has an inevitable taken an essential role in this modern world. It brings a new dimension of communication and bridging the communication gap, which often occurs in traditional media that are only one-way communication and delay feedback. The aid of internet-based and computing technologies has made our communication more interactive (Brody, 1990). Compared to traditional media, with social media, users can interact directly with others (Leonard, 2016). The development of this media technology enables health information to be quickly and widely disseminated.

As well as health programs that set up examples of workplace settings, schools or homes, according to Ventola (2014), social media is also a health promotion setting because social media is where a community of netizens is. The benefit of setting up online media is that there is no geographical limitation, physical barriers, and easy to access. The social media function is as a communication channel that conveys the message, which involves a question of something. Social media is used to describe sites and applications that allow information sharing and interactive activities among online communities; for examples blogs, wiki's, content-sharing sites, virtual worlds, and social networking sites (Bennett & Glasgow, 2009). Social media can be classified in several ways to reflect various social media platforms, such as collaborative projects (e.g. Wikipedia), content communities (e.g. YouTube), social network pages (e.g., Facebook), and virtual games or social games, for example, World of Warcraft, Second Life (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

2. Problem Statement

Mass media campaigns are a major first step in increasing the general public's perception of the government messages. Evaluating such measures is important for tracking whether the public is able to grasp the message that has been communicated. At such, this is the first-time media campaigns funded by the Food Safety Division was carried out since 2017 through social media was being evaluated in terms of the message's strategy. Evaluation is an integral aspect of any communications marketing strategy. It helps evaluate the efficacy of the communications, to verify if the right channels have been used and to determine if the combination is successful and whether investment returns are worth the effort (Turnbull & Jenkins, 2016). With the widely using of the online social media campaign, the effect of social media campaign should be considered as a factor which matters in any Food Quality and Safety Divison (FQSD) Ministry of Health Malaysia marketing mix. One reason for the growth of the social media campaign is that traditional advertising is losing influence on the target audience. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), an online network site is trending toward becoming the primary source of information for many consumers. If it is the case, marketing promotions and activities which based on these social media platforms seem to be very important for any organisation that has intention in embarking into a media campaign. It is very pertinent to research on how social media campaigns can further positively affect organisation promotional activities. In other words, how could an organisation correctly construct and implement social media strategies? It is crucial for the Divisions Ministry of Health in Malaysia to know their strategies to engage with netizens to spread of food safety awareness. Thus, the study found

exploring the method that has been executed in the previous food safety campaign is important for the FQSD to enhance future campaign effectiveness by reaching more audiences to disseminate the health message.

3. Research Questions

According to the problem statement, research questions are introduced as follow:
- What is the message strategies used by FB influencer to increase food safety campaign 2017 and 2018 content engagement?
- What is the FB user level of engagement during the food safety campaign 2017 and 2018?

4. Purpose of the Study

Effective communication strategies play an essential role in the success of any health promotion campaign. This study helped to explore relevance message strategies on Facebook for serious information such as food safety to increase engagement with Facebook users. It is imperative research to ensure the information could penetrate the community via 955 million active FB users monthly and 552 million active FB users daily (Ortigosa et al., 2014).The outcome of this study is expected to improve the Food Safety and Quality Division Ministry of Health future media campaign using the social media platform. The finding could become a guideline for communication practitioners in healthcare. Therefore, the study was conducted with a purpose to explore important strategies in Facebook postings techniques on FSQD Facebook that significant to generate engagement with Facebook users.

5. Research Methods

The paper used content analysis to probe further into the strategies used by the FSQD to conduct food safety camping aiming for various types of social media users. The primary goal of the content analysis was to identify message strategies used by the FB influencer as FB status during the Food Safety Campaign in 2017 and 2018. The content analysis allowed the researcher to examine the types of message strategies used by FB influencer on the Food Safety Campaign 2017 and 2018 as status. The message strategies were adopted from Klassen et al. (2018) and Ashley and Tuten (2015). This study considered content analysis was a reliable method because it helped to minimise bias in data collection because it is unobtrusive, unstructured, and capable of coping with enormous data, it's a context-sensitive and could examine the text or images of communication without having to engage with users (Kim & Kuljis, 2010). A similar technique also is applied by several scholars but in social media branding exercise (Phillips et al., 2014). The study applied four types of message strategies, namely the format, the posting strategy, the tone of post and the post engagement. The data was analysed descriptively. The finding was presented in percentages to identify the type of postings used by FB influencer to increase food safety campaign 2017 and 2018 content engagement. User engagement was measured based on likes, comments, shares, and tags. Total likes, comments, and shares for every post was identified based on the number of likes, comments and shares located beneath the post. Both sharing either for own timeline or friend timeline is

considered as share. For example, 10 % engagement rate for a post was determined based on total 100 likes over total views.

6. Findings

The results of the content analysis on the message strategies used by the Facebook influencer showed that the influencers had used twenty-one techniques as a strategy to encourage content engagement with the FB users. Result of the message strategies are provided in Table 01:

Table 1. List of technique in message strategy

No	Message strategy	Techniques in message strategy	% Presence	% Absence
1	Posting Format	Vid with text	52.5 (21)	47.5 (19)
2		Photo with text	30 (12)	70 (28)
3		Shared photo with text	15 (6)	85 (34)
4		Photo only	5 (2)	95 (38)
5	Posting strategies	Appeal post	82.5 (33)	17.5 (7)
6		Quote with text	80 (32)	20 (8)
7		Indirect links	57.5 (23)	42.5 (17)
8		Hack with text	47.5 (19)	52.5 (21)
9		Emotional with text	25 (10)	75 (30)
10		Statistic with video	22.5 (9)	77.5 (31)
11		Emotional video	17.5 (7)	82.5 (33)
12		Funny video	17.5 (7)	82.5 (33)
13		Hack infographic	12.5 (5)	87.5 (35)
14		Funny word	10 (4)	90 (36)
15		Quote picture	10 (4)	90 (4)
16		Statistic infographic	10 (4)	90 (36)
17		Hack video	5 (2)	95 (38)
18		Direct links	5 (2)	95 (38)
19	Tone of post	Serious tone	77.5 (31)	22.5 (9)
20		Positive tone	17.5 (7)	82.5(33)
21	Prompting engagement (user reaction)	Prompting question and answer	50 (20)	50 (20)

Among forty-two techniques that have been studied, the posts applied twenty-one techniques as a strategy to encourage FB user engagement. For the posting format, the majority of the post used video to deliver valuable information. The video was presented in many ways included used of text along with the video, to present statistic information via a video, to share the personal experience using video, to share information using humorous video, and life hacks using video that suggests tips to make daily activities easier and more effective. For example, a consequence of food poisoning threatened a family member's life posted by beautiful Nara via emotional video to increase social awareness of possibilities to get food poisoning if they take cleanliness issues lightly. The post has received 78 comments, 79 shares, 219 likes, 29 emojis, and 18 tags. The same video also posted by roti kaya accumulated 24 comments, 104 shares, 882 likes, 33 emojis, and ten tags. While only 30 percent of the posts used photo and text together to deliver information to FB users. The finding also indicated FB post only with text is not a popular

strategy for the food safety campaign 2017 and 2018. Thus, the study suggest that a video is the most popular posting format followed by a photo together with text to encourage FB user engagement.

While for the posting strategy, most of the post used a visually appealing video and photos. For example, a post made by Dr Kamarul Ariffin used interesting photos and captivated title to disseminate valuable tips on how to evaluate restaurant cleanliness. The post looks interesting and contains a sense of urgency for FB users to read. Thus, it increases engagement with FB users who saw that post. The table shows that 82.5 percent of the total post in the Food Safety Campaign for 2017 and 2018 used appealing visual technique to establish engagement with FB users. The study considers visual appealing as photos or videos that nice to look at like using innovative photos, videos, and designs as suggested by Klassen et al. (2018).

However, the least popular posting strategy that can be identified is the used of direct links to another webpage to allow the FB users to read more information. The study suggest a direct link is not a popular approach due to FB users are not interested in being directed to a formal website such as the government website. However, more than half of the posts provided an indirect link in their post. The possible explanation for this situation probably due to the nature of FB as a content generated medium that allowed users to get similar information from other FB users. Besides, many informal websites provided similar information with a simpler approach and easy to understand.

For the tone of the post, 77.5 percent of the post in Food Safety Campaign 2017 and 2018 applied a serious tone in the posting that contains important information for the FB users to understand. For instance, Dr. Kamarul Ariffin posted information related to a correct method to defrost of raw food like chicken, beef, and a variety of seafood to be stored in a freezer has received 291 comments, 1,200 shares, 2,200 likes, 142 emojis, and been tagged for 163 times.

To enhance the FB user engagement, the study has identified half of the posts prompted the FB users with a question. The question was asked as part of the status or embedded in the video. For example, the beautiful Nara page asked a question to FB users on their post before sharing ten tips of food safety during a festive season.

The study used the standard guideline from the industry to decide the level of engagement between the FB postings with FB user. The industry guideline has determined that the value of less than 1% is considered as low engagement. However, the value of 1% to 3.5% is considered as average or good engagement rate. While, a value between in a between of 3.5% to 6% is considered a high engagement rate (Wong, 2018).

Table 02 shows more than half of the post successfully established high engagement with users through comments, shares, likes, and emojis. However, the post shows a low level of engagement with FB users through the tag. The study proposed that comments, shares, likes, and emojis are the most common and easiest way for FB users to establish engagement. While low engagement for the tag is probably related to the ability of FB users to memorise or familiar with their FB contact. The finding indicated that the majority of the post for Food Safety Campaign in 2017 and 2018 have successfully established engagement with FB users via comments, shares, likes, emojis, and tags.

Table 2. Level of engagement

Engagement rate, %	% (No of Comments)	% (no of shares)	% (no of likes)	% (no of emojis)	% (no of tags)
High	47.5 (19)	85.0 (35)	100 (40)	62.5 (25)	15.0 (6)
Average/Good	35.0 (14)	2.5 (1)	0	25.0 (10)	27.5 (11)
Low	17.5 (7)	12.5 (4)	0	12.5 (5)	57.5 (23)

7. Conclusion

The current marketing trend requires the FSQD Ministry of Health Malaysia to explore relevant social media strategies as one of the efforts to incorporate media campaigns in their marketing mix. Social media marketing is a new trend and becomes the primary source for users to obtain information. FSQD has been very active in conducting relevance health campaigns since 2017. In brief, the study has identified the relevant type of postings to increase FB user engagement. It is recommended that the Food Safety and Quality Division to use an appealing video and photo to grab FB user attention. Besides that, a credible source of information must be mentioned and prioritise to encourage FB user engagement such as to share and to tag. Besides, the FSQDnalso wanted to consider to use video or photo not only visually appealing but could touch the FB users' emotions. Also, the Food Safety and Quality Division probably would like considering to use the infographics to explain important information yet challenging for the public to digest.

The study concluded that the majority of the post on the Food Safety and Quality Division FB page during the Food Safety Campaign in 2017 and 2018 have successfully attracted the FB users to engage. The Food Safety and Quality Division Ministry of Health intention to share food safety information with the public is considered a success. Therefore, for a future campaign, it is encouraged for FSQD Ministry of Health consider several techniques based on the finding of this study to increase the level of engagement between the post and the FB users.

Acknowledgments

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