Fashion SMEs:

Strengthening a brand image through social media

Arief Budiman
Program Studi Kewirausahan
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia
Tasikmalaya, Indonesia
arief.budiman@upi.edu

Heny Hendrayati
Program Studi Manajemen
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia
Bandung, Indonesia
henyhendrayati@upi.edu

Mochamad Achyarsyah
Program Doktor Ilmu Manajemen
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia
Bandung, Indonesia
achyarsyah@gmail.com

Abstract—**It can be said that social media is a new media, a powerful media for the future. It's a media where every brand has a chance to have its own media. Its ability to encourage consumers to participate or so-called consumer generated content will make communication to be efficient, fast, and timely. The creative economy growths significantly in Indonesia. The diversity of arts, cultures, creativities of youth of the nation has now become a new era of industry in which creations with high economic value are created. Fashion is a creative work related to clothing, footwear, and fashion accessories designs, fashion and accessories production and fashion line product consulting as well as fashion product distribution. Research method used in this study is simple linear regression. The result of the study shows that social media application contributes a great impact on UNKL347's Brand Image. It is important for UNKL347 to pay attention to product quality, to give transparency on specifications and details of products offered on Social Media, to combine online and offline activations as well as to make Social Media like virtual games in order to make products being offered more interactive for customers.**

Keywords—social media; brand image; fashion

I. INTRODUCTION

The creative economy grows significantly in Indonesia. The diversity of arts, cultures, creativities of youth of the nation has now become a new era of industry in which creations with high economic value are created. Not only within national scope, but also the sales reach international level. Creative industry has become a new attraction in Indonesia and also an answer for the challenge of creating products with value-added by renewable Indonesian human resources. Ministry of trade of the Republic of Indonesia defines Creative Industry as "An industry that is stemming from the use of creativity, skill and talent of individuals to create wealth and jobs through the creation and utilization of creativity and inventiveness of those individuals" [1].

TABLE I. INDONESIA CREATIVE INDUSTRY STATISTICS PROFILE

No.	INDONESIA CREATIVE INDUSTRY STATISTICS PROFILE (2002-2010)						
	Indicator	*Unit*	*2006*	*2007*	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*
1	Gross Value Added	Billion Rp	256.848	293.286	345.458	394.937	468.108
2	Constant Gross Value Added	Billion Rp	142.091	145.975	145.239	248.537	157.488
3	GDP Growth	Percentage	4.95%	2.73%	-0.50%	2.27%	6.08%
4	National Contribution	Percentage	7.69%	7.43%	6.97%	7.04%	7.29%
5	Workforce	Person(s)	7,009,392	7,375,116	7,624,643	8,207,532	8,553,365
6	Number of Companies	Company(s)	2,576,235	2,835,608	3,035,224	3,225,248	3,350,672
7	Value of Exports	Billion Rp	84.840	95.209	114.925	116.651	3,350,672
8	Value of Imports	Billion Rp	6.045	8.077	10.442	15.491	16.262

Source: Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia, [2] (accessed on December 12, 2014)

Based on the data of Indonesian creative industry statistics profile, 2006-2010 is the summary of the growth of creative industry's contribution [1]. Compared to previous years, where there's only 6.97% in 2008, 7.04% in 2009, there's an increase in 2010. The decrease of creative industry's GDP contribution in 2008 was caused by business slump in craft, design, film, video & photography—the subsectors of creative industry.

According to *Studi Pemetaan Industri Kreatif*, by the Ministry of Trade of Republic of Indonesia in 2007, the subsectors of creative-based industry are as follows: Advertising, Architecture, Art Goods Market, Craft, Design, Fashion, Video, Film and Photography, Interactive Games, Music, Performing Arts, Publishing and Printing, Computer Services and Software, Television and Radio, Research and Development.

Considering the aforementioned rationale, one of the topics that will be studied is fashion as a subsector of Indonesian creative industry. According to KBLI in 2005, in *Rencana Pengembangan 14 Subsektor Industri Kreatif* 2009-2015 [1], Creative Industry of Fashion Subsector is a creative work

related to the creation of clothing, footwear, and other fashion accessories designs, fashion and accessories production, fashion line product consulting, as well as fashion product distribution.

TABLE II.   ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION OF FASHION SUBSECTOR

No.	ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION OF FASHION SUBSECTOR						
	Indicator	Unit	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1	Gross Value Added	Billion Rp	46,853	44,227	47,038	47,233	45,804
2	% Value for Creative Industry	Percentage	45.89%	44.13%	43.39%	43.87%	43.71%
3	% Value for GDP Total	Percentage	3.11%	2.80%	2.84%	2.70%	2.48%
4	TK Participation Rate to Creative Industry	Percentage	51.26%	50.45%	51.81%	53.00%	53.52%
5	% Value of Exports to Creative Industry	Percentage	60.29%	59.92%	63.32%	64.81%	65.73%
6	Number of Companies	Company(s)	60.29%	59.92%	63.32%	64.81%	65.73%

Source: Mapping Study of Creative Industry by the Ministry of Trade of Indonesia in 2007 in Rencana Pengembangan 14 Subsektor Industri Kreatif 2009-2015 [1].

Data above is economic contribution of subector fashion industry for the creative industry of fashion subsector has been able to make some contributions to national GDP significantly, that is 2.79% in 2002-2006 period, and 44.18% to overall creative industry. Fashion is a creative work related to clothing, footwear, and accessories designs, fashion and accessories production, fashion line product consulting, as well as fashion product distribution [2].

Nowadays the customers demand information for the products they consume or are about to consume. The best way to do that is by building a long-term relation and their trust to get involve with the company every day. Clothing is an apparel company that produces and sells their own products, whereas Distro (Distribution Outlet/Store) is an apparel company that sells other clothing company's products beside producing and selling theirs. This apparel company, such as the famous UNKL347 in Bandung, provides various youth-trend products include T-shirts, shirts, jackets, headgears, footwear, belts and other accessories that promote their own identity and uniqueness and are always updated by keeping pace with the flow of youth trend, and to this day lots of visitors come to UNKL347 Bandung. Based on an interview with Eddi Brokoli, Marketing Communication Manager, conducted by the author, UNKL347 has been established for 18 years and able to keep up with the existing competitors such as, Billabong, Quick Silver, Ocean Pacific, Oakley, Kuta Lines, Roxy, Ripcurl, Volcom and many more strong competitors. Up to this day UNKL347 has showrooms in many places including Bandung, Jakarta, Bali, Singapore, Australia, Malaysia, German, and other big cities in Indonesia.

Considering the importance of customers to reach the company's objective, the company should realize how central the role of customers is. The company should understand the desires and needs of the customers so that they'll get maximum satisfaction. When they're well satisfied, their trust and

perception to the company will rise, and this affects Brand Image to the customers.

It can be said that social media is a new media, a powerful media for the future. It's a media where every brand has a chance to have its own media. In addition, its ability to encourage consumers to participate or so-called consumer generated content will make communication to be efficient, fast, and timely. Basically the challenge in this market segment is not that easy. The participants should be able to compete in a market that is full with competitors who have similar strategies. In addition, they must be good at utilizing the latest technology. Various online media can now be used as an online market tool, especially Social Media which is effective and efficient when maximally utilized. The explanation above leads to an issue that attracts the author to make a further study. Internet will be a part, need, and life style of new customers. The use of Social Media as an Internet marketing tool is considered to have a great potential to add and elevate the value of products to the customers because of the existence of community and inter-customer relationship in it.

The great number of social media users and their desire to get networked are a significant potential and chance for the marketers to fully understand their customers. Since Social Media has attracted customers more than any other websites, it has become a powerful and highly potential marketing tool. Thus, Social Media is not only a marketing tool, this effectively has become a new way in running a business. This needs a new company culture, which in return needs a bigger company support, systemic and incentive. This needs a new pattern: more listening, less 'yelling' [3]. Social Media is a place where Word of Mouth becomes ballistics. Thus, Word of Mouth doesn't occur spontaneously as of the first thing you'd like to measure is the impact of your own publications [4]. Social Media allows marketers to build public opinions and web existence and to strengthen other communicating activities. Because of their daily closeness, they can encourage the company to keep innovative and relevant [5].

According to Smith and Zook, social Media channels are as follows: Blogs, Social Networking, Social Content, Social Recommendation, and Social Bookmarking [3]. Zarella explains that Social Media channels include Blogging, Microblogging, Social Networking, Media Sharing, Social News and Bookmarking, Rating and Review, Forum, dan Virtual World [6]. It is also in line with Heuer, an initiator of Social Media Club and innovator of new media, in Solis, there's 4 C in running Social Media namely first Context; it is a way or form in addressing some message to the public [7]. One of the best ways to effectively address a message is by using multimedia. According to Hasan, the use of multimedia (photo or video) can change the poor point of view about procedures of selling and give a friendly impression to the company [8]. Communication; it is an act of conveying or sharing and listening, responding as well as elaborating messages to the public. Collaboration; it is a cooperation between communicator and communicant in order to make message exchange more effective and efficient. Connection; it is a relation built up between communicator and communicant.

Based on the introduction above the author has formulated some issues as follows: How is the implementation of customer-based Social Media; how is UNKL347 Brand Imaging done by the customers; what is the influence of Social Media to Brand Image of UNKL347's products. While the purpose of this study is to discover customers' perception to Social Media marketing conducted by UNKL347; Brand Image of UNKL347's products from customers' point of view; and the impact of Social Media towards Brand Image of UNKL347. The result of the study is expected to expand marketing management study, especially Social Media, and customer behavior theory including Brand Image.

II. METHOD

The research is conducted by using marketing approach, especially Social Media influence towards UNKL347's Brand Image. Furthermore, the research studies two variables, which are independent and dependent variables. Social Media is the investigated independent variable, while UNKL347's Brand Image is the dependent variable. Respondents of the research are the members of UNKL347 Facebook Fan page who uses Social Media actively as well as UNKL347's customers or those who have ever bought UNKL347's products. UNKL347 is chosen because it's a local brand of creative industry of fashion subsector that is able to reach international market. Based on time dimension this research is conducted for less than a year, from September 2017 to February 2018. Therefore according to Ulber Silalahi, the research method should use cross-sectional research, a research conducted in a single point in time with different analyzing units [9]. McDaniel and Gates states that marketing research is data planning, collection, and analyses that is relevant with marketing decision-making and then communicate the result of analysis to the management board [10]. The chosen method for the research is causal-comparative method, because the research uses causal relationship and independent variable is not manipulated [9]. Based on data collection, the research uses survey technique. The definition of survey is limited to a research that collects data from a sample of population to represent the whole population, and information is collected from a sample or respondents of population to represent the whole population through an interview or questionnaire. Utilizing the information technology, survey by questionnaire can be conducted through phone or e-mail [9].

Based on survey data collection technique above the method used in this research is online survey. According to McDaniel and Gates, online survey is a kind of research conducted via Internet or online [10]. There are basic ways to do several online surveys: web-system survey, web-designed survey and web hosting. The author uses web-designed survey that allows him to design an online survey without making dedicated software. Through this causal and correlational research, it is gained a description of Social Media relation as independent variable run by UNKL347, whereas Brand Image as dependent variable on a survey to the customers joined in UNKL347 Facebook Fan page where this research tries to discover whether there is some influence of Social Media towards Brand Image of UNKL347's products. Population of the research is the customers joined in UNKL347 Facebook

Fan page as much as 128.247 members up to September 2017 and the size of sample is 100 respondents.

III. RESULTS

The results of hypothesis testing show that Social Media implementation has a positive impact on Brand Image with a correlation value of 0.802, reflecting a strong correlation level. In addition, the impact of Social Media--comprising Context, Communication, Collaboration, Connection indicators--accounts for 64 percent, reflecting variable x's effective impact on variable y. while other factors account for 36% of the influence. The regression formula also shows that if the value of Social Media is raised by 1, Brand image will increase to 0.702.

The Social Media implementation is aimed to form a positive Brand Image for a company, based on a premise that the Social Media implementation is an effort to form a brand positive image among customers. UNKL347 is a clothing company that utilizes online media as one of channels to sell its products. The company has several social media accounts to market its products. A number of marketing experts have revealed the correlation between Social Media and Brand Image. Shaw and Jones reveals a new rule of engagement in social websites in relation to their contributions: damages will increase company's reputation and Brand Image [11]. The rapid change directly influences marketing communication to manage reputation and branding. Company's reputation and Brand Image viewed by audience are not only shaped by communication efforts; they are products of direct online conversation [11]. Based on the definition, shaping a positive Brand Image requires Social Media implementation, which is a part of marketing communication. Furthermore, active conversations between Social Media users also play major role to establish a Brand Image. In addition, web 3.0 is a tool for consumers and citizen empowerment. In this case it is used to effectively promote brand and reputation in a new environment and serves as a necessity to work in partnership with various stakeholders [11]. Brian Jones et.al suggests that to maximize the reach and the impact of online reputation in branding, a management must involve company's stakeholders in online conversations. With a well-managed and well-organized online conversation, building reputation and brand image, as well as maintaining existence will be possible. In the Social Media environment, a company must convey a clear and convincing social messages, so that customers would experience higher level of satisfaction for a product or a service [12]. The research shows that Social Media implementation has a strong impact on UNKL347 Brand Image, with a value of 0.802.

IV. DISCUSSION

This research has resulted in findings that are expected to benefit webbing handicraft industries in general and UNKL347 in particular. The research shows that the variable of Social Media implementation (X) gains a moderate score, particularly for the Context indicator. This can be improved by continuously updating contents on a regular basis, encouraging website administrator to be more customer-friendly, and focusing on information details, such as sizing chart and tips to maintain products, as well as keeping customers updated on the

latest fashion. In terms of Communication indicator, or the practice of sharing, listening, responding and developing messages to audience, maintaining customer's enthusiasm about the UNKL347 brand in Social Media is important. A good Collaboration between the message sender and recipient will reflect an effective and efficient communication. This can be realized by being actively engaged in conversations in social media. Therefore, customers will have a sense of being appreciated and build a positive online word of mouth. The Connection indicator covers a relationship between message sender and recipient. This can be developed by improving the quality of products, being more transparent in terms of product details and specifications showcased in Social Media. In addition, the company is encouraged to be active, be interesting, be humble, be professional and be honest. In terms of types of Brand Association, UNKL347 continuously monitors the trend of brand in social media by keeping in mind that the information gained from such a monitoring should be relevant to functions, communications, designs, marketing, risks, etc. In terms of Brand Association Favourability, the company can respond to various conversations even in a personal setting. Fast and appropriate responses in Social Media can be an important step to address both positive and negative comments.

V.   CONCLUSION

The company has strived to improve its Brand Association Strength by involving followers and fans. Such an effort is one among other ways to strengthen the brand existence in Social Media and to provide customers with a forum to interact with products, brand and other customers. Finally, the Brand Association Uniqueness indicator is related to the advantage of UNKL347 products compared to competitors'. To improve this, UNKL347 can combine online and offline activities and create a social media, such as virtual games, to engage in interactions with its customers and to offer its products. For further studies, researches are expected to find other variables that may affect UNKL347's Brand Image, such as Functional Building Blocks of Social Media, Viral Marketing Online and the Effectiveness of Mouth Communication. It is also expected that further studies would provide an optimal contributions for researchers and the company.

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