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**BUSINESS STRATEGY INFLUENCE OF FACEBOOK ONLINE APPAREL
RETAILERS ON CONSUMERS' ATTITUDE (FOCUS ON SCHOOL OF
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT FEMALE POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS)**



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UUM
Universiti Utara Malaysia

UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA

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BY:

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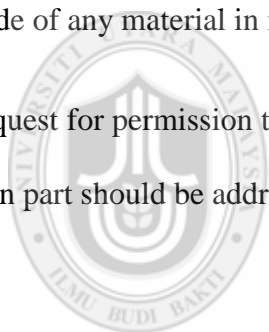
UUM
Universiti Utara Malaysia

**Thesis Submitted to
School of Business Management
Universiti Utara Malaysia
In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Master of Science
(Management)**

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ABSTRACT

The advancement of technology nowadays has led to the changes of human lifestyle by providing opportunities for them to access internet anywhere they want using the mobile gadgets. This situation allows the users to purchase goods and services through online store, especially from the online stores on social media network sites like the apparel stores on Facebook. This situation creates opportunities to individual and organization to start doing online business. However, not all of the online retailers manage to survive in the virtual market for a long period of time due to poor business strategy plan. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of the business strategy of online apparel retailers on Facebook using the marketing mix model towards the consumers' attitude among School of Business Management (SBM) female postgraduate students while making purchasing decision. A survey data was collected from a total number of 197 SBM, Universiti Utara Malaysia female postgraduate students as respondents, and the data was analyzed by using the Statistical Package Social Science (SPSS) 22nd version software. Based on the analysis findings, it was found that the product strategy, distribution strategy and promotion strategy has a positive significant relationship with the female consumers' attitude, while the price strategy was found not to be significant to female consumers' attitude. Promotion strategy showed the strongest positive relationship with the female consumers' attitude compared to the other independent variables. Recommendations and suggestions that can be used by future researchers and apparel online retailers have been suggested at the end of the study.

Keywords: business strategy, marketing mix model, female consumers' attitude, apparel online retailers, Facebook

ABSTRAK

Kemajuan teknologi pada masa kini telah membawa kepada perubahan gaya hidup manusia dengan menyediakan peluang kepada mereka untuk mengakses internet di mana-mana sahaja dengan menggunakan peranti mudah alih. Keadaan ini telah membolehkan pengguna untuk membeli barangan dan perkhidmatan melalui kedai dalam talian, terutamanya daripada kedai-kedai dalam talian di laman rangkaian media sosial seperti kedai pakaian di halaman Facebook. Keadaan ini mewujudkan peluang kepada individu dan organisasi untuk mula melakukan perniagaan atas talian. Walau bagaimanapun, tidak semua peniaga dalam talian berjaya bertahan di pasaran maya untuk tempoh masa yang panjang. Oleh yang demikian, tujuan kajian ini dijalankan adalah untuk mengkaji pengaruh strategi perniagaan dengan menggunakan model campuran pemasaran keatas sikap pengguna wanita dalam kalangan pelajar-pelajar pasca-siswazah perempuan daripada Pusat Pengajian Pengurusan Perniagaan semasa membuat keputusan pembelian barang di kedai pakaian atas talian dalam halaman Facebook. Data kajian telah dikumpul daripada seramai 197 orang pelajar pasca-siswazah perempuan Pusat Pengajian Pengurusan Perniagaan, Universiti Utara Malaysia sebagai responden, dan data dianalisis dengan menggunakan perisian *Statistical Package Social Science* (SPSS) versi ke-22. Berdasarkan dapatan analisis, didapati bahawa strategi produk, strategi pengedaran dan strategi promosi mempunyai hubungan yang signifikan positif dengan sikap pengguna wanita, manakala strategi harga didapati tidak mempunyai hubungan yang signifikan dengan sikap pengguna wanita. Strategi promosi telah menunjukkan hubungan positif yang kuat dengan sikap pengguna wanita, berbanding dengan pembolehubah bebas yang lain. Saranan dan cadangan yang boleh digunakan oleh penyelidik dan peniaga pakaian atas talian pada masa depan telah dicadangkan pada akhir kajian.

Kata Kunci: strategi perniagaan, model campuran pemasaran, sikap pengguna wanita, peniaga pakaian atas talian, Facebook

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DV	-Dependent variable
ETA	-Estimated time of arrival
etc.	-et cetera
IV	-Independent variable
PC	-Personal computer
PhD	-Doctor of Philosophy
R	-Pearson's correlation coefficient
RBV	-Resource-based view
SBM	-School of Business Management
SLEPT	-Social, Legal, Economic, Political and Technology
SMEs	-Small and Medium Enterprises
SPSS	-Statistical Package for the Social Science
UUM	-Universiti Utara Malaysia
WiFi	- Wireless Fidelity, Wireless Internet

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The introduction chapter gives introductory information regarding this research study. The researcher briefly explains the background of the study, problem statement, research question, research objective, scope of study, significance of study, operational definition, and last but not least the explanation of the organization of remaining chapters.

1.1 Background of the Study

Nowadays, the emergence of science and technology sector has really changed the way we perform our daily activities; from a simple task like cooking our food, to a more complex task like performing business collaboration via web conferencing meeting across the continents. Technology by itself is a vast area of practices and internet is one of the prominent technology practices in a current human surroundings. By using internet technology, people manage to do their task anywhere, anytime and free-without any boundaries.

Moreover, the advancement technology of mobile devices like mobile phone, tablets, and portable WiFi router allow users to access internet anytime whenever they want to do it. Not only that, the development of technology provides another alternative for users to do merchandise purchasing, which is by doing online shopping,

compared to the usual conventional way of purchasing which is buying merchandise from brick-and-mortar stores.

According to the Internet Live Stats portal (2016), the number of internet users keep increasing tremendously since year 1993, and just in year 2016, about 46.1% of world population used internet in their daily life. The following figure and table shows the statistics of world internet users per year.

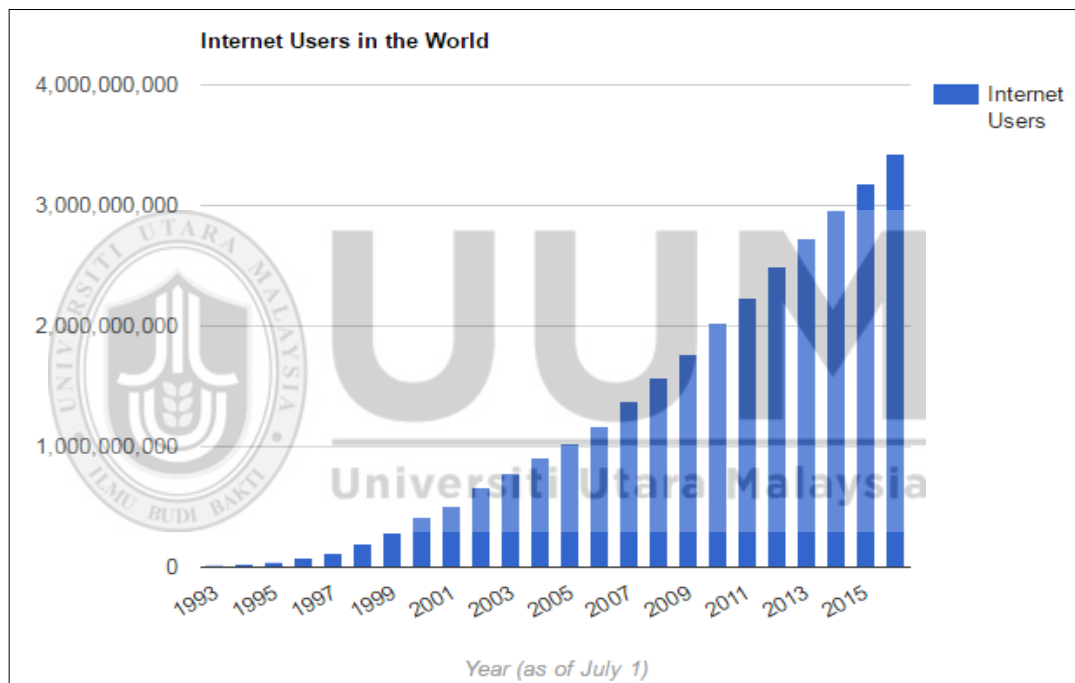


Figure 1.1:
Statistics of Internet Users in the World in Year 1993-2016
Source: Portal Internet Live Stats (2016)

Table 1.1:
Internet Users in the World in Year 2000-2016

Year	World Internet Users	Penetration (% of Population)
2016	3,424,971,237	46.1
2015	3,185,996,155	43.4
2014	2,956,385,569	40.7
2013	2,728,428,107	38.0
2012	2,494,736,248	35.1
2011	2,231,957,359	31.8
2010	2,023,202,974	29.2
2009	1,766,403,814	25.8
2008	1,575,067,520	23.3
2007	1,373,226,988	20.6
2006	1,162,916,818	17.6
2005	1,030,101,289	15.8
2004	913,327,771	14.2
2003	781,435,983	12.3
2002	665,065,014	10.6
2001	502,292,245	8.1
2000	414,794,957	6.8

(Source: Portal Internet Live Stats, 2016)

Other than that, social media network has become a trend among internet users to have their own personal social media account. Those social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, WeChat, LINE, Viber, LinkedIn, Path, Foursquare and many more, allow internet users to interact among each other, sharing ideas, exchange information and critiques any injustice that happens around their surrounding. According to Chaffey (2016) on his portal page Smart Insight, the statistics show that the Facebook was a global market leader of social network as of April 2015 with most number of active users compared to the other social media platform. By looking to those evidences, it shows that there are opportunities for individuals and organizations to set up an online business and expand to global

business sectors. The following figure shows the statistics of worldwide social media platform ranking in year 2015:

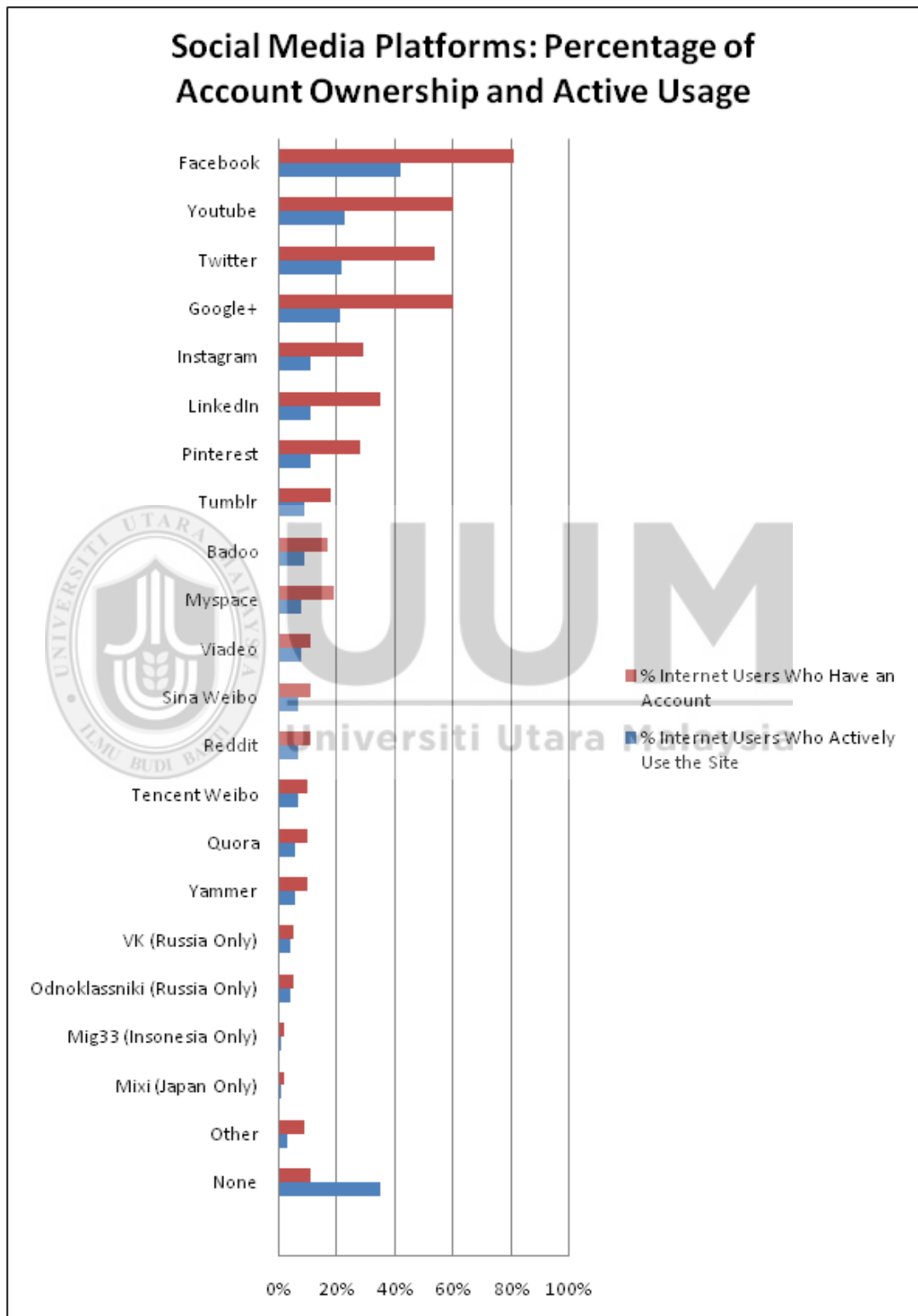


Figure 1.2
Statistics of Worldwide Social Media Platform Ranking in Year 2015
 Source: Smart Insights (2016)

According to report in year 2014 made by Nielson, a global information and insights company, the number of Southeast Asia consumers who do online business increased significantly in the past two years and the penetration of mobile gadget is one of the contributor to the growth of online shopping in this region. The presence of mobile gadgets allow the consumers to do online purchasing spontaneously and anytime when they feel free, without having to use personal computer (PC) access. The increase in screen size of mobile gadgets also contribute to the improvement of online purchasing experience towards mobile gadget avid users, especially it comes with comprehensive built-in applications that are user-friendly to be used (Nielson, 2014).

Based on the past survey, about 35% of Malaysian users access internet using mobile gadgets which is without using PC, and it is considered as among the highest in the world according to Google's research (Kugan, 2014) . Moreover, about 42% of Malaysian users used smartphone while doing their purchase of goods (Wong, 2015). In year 2014, Pos Malaysia, our national courier agency, has stated that their online purchase deliveries have increased from 29 million to 40 million. It is a huge increase in just merely two short years.

According to (Wong, 2015), the statistics shows that the most popular items to be purchased on online site by Malaysian users are flight tickets (86%), hotel reservations (75%), apparel (42%), Cinema tickets (37%), insurance (26%), appliances (11%), TV sets (9%), and groceries (6%). From that statistics, it can be seen that apparel online business are among the favourite items to be purchased by online channel. Besides, nowadays apparel online retailers are good at attracting consumers by providing good images of clothing from different angles and good lighting to influence consumers to do online shopping with their online shop (Che

Nawi, 2012). The following figure shows the statistics of items purchased via online by Malaysian consumers.

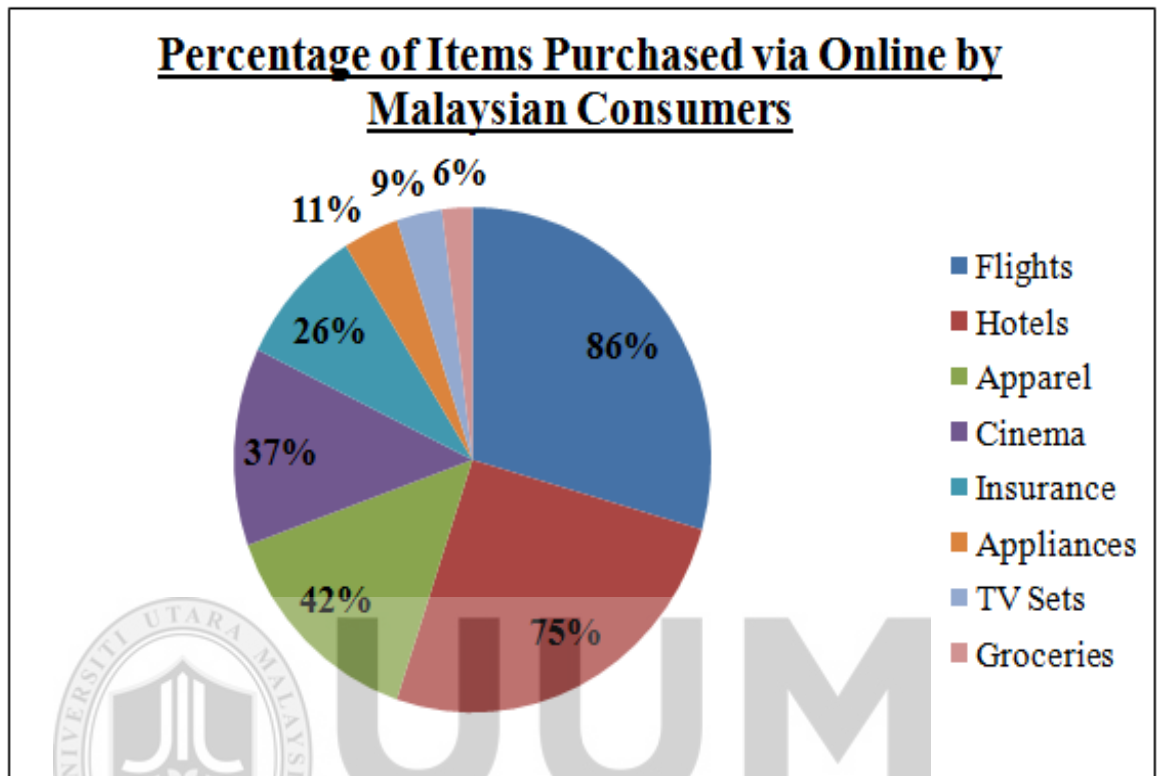


Figure 1.3:
Statistics of Items Purchased via Online by Malaysian Consumers
Source: Wong (2015)

The influence of social media sites like Facebook to online business activity has become more and more important. If one shares information on social media, then it could be browsed by many people, thereby leading to many-to-many spread of information. The emergence of social media allows a company to develop competitive business strategies in order to maintain a competitive advantage. Competitive advantage is a set of unique features of a company and its products that are perceived by the target market as significant and superior to the competition. It is the reason that influence the consumers' attitude while doing product purchasing and why consumer prefer one product or service over another.

In today's technologically-savvy period, the presence of internet and Facebook network page has become one of the pivotal influence to business sector. This is because people can easily access internet and streaming to Facebook anywhere and anytime they want. Therefore, it is important for merchandise marketers to tackle this trend and change it to opportunities by creating another option of business strategy; for example by applying online business strategy.

According to Esichaikul and Chavananon (2001), many marketers have adopted Business-to-Consumer Electronic Commerce, Business-to-Business Electronic Commerce and Electronic Business, in order to attain competitive advantage and become market leader over the competitors. Besides, the evidence from a study done by Pavic, Koh, Simpson, and Padmore (2007) explaining that there is potential for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to develop competitive advantage by using e-business. According to Currie (2000) (as cited in Piriz, Fitzgerald, and Serrano; 2004), there are four cost and performance benefits that companies will gain if they implement e-commerce.

Those benefits are:

1. Reducing external and internal communication cost, such as, speed-up business processes and reduce administrative paper work processes.
2. Work as an additional initiative to extend the network of suppliers and customers while maintaining relationship with current networks.
3. Reducing operational cost, while increasing the flexibility of working practices and ethics.
4. Increasing competitive advantage in the market and improving customer relationship management.

This research will focus on the competitive business strategy of online apparel retailers on Facebook page as it plays one of crucial roles in e-commerce sector nowadays especially towards female internet users. According to Karr (2014), based on the research made by Payment Sense UK, there are about 72% of women that do online shopping, compared to men which is only 68% within a month. Also, that research found that 57.9% of women purchased clothes as a self-reward in their online retail therapy. The following figure shows the evidence from that research:

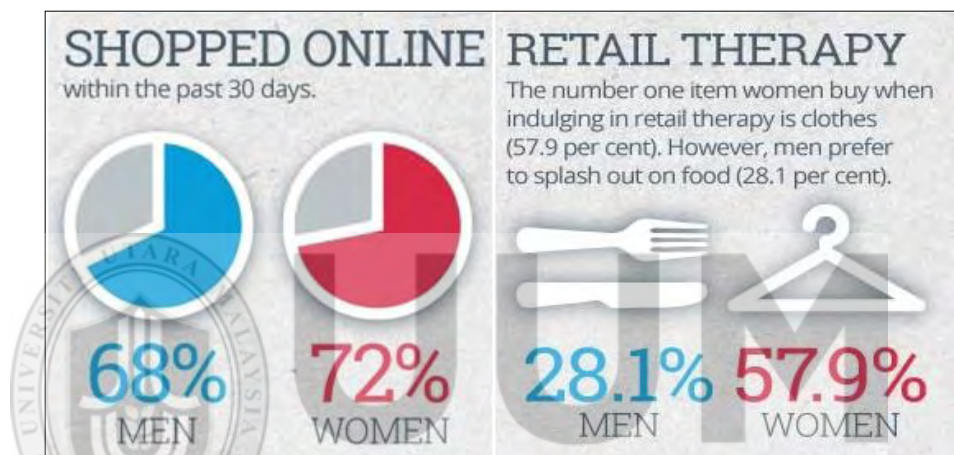


Figure 1.4
 Statistics of Men versus Women in Online Shopping
 Source: Karr (2014)

According to Kwahk and Xi Ge (2012), through social media pages, people can easily share and spread information to their friends. According to Marketing TechBlog webpage, in the year 2014, about 46% of web users looked towards social media pages when making a purchase and 70% of business-to-consumer marketers acquired their customers just from Facebook page. Moreover, social media networking is one of top online activity done by web users with the average of 37 minutes time spent every day. This shows that many consumers made their purchase decisions based on the information they gathered from social media network.

Other than that, consumers can get benefit by doing the purchase of something that are not offered by physical stores and save their traveling time plus cost. According to Couclelis, 2004; Farag et al., (2007) (As cited in Hsiao, 2009), e-shopping can increase the time constraint of shopping process by delaying delivering process of products but in contrast, it can positively reduce consumer search cost which is the cost they incur to take them to a physical store (Lieber and Syverson, 2011).

The market share of social media online business has been growing gradually from past few years as the number of social media users keep increasing. Everyday people buy things that are relevant to their needs, especially through online business. So, by looking to those evidences, the retailers should come up with competitive business strategy that will attract consumers to do online business with them. The purpose of this study is to assess the influence of business strategy of online apparel retailers on Facebook using marketing mix model towards the female consumers' attitude to make purchasing decision in the online business activity; by focusing on the SBM-UUM female postgraduate students.

1.2 Problem Statement

In a marketing environment, it is important for marketers to inspect the external environment that will influence the development of their business, and it can be done by doing SLEPT analysis, which consists of a few of variables– Social, Legal, Economic, Political, and Technology (Abiodun, 2013). Among these variables, the technology has a great impact to the development of business sector by providing another option to a retail sector to do an electronic marketing. According to Pride and Ferrell (2003), the retailers should tackle to the changes of technology and be

proactive to adjust their business model according to the changes of external environment.

Online shopping is a form of electronic marketing that allows consumers to do purchasing of goods directly from their own house or any other place without having to go to physical outlets. And yet the number of internet users especially social media patrons keep increasing day by day. This shows that there is an opportunity for individuals and companies to venture into online business activity. Unfortunately, to gain a strong customer base, they should have a strong performance and strategy in order to create competitive advantage in marketplace.

In the world of brick-and-mortar business, every person who works in an organization always just simply keeps repeating their daily routine by waking up early in the morning to do the same job tasks till evening everyday. But some people might come to a decision to change their way of living by starting-up their own online business platform which provides them much easier and comfortable environment to do their job. Not only it can make you do your business in your own house, but also it can make you become your own boss in the home.

However, though the idea of working from home seems like an ideal solution, most of them are just not enough prepared for future consequences. It might come to a failure if they had no preparation and knowledge to jump into internet business and marketing business. If they are not aware it would be a total mess. According to Ducker (2010), more than 90% of all online business starts-up end up failing within the first 120 days of their business.

In addition, most of individual and companies that pursue online business rarely think of as how to maintain a long-term competitive advantage over their competitors

(Ducker, 2010). Therefore, it is important for them to know the best way to succeed in online business activity. It will be of great significance to find out which competitive business strategies for online business that affects the female consumers' attitude while making purchasing decision on the Facebook online apparel business activity works the best.

According to Wong and Oh (2013), there are few reasons why apparel online business cannot survive in the marketplace. Those reasons are the apparel online retailers fail to create something new and differentiate from the other competitors. Other than that, the apparel online retailers not only fail to be innovative but also get involved in absurd price wars with competitors who are selling the same brand line of product and the apparel online retailers fail to provide a good branding that make consumers loyal to them. With the lack of customer service experience, the retailers tend to take a long time to respond to customers' request and also provide low product quality. Also, the apparel online retailers fail to manage in rolling their old stock which is already out of season and the website interface are not user-friendly, unattractive for consumer to experience a leisure online shopping moment.

All of those reasons happened according to the consumers' attitude on how they perceived the goodness of online retail business provided by online retailers. According to Goldsmith and Goldsmith (2002), the act of purchasing apparel product from online retailers are influenced by the positive attitude shared among online communities. Even though there are lots of studies done on topic of online shopping behaviour, there are limited studies done on the topic of competitive business strategy for online shopping and it is required to do further research to gain more insight for body of knowledge (Shin, 2001).

Hence, this research tries to investigate the influence of the business strategy of online apparel retailers on Facebook using marketing mix model towards the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchasing decision. Therefore it is important to understand on the attitude of SBM female postgraduate students' while making their own purchasing decision according to different competitive business strategy being applied by apparel online retailers on Facebook.

1.3 Research Question

The research questions for this study are:

1. Is there any influence of price strategy towards the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchase decision in the online apparel retails on Facebook.
2. Is there any influence of product strategy towards the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchase decision in the online apparel retails on Facebook.
3. Is there any influence of distribution strategy towards the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchase decision in the online apparel retails on Facebook.
4. Is there any influence of promotion strategy towards the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchase decision in the online apparelretails on Facebook.

1.4 Research Objective

The objectives of this study are:

1. To investigate the level of influence between price strategy and the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchase decision in the online apparel retails on Facebook.
2. To investigate the level of influence between product strategy and the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchase decision in the online apparel retails on Facebook.
3. To investigate the level of influence between distribution strategy and the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchase decision in the online apparel retailson Facebook.
4. To investigate the levelof influence between promotion strategy and the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchase decision in the online apparel retails on Facebook.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study is conducted in Universiti Utara Malaysia, Sintok Kedah. This study's respondents are female postgraduate students because most of them already got a job with a stable income and covered with scholarship, compared to the bachelor degree students and exposed to the online shopping activity. Moreover, most of them have social media network account.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Significantly, this study will offer a new insight into business sectors on the potential of the current online business trends. The evidence from this study might help the local companies in our country especially to have a deeper understanding of the dynamic online business marketplace before venturing into online commerce activity. This research study will also give ideas to companies to plan the strategy, identify consumers attitude, especially female consumers and their types of interest on certain desired product. The marketers will also be able to set their own competitive pricing on the products they sell through online business and forecast any consequences for their business in future.

Besides, the results this study will be beneficial to the marketers and other future researchers in terms of general knowledge references about online business and customer preferences. The results from this study also are expected to help the online marketers to make their improvement and revise their strategy so that they can attract more consumers to do online business with them. Other than that, the online marketers and users can use this study results as a guide to fully utilize adopting the online applications and infrastructure available.

Last but not least, this study will help the electronic marketers to take into consideration to create a new strategy or revise their current strategy by referring to the recommendations of this study. The findings from this study can be a part of knowledge body that will increase the educational information in business and management sectors.

1.7 Operational Definition

To develop the research framework and research design that will be used throughout this study, the operational definition (definition of terms) related to the study will be thoroughly explained.

Table 1.2: *Operational Definitions*

No.	Item	Definition	Supported Literature
1.	Online Business	Online business is an activity that allows people to search their favorite products, purchase, and make recommendation about it through online (internet computer network) site.	Zhang (2009)
2.	Onlineapparel Retailers	Apparel online retailers are the individual or company who establish clothing business through website and communicate with their customers through the Internet and build long-term relationships with them.	Seock (2003)
3.	Social Media Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Social media network websites are popular among the users nowadays and have integrated these sites into their daily routine. ii. Social Media Network is a modern webpage provided for online communities which is influencing their private life and allows them to trade business among online social community members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Farooq and Jan (2012); Boyd and Ellison (2007) ii. Farooq and Jan (2012)
4.	Facebook	Facebook is a social media webpage that is used to connect people via internet connection and share their common interest among each other. It was introduced in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg as a close online community for a Harvard College students and now it is expanded globally.	Hubspot (n.d.)

Table 1.2 (Continued)

5.	Consumers' Attitude	Attitude can be defined as an action and mental-state readiness, organized through experience of life, exerting into directive responses of individual towards surrounding objects and situations. It has a significant effect on individual's product purchasing habit and influences the way they choose their business platform.	Mutlu (2007)
6.	Female Online Consumer	Female online consumer are women who do online purchasing and they usually prefer to invest their money to buy food, cosmetics, and clothing, compared to men who are interested into hardware, software and electronics.	Zhou, Dai, and Zhang (2007)
7.	Competitive Business Strategy	Competitive business strategies are the methods used by marketers to sell and promote their products in order to achieve competitive advantage in the marketplace.	Smallbizconnect (n.d.)
8.	Marketing Mix Model	Marketing mix model is a statistical analysis used by marketers to evaluate the previous historical impact and forecast the future impact of various kinds of marketing strategy for a business development.	Nielsen (2014)
9.	Product Strategy	Goods and services that are being sold and promoted by the marketers.	Singh (2012)
10.	Price Strategy	Price can be explained as the amount of money that has been set by the marketers whereby the consumer have to pay for goods and services	Singh (2012)
11.	Distribution Strategy	It is about the location, the distribution and logistic channels, and methods of products move to the end-users. It can be in terms of the location of the retail shops, courier service involved, use of internet banking and business, and etc.	Singh (2012)
12.	Promotion Strategy	Promotion is the way of communication whereby the marketers delive informations about the benefits and value of product to consumers. It involves the process of persuading to stimulate and create a demand from users. It can be in the form of advertisement, direct marketing, and sales promotion.	Singh (2012)

1.8 Organization of Remaining Chapters

1.8.1 Chapter 2

Chapter 2 explains the literature reviews of each of variables in this study. A discussion of the variables leads to the selection of the measures that show the relationship and the theoretical framework for variables involved.

1.8.2 Chapter 3

Chapter 3 explains the research methodology that will be used to analyze the data of this study. Detailed descriptions of the research design, sample population, research instruments and measurements, data collection procedure, and data analysis technique are presented.

1.8.3 Chapter 4

Chapter 4 presents the results of the data analysis of the research. Detailed explanation on the development of data analysis process will be presented in this chapter.

1.8.4 Chapter 5

Chapter 5 discusses about the analysis and report made based on the findings from Chapter 4. It also will summarize key findings of research, practical and theoretical implications that should be highlighted, research limitation and recommendation for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter will explain about the evidence from the past research related to this study. Besides, through this chapter, there will be a further explanation on the theory of competitive business strategy, consumers' attitude while making purchase decision and any past research that connects both of the variables.

These literature reviews are obtained from various kind of resources, such as, journal articles, media electronic articles, and books. The researcher also developed a theoretical framework to understand more about the research done. Hopefully all of these theories and explanation will help other researchers to do their research in the future.

2.1 Conceptual Definition

This section will explain about the conceptual definition for competitive business strategy and consumer attitude while making purchasing decision. This explanation is important because it helps the researcher to understand more about this research and gives ideas on how to complete this research successfully.

2.1.1 Competitive Business Strategy of Online Business

According to Porter (1980, 1985) (as cited in Shin, 2001), every organization develops their own business strategy in order to acquire and maintain the competitive advantage over its competitors. Porter has stated that there are three competitive generic strategies can be executed by an organization in order to achieve a good position and performance in the marketplace.

Those strategies are as follows:

1. **Cost Leadership:** The generic competitive strategy whereby a firm sells their products at an average market price or lower than that in order to gain a higher profit and market share compared to its competitors.
2. **Differentiation:** It is a strategy that produces goods and services which come with unique attributes that are perceived differently from other common products by the users. The uniqueness of the product may allow the firm to demand a premium price for it.
3. **Focus Strategy:** It is a strategy that focuses on narrow market segment to achieve either cost leadership or differentiation. Usually this kind of strategy tends to receive a high level of customer loyalty as they are fully focused on their performance towards certain groups they serve.

According to Singh (2012), strategic Marketing Mix model is a model that consists of four elements that are important for a business, and those elements are Product, Price, Promotion and Distribution. Those elements should be critically examined in order to create a sustainable competitive business strategy with available resources. To compete in the marketplace and gain competitive advantage, the online business and electronic commerce tools are frequently being used nowadays by organizations

(Esichaikul and Chavananon, 2001). The use of online business tools helps the companies to develop new markets, as well as virtually interacting with customers, business partners and suppliers virtually.

Meanwhile, from a study made by Papulova and Papulova (2006), the organization should be aware of their surrounding competitive environment to sustainably exploit their strategic abilities, make improvements in every area that they are lacking in and strategically push the best opportunities they can venture. According to Biggs (2000), electronic business has become an important influence in business sector and it is seen as one of competitive strategy that should be invested in by an organization (Rodgers, Yen and Chou, 2002), as it allows the organizations to expand their connections with suppliers, business partners and also consumers.

A study made by Chrisman and Danforth (1993), an exploratory study on strategies, stated that to measure whether the organization managed to obtain competitive advantage; it can be looked by the way it defines its strategy and allocates subtle resources to its chosen environment. This is because there are some organizations who manage to dominate their competitors by applying the right resources at the right place, and understand that different market segment have a different types of strategies that can be conducted (Hoffer, 1975).

Besides, the statement made by Hoffer (1975), also been supported by Barney (1991) (as cited in Block, Kohn, Miller and Ullrich; 2014) that the resource-matching constraint may lead to a strategically positive competitive outcomes. According to Prahalad and Hamel (1990) (as cited in Wang, 2014), the organization has to focus on a firm's capabilities and resources to build core competencies to compete in the marketplace. These actions are also known as the resource-based view of the firm

(RBV). By having unique and distinctive competencies compared to rivals, it can help a firm to achieve a success over its competitors (Papp and Luftman, 1995) (as cited in Wang, 2014).

Last but not least, as previously mentioned statement made by Porter (1980, 1985), that it is important for a marketer to create a sustainable strategy in order to maintain competitive advantage in the marketplace, this study will refer to McCarthy's Strategic Marketing Mix Model to investigate the relationship between competitive business strategy and female consumers' attitude while making purchasing decision in the apparel online business activities on facebook. And all four elements of Marketing Mix (Product, Price, Distribution (place) and Promotion) are inter-related and dependable towards each other. The followings figure shows the cycle of Marketing Mix Model (Singh, 2012):

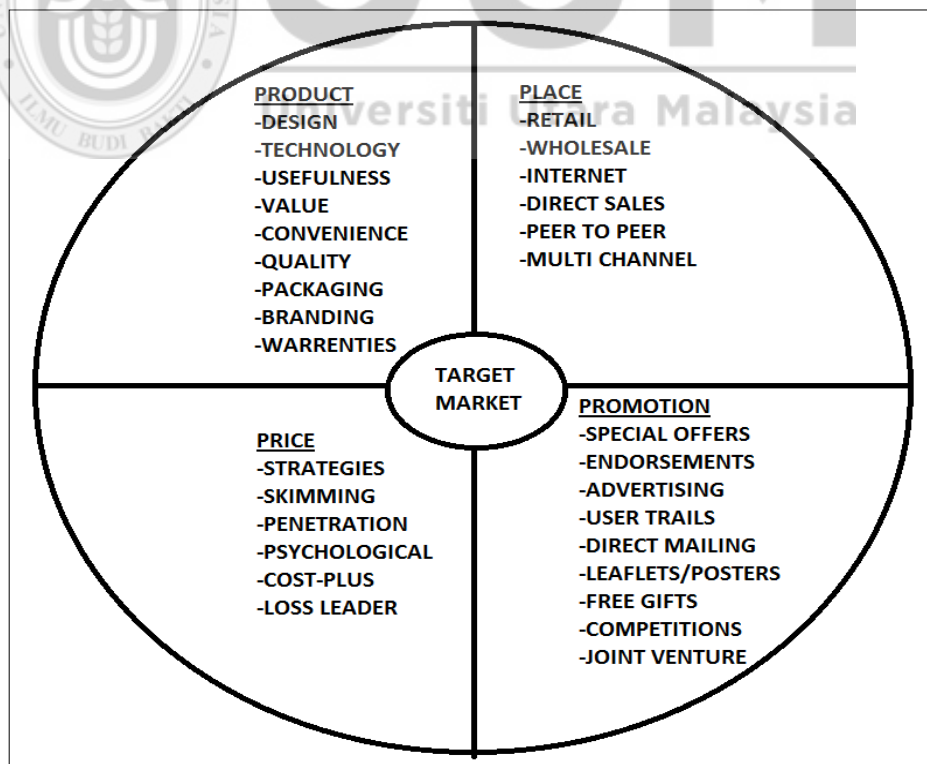


Figure 2.1
Strategic Marketing Mix Cycle
 Source: Singh (2012)

The presence of those four variable elements help the organization to formulate the necessary strategic decisions that will allow them to gain competitive advantage (Singh, 2012). As we know, the customer is the main character that every marketer wants to entertain, so it is crucial for the management to enroll the best marketing mix plan that will satisfy those customer needs and wants. It is about how the company allocates the right product, with the right pricing scheme, distribute using a right channel, at the right time and promote adequately with various kinds of marketing tools. According to Hirst and Omar (2005), with the current communication technology development adopted by online retailers, they are focusing more on niche market in order to grab competitive advantages. The advantage of focusing on niche market is that the online retailers are able to get into a large particular population segment which comes from various geographical areas, and demographic segments (Strauss and Frost, 1999).

2.1.2 Attitude

According to Nikolova (2012), attitude is something that every person possess and it is also apart of our personality traits. Everyone has their own different types of feelings lingering in theirselves like love, hate, sorrow and others. Those kinds of feelings have a direct involvement towards the reinforcement of attitude of a person. Moreover, according to Bohner (2002) (as cited in Nikolova, 2012), the attitudes formation of a person also have a direct impact on the business sector.

According to Crano (2008) (as cited in Nikolova, 2012), the study of attitude set a significant outline to the understanding of the behavior of people as it affects the way people make perception and beliefs in certain issues. Lee (2013) stated in his study

that the attitudes are related to the consumers' information process whereby the judgement of certain issues are made by expectations. The way that make people choose and purchase certain products are influenced by that person's attitudes and their exposure to the informations regarding to those products.

According to Smith (1993) (as cited in Lee, 2013), attitudes can be cultured through past experience and also through information processing.

Those processes involve three elements, and they are:

1. **Cognitive:** It refers to a person's awareness and knowledge information about the products. For example; brands, price list, and model of products.
2. **Affective:** It is the way consumers perceive the products they consume. It can be positive or negative feelings associated with certain products.
3. **Conative:** It can be explained as the intention of a person to purchase a product.

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) (as cited in Jun and Jaafar, 2011), attitude will lead a person towards a certain behavior and outcomes of certain situations. In the business sector, the attitudes of a consumer is one of the factors that affects the consumer's purchasing decision (Jun and Jaafar, 2011). Attitude towards a behaviour has been found to be strongly related to a particular behaviour (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980) (as cited in Jun and Jaafar, 2011). Jarvenpaa and Todd (1996) have created a model to study the influence of attitudes and shopping intention towards online business.

The model developed consists of four indicators, which are:

1. The value of the product
2. The shopping experience

3. The quality of service
4. The risk perceptions of online retail business

Besides that, Jun and Jaafar (2011) have summarized a few factors that may influence the attitudes of consumer in the online business. Those factors are as follows:

1. Usability
2. Security
3. Privacy
4. After-sales service
5. Marketing mix
6. Reputation

According to James (2013), in his study about male and female attitudes to online business, he stated that women have been slow in adapting and adopting to online purchasing as they were not interested in the products available at online shops.

Previously, the digital and electronic products are more readily available, compared to products that are preferable by women like foodstuffs, clothing fashion products, and household and home-furniture products (Hasan, 2010; as cited in James, 2013).

Besides, what have been looked by women while doing online shopping are the self-enjoyment and positive benefit results from the offers made by online retailers (James, 2013). To ensure that women consumers feel online shopping as worth while experience, the online retailers have to provide conducive products with a good website design and customer service (James, 2013). If the retailers manage to provide all of those services, it would help women to experience a fun online shopping moment, and they may also make a spontaneous purchase.

A study made by Singh and Kashyap (2013), found that a young generation women around age of twenty to thirty years tends to do online shopping as much as men. This type of electronic business is popular among younger generations because they are more exposed to the latest technology development and it is easy to click to various types of products from the same website without having to walk from one store to another. Women online consumers are usually influenced by the price and latest fashion trends of the apparel available online (Singh and Kashyap, 2013). The attitude of consumers towards online shopping are affected by the detailed products information provided, good customer service, variety of products selection, retailer's brand name and reputation, and the comfort online purchasing security (Singh and Kashyap, 2013).

2.2 Theory

This part gives explanations on the theories and concept model related to the study conducted. It explains about theories of McCarthy's Marketing Mix model.

2.2.1 Strategic Marketing Mix Theory

As the numbers of Internet users keeps increasing day by day, and also the way internet plays a roles as an interactive tool to influence consumers' purchasing decisions, the presence of strong acquisition of Marketing mix is important for an organization and marketers to compete in business sector (Nargesi et al., 2013). The theory of Marketing Mix Model was introduced by Professor Jerome McCarthy in the early of 1960s, which consists of four proposed elements of product, price, place (distribution) and promotion.

According to Minty and Trustee (n.d.) (as cited in Pour, Nazari and Emami, 2013), Marketing managers of organizations play a huge role to analyze, plan, implement, and control the functional marketing programs in order to develop competitive advantage position in target markets. Moreover, it is a continuous process to be improved timely so that it helps organization to determine the best strategy to achieve the objectives of organization and predict the future consequences.

Lavak (1982) (as cited in Pour et al., 2013) mentioned that marketing mix is a process that is varied and subject to change. It may change and be different at different occasions. It can be due to the changes in consumption patterns of consumers, the growth of population, changes in current lifestyle trends, advance knowledge-savvy technology and the diversity of products. Marketing mix also helps a marketer to use the appropriate services to the right target market and distributions, and thus lead to efficiency of the business plan that they conduct.

Niharika (2015) stated that the main objectives of marketing mix is to build the customer's satisfaction by creating a plan that meets the customer's requirement. Therefore to meet the demands by consumers, a marketer should provide a high quality products and services. Furthermore, in order to survive in competitive market and become successful, it is important to gain consumers' satisfaction and loyalty. Niharika (2015) stated that there are 5 elements to make the business a success and get recognition by consumers, they are:

1. Find a right target customer
2. Understand your customers' demands and preferences
3. Making Values For Target Customers
4. Communication of Values

5. Making Easy For Customers To Buy That Value

Just like the other concept models, marketing mix model also is a comprehensive and yet simple model to be understood by every marketers. The model concept comes from the ideas and knowledge about marketing procedure getting from learning process and experience in business. The results of those activities really become a helpful guide in business and marketing sector.

2.2.1.1 Product Strategy

According to Kotler and Keller (2012) (as cited in Adielsson and Leivo, 2015), product means anything that marketers offer to the customers in order to satisfy their needs and wants. It can be either tangible or intangible good and/or service. Compared to the traditional state of products, which allow us to feel it with our five senses, the products and services that are being promoted via online environment cannot be touched, tasted or smelt (Talpau, 2014) (as cited in Adielsson and Leivo, 2015). Therefore to get away from disadvantages of non-physical evidence of the products, the online marketers should provide a comprehensive and exact informations about the products with a clear picture, so that customers will be attracted and well-clarified about the products.

Talpau (2014) (as cited in Adielsson and Leivo, 2015) has stated that there are three categories of products that are being sold via online retailers, they are (1) tangible goods like books, cosmetics, apparels, and electronic products; (2) intangible goods and services like online cinema ticket, flight ticket and insurance; and (3) digitized goods, like e-books and software products.

According to Valdani (2000); Pastore and Vernuccio (2004) (as cited in Dominici, 2009), the way of the advancement of internet presenting a business of goods and services has led to a new development of virtual product concept. Moreover, the virtual product can be purchased by a customer in a digital form, such as: MP3 songs, MP4 videos, PDF journals and magazines, and many more (Pastore and Vagnani, 2000) (as cited in Dominici, 2009).

Other than that, on the internet, consumers can get information about the products easily without having to travel to the brick-and-mortar stores, and also make a price inspection and comparison (Shin, 2001). The product branding also plays a major role in the product strategy of online business. According to Yannopoulos (2011), consumers prefer to purchase products and services that are well-known and come from a reputable marketers. This is because most of them are concerned about the subject matter of privacy and trust (Ipsos Reid, 2002) (as cited in Yannopoulos, 2011). Attaining consumers' trust is one of major challenge faced by online retailers as most of the consumers are reluctant to give their credit card information to someone they do not trust.

2.2.1.2 Price Strategy

According to Kotler and Keller (2012) (as cited in Adielsson and Leivo, 2015), usually the price of products are not being set at a fixed rates but rather are set according to the different variation of geographical demand and cost needed. Therefore, it means that the organization will try to adapt their pricing structure according to the different countries they are based in.

The pricing structure is the most unstructured and least standardized in the marketing mix model (Birnik and Bowman, 2007) (as cited in Adielsson and Leivo, 2015). This is because it can be changed due to the changes in markets' environments. According to Talpau (2014) (as cited in Adielsson and Leivo, 2015), in the environment of online business, the price structure can be as an asset to the online retailers, because of the low cost of storage and rents. Due to these reasons, online retailers are able to offer lower prices compared to brick-and-mortar retailers. And the most important elements of online retailers is that they should be responsive towards changes in demands (Robins, 2000) (as cited in Adielsson and Leivo, 2015).

According to Dominici (2009), the presence of internet affects the organization pricing strategy in multiple ways. It can be in terms of wide use of informational search engine by the consumers, higher competition with other online retailer rivals with the same product line, increasing number of retailers and many more. Therefore to overcome those consequences, online retailers should develop appropriate pricing strategies for their online sales of products (Shin, 2001). According to Bakos (1998) (as cited in Shin, 2001), the online retailers may employ a price discrimination strategy that makes it difficult for consumers to make price comparison with other alternative product offerings.

But if the organization cannot apply the price discrimination strategy, they can pursue the cost leadership strategy for a certain target market or industries (Shin, 2001). They may improve their marginal profit as it will be in a lower productions and operating cost. Besides, the company can try to increase the goods and services offerings with the value added features to attract consumers' attentions.

2.2.1.3 Place and Distribution Strategy

According to Kotler and Keller (2012) (as cited in Adielsson and Leivo, 2015), place is the location where a product is being sold, it can be in form of physical brick-and-mortar, or the online platform. According to (Zentes, Morschett & Schramm-Klein, 2011) (as cited in Adielsson and Leivo, 2015), the place term can be defined as the location that allow users to get and purchase products.

In an online business environment, the production, operation and distribution cost of business can be reduced as there is no physical store rent payable by organization (Talpau, 2014) (as cited in Adielsson and Leivo, 2015). Moreover, the presence of physical stores might reduce the chances of having customers, as not all people can access the stores which are far away from their house (Zentes, Morschett and Schramm-Klein, 2011) (as cited in Adielsson and Leivo, 2015).

According to Yannopoulos (2011), many online retailers use a multiple number of distribution channels to channel their products to the end-consumers. By using different kinds of distributions, it allows the online retailers to exploit alternative way to get a higher market coverage. Usually companies combine a physical store with online platform, or also known as “clicks-and-mortar” strategy, which enable consumers to get information of products via online and then purchase it at physical stores or vice versa. Other than that, Some retailers have computer facilities in their stores so customers can order and search information through online.

2.2.1.4 Promotion Strategy

Promotion can be defined as the way that all of the information are transmitted among the parties involved in business (Yudelson, 1999) (as cited in Dominici, 2009). According to (Ghauri and Cateora, 2014) (as cited in Adielsson and Leivo, 2015), promotion is one of the most difficult decisions to be made as it is related to the fulfillment in different sets of markets. It has to adapt to different countries, cultures, languages and social environments.

The traditional promotional marketing methods use the mass media like television commercials and advertisements, but they are now rather unsuccessful as more people have shifted to the use of more personal computers compared to television (Sealey 1999; Hoffman and Novak 2000) (as cited in Shin, 2001). Nowadays advancement of internet has become a crucial component of promotion strategy to organizations as it provides a new way to reach people and deliver the company's message (Yannopoulos, 2011).

According to Talpau (2014) (as cited in Adielsson and Leivo, 2015) , the online promotional tools share the same principles of traditional marketing, but with new kind of functionality and prospects. The roles of promotional marketing strategy made by marketers are to ensure that their message of business and the products informations are well-delivered to all consumers with a good image branding. According to Schlosser, Shavitt and Kanfer (1999), the use of internet advertising as a promotional marketing mix tool has become a regular strategy used by apparel clothing online retailers to promote their products to consumer across the region.

2.3 Social Media Online Business

According to Solis (2010) (as cited in Lee, 2013), social media is a new development form of media that allows people to connect virtually. The following figure shows how social media is formed according to the interconnected relationship between elements involved (Dann and Dann, 2011) (as cited in Lee, 2013):

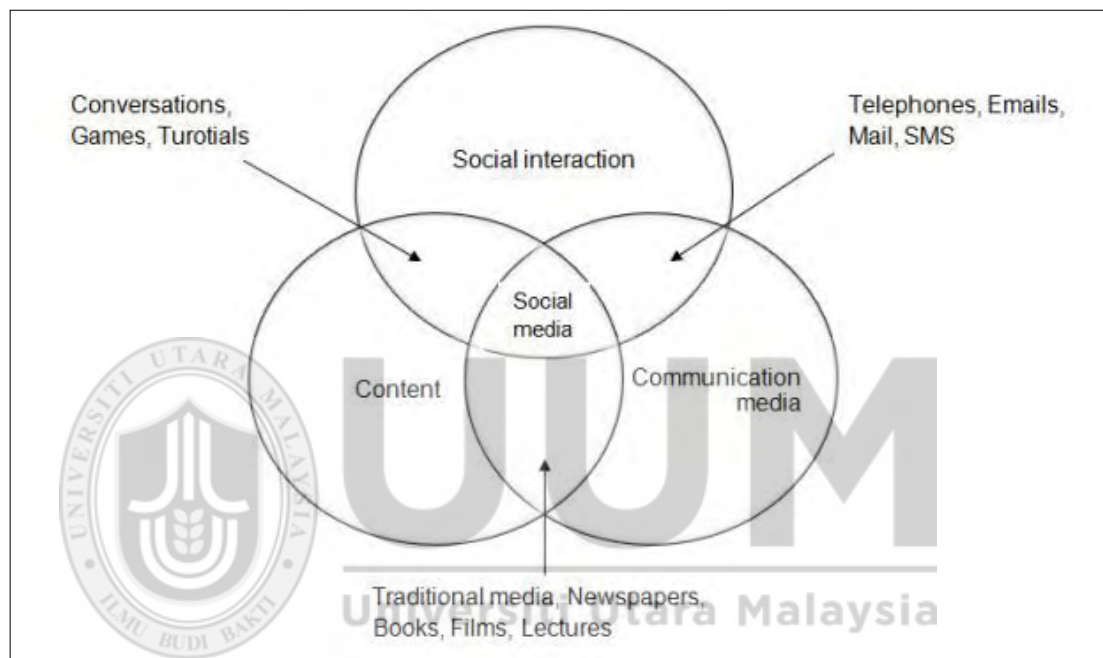


Figure 2.2
Social Media Element Interconnection
Source: Lee (2013)

According to Solis (2010) (as cited in Lee, 2013), social media has made a new platform for people to socialize virtually and also make business. It helps people to communicate and spread useful information among the online communities. The communication might be placed on media locally, but it may be spread to the global communities too (Smith and Zook, 2011) (as cited in Lee, 2013).

According to Kwahk and Ge (2012), social media has an important role on the development of online retails. This is because people can share informations with

public, then everyone can browse it and lead to many-to-many spread of information. According to OTX's social Media (Kwahk and Ge, 2012), around 70% of consumers visit social media websites to gain information about companies' brands and products. Furthermore, about half of consumers (49%) make purchasing decision based on information they gather from social media.

By knowing the importance of social media sites as a place where people gather to share informations, the online retailers should take advantage of this trend by setting a medium to listen and respond to consumers' thoughts and demands, as well as promote their goods and services within online social communities (Weber, 2009) (as cited in Lee, 2013).

According to Lu and Hsiao (2010) (as cited in Hajli, 2014), online communities and social networking sites (SNSs) is one of new interactive technology that specializes for social interactions and information sharing, whereby the consumers are able to access to many different sources of information (Senecal & Nantel, 2004) (as cited in Hajli, 2014) which are affecting the online marketing (Do-Hyung et al., 2007) (as cited in Hajli, 2014).

Merril, Latham, Santalesa and Navetta (n.d.) stated that there is something that social media networks offer for a business that the other platforms do not. Social media network provides a platform for retailers to observe the consumers' awareness and perception towards their goods and services and branding names. Furthermore, the retailers will be able to response quickly to any situation by communicating with their consumers via social network sites.

As this study focuses on to the online retailers on Facebook platform, by referring to a study made by Harris and Dennis (2011), they explained that online users spend

more time browsing Facebook (about average of seven hours per month; cited from Nielsen, 2010) compared to the time they browse Google, Yahoo, Youtube, etc. Therefore, from the perspective of online retailers, they should push the products and services on Facebook platform.

According to a study made by Chadwick Martin Bailey (as cited in Owyang, 2010), about 33% of Facebook users made purchases of product according to brands of product, and another 70% made their decision based on friends' recommendation or how many 'like' get by that product post on Facebook. According to Dennis, Morgan, Wright, & Jayawardhena (2010), young generation women like to browse social network online business as they think that it is pleasurable and practical. Facebook also nowadays updates their service by providing a one-tap Login service that allows users to login at one time only for more than one accounts. This reason provides an opportunity to users, especially to youngsters to have their business facebook account simultaneously with the private account.

2.4 Influence of Marketing Mix on Consumers' Attitude

According to Singh (2012), marketing mix is one of key strategy for every organizations for attaining competitive advantage in the marketplace. As the customer is the main concern in the business, it is important for every organization to employ excellent marketing mix by marketing manager as these key elements will satisfy the customer needs and demands, and also attract them to do business with the organization. It is highly necessary to plan and implement appropriate Marketing Mix of 4P'S for competitive advantage (Singh, 2012).

According to Gilaninia, Taleghani and Azizi (2013), every organizations have to take care of their customers as the main center of attention in order to gain competitive advantage. It is necessary to take care of customer satisfaction by providing marketing mix that meet their customers' needs and demands that contain accurate identification, expectations, desires, strengths and their limitations to buy products. By accessing to those informations, it can help organization to detect the factors affecting consumer attitude and it can be used in the making marketing decision process.

In a study made by Jun and Jaaafar (2011) on consumers' attitude towards online business in China, it is found that the marketing mix and seller's reputation have a significant positive impact on the consumers' attitude towards adopting online purchase. It is important for sellers to pay more attention to product variety, quality, design, features and their reputation, when they expand their business through the Internet in China. Therefore, the marketing mix is an important factor, which can influence consumers' attitude in adopting online purchase in China.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter provides evidences from previous research made by other researcher scholars on the topic related to this research study. It includes the explanation of literature reviews and theories for competitive business strategy, consumers' attitude while making purchase decision and social media online business. In the next chapter, the theoretical framework and research hypotheses are developed according to the evaluation dervied from literature review in this chapter.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the method that will be used in order to test the research objectives that have been set up in the chapter one. Among the aspects that will be discussed in this chapter include: research framework and hypotheses development, research design and procedures, the sampling technique, research instruments, data collection and administration, and data analysis technique that will answer the research questions and achieve the research objectives.

Moreover, this study is purposely made to develop a theoretically derived and empirically tested final path model in order to test the relationship between competitive business strategy and consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchasing decision in the online apparel business activities on Facebook. To achieve that, this chapter describes and discusses thoroughly the research design and methodology used in this study.

3.1 Research Framework

According to the literature review explained in Chapter 2, the conceptual framework is developed to identify which business strategy affects the female consumers' attitude to make purchasing decision in the apparel online business activity on Facebook.

The research framework for this study involves four independent variables and one dependent variable based on the hypothesis as follows. The independent variables involved are product strategy, price strategy, distribution strategy, and promotion strategy. Meanwhile, the dependent variable is the consumers' attitudes among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchasing decisions in the online apparel business activities on Facebook..

The following figure shows the conceptual framework of this study:

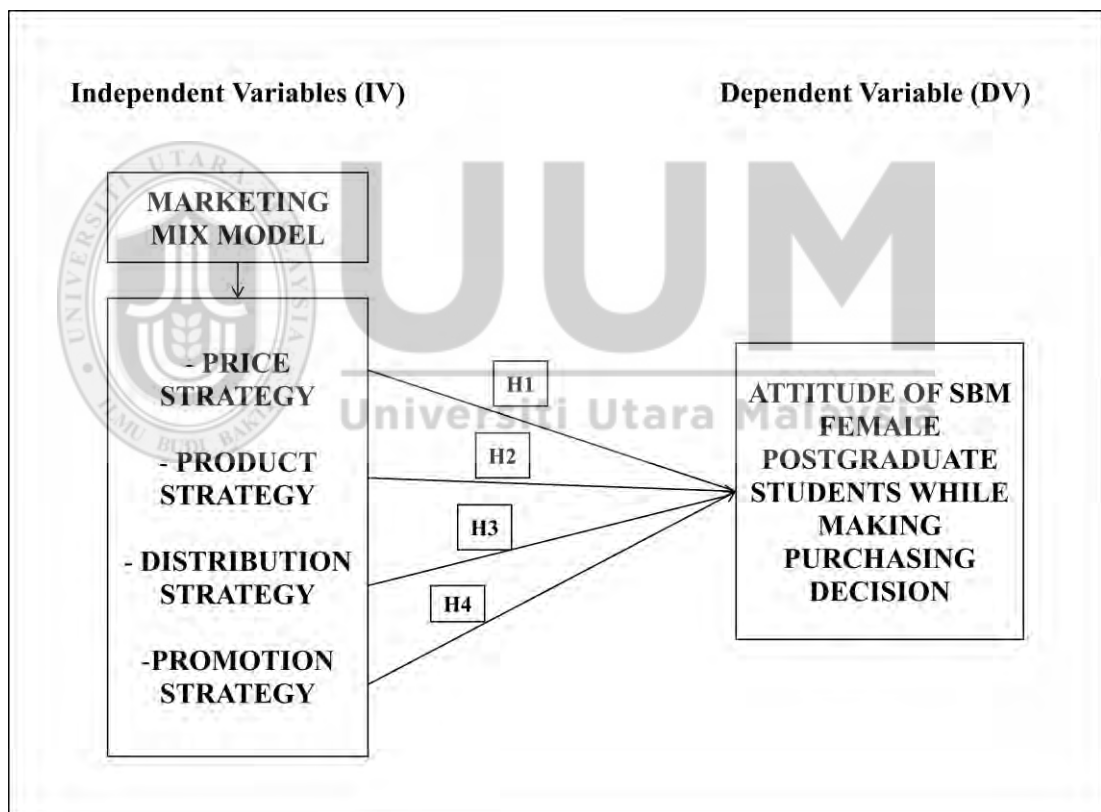


Figure 3.1
Conceptual Framework

3.2 Hypotheses Development

By referring to the theoretical framework that has been developed, four hypotheses are formulated for this study:

H1: There is a positive significant relationship between price strategy and the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchasing decisions in the online apparel business activities on Facebook.

H2: There is a positive significant relationship between product strategy and the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchasing decisions in the online apparel business activities on Facebook.

H3: There is a positive significant relationship between distribution strategy and the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchasing decisions in the online apparel business activities on Facebook.

H4: There is a positive significant relationship between promotion strategy and the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchasing decisions in the online apparel business activities on Facebook.

3.3 Research Design

The research design part will give a glimpse of the framework and strategy plan that will lead towards research procedure. A quantitative research method is made to determine the research of the influence of the business strategy using marketing mix model towards the female consumers' attitude while making purchasing decision in the online business activities.

According to Abdul Ghafar (2003), survey questionnaires are one of the methods used by the researchers to get the information through the data collection phase. The reason why the researcher chooses to do survey questionnaire is because the data collections can be done within a reasonable timeframe and also it is cost-efficient method (Sekaran, 2003).

To examine the relationship between the variables, this research will use correlational research as its research design. According to Salkind (2012), correlational research is a method of research used to examine the linear relationship between two or more variables. It explains whether the variables have a significant relationship or not.

As a descriptive technique, it is very useful because this method indicates whether variables share something in common with each other. If they do have common elements, the variables are correlated with each other. To achieve the research objectives, the hypotheses will be tested by the analysis data of those questionnaires.

3.4 Research Population and Sampling

According to Salkind (2012), a population is a group of potential participants that can be generalized in the research results. According to this research, the population will focus on the female postgraduate students of Universiti Utara Malaysia, Kedah Darulaman. The population chosen is based on the potentials of their tendency to do online business activity during their pamper time and fulfill the criteria needed for this research.

The subjects or the respondents chosen are the female postgraduate students registered with School of Business Management, Northern University of Malaysia and they were selected because of their knowledge in business and the maturity when dealing with virtual business. According to Salkind (2012), the sample is a representative portion of a population. Samples should be selected from populations in such a way that you maximize the likelihood that the sample represents the population as much as possible.

The sampling method that will be used in this research is the probability sampling strategy. Simple random sampling procedure will be used to select the research samples. This method allows each member of the population to get an equal (no bias) and independent chance of being selected to be part of sample.

The researcher referred to the Table for Determining Sample Size from a Given Population proposed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) to get the total number of samples for this research. According to the list of postgraduate female students given by UUM Academic Affairs Department, the population number of active female postgraduate students for second semester (A152) 2015/2016 session are 403 students. By referring to the table of Krejcie and Morgan to determine the sample size, the total number of 197 students are chosen to become respondents for this research study. The followings figure shows the Krejcie and Morgan Table:

<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	100000	384

Note.—*N* is population size. *S* is sample size.

Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970

Figure 3.2

Krejcie and Morgan Table for Determining Sample Size

Source: Krejcie and Morgan (1970)

Table 3.1

Research Population and Sampling

Population (N)	403
Sample Size (n)	197

(Source: Krejcie and Morgan, 1970)

3.5 Research Instrument and Measurement

The instrument that will be used to collect the research data is by using the questionnaires. There are five sections included in the questionnaire. They are as follows:

1. Section A: Demographic Background
2. Section B: General Information
3. Section C: Reasons for Online Shopping
4. Section D: Competitive Strategies
 - i. Price Strategy
 - ii. Product Strategy
 - iii. Distribution Strategy
 - iv. Promotion Strategy
5. Section E: Consumers' Attitude

In Section A, there are questions about demographic background information of respondents like age, education level, race, occupation, monthly income, the status on whether they do have Facebook and Instagram page account and did they do any apparel online business before. In Section B, there are questions about the reasons why female consumer choose to do online business.

In Section C, the measurements for the elements of competitive strategies are adapted from the past research questionnaire questions made by Koku and Ogbeh (2012). Those past questionnaire surveys are about investigating the internet marketing strategies among hotels in Ghana. The researcher has made an adjustment

and improvement to the questions in order to suit the questions with the content of this research study.

In section D; to measure the attitude of consumer measurement, the measurements are adapted from a study of Consumers' Attitude towards Online Shopping: Factors influencing Gotland consumers to shop online made by Sultan and Uddin (2011). The researcher chose to refer to these references compared to other questionnaires because the questions are easy to understand and suitable for this research study. The questionnaire questions will be divided into five sections as below:

Table 3.2:
Questionnaire's Sections

Section	Component	Items	Section
Section A	Demographic Background		
	1. Age	1	Section A:1
	2. Education level	1	Section A:2
	3. Occupation	1	Section A:3
	4. Monthly income	1	Section A:4
Section B	General Information		
	1. Do you have Facebook and Instagram account?	1	Section B:1
	2. Have you previously done online business on Facebook and Instagram?	1	Section B:2
	3. How often you access apparel online business site in a week?	1	Section B:3
Section C	Reasons For Online Shopping	6	Section C:1-6

Table 3.2 (Continued)

<u>INDEPENDENT VARIABLES</u>			
Section D	Business Strategy		
(IV)	(i)	Price Dimension	5 Section D(i):1-5
	(ii)	Product Dimension	5 Section D(ii):1-5
	(iii)	Distribution Dimension	4 Section D(iii):1-4
	(iv)	Promotion Dimension	4 Section D(iv):1-4
<u>DEPENDENT VARIABLES</u>			
Section E(DV)	Consumers' Attitude	11	Section E:1-11
		Total Questions	42

In section A and B, the nominal and ordinal scale is applied to explore the respondents' demographic background information, such as: age, race, education level, occupation, monthly income and general questions. For the Section C, D, and E, the items will be measured by using Five-Point Likert Scales as follows:

Table 3.3:

Five-Point Likert Scales

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

3.6 Pilot Test

To ensure that questions in the questionnaire to be easily answerable and understandable to the respondents, the pilot test will be conducted. According to Chua (2006), pilot test is a small test that are conducted prior the real research test. The reason of this test is to look whether the questions are understandable by the respondents or not.

Other than that, it also helps the researcher to monitor the time allocation needed to complete the survey. It will help in improving the questionnaires accuracy and reduce the error that may occur in order to collect the primary data. The pilot test's respondents also will be given chance to give any comments to researcher to improve the questionnaire's quality.

For this study, thirty sets of questionnaire are distributed among the selected postgraduate students involved in the initial stage of the research. The researcher sat together with pilot test's respondents to explain and clarify about the questions, and the feedbacks and opinions from respondents are taken. The corrections and adjustment are made according to feedbacks given by the respondents.

Moreover, pilot test also made to test the reliability and validity of the items used in the questionnaire, so that it is not misleading or have any mistakes in the questions. To test the level of reliability of instrument items, the researcher used the Cronbach's Alpha Reliability analysis. The followings are the summary of Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis for pilot test instrument items.

Table 3.4:

Pilot Test Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Analysis

No.	Instruments	Items	Cronbach's Alpha Value
1.	Price/Cost Strategy Dimension	5	0.816
2.	Product Strategy Dimension	5	0.778
3.	Distribution Strategy Dimension	4	0.629
4.	Promotion Strategy Dimension	4	0.808
5.	Consumer Attitude Dimension	11	0.901

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

3.7.1 Normality Analysis

According to Ghasemi and Zahediasl (2012), it is important to check the normality for a statistical procedures, in order to determine validity of data. The normality analysis is supplementary to the assessment of normality. There are few tests that can be conducted in order to know the normality of data. Those test are Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk test, D'Agostino skewness and Anscombe-Glynn kurtosis test, the frequency distribution (histogram), stem-and-leaf plot, boxplot, P-P plot (probability-probability plot), and Q-Q plot (quantile-quantile plot). For this study, the researcher used histogram distribution test, and skewness and kurtosis test to determine the normality of data sets.

3.7.2 Reliability Analysis

As suggested by Sekaran (2003), the reliability of instruments can be explained as the measure of the instruments' stability, whether it is good and free of bias or not. For this study, researcher used the internal consistency approach method to measure and analyse the reliability of instruments involved. According to Sekaran and Bougie

(2013), the internal consistency is a measure that shows the homogeneity of the instrument items of a research. To be more specified, it can be explained that the items should be ‘grouped together as a set’ and able to be independently measureable.

The method of Cronbach’s coefficients Alpha were used to measure the reliability of instrument items in this study. This method is frequently used as a measure of the internal consistency. In order to determine whether the questionnaire questions are relevant or not, the Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient should be used to analyze the reliability of the research questionnaire. Table 3.4 below shows the reliability test using the Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient.

Table 3.5:
Reliability Test

Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient	Reliability
0.9-1.0	Very Good and Effective, with high reliability level.
0.7-0.8	Good and Acceptable
0.6-0.7	Acceptable

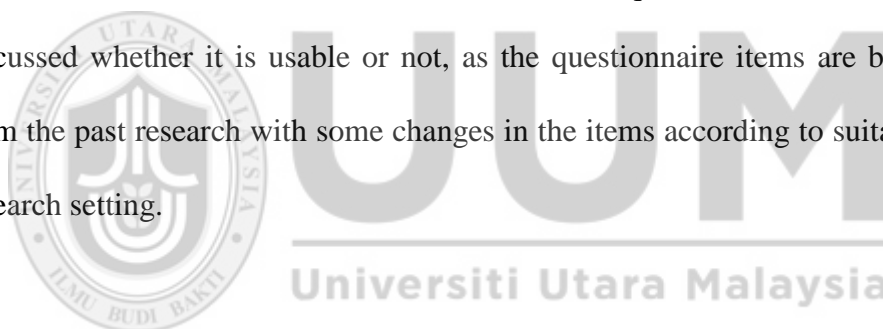
(Source: Mohd Najib Abdul Ghafar, 2003)

By referring to table above, if the Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient is more than 0.6, the questionnaires are considered as acceptable and reliable for the researcher to continue the research. But if the Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient is lower than 0.6, there might be some problems with the questions, and the researcher needs to make some adjustment towards the questions.

3.7.3 Validity Analysis

The validity test can be considered as one of important criteria for a research as it is used to measure the instrument used in a research (Kothari, 2004). According to Degu and Yigzaw (2006), validity refers to the measure on how close are the measurement values between the items being measured with the true value of the items.

Validity is the most critical criterion and indicates the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. For this research, to verify the the measurement of items, face validity analysis is used by the researcher to measure those items. The researcher showed the items of the questionnaires to the lecturer and discussed whether it is usable or not, as the questionnaire items are being adapted from the past research with some changes in the items according to suitability of this research setting.



3.7.4 Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis also can be explained as statistical analysis that are made to describe data and to recognize the characteristics of the aspects needed for the research study. The main objective of this type of research is to describe and portray the data and characteristics about what is being studied and explored.

Besides, descriptive analysis is also used to analyse the frequencies, mean, standard deviation, and other statistical calculations that give the descriptive informations about the data collected. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013), descriptive

research is used to interpret the characteristics of group associated with the research study, and to describe the events and situations.

This type of analysis also may help the researcher to make simple decisions based on the respondent feedbacks (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). Moreover, descriptive analysis can be used to investigate the relationship between specific phenomenon involved in the research and also used to explore the correlation between two or more variables. Therefore, the questionnaire method is used for this research study and it was distributed to selected sample drawn from a particular population.

3.7.5 Pearson Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis will be done to measure the strength of the association between the two variables involved in this research (Competitive Strategies and Attitude of Consumers). The strength of the association between the two variables can be determined by using the Guilford's Rule of Thumb. By using this technique, the correlation strength level of variables can be determined (Guilford, 1956). Table below shows the Pearson's correlation coefficient (r).

Table 3.6:
Pearson's correlation coefficient, r

Correlation Coefficient, r	Strength
0.00	No relationship
0.10-0.40	Weak relationship
0.41-0.70	Moderate relationship
0.71-0.90	Strong relationship
0.91-1.00	Perfect relationship

(Source: Guilford, 1956)

3.7.6 Multiple Regression Analysis

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013), the multiple regression analysis is the analysis whereby more than one independent variables are used to define the variance in the dependent variable. Multiple regression analysis is a multivariate technique that is usually used in the research study.

The first and foremost step of multiple regression analysis is to develop the conceptual framework, and the hypotheses that have been derived from that framework. Multiple regression analysis provides a means of objectively assessing the degree and the character of the relationship between the independent and dependent variable. The regression coefficients indicate the relative importance of each independent variables in the prediction of the dependent variable.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection procedure for this research is to find the relationship between competitive business strategy of online business and consumers' attitudes while making purchasing decisions, by using primary data and secondary data.

3.8.1 Primary Data

Primary data is the data that is collected from primary sources (Yusof, 2004). The examples of the primary data are the questionnaires or surveys that are answered directly by the respondents. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013), primary data can be explained as the series of informations gathered from direct instruments like surveys, interview, and direct observations.

Primary data for this research was collected from the analysis of the questionnaires that were distributed to the female postgraduate students registered with UUM's School of Business Management. A questionnaire is a formulated data set developed by researcher for a descriptive analysis, and usually are less expensive and time consuming to perform (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013).

3.8.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data is the data that can be found from the reading or any other existing data like past research journals, articles, books and other written data (Yusof, 2004). According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013), secondary data is sets of data that are not collected by the researcher and it is already available for the researcher to refer as references. The advantage of using secondary data is that it saves the time and the resources are usually updated (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). For this research, the sources of secondary data that has been used are the research journals, articles and books related to the topic.

3.8.3 Data Analysis Technique

The data that will be collected from the questionnaires distribution will be analyze by using the Statistical Package Social Science (SPSS) software 22nd version in order to conduct descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013), SPSS is a quantitative data analysis software program that analyzes the statistical data such as descriptive data like frequencies and plots, inferential and multivariate statistical analysis.

3.9 Chapter Summary

Overall, this chapter explains about the research methodology that are conducted for this research on how to collect the data and create a platform on how to analyze data in the next chapter.



CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

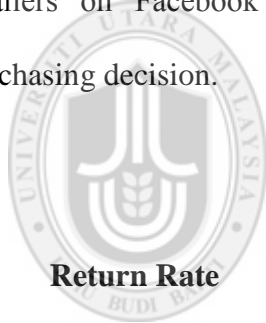
4.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the analysis and findings acquired from the answered questionnaires which were collected from the respondents of this research. The data collected were analyzed by using Statistical Package Social Science (SPSS) 22nd version software to answer the research questions and objectives of this study. The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of business strategy of online apparel retailers on Facebook towards the female consumers' attitude while making purchasing decision.

4.1 Return Rate

Researcher distributed a total number of 250 sets of survey questionnaires to a randomly selected female postgraduate students from UUM School of Business Management. The questionnaire sets were distributed through email, and by-hand at the classes, library and the residential colleges. The respondents were given about two weeks to complete and return the questionnaires back to the researcher. A total number 214 sets of questionnaires were returned back to researcher to analyze.

According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a total number of 197 respondents should be drawn from 403 population tested. There are 7 questionnaire sets rejected because some questions in those questionnaires were not thoroughly answered. Therefore, the



sample number of 197 questionnaires were tested for this study to answer all the research questions, objectives and hypotheses.

Table 4.1
Questionnaires Return Rate

	Number Of Questionnaires/Rate
Total number of distributed questionnaires	250
Total number of received questionnaires	214
Total number of rejected questionnaires	7
Return Rate	85.6%

4.2 Data Screening

Data screening is a process whereby it is done prior to the actual data analysis to ensure that all of the key-in data is ready for the next descriptive and inferential statistical analysis without any data errors. It is important to know that the data are reliable and valid for this study.

4.2.1 Missing Value

Before analyzing the keyed-in data, the researcher used SPSS to check whether there are missing data during the input data key-in process. One missing data was found at one of the item (Product 1), and the data was corrected after the researcher rechecked the questionnaire set. The following table shows the missing value of data.

Table 4.21
Missing Data Value

Product 1		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	1.0
	Disagree	26	13.2
	Neutral	60	30.5
	Agree	93	47.2
	Strongly agree	15	7.6
Total		196	99.5
Missing	System	1	.5
	Total	197	100.0

Source: SPSS

4.2.2 Normality Test Analysis

The normality test is used to ensure that the the data structure is well-distributed and stay in normal distribution. Therefore, the researcher used the Histogram chart to verify the normality of data distribution. There was normal distribution as the bell-shaped curved can be seen. The following figures show the histogram chart of independent and dependent data of this study.



Figure 4.1
Normality Histogram Distribution Chart for Price Strategy

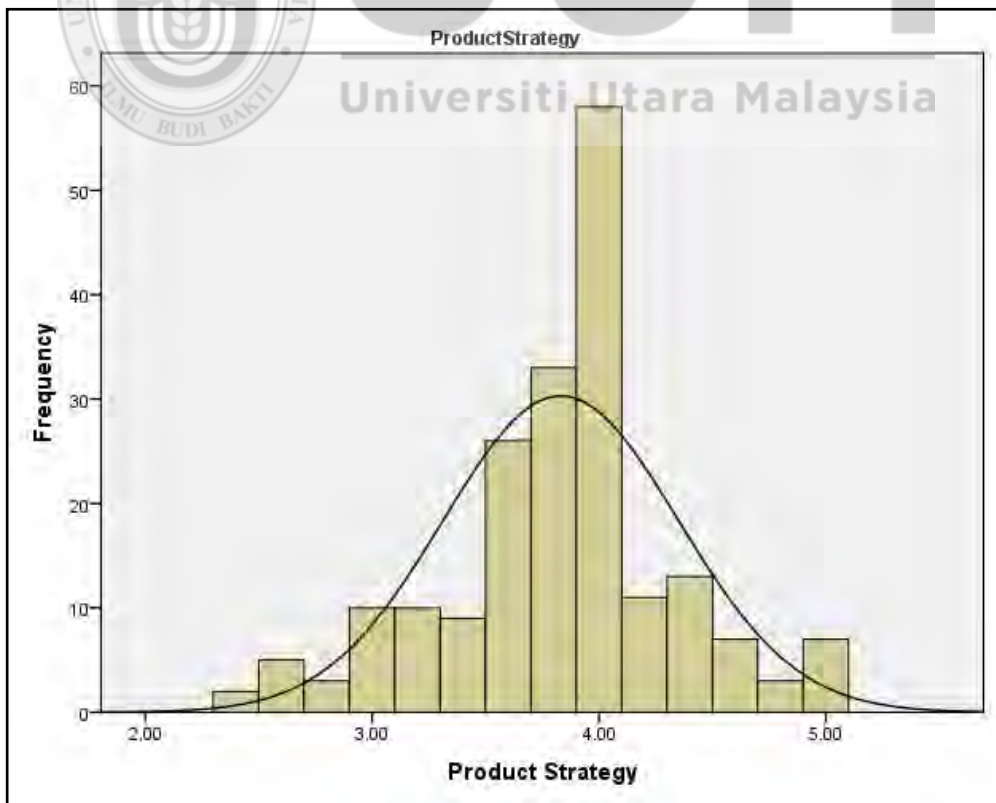


Figure 4.2
Normality Histogram Distribution Chart for Product Strategy

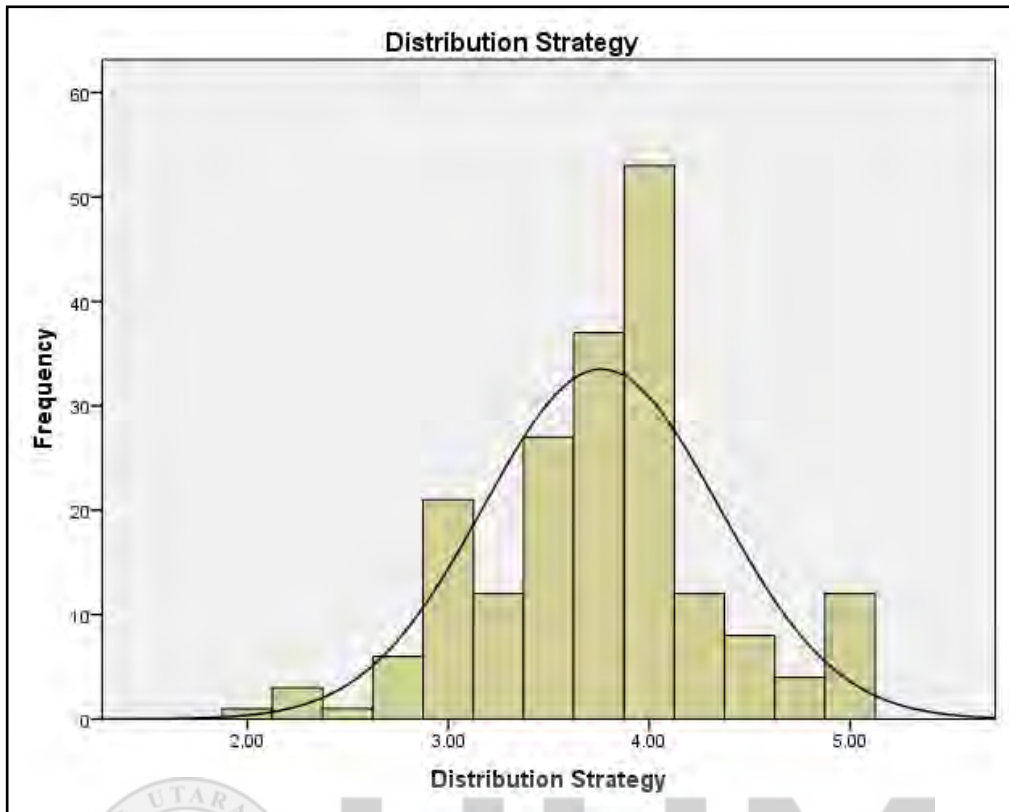


Figure 4.3
Normality Distribution Histogram Chart for Distribution Strategy

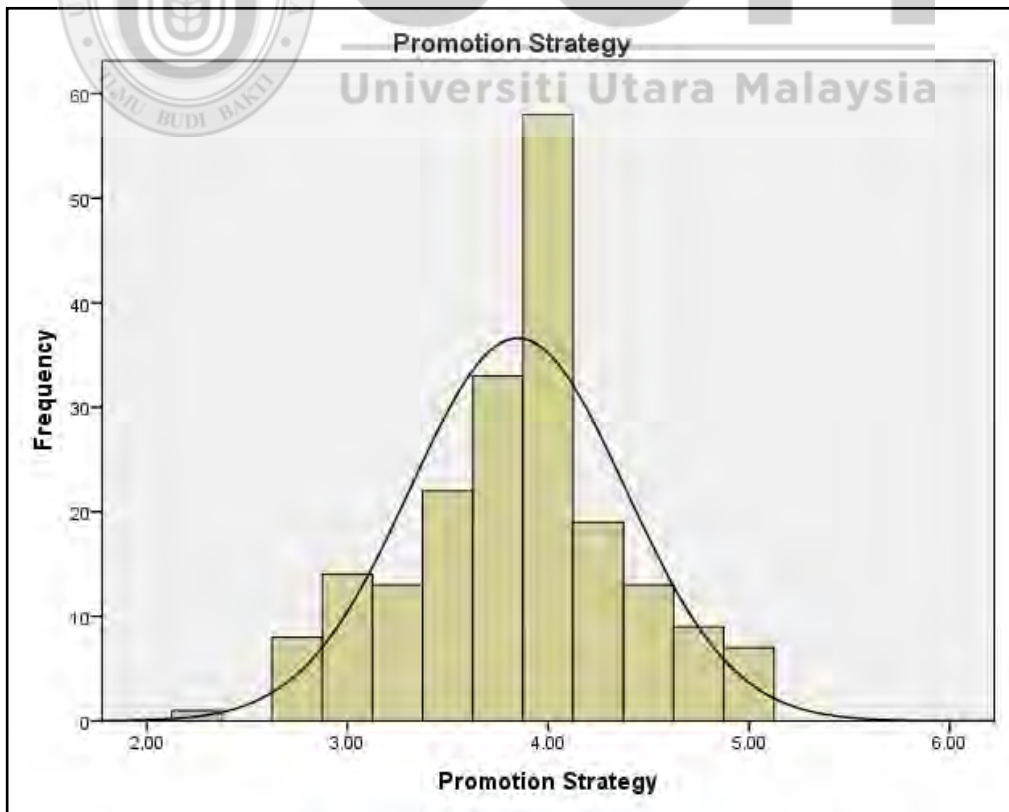


Figure 4.4
Normality Distribution Histogram Chart for Promotion Strategy

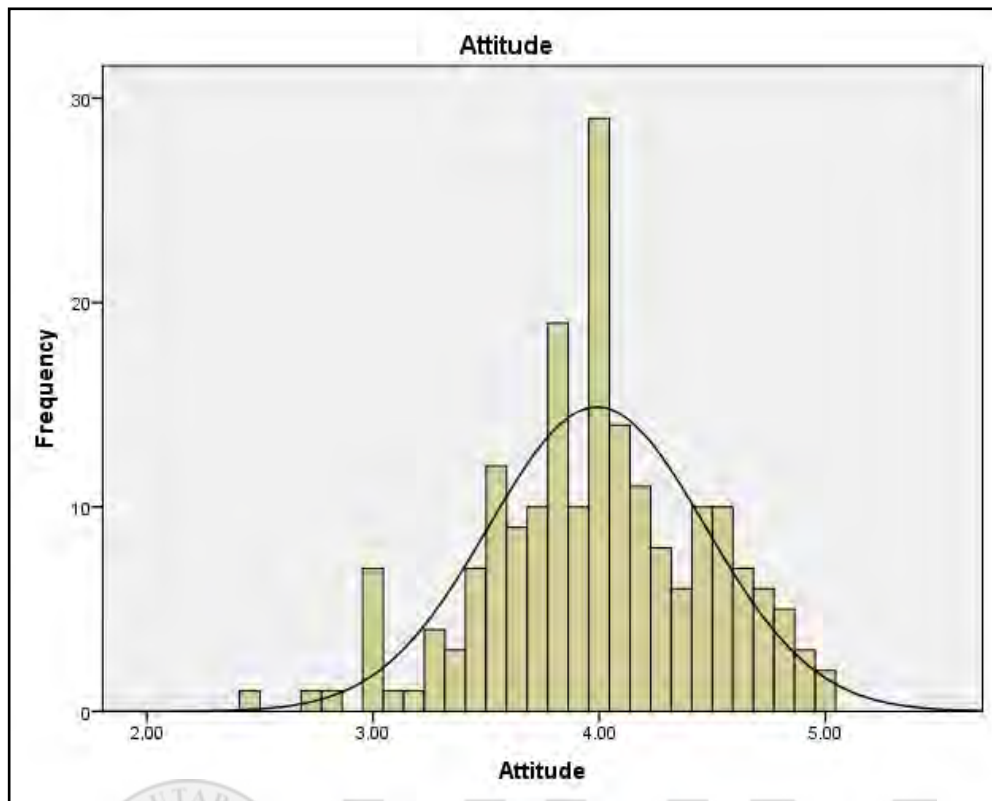


Figure 4.5
Normality Distribution Histogram Chart for Consumer Attitude

Other than that, the normality of data also can be determined through the readings of skewness and kurtosis value from the analysis of normality using SPSS. According to Kline (2011), the value of skewness should be in between range value of -3 to +3, while for kurtosis, it should be in between range of -10 to +10. The following table shows the value of skewness and kurtosis for every variables in this study.

Table 4.22
Skewness and Kurtosis Value for All Variables

Variables	Skewness	Kurtosis
<u>Independent</u>		
Price Strategy	-2.5029	0.3304
Product Strategy	-1.6069	1.6609
Distribution Strategy	-0.5029	1.1449
Promotion Strategy	-0.9191	0.0986
<u>Dependent</u>		
Female Consumers' Attitude	-1.4913	0.2841

4.2.3 Reliability of Actual Data

The researcher executed the reliability analysis by using Cronbach's Alpha test to the independent and dependent variable items to measure the consistency of the overall questionnaire items. According to Cronbach's Alpha coefficient table mentioned in Chapter 3, all of the results obtained from reliability tests for every variable can be considered as good items to proceed to next analysis. The following table shows the results of reliability test for the actual data.

Table 4.23
Reliability Test for Actual Data

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha, α	Interpretation
<u>Independent</u>			
Price Strategy	5	0.743	Good
Product Strategy	5	0.760	Good
Distribution Strategy	4	0.783	Good
Promotion Strategy	4	0.681	Acceptable
<u>Dependent</u>			
Female Consumers' Attitude	11	0.870	Good

4.3 Descriptive Analysis

4.3.1 Demographic and General Information of Respondents

The descriptive analysis are conducted to analyze the statistics of demographic information involved in this study. Those demographic items tested are age, education level, occupation, and monthly income of respondents. From the analysis of 197 respondents, there were 37 (18.8%) of students less than 25 years old, 112 (56.9%) students between 25 to 30 years old, 25 (12.7%) students between 31 to 35

years old, 19 (9.6%) students between 36 to 40 years old, one student between 41 to 45 years old (0.5%), and remaining 3 (1.5%) students are above 46 years old. From the total of 197 students, 181 of them are master students (91.9%), and the remaining 16 students are PhD students (8.1%). Majority of the respondent are full-time students with 114 respondents (57.9%), followed by working-students: 41 respondents work in private sector (20.8%), 24 respondents work in government sector (12.2%), and 9 respondents are research assistant/officer and self-employed respectively (4.6%). As most of them are full-time students, a total of 135 respondents have their monthly financial income less than RM2500 (68.5%), 18 respondents (9.1%) between RM2500 to RM 2999, 11 respondent (5.6%) between RM3000 to RM3499, 15 respondents (7.6%) between RM3500 to RM3999, and 18 respondents (9.1%) with monthly income above RM4000. The following table shows the summary of the demographic and general information descriptive statistics analysis results:

Table 4.31
Summary of Demographic and General Information Descriptive Statistics Analysis

Items	Label	Frequency (n=197)	Percentage (%)
Demographic Information	Age		
	Less than 25 years old	37	18.8
	25-30 years old	112	56.9
	31-35 years old	25	12.7
	36-40 years old	19	9.6
	41-45 years old	1	0.5
	46 years old and above	3	1.5
Education	Master	181	91.9
	PhD	16	8.1

Table 4.31 (Continued)

Occupation	Student	114	57.9
	Research	9	4.6
	Assistant/Officer		
	Government Sector	24	12.2
	Private Sector	41	20.8
	Self-employed	9	4.6
Monthly Income	Less than RM2500	135	68.5
	RM2500-RM2999	18	9.1
	RM3000-RM3499	11	5.6
	RM3500-RM3999	15	7.6
	More than RM4000	18	9.1
General Information			
Do you have a Facebook Account?	Yes	190	96.4
	No	7	3.6
Previously done online business on Facebook?	Yes	94	47.7
	No	103	52.3
How often access to online apparel business page on Facebook in a week?	Less than 5 times	113	57.4
	6-10 times	34	17.3
	11-15 times	16	8.1
	16-20 times	7	3.6
	More than 20 times	27	13.7

According to the results of general information tested, there are 190 respondents (96.4%) who have a Facebook account, and the remaining 7 persons (3.6%) do not have Facebook account. 94 respondents (47.7%) have done online purchasing on Facebook before and the other 103 respondents (52.3%) never done that. Majority of the respondents access to online apparel page on Facebook less than 5 times a week with a total of 113 students (57.4%), 17.3% of respondents (34 students) access 6-10

times a week, 8.1% of respondents (16 students) access 11-15 times a week, 3.6% of respondents (7 students) access 16-20 times a week, and 13.7% of respondents (27 students) access more than 20 times a week.

4.3.2 General Reasons of Online Apparel Shopping on Facebook

The following table shows the descriptive analysis of the general reasons why female consumers choose to do online apparel purchasing on Facebook.

Table 4.32
Reasons of Online Apparel Shopping on Facebook

Reasons	Label	Frequency (n=197)	Percentage (%)
Saves time	Strongly disagree	10	5.1
	Disagree	25	12.9
	Neutral	73	37.1
	Agree	64	32.5
	Strongly agree	25	12.7
Saves money	Strongly disagree	2	1.0
	Disagree	5	2.5
	Neutral	17	8.6
	Agree	92	46.7
	Strongly agree	81	41.1
More relaxing shopping experience	Strongly disagree	5	2.5
	Disagree	10	5.1
	Neutral	40	20.3
	Agree	86	43.7
	Strongly agree	56	28.4

Table 4.32 (Continued)

Much easier shopping moment	Strongly disagree	5	2.5
	Disagree	10	5.1
	Neutral	30	15.2
	Agree	94	47.7
	Strongly agree	58	29.4
More efficient	Strongly disagree	3	1.5
	Disagree	16	8.1
	Neutral	54	27.4
	Agree	84	42.6
	Strongly agree	40	20.3
Secure shopping experience	Strongly disagree	9	4.6
	Disagree	38	19.3
	Neutral	83	42.1
	Agree	49	24.9
	Strongly agree	18	9.1

From Table 4.32, it can be concluded that most of female consumers (37.1%) feel neutral whether online apparel shopping on Facebook is time-saving, which mean they either agree or disagree with the time management they spend when they do online shopping. It was followed by 64 female consumers (32.5%) who agree online shopping is time-saving. However, the lowest choice among the respondents were 10 persons (5.1%), they chose strongly disagree about time-saving in online shopping.

A total of 92 respondents (46.7%), and 81 respondents (41.1%), chose agree and strongly agree respectively on the money-saving matter in online apparel shopping on Facebook. While the lowest choice was that they strongly disagree with just 2 respondents (1.0%) who chose this. For the reason of more relaxing shopping experience, the highest percentage consumers (86 respondents, 43.7%) agreed with this point, and 5 respondents strongly disagreed (2.5%). Besides, the highest rate of

about 47.7% of respondents agreed that the online apparel shopping provided a much easier shopping moment, while the lowest rate chosen was the strongly disagree with only 5 respondents (2.5%).

Other than that, for the dimension of more efficient shopping moment, the highest rate of the chosen were 42.6% of respondents (n=84) agreed that the online apparel shopping is more efficient, while the lowest rate chosen was the strongly disagree with only 3 respondents (1.5%). For the secure shopping experience reason, the highest percentage comes from neutral respondents with 42.1% (n=83), while the lowest one are strongly disagree with security of online shopping (n=9, 4.6%).

4.3.3 Descriptive Statistic of Variables Involved

Descriptive statistics is used to demonstrate quantitative data in a manageable manner (Trochim, 2006). It helps the researcher to simplify huge group amounts of data in a practical way and analyze the data into more simpler summary. In this case, the data is presented in the form of mean and standard deviation. The following table shows the descriptive statistics summary of the variables for this study.

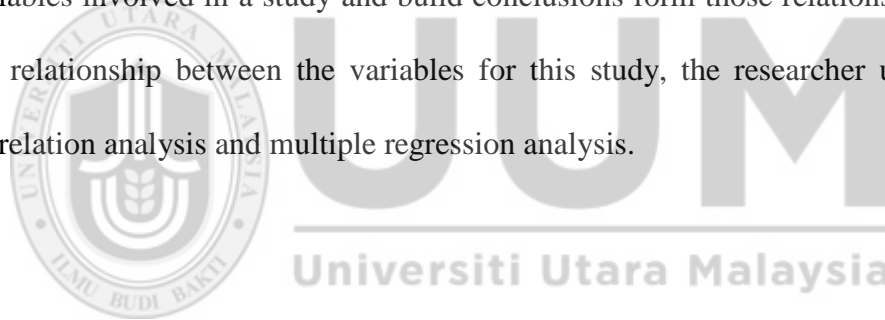
Table 4.33
Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Variables	No. of Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Price Strategy	5	3.4508	0.62193
Product Strategy	5	3.8315	0.51866
Distribution Strategy	4	3.7614	0.58646
Promotion Strategy	4	3.8490	0.53664
Female Consumers' Attitude	11	3.9903	0.48003

From the Table 4.33, the highest mean from female consumers' attitude variable with 3.9903, while the lowest mean is from price strategy variable with 3.4508. Besides, the highest standard deviation is from price strategy variable with the value of 0.62193, while the lowest standard deviation is from female consumers' attitude variable with 0.48003.

4.4 Inferential Statistics Analysis

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013), inferential statistics analysis is done to assist the researcher to construct relationship among independent and dependent variables involved in a study and build conclusions from those relationships. To test the relationship between the variables for this study, the researcher used Pearson correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis.



4.4.1 Pearson Correlation Analysis

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013), the correlation analysis are conducted in a research study to find the mutual influence between the variables involved. Pearson correlation coefficient will specify the significance of relationship of all the measurable variables of the study. The result shows that all of the independent variables (price strategy, product strategy, distribution strategy and promotion strategy) have a moderate relationship with the dependent variable (female consumers' attitude). The promotion strategy variable obtained the highest value ($r=0.592$, $p<0.01$), while price strategy variable obtained the lowest value ($r=0.435$, $p<0.01$).

Table 4.41 below shows the results summary of Pearson correlation analysis results for all independent and dependent variables.

Table 4.41
Pearson Correlation Analysis Result Summary

Variables	Price Strategy	Product Strategy	Distribution Strategy	Promotion Strategy	Female Consumers' Attitude
Price Strategy	1				
Product Strategy	.509**	1			
Distribution Strategy	.383**	.509**	1		
Promotion Strategy	.515**	.518**	.566**	1	
Female Consumers' Attitude	.435**	.554**	.559**	.592**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

4.4.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

For this research, the multiple regression analysis were conducted to investigate whether there are significant relationship between independent variables (price strategy, product strategy, distribution strategy, promotion strategy) and the dependent variable (female consumers' attitude).

The following Table 4.42 shows the summary of multiple regression analysis on the variables of this study.

Table 4.42
Multiple Regression Analysis on the Study Variables

Model	Standardized Coefficients	t-value	Significant
(Constant)		5.493	.000
Price Strategy	.066	1.026	.306
Product Strategy	.244	3.617	.000
Distribution Strategy	.244	3.655	.000
Promotion Strategy	.293	4.160	.000

Dependent Variable: Female Consumers' Attitude

Note: ** $p < 0.05$, $R = .688$, $R^2 = .474$, $F = 43.240$, $Sig. = .000$

The result from the above table shows the R^2 value is 0.474, means that a total of 47.4% of variance in the dependent variable (female consumers' attitude) are influenced by independent variables. According to the table 4.42, the result shows that independent variables have relationship with dependent variable at F value = 43.240 ($p < 0.05$). To find a significant relationship between independent and dependent variable, the p-value should be at 0.05 or less than that value.

However, not all of the independent variables were found to have a significant relationship with dependent variable at $p = 0.001$ ($p < 0.05$). There are three independent variables (product strategy, distribution strategy, and promotion strategy) that have a significant relationship with female consumers' attitude, with $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). whereas, for price strategy, there is no significant relationship with female consumers' attitude, with $p = 0.306$ ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the Hypothesis 2, Hypothesis 3, Hypothesis 4 were accepted, while the Hypothesis 1 was rejected.

4.4.3 Hypotheses Testing Summary

Table 4.43 below shows the result summary of hypotheses result tested for this study by using Pearson correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis.

Table 4.43

Summary of Hypotheses Testing Results

Hypotheses	Method of Analysis	Sig. Value	Remarks
H1 There is a positive significant relationship between price strategy and the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchase decisions in the online apparel business activities on Facebook.	Pearson Correlation	.435**	Supported
H2 There is a positive significant relationship between product strategy and the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchase decisions in the online apparel business activities on Facebook.	Pearson Correlation	.554**	Supported
H3 There is a positive significant relationship between distribution strategy and the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchase decisions in the online apparel business activities on Facebook.	Pearson Correlation	.559**	Supported
H4 There is a positive significant relationship between promotion strategy and the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchase decisions in the online apparel business activities on Facebook.	Pearson Correlation	.592**	Supported

Table 4.43 (Continued)

H1	There is a positive significant relationship between price strategy and the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchase decisions in the online apparel business activities on Facebook.	Multiple Regression	.306	Rejected
H2	There is a positive significant relationship between product strategy and the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchase decisions in the online apparel business activities on Facebook.	Multiple Regression	.000	Supported
H3	There is a positive significant relationship between distribution strategy and the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchase decisions in the online apparel business activities on Facebook.	Multiple Regression	.000	Supported
H4	There is a positive significant relationship between promotion strategy and the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchase decisions in the online apparel business activities on Facebook.	Multiple Regression	.000	Supported

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) for Pearson Correlation Analysis, and Sig. = .000 , (p < 0.05) for Multiple Regression Analysis

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter discusses about the analysis done for this research study. All of the details of the result and findings are concluded in this chapter. This study has analyzed 197 respondents from a UUM School of Business Management's female students population in order to investigate the impact of business strategy of online

apparel retailers on Facebook towards the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students. This study used multiple regression analysis to determine the significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The further explanation and discussion of the findings from the analysis made in this chapter will be discussed in much more details in the next chapter that is Chapter 5.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher explains about the overall discussion based on the findings from the analysis of data in the previous chapter. The researcher discusses whether the objectives that were set have been achieved or not. Besides, the recommendation and limitation of the study is also provided in this chapter.

5.1 Discussion

This study concentrates on the marketing mix model to the adoption of online business by online retailers according to Shin (2001), as it can be developed using four strategies; which are price strategy, product strategy, distribution strategy and promotion strategy. Shin (2001) stated that there are many reasons that make online retailers fail to gain profits in electronic marketplace, for examples, huge spending of mass marketing, rigorous price war with other competitors, low customers' search, and many more. However, the key reason to the failure of online retailers is that they do not have a rigid business strategy or plan that can contribute to an increase in the business profit margin. To find answer to this argument, this study is made to test the relationship of business strategy by using marketing mix model for online apparel retailers with the female consumers' attitude while making purchase decision. This study is tested on the total of 197 SBM female postgraduate students (master degree and PhD students) as research respondents.

In Chapter 4, a few of analysis tests are conducted to find the significance between the relationship of variables involved. Those tests conducted are descriptive analysis (demographic background of respondents, general information of Facebook usage and general information of the reasons why female consumers choose to do online purchasing on Facebook), and inferential analysis (Pearson correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis). Multiple regression analysis were carried out to test the hypotheses H1, H2, H3, and H4 and investigate whether there are direct significant relationship between independent variables (price strategy, product strategy, distribution strategy, promotion strategy) and dependent variable (female consumers' attitude). According to the results of multiple regression analysis, there will be a significant relationship between independent and dependent variable, when the p-value are at 0.05 or less than that value. The analysis results found that H2, H3, and H4 are accepted as the p-value = 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), while H1 was rejected as the p-value = 0.306 ($p < 0.05$). The discussion of research findings is needed to observe the consensus of the study conducted.

The first objective of this study is to investigate the level of influence between price strategy and the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchase decision in the apparel online retails on Facebook. According to the result obtained from the multiple regression test, Hypothesis one (H1): "there is a positive significant relationship between price strategy and the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchasing decisions in the online apparel business activities on Facebook" found that price strategy has positive relationship with female consumers' attitude but does not give significant influence to it ($\beta = 0.066$, $p = 0.306$, ($p < 0.05$)). The results of this study, show that the price

strategy is not significant to female consumers' attitude while making purchase decision in the apparel online retails on Facebook.

This situation might be because the online apparel retailers do not have to standardize the pricing structure according to specific group of consumers. Based on the result of analysis, 50.3% (F=99) of respondents agreed that the online apparel retailers on Facebook offer the best price for their garment products and 55.3% (F=109) agreed that the online apparel retailers sell their products with appropriate prices. According to Marn and Rosiello (1992), the retailers can charge a premium price over its competitors if they can provide products that are high in quality and give benefits to consumers. Based on the results of analysis, the researcher summarized that the consumers is willing to spend money on a product that is high in quality and worth to buy though it is quite expensive.

According to a study by OTX (Online Testing eXchange) on behalf of DEI Worldwide (2008) showed that the presence of online social networks have become a new medium for online users to get products' information and the research also confirmed 60 percent of consumers reported online Word-of-Mouth (recommendations from other online users) is powerful and valuable and could impact on their purchase decision. The companies, which participate with online social networks, have a greater opportunity to impact on consumers' purchase decision. Consumers would like to pass the information that they received about different kinds of companies, products or services. Consumers who searched information via online social networks and share the information with others, are getting involved in online Word-of-Mouth communication and consumers choose the

products because the product appeals to them rather than look at to the prices (Darban and Li, 2012).

Based on report made by Sinar Harian online newspaper on 14th January 2015, there are Malaysian consumers who agree that they are eager to buy products that are trending on social network site, especially on Facebook and also, it is much cheaper to buy products from online sites compared to buy at physical outlets or boutique. For example, for a purse from Coach brand, it can be purchased online with only MYR350.00, compared to MYR700.00 at the brand outlet.

The second objective of this study is to investigate the level of influence between product strategy and the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchase decision in the apparel online retails on Facebook. According to the result obtained from the multiple regression test, Hypothesis two (H2): "there is a positive significant relationship between product strategy and the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchase decisions in the online apparel business activities on Facebook" found that product strategy has positive and significant relationship with female consumers' attitude ($\beta = 0.244$, $p = 0.000$, ($p < 0.05$)).

Based on the result of analysis, it is important for every apparel online retailer to provide a clear information details of product's description, so that the consumers know it is a good product. 48.2% (F=95) of respondents agreed that the retailers provide a clear written information about the product's description. 63.5% (F=125) agreed that the retailers provide pictures that show how products look like, and 68.5% (F=135) agreed that there are evidences from previous customers that convinced them to do online apparel business on Facebook. According to Talpau

(2014), by selling the product on online page, the consumers cannot use their sense of touch to check whether the product is good or not. Therefore online retailers should provide a clear factual and realistic information of product so that it would help the consumer to choose the product wisely.

The third objective of this study is to investigate the level of influence between distribution strategy and the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchase decision in the apparel online retails on Facebook. According to the result obtained from the multiple regression test, Hypothesis three (H3): "there is a positive significant relationship between distribution strategy and the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchase decisions in the online apparel business activities on Facebook". It was found that distribution strategy has positive and significant relationship on female consumers' attitude ($\beta = 0.244$, $p = 0.000$, ($p < 0.05$)).

Most of the respondents agree that apparel online retailers on Facebook used a secure online payment facility and credible courier system to deliver items. About 42.6% respondents agree that online shopping is more efficient. It can be in terms of efficient and responsive feedback from the retailers once the order from customer comes in. According to Talpau (2014), the task of distribution strategy is to bring products at the right place and at the right time. It has a major impact on the marketing mix strategy of business plan and provides competitive advantage opportunities towards the online retailers.

The fourth objective of this study is to investigate the level of influence between promotion strategy and the consumers' attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchase decision in the apparel online retails on Facebook.

According to the result obtained from the multiple regression test, Hypothesis four (H4): “there is a positive significant relationship between promotion strategy and the consumers’ attitude among SBM female postgraduate students while making purchase decisions in the online apparel business activities on Facebook”. It was found that promotion strategy has positive and significant relationship with female consumers’ attitude ($\beta = 0.293$, $p = 0.000$, ($p < 0.05$)).

By referring to β -value = 0.293, it was the highest β -value among the independent variables. According to Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2010), β -value is used to determine the impact level of IV towards DV. A total of 60.9% (F=120) respondents agreed that most of the online apparel retailers offer a discounted value if they buy more than one item in a single purchase, and 58.9% (F=116) respondents agreed that retailers always do a promotion and offer their products to attract the costumers to buy their products. Therefore it means that promotion strategy showed the strongest positive relationship with the female consumers attitude. According to Talpau (2014), promotion strategy is the main component of marketing mix model as it is used as communication channel by the retailers to convince the potential customers to stay with them and also keep promoting their online shops.

5.2 Research Limitation

There are few of limitations faced by the researcher during the process of this study. The investigation of this study only conducted on UUM Sintok female postgraduate students. Therefore, the findings from this study cannot be generalized to the entire female postgraduate students community in this country. To obtain a better accuracy of research result, this study should be conducted to a much bigger population

sample size, for example it could be focused on all UUM female students and then it can be generalized for all universities in Malaysia.

Other than that, due to the time constraints, the researcher chose to focus on a small population sample group, which was SBM female postgraduate students. By having small number of sample size, the researcher managed to collect the data within the timeframe set by the SBM management for all MSc. Students to complete their dissertation paper.

Moreover, the researcher also faced difficulty when some of the respondents did not give a full commitment when they answered the questionnaires. Some of the returned questionnaires were not completely filled and there were some who even chose not to participate in this study. Therefore, it was quite difficult to approach respondents as they are also quite busy doing their own academic projects. Also, some of them are part-time students. It was difficult for researcher to contact them as they were not staying inside of UUM.

Besides, there are limited previous studies done by past researchers based on this topic. It was quite hard for the researcher to get literature review sources for references. Most of the past research on the topic of online business studies are done to investigate consumers' behaviour and consumers' intention in online business, instead of the topic of business strategy, especially by the use of marketing mix model framework for business strategy. Also, it is hard to find journals on the topic related to apparel or fashion online business. Most of the past research of online business usually touches on general concept of online business or focuses on the other sectors, like tourism industry and pharmaceutical.

Last but not least, in the beginning of the research process, the researcher faced some financial problem to purchase paper and cartridge ink for printing. However, this problem was solved as all of the students were given a RM250 book voucher from Malaysia's government. The researcher managed to use that voucher to buy materials for printing.

5.3 Recommendations and Suggestions

5.3.1 Online Apparel Retailers on Facebook

In order to maintain profitability of business the online apparel retailers should really understand the factors that can contribute to their success, and from that they should develop suitable strategies according to the consumers demands and preferences. With the development of technology nowadays, the millennial consumers are more conscious towards any good and bad updates related to business world. The following are the suggestions proposed by the researcher to the online apparel retailers that could be used to improve their online apparel business on Facebook:

1. The retailers should try to frequently engage with their customers. It can be done by always being available to reply to any comments made by the customers immediately. Try to avoid a late reply that can make customers feel they are not worth to be entertained. Build a customer trusts by engaging in every conversations of consumers and make them feel happy to repeat the online shopping with the same online apparel retailers.
2. The online apparel retailers should do webpage maintenance by updating their products updates frequently. They should remove any posts about old items that are no longer in-stock. Besides, they should concurrently let their

consumers be aware and know the in-stock items available with them for time being. The informations about the availability of products should be stated right on products' page. For example, for a blouse selling on Facebook, the retailers should mention at the caption of product's photo whether the product is ready-stock or pre-order, with the price information and estimated time of arrival (ETA).

3. The apparel online retailers should provide high quality of product's photo that can attract customers' attention to browse and buy items from the shop. Good photos may give the same experience and feelings as if the shoppers are doing purchasing at a physical real shop.
4. The apparel online retailers should provide customer review in their page to stimulate the comfort and secure feelings among the consumers while they do online purchasing with specific retailers. The feedbacks from past consumers usually are used by current consumers as a trust and safety measures before doing online purchasing with the certain online retailers. According to Hunter Montgomery, the Chief Marketing Officer of Higher Logic: a community management service organization (as cited in Schiff, 2015), the consumers trust the customer review twelve-times more than the other marketing inputs done by a company.
5. The retailers should make it easy for consumers to contact them with valid and reliable contact number and informations. They also should use multiple communication channels, for example Facebook Message, mobile phone business contact and e-mails. The contact information should be included in every post of item's sales, so that it would be easy for consumers to contact

directly without having to opening another page to search for the contact information.

6. The retailers should offer a free shipping or free cash on delivery payment to every items purchased by the consumers. Logically, everyone loves something free of charge, therefore it can be applied to the shipping payment of items too. According to Nima Noori, chief executive officer (CEO) of Toronto Vaporizer (as cited in Schiff, 2015), as an online retailers, it is ought to come up with free shipping offers in order to stay stable in competitive online retails environment nowadays. It can be done as long as you can absorb the operating cost of the business.
7. Online retailers should offer products that are good in quality with affordable price scheme, which is not too cheap and not too expensive for consumer to purchase.
8. Lastly, the online retailers should give discounts once in a while to the consumers, especially during festive season. Also they can give giveaways gift or voucher to selected loyal customers. By doing this, they can build a positive customer relationship that will help retailers to maintain their business.

5.3.2 Future Researchers

For future researcher who may be interested to conduct this research later, they can propose mediator or moderator variables, for example like Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), or Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), to be included in the research framework, instead of just building a direct relationship framework. Besides, for marketing mix model, future researcher

can extend into a broader framework of that model, for example, 4S, or 7P marketing mix model. It may help future researcher to gain more in-depth understanding regarding to the study of online business and electronic purchasing.

Other than that, the researcher suggests that the future research to be extended to a bigger population sample. In this case, it can be conducted to the female postgraduate population in other universities, so that the research findings can be generalized to the entire of female online users community in Malaysia. Also, future research can be extended to a comparative study between different universities, or with other population groups aside from female postgraduate students.

5.4 Conclusion

This study is made to investigate the impact of competitive business strategy of online apparel retailers on Facebook towards the female consumers' attitude. This study was conducted to the target population of SBM female postgraduate students with a sample size of 197 students. This study used the marketing mix model as independent variables and female consumers' attitude as dependent variable. Based on the multiple regression result findings got from SPSS analysis, all of the strategies have a positive significant relationship with the female consumers' attitude, except for price strategy. Also, it was found that a total of 47.4% of variance in the dependent variable (female consumers' attitude) was influenced by independent variables. In this chapter, the researcher have listed some limitations faced by the researcher during the process of this study. The researcher also proposed some recommendations and suggestions that can be used by future research and to apparel online retailers to revise their current strategy.

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