



**Faculty of Technology Management and  
Technopreneurship**

**THE IMPACT OF FACEBOOK DESIGN FEATURES ON  
POPULARITY OF THE PHOTOGRAPHY FACEBOOK  
PAGES**

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**MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION  
(TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION MANAGEMENT)**

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**THE IMPACT OF FACEBOOK DESIGN FEATURES ON POPULARITY OF THE  
PHOTOGRAPHY FACEBOOK PAGES**

**ENG POH HWA**

**A thesis submitted  
in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration  
(Technology and Innovation Management)**

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## ABSTRACT

### Purpose of the research

Facebook was reported to have more than 21 million registered members generating 1.6 billion page views each day (Needham & Company, 2007). The site is tightly integrated into the daily media practices of its users: The typical user spends about 20 minutes a day on the site, and two-thirds of users log in at least once a day (Cassidy, 2006; Needham & Company, 2007). Therefore, Facebook is a powerful social networking site to promote businesses. The primary objective of the research is to study about the impact of Facebook design features on popularity of the photography Facebook pages. Awareness among the public can be generated when the photography Facebook pages become popular. The ultimate purpose of creating popularity of the photography Facebook pages is to promote the photography service, to persuade people to buy it. In other words, creating popularity of the photography Facebook pages helps creating the market share for the photography service.

### Design/Methodology/Approach

A local freelance photography service is chosen as the target of research. Photography Facebook pages were designed to promote the photography service. Facebook pages were created to generate awareness about the photography service among the Facebook users. The photos taken by the photographer were displayed on the photography Facebook pages. Quantitative data analysis techniques were used to analyse the quantitative data collected from the questionnaires. Descriptive statistics was used to describe the basic features of the data in the research. The impact of Facebook design features on popularity of the photography Facebook pages was determined by studying the correlation relationships between the dependent variable and the independent variables (based on the results obtained in the questionnaires).

### Findings

There are a total of 310 questionnaires successfully collected from the respondents. Based on the results of the questionnaires, Facebook features most attracted the attention of the respondents is Facebook Wall (64.2%). Majority of the respondents (59%) agree that Uploaded images is the most effective marketing feature. Thus, majority of the respondents (56.5%) agree that Like and Share is the most effective Facebook design feature which influences the number of their visit to the photography Facebook pages. Majority of the respondents (52.9%) agree that Facebook Wall is the most effective Facebook design feature which influences them to like the photography Facebook pages. 85.5% of the respondents strongly agree and agree that they like the photography pages, 87.5% of the respondents strongly agree and agree that they are willing to share the photography pages.

and 81.9% of the respondents strongly agree and agree that they will visit the photography pages again. Please refer to Chap 5, part of discussion and research finding for details. The hypothesis testing supported the hypotheses (H1 and H2) but rejected the hypothesis (H3). Please refer to Chap 4, part of Hypothesis Testing for details.

Originality/ Value of the research

The research studied the impact of Facebook design features on popularity of the photography Facebook pages. This is a new topic which had not been discussed by the previous researchers.

Paper Type – Master Thesis

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## **DEDICATION**


To my beloved mother and father, family members and my respected supervisor and lecturers.

I would like to express my utmost appreciation for my supervisor and those lecturers who had guided me throughout the process in completing this thesis. They are Dr Ismi, Dr Md. Nor Hayati Bin Tahir, Professor Salleh, Dr Izzaidin and Mr Liew. I would also express my special thanks to my friends who guided and helped me throughout the process in completing this thesis. Their willingness in sharing knowledge is highly appreciated.



## DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis entitle "The Impact of Facebook Design Features on Popularity of the Photography Facebook Pages" is the result of my own research except as cited in the references. The thesis has not been accepted for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature of any other degree.

Signature :  .....

Name : ENG POH HWA .....

Date : 21 May 2012 .....

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Background

J.A. Barnes (2010) introduced the term of social networks to denote patterns of ties including bounded groups (e.g. families, villages, and so on) and social categories (e.g. sex, race, and so on). Van der Poel proposed four different approaches to understand social networks (Van der Poel, 1993) which can also be regarded as the four fundamental features of social networks: Interaction approach, Role relation approach, Affection approach and Exchange approach. Social network is the term applied by social researchers to comprehend various inter-personal dynamics that take place within the immediate environment of people (Cohen and Syme, 1985; Fischer, 1982; Wellman, 1979). It reflects a wide range of relationships that people maintain with other people and can directly impact on the well-being of people (Berkman and Syme, 1979; Hammer, 1983; Thoits, 1982; Wills, 1985).

Boyd, d. m., & Ellison, N. B. (2007) cited that social network sites (SNSs) is defined as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site. On the other hand, Halligan, Shah, and Scott (2009) state that social media is about online interactions and sharing among people. Friends and family can connect with each other even in geographically long distances.

Ji-Hong Park (2009) cited that social networking sites are profile-based websites that allow users to maintain social relationships by viewing, visiting, and sharing their lists of social connections with other members. Whereas according to Amanda Lenhart and



Mary Madden, a social networking site is an online place where a user can create a profile and build a personal network that connects him or her to other users.

According to Andrew Keenan and Ali Shiri (2009), social websites like Facebook, MySpace and Twitter offer a variety of features to facilitate socialization on the internet. Users share public musings, private messages, photos, songs, videos and most other standard forms of expression. These social websites are amongst the most visited sites on the internet (Alexa, 2008) and have grown exponentially within the last few years.

The primary objective of the research is to study about the impact of Facebook design features on popularity of the Facebook pages. Before the discussing about the Facebook design features, the comparisons of design features between the different SNSs were discussed in the following. According to David (2010), the essential features of SN web sites include but are not limited to: blogging: users can upload materials (e.g. photos, diaries, etc.) which are organised chronologically and others can post their feedbacks; grouping: users can join a group of people who have something in common (e.g. same college, company or city); networking: users can add or delete friends at any time; and instant messaging: users can send instant messages to their friends.

Majority of the SNSs consists of visible profiles that display an articulated list of Friends who are also users of the system. Profiles are unique pages where one can "type oneself into being" (Sundén, 2003, p. 3). After joining an SNS, an individual is asked to fill out forms containing a series of questions to generate the profiles. The profiles may include descriptors such as age, location, interests, and an "about me" section and profile photos which can be enhanced by adding multimedia content or by modifying the profile's look and feel. Facebook for example, allow users to add modules ("Applications") that enhance their profile.

According to boyd, d. m., & Ellison, N. B. (2007), the visibility of a profile varies by site and according to user discretion. By default, profiles on Friendster and Tribe.net are crawled by search engines, making them visible to anyone, regardless of whether or not the viewer has an account. Alternatively, LinkedIn controls what a viewer may see based on whether she or he has a paid account. Sites like MySpace allow users to choose whether they want their profile to be public or "Friends only." Facebook takes a different approach—by default, users who are part of the same "network" can view each other's profiles, unless a profile owner has decided to deny permission to those in their network. Structural variations around visibility and access are one of the primary ways that SNSs differentiate themselves from each other.

According to boyd, d. m., & Ellison, N. B. (2007), after joining a social network site, users are prompted to identify others in the system with which they have a relationship. The label for these relationships differ depending on the site—popular terms include "Friends," "Contacts," and "Fans." Most SNSs require bi-directional confirmation for Friendship, but some do not. These one-directional ties are sometimes labeled as "Fans" or "Followers," but many sites call these Friends as well. The term "Friends" can be misleading, because the connection does not necessarily mean friendship in the everyday vernacular sense, and the reasons people connect are varied (boyd, 2006a).

According to boyd, d. m., & Ellison, N. B. (2007), the public display of connections is a crucial component of SNSs. The Friends list contains links to each Friend's profile, enabling viewers to traverse the network graph by clicking through the Friends lists. On most sites, the list of Friends is visible to anyone who is permitted to view the profile, although there are exceptions. For instance, some MySpace users have hacked their profiles to hide the Friends display, and LinkedIn allows users to opt out of displaying their network.

According to boyd, d. m., & Ellison, N. B. (2007), most SNSs also provide a mechanism for users to leave messages on their Friends' profiles. This feature typically involves leaving "comments," although sites employ various labels for this feature. In addition, SNSs often have a private messaging feature similar to webmail. While both private messages and comments are popular on most of the major SNSs, they are not universally available.

According to boyd, d. m., & Ellison, N. B. (2007), beyond profiles, Friends, comments, and private messaging, SNSs vary greatly in their features and user base. Some have photo-sharing or video-sharing capabilities; others have built-in blogging and instant messaging technology. There are mobile-specific SNSs (e.g., Dodgeball), but some web-based SNSs also support limited mobile interactions (e.g., Facebook, MySpace, and Cyworld). Many SNSs target people from specific geographical regions or linguistic groups, although this does not always determine the site's constituency. Some sites are designed with specific ethnic, religious, sexual orientation, political, or other identity-driven categories in mind. There are even SNSs for dogs (Dogster) and cats (Catster), although their owners must manage their profiles.

The primary focus on the research is to discuss about the Facebook design features. Why Facebook was chosen as the research topic base? According to Wikipedia, Facebook reports 600 million active users, 50% of them log in daily, 25 billion pieces of content are shared each month (including web links, news, blog posts, notes etc.), more than 100 million users engage with Facebook on external websites every month, half of comScore's Global Top 100 websites have integrated with Facebook. (According to Wikipedia, comScore is an Internet marketing Research Company providing marketing data and services to many of the Internet's largest businesses.)



The web traffic data for Facebook, oriented towards college students, shows 15 million unique US visitors a month (QuantCast, 2007a). Facebook is one of the world's most visited websites. Facebook users are pretty evenly distributed across age groups. And despite its high popularity among young people, Facebook's fastest growing demographic is over 35. Global in both its massive scale and reach, Facebook is available in more than 70 languages around the world. More than 300,000 people helped with the translation process via a crowd-sourced application open to all Facebook users. In addition to growth around the world, users are becoming increasingly engaged. Half of our users come back every day and the amount of time that people spend on Facebook is triple what they spend on the No. 2 website (Facebook,2011).

Why photography service was chosen as the research topic? Photography service is a form of service, which people are willing to spend some amount of time to purchase it. There are too many photography services in Malaysia, which leads to serious competition among the photography services. Therefore, a good promotional tool is needed for photography services to create awareness among the public. In conjunction with this, photography Facebook pages were created to study the impact of Facebook design features on creating popularity for the pages.

A local freelance photography service is chosen as the target of research. Photography Facebook pages were designed to promote the photography service. Facebook pages were created to generate awareness about the photography service among the Facebook users. The photos taken by the photographer were displayed on the Facebook pages.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

According to the researchers Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C., & Lampe, C. (2007) Facebook was reported to have more than 21 million registered members generating 1.6 billion page views each day (Needham & Company, 2007). The site is tightly integrated into the daily media practices of its users: The typical user spends about 20 minutes a day on the site, and two-thirds of users log in at least once a day (Cassidy, 2006; Needham & Company, 2007).

Therefore, Facebook is a powerful social networking site to promote the freelance photography service. Awareness among the public can be generated by creating the photography Facebook pages. The ultimate purpose of creating the photography Facebook pages is to promote the photography service, to persuade people to buy it. In other words, creating the photography Facebook pages is to help creating the market share for the photography service. However, to create the market share for the photography service, we need to first understand the target market better. To understand the target market, we need to need to understand the demographic of the potential fans of the photography Facebook pages, because these people are the potential customers for the photography service. Therefore, the research question 1 is: What is the demographic of the potential fans or members of the photography Facebook pages?

In fact, the primary objective of the research is to study about the impact of Facebook design features on popularity of the photography Facebook pages. To achieve this objective, which of the Facebook design features most attracted the attention of the respondents must first be determined. Therefore, the research question 2 is: Which of the Facebook design features most attracted the attention of the potential fans of the photography Facebook pages?



On the other hand, it is known that the purpose of creating the photography Facebook pages is to help creating the market share for the photography service. However, which of the Facebook design features is the most effective Facebook marketing feature to help creating the market share for the photography service? This is the research question 3. How to determine the popularity of the photography Facebook pages? The popularity of the photography Facebook pages can be determined by the following research questions:

Research question 4: Which of the Facebook design features influences the number of visits of the respondents to the photography Facebook pages?

Research question 5: Which of the Facebook design features influences the respondents to like the photography Facebook pages?

Research question 6: Are the respondents like the photography Facebook pages?

Research question 7: Are the respondents willing to share the photography Facebook pages?

Research question 8: Will the respondents visit the photography pages again?

The impact of Facebook design features on popularity of the photography Facebook pages can be determined by studying the correlation relationships between the different research questions (which are represented by different variables).

Lastly, some research questions were studied to understand how the respondents behave when they visit to the photography Facebook pages?

Research question 8: Why they choose to suggest or not suggest the pages to their friends?

Research question 9: Why they choose to share or not share the contents of the pages?

Research question 10: Why choose to like the pages?

Research question 11: Why they choose to comment or not comment on the pages?

Concluding the research questions above, the problem statement can be defined as:

“How the Facebook design features affect the popularity of the photography Facebook pages?” Therefore, the final research title derived is: “The impact of Facebook design features on popularity of the photography Facebook pages.”

### 1.3 Research objective

- ✓ To study the demographic of the respondents who are also the potential fans or members of the photography Facebook pages.
- ✓ To study which of the Facebook design features most attracted the attention of the respondents.
- ✓ To study the impact of Facebook design features on popularity of the photography Facebook pages.
- ✓ To study the behavior of the respondents when they visit to the photography Facebook pages.

### 1.4 Justification and significant of the research

According to the researcher, Asimina Vasalou (2008) the behaviour chain model defines the three target behaviours of true commitment in generic terms: social network designers set out to immerse users into what seems to be a static (as opposed to an evolving or maturing) state of true commitment (Fogg and Eckles, 2007). This view is also reflected in the design choices of previous experimental studies, which have not used users' length of participation in the site as an independent variable (e.g. Joinson, 2008; Lampe et al., 2006; Ellison et al., 2007; Lampe et al., 2007; Golder et al., 2007).

Therefore the researcher, Asimina Vasalou (2008) challenge the intuitive appeal of this perspective by examining whether Facebook users adopt stable motivations, uses and time investment while in the phase of true commitment, or whether these evolve as users become more situated within the social network site.

The respondents were requested to provide personal details of the respondents such as name, email address, gender, age, residential location, education level, occupation, income level, and race. The name and email address of the respondents were requested to prove the validity of the respondents, to prove that the respondents are real. Thus, it also proved that each respondent only answer the questionnaire once.

The primary objective of the research is to study the impact of Facebook design features on the popularity of the photography Facebook pages. Therefore, the dependent variable refers to the popularity of the photography Facebook pages. Popularity of the photography Facebook pages can be determined by measuring whether the respondents like the photography pages, willing to share the photography pages to their friends and willing to visit the photography pages again.

Next, Facebook design features which included the Facebook Wall, News Feed, Uploaded Images, Share and Like Features are the elements to form the independent variables. According to Webopedia, Facebook wall is a section in your profile where others can write messages to you or leave you gifts. Facebook Wall is a public writing space so others who view your profile can see what has been written on your wall. Whereas, News Feed is a list of updates on your own Facebook home page. The News Feed will show updates about those people who are in your friend's list. Next, the photo application enables the users to upload albums of photos, tag friends helped by face recognition technology, and comment on photos. Last, according to Wikipedia, Like and Share Features enable the users of Facebook to "like" and "share" status updates, comments, photos, and links posted by their Facebook friends and other users, as well as adverts, by clicking a link at the bottom of the post or content. Descriptions and definitions about these design features were discussed in the literature review.



Using the Facebook design features, the following independent variables were derived:

- (1) Effective Facebook marketing feature
- (2) Facebook feature influences the number of visits to the photography pages
- (3) Facebook feature influences the respondents to like the photography pages

These independent variables are believed to significantly affect the popularity of the photography Facebook pages.

The photography Facebook pages were created to create awareness about the photography service among the Facebook users. Since Facebook is a universal social networking site, it is able to promote the pages not only among the Malaysians, but also among the foreigners who are staying in the overseas countries, for example there are some fans of the photography pages that are staying at Singapore and United States. Therefore, this potentially helps to expand the market share of the photography service to the foreign countries.

The photography Facebook pages were created using the local business profile of the freelance photographer. It was built as business pages. Therefore, only certain Facebook design features are available on the photography pages. From the design features available, only selected design features were discussed and evaluated. These design features including Facebook Wall, News Feed, Uploaded Images, Share and Like Features.

### 1.5 Contribution of the research

First, the research studied the demographic of the respondents, who are the potential fans of the photography Facebook pages. The demographic of the potential fans can be determined by studying the profiles of the respondents. These profiles includes personal details of the respondents such as name, email address, gender, age, residential location, education level, occupation, income level, and race. This information is important for the freelance photographer for doing marketing analysis on the market segmentation in the future. The research enables the freelance photographer to identify meaningfully different groups of customers, which is segmentation of customers. Thus, the research enables the local photography service to select which segment(s) is well to be served, which is targeting of customers.

Subsequently, the research studied which of the Facebook design features most attracted the attention of the potential fans of the photography Facebook pages. Thus, the research studied which of the Facebook design features is the most effective Facebook marketing feature. Completing research in these areas enables the freelance photographer to identify which Facebook design feature to be focused in to create market share for the photography service. The freelance photographer is able to select the most effective design feature to approach the target market.

Next, the research enables the researcher to determine the impact of Facebook design features on popularity of the photography Facebook pages. The results show the relationship between the Facebook design features and the popularity of the photography Facebook pages. Understanding the relationship between the two helps the photography Facebook page owner to manipulate the Facebook design features in order to promote the photography service.



Lastly, the research studied on how the respondents behave when they visit to the photography Facebook pages? Why they choose to suggest or not suggest the pages to their friends? Why they choose to share or not share the contents of the pages? Why choose to like the pages? Why they choose to comment or not comment on the pages? Understanding the behavior of the respondents helps the photography Facebook page owner to identify the shortcomings of the pages and identify the ways to improve the pages in the future. Making the pages better helps the photography pages owner to achieve better response from the fans in the future.

## 1.6 Assumption and scope of study

### 1.6.1 Assumption

There are 310 respondents for the questionnaire. From these 310 respondents who answered the questionnaire, there are 78 of the respondents are strongly agree that they like the photography Facebook pages, and there are 187 of the respondents are agree that they like the photography Facebook pages.

However, the photography page Insights showed that there are only 62 of fans who like the photography Facebook pages. This is assumed to happen because the respondents had not click the “like” button on the photography pages due to their unforeseen reasons, for example page errors occurred when some of the respondents tried to click the “like” button, some of the respondents lazy to do so, some of the respondents did not have time to do so and many more reasons. This is why the respondents are called as the potential fans but not the actual fans of the pages.

The photography Facebook pages were built as business pages, it is not running as personal pages. Therefore, Facebook Event is not available on the photography pages. Facebook Event is a way for members to let friends know about upcoming events in their community and to organize social gatherings. This could be an effective Facebook design