THE INFLUENCE OF PERCEIVED EASE OF USE AND PERCEIVED USEFULNESS ON THE INTENTION TO USE A SUGGESTED ONLINE ADVERTISING WORKFLOW.

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ABSTRACT.

The objectives of this study is firstly, to find out if perceived ease of use has any influence on the intention to use a suggested online advertising workflow. Secondly, to find out if perceived usefulness has any influence on the intention to use a suggested online advertising workflow. The problem this study seeks to solve is the issue of expertise in online advertising for Malaysia SMEs. That is to say, how can we make it simple for Malaysian SMEs to learn how to create online advertisement for their products or services on their own? In this study semi-structured interviews, observation and think aloud protocol were used as the methodology. At the end the researcher found out that, perceived ease of use do not have any influence on the intention to use the suggested online adverting workflow, while perceived usefulness has a positive influence on the intention to use the suggested online advertising workflow. In this paper, the researcher laid out the research problem, the method used in solving the research problem, the related studies done and the findings.

Keyword: Malaysia, Online advertising, SMEs, advertising design.

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INTRODUCTION

After a series of interchanges with advertising experts, Richards and Curran (2002, p. 74) developed the following definition: "Advertising is a paid, mediated form of communication from an identifiable source, designed to persuade the receiver to take some action now or in the future." Advertising can also be defined as "any paid form of non-personal communication about an organization, product, or idea by an identified sponsor" (George and Michael, 2007, P.17). Majority of firms believes that advertising is beneficial in the form of building awareness. A successful advertisement is able to increase the company's performance in many aspects, increase market share, increased sales which in turn generates higher profit, building reputable brand image and so on Gan (2010). According to Clow and Baack (2006), advertising represents an important means by which organizations communicate with their customers, both current and potential, thus having clear objectives for advertising will aid operational decision making for advertising programs in effectively conveying the intended message to the audiences.

The major purpose of advertising is to sell something, a product, a service, or an idea and to create awareness. The objective of an advertising campaign may adopt many forms such as the following, (Clow & Baack, 2006, p.151). Increase brand awareness of existing brand or create awareness of new brand. Building brand image, increase customer traffic. Increase retailer or wholesaler orders. Responding to inquiries from end users and channel members. And lastly providing quality information. In regard to online advertising, there are different definitions, but in this study the researcher adopted the definition from Schlosser et al. (1999, p. 36), who defined online advertising as "any form of commercial content available on the Internet that is designed by businesses to inform consumers about a product or service"

Country head for Google Malaysia Sajith Sivanandan reported that Many SMEs want to do more online, but feel they lack the time, resources, or expertise to get started. Therefore, because of this problem Google Malaysia has launched a new initiative to get small and medium enterprises (SMEs) into digital advertising. This new initiative is called The Premier SME Partnership Program, it is designed to bring digital marketing to more Malaysian SMEs by fostering a network of partners dedicated to providing specialized services that help SMEs grow, the company said in a statement. (Sijith, 2010). This new initiative from Google Malaysia helps Malaysian SMEs to solve the problem of time. This is because SMEs who do not have time can simply approach these Google Malaysia partners and their online advertisement will be handled for them.

But making use of Google partners does not solve the problem of resources because these SMEs still need to pay for the services and also it does not solve the problem of expertise because these Google partners won't be willing to teach these SMEs the online advertising procedures. The importance of Malaysian SMEs where emphasized by the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak in his 2014 budget announcement. The Malaysian government has allocated RM2.6bil for 13 specific programmes for SME development. Additionally, under the Green Lane Policy programme, the government also provides a subsidy on interest rate of 2% or a maximum of

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RM200, 000 per year and stamp duty exemption for loan agreements under the soft loan incentive scheme. (The star online, 2014).

From the information above the researcher discovered that Google Malaysia is trying to help Malaysian SMEs to overcome the problem of time and the Malaysian government is trying to help the Malaysian SMEs to overcome the problem of time. But no one is trying to understand or help Malaysian SMEs to overcome the problem of expertise in terms of online advertising.

Problem statement

There are challenges faced by SMEs. While it is common for SMEs to face financing and working capital issues, this sector also tends to shy away from research and development (R&D), which usually requires a considerably hefty amount of investments without a fixed return on investment. Apart from their role in terms of their contribution to exports, employment and economic growth, there is a wide recognition in the literature about the challenges and barriers facing Malaysian SMEs. These prevent them from growing further and put them in a critical position to face the new challenges that are rising from globalization, liberalization and extensive organizational, institutional, and technological change (Saleh & Ndubisi, 2006). SMEs in Malaysia are facing many new challenges, domestically as well as globally. These challenges include intensified global competition, limited capability to meet the challenges of the market liberalization and globalization, limited capacity for technology management and knowledge acquisition etc. (Small and Medium Industries Development Corporation, [SMIDEC] 2005).

But the challenge this paper seek to solve is the issue of expertise for Malaysia SMEs. The researcher discovered that there is little or no attempt yet to help Malaysia SMEs solve the problem of expertise. This means SMEs being able to create their online advertisement on their own. This is the research problem this research seeks to solve.

Research objectives

The objectives of this research are:

- Firstly, to find out if Perceived ease of use has any influence on the intention to use a suggested online advertising workflow.
- Secondly, to find out if perceived usefulness has any influence on the intention to use a suggested online advertising workflow.

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Research questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

Q1: Does Perceived ease of use have any influence on the intention to use a suggested online advertising workflow?

Q2: Does perceived usefulness have any influence on the intention to use a suggested online advertising workflow?

LITERATURE REVIEW

SMEs and internet usage in Malaysia

In this research, one of the research objectives was to find out the barriers that may hinder Malaysian SMEs from using the suggested online advertising workflow. Therefore, it is important to understand why some Malaysia SMEs are not adopting the internet for their businesses. Noor and Shifa (2014) studied the adoption of E-Commerce by SMEs in Malaysia. The study found two important factors for SME to adopt e-commerce, and they are SME location and the manager's experience of living abroad.

Set (2014) explored the internet adoption on Tourism Small and Medium Enterprises (TSMEs) in Malaysia. Findings of this study show that the most use of the internet by TSMEs is for information to customer, followed by Email, and looking for information. Syed (2009) studied the adoption of internet by Malaysia SMEs. The findings show that manager's characteristics, perceived benefits, organisational culture, technological competency, and cost of adoption have significant relationships with internet adoption. Tan (2009) studied the internet-based ICT adoption among SMEs in southern Malaysia. Findings indicate that majority of Malaysian SMEs are using Internet-based ICT for e-mailing and surfing purposes.

Kogilah, Santhapparaj, and Uchenna (2008) conducted a research on website adoption among SMEs. The findings shows that the greatest barrier to website adoption is the security issues followed by lack of Technical and IT personnel, high start-up cost, low ROI, and inadequate knowledge in that order. In this research, one of the research objectives was to find out the barriers that may hinder Malaysian SMEs from using the suggested online advertising workflow. Therefore, it is important to understand why some Malaysia SMEs are not adopting the internet for their businesses.

SMEs and online advertising in other countries

This research focused on Malaysia SMEs, but the research also wanted to see how SMEs on other countries are adopting online advertisement Heiligtag and Xu (2007) studied the factors affecting the adoption of internet advertising for Australia SMEs. In the study, eight variables were identified as factors affecting the adoption of internet advertising, namely: relative advantage,

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compatibility, operation expenses, complexity, organization size, top management support, organization innovativeness, and customer interaction.

Samiaji (2012) studied the adoption of social media networks by Indonesian SME. The studies found that individual characteristics, size of organization, and the structure of organizations are factors that enable the success of using social media networks for supporting a business. Ifinedo (2011) studied Canadian SMEs in order to find what causes them to be reluctant about accepting internet and e-business technologies (IEBT) in their operations. The study's findings indicated that perceived benefits, management commitment/support, and external pressure are significant factors of IEBT acceptance. They also found that factors like organizational IT competence, vendor support, and availability of financial support positively influence IEBT acceptance by the SMEs.

Lee and Cheung (2004) developed a theoretical framework for analysing the adoption of internet retailing for SMEs in Hong Kong. They found that organizational readiness (IT sophistication, financial resources, and customer readiness); perceived benefits of internet retailing and environmental factors are the key variables affecting adoption of internet retailing.

SMEs and online advertising in Malaysia

In the studies below the researcher was interested to find out what other researcher have discovered about Malaysia SMEs and their behaviours towards online advertising. Ramayah et al. (2011) conducted a study to investigate the determining factors for the usage of web-based marketing by SMEs in Malaysia found that the most used web-based marketing application by Malaysia SMEs is email, whereas the least used application is online payment system.

Also, Alam et al. (2011) empirically examine determinants of E-commerce adoption by Malaysian Small and Medium-sized Enterprises. They found that relative advantage, compatibility, organizational readiness, manager's characteristics, and security have significant impact on e-commerce adoption by Malaysia SMEs. Natalia (2010) studied the successful SME web design through consumer focus group found that Malaysia SMEs believe that a transactional SMEs website should have three main strong points: it must be secure; price information should be provided; and a wide range of images should be shown.

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METHODOLOGY

The theory of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by Fred Davis (1989) was adopted in order to explain the acceptance and use of the suggested online advertising workflow that the researcher suggested to Malaysia SMEs.
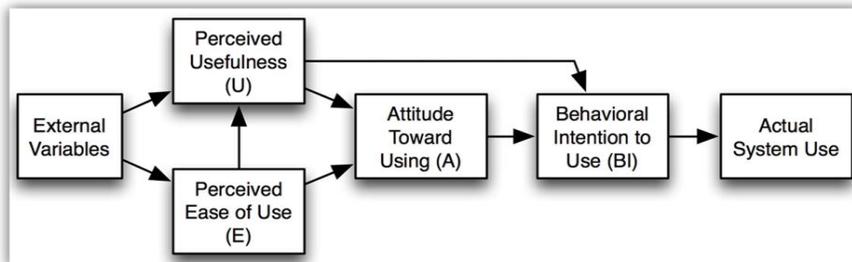

Figure 1: The technology acceptance model, adopted from Davis (1989)

Semi-structured interviews, observation and think-Aloud protocol were chosen for data collection.

Pilot study

The researcher conducted a pilot study with two participants. Before the pilot study, the researcher developed an online advertising workflow. This workflow was then tested by the pilot study participants. During the pilot study, the participants said they were not comfortable with a video recording. Rather they prefer only audio recording. And because of this, the researcher adjusted the data collection instrument by removing video recording from the data collection.

Data collection

The research participants involved eight willing Malaysia SMEs employees in the state of Melaka. To qualify as a participant for this research, the participants must not have previous knowledge in online advertising (have not created an online advertisement previously). Each participant was asked by the researcher to choose the topic. After which they followed these steps to create their online advertisement.

- Step 1: They created a website for their business.

- Step 2: They created an advertisement for their business in Google AdWords.

- Step 3: They created a facebook page for their business.

- Step 4: They created a facebook advertisement for their business.

Interview Questions

A set of four questions were used as a guide in these interviews.

Question 1 measures perceived ease of use while question 2 measures perceived usefulness

1) Did you find this workflow easy/complicated to use?

2) Do you think it is useful to your company?

Question 3 and 4 measures intension to use the suggested online advertising workflow

3) Would you use it again?

4) Would you recommend it?

Limitation of data collection

In this study, data was collected from eight participants only. The result of this research is based on the opinion and view of these eight participants, therefore the result cannot be generalized. In addition, the data collection was done in only one State in Malaysia called Melaka; therefore, future research could be done to cover more states in Malaysia with larger sample size and different data collection method.

FINDINGS

Participant's profile

There were four male participants, four female participants. The participants selected the following sectors for their online advertisement. Hotel (Participants A), insurance (Participants B), farm (Participants C), Law (Participants D), Fashion (Participants E), Hospital (Participants F), Property (Participants G), Restaurant (Participants H). The eight research participants were selected carefully and they were specifically those people who work in SMEs and who have no previous experience in online advertising (i.e. have not created online advertisement before). The researcher ensured that, during the data collection that all participants understood the content of this research and that they were willing to co-operate and be a part of this research. After which they all signed the consent form. The eight participants were given the suggested online advertising workflow for them to follow and recreate what was suggested on the workflow on their own. Data was collected during the testing phase through semi-structured interviews; think-aloud protocol and observation.

Reviewing research question 1

Research question 1 says; does Perceived ease of use have any influence on the intention to use an online advertising workflow? To answer this question the researcher at the end of the task interviewed the participants and recorded their responses with an audio recording device. In response to the interview question on perceived ease of use, some participants described the

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workflow as easy while some said it was a little bit complicated and confusing. The interview question was; did you find this workflow easy/complicated to use? The participants responded to this question in different ways. The responses of the participants on the above question can be read on the table below.

Table 1: Participants who perceived the workflow to be easy or complicated

Participants	Easy	Complicated	Indecisive	Behavioural intention to use the workflow in future
PA			"I won't say it is easy but I will say it is learnable"	"Yes I will use it."
PB	"I think it is easy to use"			"I will still use it even if it is complicated because it will bring benefit to my business"
PC	"the workflow is not complicated, it is quite straightforward"			"I think it is quite convenient"
PD	"I think it is easy, if I just follow the workflow"			"I will find a way to use it"
PE		"It was a little bit complicated"		"Yes I will still use this workflow if it was complicated, but I will have to practise"
PF		"Google advertisement was a little bit confusing"		"I will still use it, all I have to do is to figure another way out"

PG		"I think creating the website was a little bit complicated and confusing and also the Google advertisement"		"But that won't stop me from using it. Instead I will learn it"
PH			"It was a bit difficult, but following the workflow made it easy"	"I think I need it because I will want to promote my business so that people can know about it"

Looking at the responses from the participants, the researcher observed that all the participants agreed that they would use the workflow in the future. There is behavioural intention to use the workflow in the future. In addition, from the interview responses, the researcher noticed that the participants that said the workflow was a little bit complicated and confusing agreed that they would use the workflow in the future and those that said it was easy agree that they will use the workflow. So from the participants responses the researcher concluded that the perceived ease of use do not have any influence on the intention to use an online adverting workflow. Instead of not using the workflow, if it is complicated some participant said they are willing to learn it or practise more.

Reviewing research question 2

Research question 2 says, does perceived usefulness have any influence on the intention to use an online advertising workflow? To answer this question the researcher at the end of the task interviewed the participants and recorded their responses with an audio device. In response to the interview question on the perceived usefulness of the suggested workflow, all participants described the workflow as useful. The interview question that asked about the usefulness of the workflow was; do you think it is useful to your company? The responses from the participants can be viewed in the table below.

Table 2: Participants who perceived the workflow to be useful or not useful.

Participants	Useful	Not useful
PA	"Definitely I think this workflow will be useful to me in the future if I start a business that means I don't have to hire an expert."	
PB	"I think this workflow will be useful to my company in the future."	

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PC	"I will use this workflow again in future, it is quite convenient."	
PD	"I can't see any way how this workflow won't be useful to my company in future, so definitely it will be useful to me."	
PE	"The aspect I find useful is the part of the advertisement."	
PF	"I think in future if I have a company the workflow will be useful to my company especially the Google advertisement."	
PG	"I think it will be useful to my company in future especially the facebook part."	
PH	"Yes I think it will be useful to my company in future. I will use it again in future, but I must first learn how to write a good content first so that when people visit my business website they can understand what my business is all about."	

All the participants responded that the workflow would be useful to their business or company. The researcher discovered by looking at the interview responses that perceived usefulness has an influence on the intention to use an online advertising workflow. From the responses, the researcher noticed that the participants would not use the suggested online advertising workflow if it were not useful to them. For example, PB said "… I will not be interested to use it if it was not useful" in addition PF also said"… But if it is not useful to my company I may not use it." Therefore, the researcher concluded that perceived usefulness has a positive influence on the intention to use an online advertising workflow.

DISCUSSION

The problem this research seeks to solve is the issue of expertise in online advertising for Malaysia SMEs. Many Malaysians SMEs have not yet taken their business online; some who have website and social media pages does not know how to advertise their business online. One of the reasons is because of lack of expertise, Sajith (2010). That is the research problem this research seeks to solve. To solve this problem firstly the researcher suggested an online advertising workflow for Malaysia SMEs that tackles the problem of expertise. Then the researcher tested the workflow using eight participants who worked in an SME.

 The researcher tested the workflow because the researcher wanted to find out if perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness have any influence on the intention to use an online advertising workflow. At the end of the workflow testing, the researcher was able to get answers to these research questions.

Contribution of the study

This study contributed to knowledge by developing a workflow, which will help Malaysia SMEs to overcome the problem of expertise in terms of online advertisement. This research also contributed to knowledge by discovering the influence of perceived ease of use and perceived

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usefulness in the intention to use an online advertising workflow. For Malaysia SMEs there are some factors hindering them from taking their business online and they are time, resources, and expertise Sajith (2010). Looking at these factors, Google Malaysia decided to help solve the problem of time. Google Malaysia launched a new initiative to get small and medium enterprises (SMEs) into digital advertising. This new initiative is called The Premier SME Partnership Program. Any SME who do not have the time to handle his or her online advertisement on his own can easily approach google Malaysia partners and they will do all the advertisement for him.

In addition, Malaysia Government is trying to solve the problem of resources. The Malaysian government has allocated RM2.6bil for 13 specific programmes for SME development. (Najib, 2014). So looking at the above information the researcher concludes that the main contribution of this research is in the area of expertise in terms of online advertisement for Malaysia SMEs.

Limitation of the study

This study only focused on Malaysia SMEs so the result may not be relevant to other sectors or other countries. In addition, the benefit of this study might be limited to Malaysia SMEs. Data were collected from eight participants only, and the result of this research is based on the opinion and view of this eight participants. Therefore, the result cannot be generalized. In addition, the data collection was done in only one State in Malaysia called Melaka. Thus, future research could be done to cover more state in Malaysia with large sample size and different data collection method.

Implication for practice

This research will be beneficial to Malaysia government, Malaysia SMEs policy makers and SME owners and managers. SMEs owners in Malaysia can also educate their employees using this workflow; this may result in SMEs creating their online advertisement in-house instead of outsourcing them to other companies

Implication for research

The key implication for future research is that perceived ease of use did not have any influence on this research participant's intention to use an online advertising workflow. This is different from what (Davis 1989) proposed. Does this maybe point to a generational difference to Davis' participants? Is there a geographical/social difference to Davis? This interesting finding needs further research

Recommendation for future research

This research focused on the creation of online advertisement only. It did not touch the aspect of optimization and management of the online advertisement. Research should be done on the optimization and management aspect of the online advertisement. This is because creating the advertisement is just the first step. In order for a company to advertise their business effectively,

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they need to know how to optimize and manage the online advertisement in order to get a good result and achieve their online advertising objectives.

CONCLUSIONS

From the beginning of this research, the researcher seeks to solve the problem of expertise in online advertising for Malaysia SMEs. Because of this problem, the researcher suggested an online advertising workflow, which will help to solve the issue of expertise for Malaysia SMEs. Semi-structured interviews, observation and think-Aloud protocol for data collection. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was adopted in order to explain the acceptance and use of the suggested online advertising workflow that the researcher suggested to Malaysia SMEs. In this study, it was found that perceived ease of use don't have any influence on the intention to use an online advertising workflow, but in the other hand perceived usefulness has a positive influence on the intention to use an online advertising workflow.

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