INTRODUCTION TO MEDIA IN MALAYSIA

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Publisher:

Year of Publication:

2025

e ISBN 978-967-19877-4-2

9 789671 987742

Communication and Media Centre (COMET)

(online)

Contents

Acknowledgement

Assalamualaikum warahamatullahi wabarakatuh

First and foremost, praise be to Allah SWT for the publication of this book.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Prof. Syed Arabi Idid, whose groundbreaking ideas and lifelong dedication to the field of media and communication in Malaysia have inspired the publication of this book.

We also express our appreciation to the researchers and contributors who played an instrumental role in shaping the content of this book. Your commitment to excellence and meticulous attention to detail have ensured the quality and depth of this work.

To our family and friends, thank you for your unwavering support, understanding, and encouragement. Your belief in my work has been my anchor and motivation.

Lastly, we acknowledge all the readers, scholars, and practitioners who engage with this book. It is our hope that it serves as a valuable resource and inspiration in your endeavors.

Dr. Mohd Helmi Yusoh
Dr. Shafizan Mohamed
Editors,
Introduction to Media in Malaysia

Preface

The Malaysian media industry has undergone profound transformations, evolving from traditional print and broadcast media to the dynamic digital age. As academics at the Department of Communication, International Islamic University Malaysia, we recognized the pressing need to document this evolution, particularly in light of the rapid changes brought about by technological advancements and societal shifts. This book seeks to capture key milestones in this journey, serving as a foundational resource for learners, media professionals, and anyone interested in understanding the development of Malaysia's media landscape.

The idea for this book emerged from observing the significant changes brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. The global health crisis disrupted conventional ways of life, accelerating the shift to digital platforms and fundamentally altering how Malaysians interact with media. As institutions and individuals adapted to these new realities, it became clear that digital media would continue to redefine communication and media practices well into the future.

Additionally, in a world increasingly dominated by global narratives, preserving and asserting Malaysia's unique media history is an act of cultural pride and resilience. It acknowledges the challenges and achievements that have shaped the nation's media landscape, bridging its rich heritage with the complexities of the modern digital era.

This book represents a starting point—a preliminary effort to document Malaysia's media history. While it provides a foundational overview, our hope is that future editions will expand this work, covering broader and deeper aspects of the Malaysian media experience. By doing so, we aim to contribute to the growing body of knowledge that celebrates and critically examines the media's role in shaping Malaysia's past, present, and future.

In this context, the urgency to reflect on and document these changes cannot be overstated. This volume explores how the digital era has reshaped traditional media forms such as radio, television, newspapers, and advertising. It highlights the resilience and adaptability of the Malaysian media industry, offering valuable insights into its transformative journey and setting the stage for future exploration and discourse.

Structured to offer a comprehensive yet accessible narrative, the chapters in this book cover various aspects of Malaysia's media evolution:

Historical evolution of Media in Malaysia: The chapter traces the evolution of Malaysia's media from its pre-colonial oral traditions and manuscripts to the digital age. It highlights how colonial rule introduced print media, radio, and censorship, with the vernacular press fostering nationalist sentiments. Post-independence, media became a tool for nation-building, promoting unity and identity, while the 1980s

privatization era led to the rise of private broadcasters like TV3, sparking competition and innovation. The digital era further transformed media consumption, with the growth of the internet, social media, and streaming services, while challenges such as media ownership concentration and the need for ethical journalism persist. Overall, the chapter underscores the media's pivotal role in shaping Malaysia's identity, culture, and political landscape.

Newspapers in Malaysia: The chapter explores the history and challenges of Malaysia's newspaper industry, from its colonial origins catering to expatriates to its role in fostering nationalism and independence. Post-independence, the media landscape diversified to reflect Malaysia's multicultural society. It discusses issues like political influence, media ownership concentration, and declining print circulation in the digital age, while highlighting opportunities for innovation through digital transformation, new revenue models, and adapting to changing audience preferences.

Radio Broadcasting in Malaysia: The chapter traces the history and evolution of radio broadcasting in Malaysia, from its colonial beginnings in the 1920s to its current digital transformation. Initially introduced by the British for communication and propaganda, radio became a key tool for nation-building post-independence. The transition from AM to FM radio in the 1970s improved sound quality, and the rise of private radio stations in the 1980s and 1990s introduced more diversity in programming. Digital broadcasting, online streaming, and podcasts have since reshaped the industry, offering new opportunities and challenges. Despite competition from digital platforms, radio remains a vital medium in Malaysia, adapting to new technologies and audience preferences to maintain relevance.

Advertising in Malaysia: This chapter examines the evolution of advertising in Malaysia, highlighting the influence of the country's diverse cultural and religious landscape. It explores the shift from traditional to digital advertising, driven by high internet penetration and social media use. Advertising in Malaysia not only serves commercial purposes but also promotes national unity and cultural values. The chapter discusses the growing role of influencers, AI, and augmented reality, while also addressing challenges such as privacy concerns and advertising fraud. Overall, it emphasizes the need for advertisers to align with Malaysia's unique cultural and ethical expectations.

Social media in Malaysia: The chapter explores the growth of social media from platforms like Friendster to popular apps like TikTok and Instagram, driven by high smartphone penetration. It highlights Malaysia's unique influencer culture, shaped by multi-ethnic and predominantly Muslim demographics, while addressing challenges such as misinformation, privacy concerns, online scams, and cyberbullying. Social media's dual role as a platform for connection, political discourse, and cultural expression, as well as a source of societal risks, is emphasized, underscoring the need for regulation and digital literacy to ensure a safe and inclusive online environment.

Media regulations in Malaysia: The chapter examines Malaysia's media regulations, balancing freedom of expression with legal limits to safeguard public order, security, and morality. Rooted in Article 10 of the Federal Constitution, laws like the Printing

Presses and Publications Act and Sedition Act shape media practices within the nation's historical and cultural framework. The chapter also addresses ethical guidelines, challenges from globalized media, and shifting societal norms, highlighting the essential role of these regulations in maintaining national harmony and stability in an evolving digital landscape.

Each chapter provides a snapshot of Malaysia's media journey, reflecting the dynamism, resilience, and adaptability of the industry amidst political, economic, and technological changes.

We hope this book will inspire further research and discussion, serving as both a celebration and a critical examination of Malaysia's media landscape. To our readers—students, professionals, and enthusiasts—we invite you to explore, reflect, and engage with this narrative. Together, let us honor and advance the story of Malaysian media in the ever-evolving global context.

CHAPTER 4: Advertising in Malaysia

Aida Mokhtar

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter is about advertising in Malaysia and the development of traditional and digital advertising. The nation has an ambiance that provides a special setting for its advertising mainly influenced by cultural, economic and political factors. Malaysia makes an interesting case study due to its rich history, unique population composition and Islam as the official religion allowing for the continuous mission for attaining an equilibrium between the diverse cultures.

Background

Advertising in Malaysia appears to not only have commercial elements and extrinsic messages but also intrinsic messages that promote values through social messages as evident through the various guidelines and codes. Malaysia's total population of 34 million in 2024 is a melting pot of diverse ethnic groups encompassing mainly the Malays (58 percent), Chinese (22.6 percent) and Indians (6.6 percent) making up the 30.6 million citizens (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2024). A challenge of nation building in Malaysia is to firstly unite the multiethnic and multireligious populace, before progress can then happen successfully. The 13th of May 1969 riots between the Malays and Chinese after the general election that caused hundreds of deaths mark a watershed for Malaysia as it had put the country in disarray spurring the government to unite the races even more. National unity has been a favourite theme in the pursuit of nation building since Malaysia's Independence on 31 August 1957.

The media has always been an important medium in propagating multiculturalism and national unity in Malaysia" (Periasamy et al., 2017) hence, advertising also follows suit in this regard. Advertising provides a roof over the separate rooms in which the groups are in. "The multiethnic, unified, harmonious, consumptive lifestyle that Malaysian advertising advocates is an intentional, constructive, social reproductive tool" (Holden, 2001, p. 275). It is apparent that advertising goes beyond its commercial objectives in Malaysia. This supports the notion that the government understands the effects of advertisements on audiences. From a theoretical perspective, this is of course posited by theories such as AIDA model (Strong Jr, 1925), hierarchy of effects (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961), cultivation theory (Gerbner et al., 2002) and social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2001) to name a few.

The notion of nation building is apparent in the guidelines issued by the Film Censorship Board, the Content Code, and the Malaysian Advertising Code of Practice whereby advertising should be used for nation building marking the important role of media overall in Malaysia. The Content Code 2022 mentions that online advertisements should uphold the national policy objectives focused on promoting a

civil society and preserving the nation's harmony (The Communications and Multimedia Content Forum of Malaysia (CMCF), 2022). The Malaysian Advertising Code of Practice mentions that all advertisements should project the Malaysian culture and identity (Advertising Standards Malaysia, 2023). The Film Censorship Guidelines also focus on nation building as Home Minister, Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said they "have been improved with three main pillars: public safety and security, religion, as well as morals and socioculture," (Updated censorship guidelines focuses on public safety and culture - says Saifuddin, 2024).

In Malaysia, culture and religion are fused. Most of Malaysia's cultural values are shaped by religious practices. For advertisers involved in global advertising and integrated marketing communication (IMC), they need to be aware of the restrictions that they would encounter when promoting a new market, specifically those with strong cultural and societal codes of behavior (Jafara et al., 2016). The National Culture Policy puts forth the importance of the indigenous culture of the region that is the Malay culture and that elements from other cultures such as the Chinese, Indians, Arabs, Westerners and so forth that are regarded as suitable can be included in the national culture, Islam as important part of the national culture (Prime Minister's Office of Malaysia, 2019). Islamic culture as being most predominant. The official religion of Malaysia is Islam as mentioned in Article 3 of the Federal Constitution with the Malays identified as Muslims in Article 160 of the Federal Constitution (Government of Malaysia, 2010). The 3Rs are very sensitive in Malaysia as race, royalty and religion are not allowed to be mentioned offensively in the media with the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) in collaboration with social media platforms to have reportedly removed 1,454 contents on the 3Rs between January to March 2024 (1454 Contents Related to 3R on social media Removed from Jan - March - Teo, 2024). At present the concept of Malaysia Madani is put forth by Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim that underscores a better Malaysia with the emphasis on Islamic teachings that are universal echoed through the "message of humanity, patriotism, justice for the grace of goodness and safety for all" (Madani Concept Inclusive to All Races - Religions – PM Anwar, 2023).

Economically, advertising expenditure in Malaysia has been positively forecasted in 2024. Advertising spending in the Malaysian advertising market is reported to reach USD1,831.00 million in 2024 with the largest market being television and video advertising with a market volume of USD407.80 million in 2024 (Advertising - Malaysia, 2024). Digital advertising has come into the picture in the last decade with the emergence of the Internet. The 4G network coverage is about 98.07 percent in 2024 and internet penetration estimated to be G8 percent in 2024 with the number of households with internet access in Malaysia predicted to amount to 7.41 million in 2024 (Digital G Connectivity Indicators - Malaysia, 2024).

The more popular social media platforms in Malaysia are Facebook with around 63 percent users out of all social media platforms 63 percent, followed by Instagram, with about 12.5 percent of the social media market share in the country (Siddharta, 2024). These have been used for carrying advertisements.

Malaysia is looking at expanding its digital economy. According to the Ministry

of Investment, Trade and Industry (MITI), "Under Malaysia's MyDIGITAL Blueprint, Digital Economy is defined as economic and social activities that involve the production and use of digital technology by individuals, businesses, and governments" (Digital Economy, 2024). Moreover, the current digital economy is to be expanded to contribute 22.6 percent of Malaysia's GDP by 2025, there are also initiatives to empower industries and local MSMEs to be involved ion complex activities that provide higher value. Against this backdrop, digital advertising will thrive. Malaysia already has one 5G network through the Digital Nasional Berhad (DNB) shared network and the second 5G network is developed by UMobile (Fahmi: Premature to Reveal Conditions for U Mobile's 5G Network, 2024).

Definition of Advertising

Advertising has evolved greatly together with media development. The phases of advertising development in this chapter comprise traditional and digital advertising. Advertising is defined as, "Paid nonpersonal communication from an identified sponsor using mass media to persuade or influence an audience" (Moriarty et al., 2019, p. 578). Another definition of advertising is, that it is a form of marketing communication due to its omnipresence and pervasiveness nevertheless the media development has made defining advertising difficult with the emergence of several different campaigns that do not fit into the traditional advertising denotation (Belch & Belch, 2021).

Islamic Advertising

The importance of Islamic advertising that is principled by the Qur'anic verse (3:104), "Enjoin good and forbid evil," is apparent as this means that advertising needs to educate the market in Malaysia that is predominantly Muslim (Mokhtar & Samsudin, 2015). The notion of creativity with a purpose is also put forth as being meaningful and intrinsically Islamic (Mokhtar et al., 2024). The intertwining of Islamic values and conventional advertising needs to be practised as it is deemed the moral obligation of the Muslim advertiser and advertising agency as key players to play their role as vicegerents.

The concept of Islamic advertising appears to need redefining as the products advertised should not only be *halal,* but the brands should also not support Israel. The Muslim target audience in Malaysia is sensitive thus it is no wonder that some brands have been boycotted also affecting the use of advertising by these brands. With the majority of the Malaysian populace being Muslim, the Palestine-Israeli conflict has given birth to boycotts of brands that are perceived to be supportive of Israel which appears to be spurred by the global boycott movement by the wider Palestinian-led Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement seeking to put pressure on Israel to terminate its occupation of Palestine (Rajvanshi G Serhan, 2024). According to the article, BDS has called for fresh boycotts of McDonald's, Pizza Hut, and Burger King that are deemed as new targets due to their perceived support of Israel. McDonald's Malaysia, that is owned by Gerbang Alaf Restaurants, in 2023 filed a lawsuit against BDS Malaysia blaming the movement of damaging its business by linking it to Israel's

war in Gaza that is false (Llewellyn, 2024).

The sales of products belonging to these brands have suffered of late in Malaysia and Indonesia – both Muslim majority nations with Indonesia having the largest Muslim population in the world, home to over 242 million Muslims (Muslim Population by Country 2024, 2024). In the case of Starbucks in Malaysia, "Analysts have revised their earnings forecasts for Starbucks Malaysia operator in financial year 2025 and 2026, pencilling in bigger losses as the boycott on the Starbucks brand continues unabated" (Kamaruddin, 2024). Nestle products have also encountered falling sales but the brand is positive that sales will pick up eventually once the boycotts wear out with Milo and Maggi brands regarded as Malaysian staple products difficult to miss (Poo, 2024).

Not everyone is fond of the boycotts, as a Muslim group has however criticised the act of boycotting major brands as most of the shares of Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), McDonald's and Pizza Hut have Muslims as majority shareholders, and they pay a big amount in corporate tax. "Boycotting major brands in Malaysia will have unintended consequences to the local economy including undermining Muslims who own or work for these firms, said the Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia (IKIM)" (Chan, 2024). As a result, the income generated by advertising expenditure has also reduced as brands are not using a lot of advertising due to the boycotts but concentrating more on crisis communication (Business Times, 2024). Confidence and trust in brands for not supporting Israel needs to be continuously instilled in ongoing promotions for sales of products by the Muslim market to increase and for boycotts to be eliminated. Brands of halal products have to distance themselves from Israel somehow to be sustainable.

Evolution of Traditional Media in Malaysia

- **Newspapers and Magazine Advertising in Malaysia**

Advertising emerged in Malaysia and Singapore in the 19th century when foreign traders came to Malaysia (called Malaya at the time) and the medium used for advertising was restricted and the techniques used for producing the advertisements were unappealing with the basic function of advertising being to inform and sell products to local and other traders with posters, brochures, newspapers and pieces of wood used most (Abdullah, 2002). Abdullah also reported that the first newspaper advertisement appeared in the Prince of Wales Island's Gazette that was published in Penang in 1805; newspapers and magazines were initially introduced in trading centres such as Singapore, Penang, and Malacca. Abdullah (2002) also narrated that the first edition of The Straits Times published on 15 July 1845 in Singapore had different types of advertisements from shopping to medicinal products characterised by direct messages and copy (or text) oriented.

The magazine advertising development in Malaysia is difficult to trace compared to newspapers with the Chinese Monthly Magazine cited to be one of the earlier magazines (Lent, 1978). The oldest magazine that has since halted production *Mastika* which first started publishing on 1 June 1941 by Utusan Melayu, "holds the undisputed record for being the oldest magazine in the country" and has since 2018

closed down (Seng, 2018).

In the more contemporary era, readership of newspapers and magazines has fallen in Malaysia. Magazines and newspapers used to enjoy a large readership, but this has been affected over the last decade with the advent of the Internet, social media and online media marking the inevitable slow passing of the printed versions (Azuddin, 2023). According to the writer, some media migrated online while others are still publishing in both print and found online; Malay Mail has halted its print version and is operating online. When media move to social media platforms to capture the market, advertising revenue also moves to these platforms. To survive, sponsored content needs to be sold, subscription fees for digital and some online content are charged by The Star, The Malaysian Insight and Malaysiakini and the media that provide free access to their news will gather audience data and display advertisements.

With the Audit Bureau of Circulation closed in 2019, it is difficult to credibly measure the decline in circulation or numbers of copies sold of newspapers and magazines (Chandran, 2021). "Consumption of traditional media sources such as television news and print has been declining for several years, with the weekly use of print newspapers having halved since 2017. Online and social media have become a convenient alternative with Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, and TikTok becoming important sources of news" (Nain, 2024). Nain also reported that two news portals have closed and satellite pay-television, ASTRO has suffered losses.

When it comes to magazine advertising, it has been predicted that expenditure will reach USD35.68 million by 2024, the number of readers in the magazine advertising market is predicted to reach 2.0 million users by 2029 and is currently experiencing a shift to digital platforms (Magazine Advertising - Malaysia, 2024). When it comes to newspaper advertising spending, there appears to be the forecast of USD82.68 million in 2024, the number of readers is expected to reach 7.1 million users by 2029 and there is also the shift of newspapers to digital platforms (Newspaper Advertising - Malaysia, 2024).

● **Radio and Television Advertising in Malaysia**

In early 50s, broadcasting activities in Malaya operated from a temporary studio in Jalan Young (now known as Jalan Cenderasari) in Kuala Lumpur and subsequently, in 1956, they were moved to the Federal House, Kuala Lumpur where broadcasting developed with the emergence of several stations (Background, 2024). It is also mentioned that commercial advertisements first aired on radio in 1960 and became a new source of revenue for the government and a primary source of revenue in the past.

Radio too has had to evolve in Malaysia as most stations incorporate more options by offering new platforms such as podcasts, videos with social media offering live telecasts (Radio in Malaysia – Background and Advertising Insights, 2022). Advertising expenditure for traditional radio advertising is expected to be USD 91.89 m in 2024 as a result of the initiatives in making radio stations relevant by offering targeted and cost-effective campaigns (Traditional Radio Advertising - Malaysia, 2024).

In Malaysia, television services were launched in 1964 after radio became popular as they were transferred to the Angkasapuri Complex where Rangkaian Satu commenced (Milestones In TV As Media In Malaysia, 2022). It was reported, RTM (Radio Televisyen Malaysia) became a prominent broadcasting company where it would expand to every part of Malaysia and now, we have TV1 and TV2. At present, the media group, Media Prima Berhad, operates TV3, NTV7, 8TV and Channel G and are important channels for particular target groups but even they have been affected by the Internet and need to evolve and keep up with the latest trends. On top of that, a satellite television service offered by ASTRO has offered advertising opportunities through more than 100 channels for various audiences. There is at present the advent of the streaming service in the likes of Netflix that provides television shows and movies on internet-connected devices and has been in Malaysia since 2016. It is not clear whether advertisements are shown on Netflix although online sources have indicated that they are found on the most basic packages in some countries.

Traditional television advertising expenditure is forecasted to be USD213.40m in 2024 as it benefits from the digitally saturated market (Traditional TV Advertising- Malaysia, 2024). There is hope for television as new data uncovers that savvy advertisers are beginning to identify the enduring value of television, both in its traditional and connected forms, as they navigate an increasingly fragmented media landscape (The Malketeer, 2024b).

- **Digital, Converging and Social Media Advertising**

Traditional media must have online and digital presence on social media platforms to remain competitive. This is not only the case for Malaysia but globally with the advent of artificial intelligence leading to convergence between traditional and digital media supported by the high Internet penetration rate. Advertising expenditure in Malaysia has been on a positive note but leaning towards digital advertising with artificial intelligence as indicated by several sources. "Kiron expects artificial intelligence (AI), led by generative AI, to make a positive impact in 2024, especially within the marketing and advertising space" (Dhesi, 2023). "Emphasising on technology, the Association of Accredited Advertising Agents Malaysia (4As) acting president Ryusuke Oda said with physical communication returning to pre-COVID- 1G levels, coupled with the advent of AI, advertising communication will expand at an accelerated pace in the near future." (Adapting to uncertainty, 2023)

Digital advertising expenditure in Malaysia was at 65.6 percent against total advertising spend in 2023 (How to Do Advertising in Malaysia: Full Guide 2024, 2024). Advertising spending in the digital advertising market is projected to reach USD1,044.0m in 2024 (Digital Advertising - Malaysia, 2024). It is also reported that digital advertising in Malaysia has shown regular progress over the years, with the total advertising expenditure increasing from USD401 million in 2017 to a forecasted USD1,234 million in 2025 (Wei, 2023).

"Traditional advertising formats have been eclipsed by more innovative and surgically targeted approaches through digital media" (The Malketeer, 2023). As digital

advertising usage rises, traditional advertising agencies have to be creative as they can reach a wider audience and specific targets by using interactive communication instead of only one-way communication for traditional media (Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, 200G). The interactive communication model explaining social media orientations posits that the sender and receiver can switch roles and have conversations (Wells et al., 2021).

Key trends have also allowed e-commerce and advertising to combine, advances in mobile advertising marked by increased access to the internet through mobile devices, increased used of data analytics that involve algorithm-driven automated procedures to analyse large volumes of data to identify the best advertising placements and the use of social media influencers that will become popular in Malaysia (Bakar, 2024). Top influencers in Malaysia include Neelofa with 8.7 million followers, Zizan Razak with 7.8 million followers and Mirah Filzah with 7.3 million followers (Howe, 2024). Neelofar, a Malaysian actress, television host and founder of fashion brand Naelofa has also been the face of Chanel, Lancôme and Swarovski (Ying, 2019). Another influencer that is popular is the winner of The Creator of the Year in the People's Choice category at the TikTok Awards MY 2023, Khairul Aming. He is popular for his culinary videos and his sambal nyet product and has 3.7 million followers (Chua, 2023). Khairul is known for his marketing, his niche, openness to feedback, determination, his humility, his approachable online personality, he does not remain stagnant, and he takes good care of his employees (Sabrina, 2023).

"A study found that parasocial relationships (PSR) between influencer and followers had a significantly positive impact on purchase intentions relative to other characterizations and that PSR was significantly related to the three personal attributes: attitude homophily, physical attractiveness, and social attractiveness" (Masuda et al., 2022).

Of course, there are challenges like fake advertisements and privacy concerns, but these should not deter advertisers from using digital media for promoting products as with their embrace disruptive technology, they will be left behind. "Advertising fraud concerns, data usage transparency, and privacy management will all be challenges for advertisers to overcome. Success in this dynamic environment will also depend on keeping up with quickly changing consumer preferences and technological advancements" (Bakar, 2024).

The growth in digital advertising is not limited to a single segment. Still, it has been experienced across all major digital advertising formats (Wei, 2023):

- **Banner Advertising:** The largest segment in the Malaysian digital advertising market, Banner Advertising has grown from USD189.7 million in 2017 to an estimated USD495.4 million in 2025.

- **Classifieds:** Although the smallest segment, Classifieds have also seen steady growth, with ad spending increasing from US$55.1 million in 2017 to a projected US$88.57 million in 2025.

- **Search Advertising:** This segment has experienced significant growth, with ad spending rising from USD113.6 million in 2017 to an estimated USD379.8

million in 2025.

- **Video Advertising:** Like Search Advertising, Video Advertising has witnessed considerable growth, with ad spending increasing from USD42.68 million in 2017 to an estimated USD270.7 million in 2025.

In 2024 there is the use of artificial intelligence (AI), augmented reality (AR), computer-generated imagery (CGI). "Augmented reality (AR) refers to the real-time integration of digital information into a user's environment. AR technology overlays content onto the real world, enriching a user's perception of reality rather than replacing it" (Hayes G Downie, 2024). There are technological turning points, cognitive cities redefining urban living, digital identification in the an age of personalisation, AI in education, new storytelling horizons with generative AI tools, consumer adoption and tech wave from 2024 and beyond in Malaysia (The Malketeer, 2024a). In terms of technological turning points, augmented reality, artificial intelligence and other cutting-edge technologies are infused with conventional marketing. Cognitive cities redefining urban living through smart billboards to augmented reality-guided city tours integrating the physical and digital realms. With regards to digital identification in an age of personalisation, consumer behaviour is identified, and AR uses algorithms to predict consumer behaviour and allows for advertisers to tailor offerings to consumers. When it comes to AI in education, learning has become AI centred and fun making advertising messages having to embrace AI to become as immersive and interactive. As for new storytelling horizons with generative AI tools, "Augmented marketing, through generative AI tools, enables the creation of dynamic content that adapts to user preferences, providing an engaging and personalised storytelling experience". Consumers have become more tech savvy and advertisers must cater to this.

For Naum (2021) in 2024 and beyond, there is AI and personalised engagement through chatbots and augmented reality through superimposing digital elements onto the physical world, it enables brands to create immersive and interactive experiences that fascinate audiences such as the look of a new rug in your home through a preview and the use of computer-generated imagery (CGI) videos for advertising content.

However, there are issues in Malaysia, as a recent AI-generate Chinese New Year post by Malaysia Airlines raised questions of authenticity and ethics in advertising when it aimed to promote flights during the festive season, some netizens thought the image looked AI generated and one said it was cheap-looking (Shirbeeni, 2024). However, the sentiment was not very bad as "Since the day of the post, Malaysia Airlines' sentiments were 37.1 percent positive and 28.8 percent negative." In 2023, "Malaysian AI radio DJ, Aina Sabrina, has been appointed as the newest brand ambassador for Calpis, a Japanese cultured milk drink" (Boo, 2023). As the official sponsor for the first AI radio show in Malaysia, Calpis will be using Sabrina to promote its newly launched Calpis Chewy Grape drink. Titled "Calpis with Aina", the show will be in line with Sabrina's characterisation as someone who loves all things Japanese. Through this, it aims to bring Sabrina closer to listeners and consumers.

Digital And Traditional Media Advertising Need To Blend

It is evident that digital media has attained great popularity. This, however, should not put traditional media and marketing communication tools such as printed posters, flyers, banners, buntings, exhibitions and guerilla marketing in the shadows. They are as important as digital media and should be combined in usage for integrated marketing communication (IMC) campaigns where there is the fusion of marketing communication tools such as advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing and public relations in light of price, place and product conveying messages that together create a synergy effect to target audiences (Wells et al., 2021). With the popular use of digital media this means that the clutter of messages is apparent, and traditional media would be able to cut through the clutter and make messages more visible.

There are several reasons for the advocacy of the fusion of both digital and traditional media advertising.

Firstly, chatbots can never replace humans and interpersonal communication in exhibitions and festivals or at customer service counters. Face-to-face, Interpersonal communication is the highest in richness as posited by information richness theory as it has the characteristics of immediate feedback, audio and visual channels and cues, personal focus and natural language (Lengel & Daft, 1G84). Speaking to salespersons, customer service personnel and advertisers at exhibitions is more satisfying as messages can be delivered accurately and persuasive communication can be more effectively carried out and be converted to sales.

Secondly, the older generation are still consuming messages from traditional media as they are more familiar (Todor, 2016). There are advantages of both digital media and traditional media and a balance of both is proposed by the researchers.

Thirdly, when it comes to relationship marketing for business-to-business (B2B) markets, traditional methods are still better. Social media can be particularly helpful in attracting international customers, digital communication tools appear to be most rampant in the persuasion phase, while traditional communication tools still triumph in customer relationship management when it comes to B2B marketing (Fraccastoro et al., 2021). There are benefits with regards to digital sales communication tools, but face-to-face meetings are still preferred given the immense interactive orientation of B2B buying, which calls for the participation of salespeople.

CONCLUSION

Malaysia has expedited the expansion of its digital economy marking the need for advertisers to keep abreast with new forms of advertising. Malaysian markets are now more discerning and are in the position to choose the media they prefer. Digital advertisements should be coupled with traditional media advertisements and include the cultural values of Malaysians. Indeed, the Malaysian government considers the role of advertising as important with effects that could be useful for nation building.

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Index

INTRODUCTION TO MEDIA IN MALAYSIA

Helmi Yusoh & Shafizan Mohamed

Malaysia's media landscape is as vibrant and diverse as its people. From the early days of print and broadcasting to the fast-paced digital revolution, the story of Malaysian media is one of resilience, innovation, and cultural richness.

Introduction to Media in Malaysia offers an engaging exploration of this dynamic industry, chronicling its transformation across generations. Through carefully curated chapters, the book delves into the pivotal moments that shaped the nation's media—from the colonial press to the rise of television, the privatization of broadcasting, and the sweeping changes brought about by the digital age.

This book not only captures the milestones of Malaysia's media journey but also examines the profound impact of globalization, technological advancements, and societal shifts on communication practices. It sheds light on the challenges and opportunities facing traditional and new media, offering insights that are both timely and timeless.

Perfect for students, scholars, and media professionals, this book is more than just a resource—it is a celebration of Malaysia's media evolution and a call to preserve its unique identity in an increasingly globalized world.

Step into the story of Malaysian media, where history meets innovation and tradition blends with the future.

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