

VIRAL MARKETING: A CASE STUDY ON GO-JEK COMMERCIAL CAMPAIGN

Ghina Ramadhani, Agung Eko Budiwaspada
Visual Communication Design Program,
Bandung Institute of Technology, Indonesia 2019

ABSTRACT

Increasing use of the internet by millennials is a phenomenon that needs to be adapted to. The advertising-marketing world is no exception. Responds to the phenomenon has been varying, for example there's a new category for advertising media besides Above The Line and Below The Line; Through The Line Media. Through The Line occurred to define internet media which has the quality of both above the line and below the line medias. Another form of adaptation to this situation exists in the form of marketing strategies; that is viral marketing. Viral marketing is a strategy that is only relevant in internet media. This paper will try to explain the kind of impact made from this marketing strategy, and its effectiveness on millennial target audiences by using some case studies on the brand, Go-Jek.

Keywords: viral marketing, internet marketing, advertising, millennials.

BACKGROUNDS

The components of communication consist of senders, messages, channels, recipients, and feedback. Advertising as a type of communication activity also has a channel component in the process. There are various types of communication channel, or what is commonly called the media in advertising, which evolves as time goes. Amalia E. Maulana, in her writing "The End of the Line: Mengakhiri istilah ATL vs. BTL" reveals that the media used in advertising can be categorized as above the line and below the line media. The term 'the line' defines the limits of production costs, in other words, Above The Line (ATL) medias are media which costs exceed the cost of production, there are tax costs / installation costs for the media to be used, for example, billboard media and television advertisements. Whereas the Below The Line (BTL) medias are media that doesn't need other costs besides production costs, for example flyers, pamphlets, outdoor media, etc.

In the categorization, the characteristics and distinctive advantages of each category surfaces, such as ATL media will usually be used for advertisement messages that are not specific and public, while the BTL media will usually be used for advertisement messages that target specific audiences. It is more specific and the message delivered can be more detailed.

Nowadays, many communication medias have now shifted to the internet, and then created one more category of advertising media, named Through The Line (TTL) media. This Through The Line defines advertising media on the internet which characteristics and advantages are combining both qualities in the Above The Line and Below The Line Media. TTL media has the ability to reach specific target audience by utilizing algorithms on the internet, but its reach remains mass- wide, even wider than traditional Above The Line media.

Through The Line media, hereinafter will be referred to as Internet media, with its distinctive characteristics certainly requires different treatment in its communication strategy. One strategy that is often used is Viral marketing. Viral marketing is only relevant if the advertising media is the internet, because the viral marketing strategy is simply a strategy that relies on words of mouth marketing that has also shifted to the Internet media, Internet Word of Mouth. The term ‘viral’ means the virus that spreads quickly. Datta et al., (2005) explains what is meant by viral marketing;

”On the internet, viral marketing is a marketing technique that induces websites or users to pass on a marketing message to other sites or users, creating a potentially exponential growth (like a virus) in the message’s visibility and effect”.

In the last 15 years, as of 2004, teenagers born over 1980 – which Lamminman categorized as millennials, have been targeted by as many as 20,000 advertisements per year. That number was recorded in 2004, now it has been over a decade and a half passed since then accompanied by rapid development and use of the internet, therefore we can imagine the rising giant numbers of advertisements on the internet that are targeting the target millennial audiences in 2019.

The era of this rapidly developing communication with internet, is a condition that must be adjusted by communication strategies, especially for advertisers. With those rapid developments, there are possibilities that the communication strategy which is effective a few years ago is no longer effective now. Viral Marketing is one of the effect of this rapid

developments. The viral marketing phenomenon will be discussed in this paper by considering the Millennial Target Audiences, where the relevance of the strategy can be used as a reference and learning.

The Viral Marketing phenomenon will be discussed by case study research method, which will be using a sample of advertising strategy done by Go-Jek brand, a theoretical review on the topic of internet marketing and the e-commerce paradigm, and the responses of the target audiences from the ad.

Michel Syrett and Jean Lammiman, authors of CoolSearch, identify five features that distinguish the millennial generation and explain the long term implications for marketers of millennial attitudes and behavior. Weaving together uncompromising feedback from a survey group of 18–24 year olds and case studies from companies as diverse as IKEA, GMT, 3M and L'Oreal, our book, CoolSearch, highlights five characteristics that define millennials:

- *Intimacy*: the ability to establish and sustain close relationships over the internet
- *Loyalty*: to their own closely-guarded personal networks and, less consistently or reliably, to brands and employers
- *Awareness*: of social issues inside and outside work, of the need for transparency and honesty and awareness of hypocrisy in brand management or human resource strategies
- *Balance*: in the interface between work and personal life, millennials are also willing to embrace 24/7 lifestyles
- *Risk*: in their openness to frequent change and their willingness to be open, flexible and mobile.

In a Management Jurnal written by Bertha Silvia Sutejo, titled Internet Marketing: *Konsep Dan Persoalan Baru Dunia Pemasaran*, was stated that Internet use changes some elements of the traditional marketing mix approach. Which are:

- The key to successful internet marketing strategies is an interactive strategy.
- Second, the internet provides a different environment and approach to international marketing. The internet makes a fundamental change from mass marketing to personalized marketing.
- Marketing mix for 5P internet marketing, namely product, price, personalization, promotion, and place. Internet marketing allows the transformation of traditional trading activities from non-electronic to electronic platforms.
- The new marketing paradigm is built on 7 (seven) dimensions that distinguish traditional marketing and internet marketing, namely time perspective, dominating marketing

function, communication mode, value creation, the basis of competition (competition base), market conditions (market nature), and economic thinking (economic thinking).

Bertha was not alone in stating that internet changes more than just the surface of advertising, Donna L. Hoffman and Thomas P. Novak also theorized a new paradigm in their paper titled “A New Marketing Paradigm for Electronic Commerce”. They stated:

- In the web, advertising effectiveness can be explicitly tied to customer response and the possibility exists of developing new measurement systems that capture the value of a single consumer's visit and subsequent response in new and innovative ways.
- New bases for market segmentation will also be needed for Web-based marketing efforts because consumers vary in their ability to achieve flow.
- The Web as both medium and market is more likely to be successful if it frees consumers from their traditionally passive role as receivers of marketing communications.

Viral Marketing Determinants of Top Online Shop Brands in Indonesia which is a paper written by Aditya Wardhana, and Mahir Pradana also stated factors that determine a viral marketing.

Factors that are the priorities in forming viral marketing are (1) customer recommendation, (2) newsletter, (3) link strategy, (4) community, (5) free offer, (6) sweepstakes, (7) list of prospective buyers, (8) discussion room, (9) reference list, (10) product description, (11) affiliate program, and (12) search engine.

Jure Leskovec, Lada A. Adamic, dan Bernardo A. Huberman, based on their research in their paper titled “The Dynamics of Viral Marketing” stated:

- Marketers should take heed that providing excessive incentives for customers to recommend products could backfire by weakening the credibility of the very same links they are trying to take advantage of.
- We find that the probability of purchasing a product increases with the number of recommendations received but quickly saturates to a constant and relatively low probability. This means individuals are often impervious to the recommendations of their friends, and resist buying items that they do not want.
- We find that there are limits to how influential high-degree nodes are in the recommendation network. As a person sends out more and more recommendations past a certain number for a product, the success per recommendation declines. This would seem to indicate that individuals have influence over a few of their friends, but not everybody they know.

- We obtain a highly disconnected network where the largest component grows over time by aggregating typically very small but occasionally fairly large components. We presented a model which shows that these smaller and more tightly knit groups tend to be more conducive to viral marketing.
- Since viral marketing was found to be in general not as epidemic as one might have hoped, marketers who want to develop normative strategies for word-of-mouth advertising should analyze the topology and interests of the social network of their customers.

METHOD

A case study method was used for this study because it represents an intensive analysis of viral marketing strategy qualitatively. The researcher collects extensive data on the brand Go-Jek, and one of their recent commercial campaigns, #AnakBangsaBisa. These data include observations and data including information about documentations on this campaign and analytical approach using the theories mentioned above in the backgrounds.

*Figure 1: Go-Jek #AnakBangsaBisa campaign key visual,
 source: <https://www.go-jek.com/blog/anak-bangsa-bisa/>*

DISCUSSION

The case that I chose to study was a commercial campaign from the Go-Jek brand, which was titled #AnakBangsaBisa. This commercial campaign was created to commemorate the 73rd Indonesian Independence Day. Go-Jek commemorates independence day by appreciating the works of the nation's children, especially original Indonesian products. #AnakBangsaBisa campaign appreciates various Indonesian locals, starting from celebrities, athletes, artists, even another local brand like Kopiko and Tolak Angin.

For the records, Go-Jek is a transportation network company and logistics startup company based in Jakarta, Indonesia. It is the first unicorn company, and also the first Decacorn company in Indonesia. Go-Jek also ranks in Top 10 most Powerful Brands in Indonesia and Top 3 Most Powerful Transportation/Logistic Brands.

With #AnakBangsaBisa campaign, Go-Jek embodies its appreciation in the form of traditionally- decorated giant billboards, which are placed in strategic places, where many people can see and take pictures of them easily, henceforth to be shared on social media and the internet. Go-Jek explicitly suggests the people who saw the bouquet to spread

it, as said on their website:

*“Dalam memperingati hari kemerdekaan Republik Indonesia ke-73, GO-JEK ingin mengucapkan rasa terima kasih kepada putra-putri bangsa yang sudah menginspirasi dan berhasil membawa nama Indonesia sampai ujung dunia, bahkan sampai ke luar angkasa. Akhir kata, terima kasih buat kamu semua yang sudah membuktikan kalau #AnakBangsaBisa *mungkin nggak bisa sebutin semua dalam satu campaign, tapi kamu bisa membagikan pesan positif ini di Facebook, Twitter, atau Instagram kalian dengan menggunakan tagar #AnakBangsaBisa.” (Go-Jek, 2018)*

“In order to commemorate the 73rd Independence Day of Republik Indonesia, GO-JEK would like to express gratitude to the sons and daughters of the nation who have inspired and succeeded in bringing the name of Indonesia to the edges of the world, even to the outer space. Finally, thank you for all of you who have proven that #AnakBangsaBisa *we might not mention all of those inspiring and successful names in one campaign, but you can share this positive message on your Facebook, Twitter or Instagram using the hashtag #AnakBangsaBisa.” (Go-Jek, 2018)

The resulting impact shows that on those said platforms for distributing the message; Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, messages containing the hashtag #AnakBangsaBisa still can be easily found because many people discuss it through their own social media. With this, the #AnakBangsaBisa campaign by Go-Jek has shown one of the signs of a viral marketing strategy, and that is content / messages that spread and shared by their own target audiences. Furthermore, deeper analysis through the above theories is carried out as follows:

- Advertising and Millennials

Elaborating from this theory, considering that Go-Jek users are also millennial, Go-Jek benefits on the Millennial’s Intimacy aspect. The manifestation of intimacy in this campaign is this border-less and self-less forms of appreciation from Go-Jek. Go-Jek undoubtedly undermines all formalities between brands and businesses, like Kopiko and Tolak Angin, where interactions between them is not a common thing to see, let alone sincere appreciations. This quality is a manifestation of characteristic of millennials that support friendships and connections between people. Go-Jek is using the momentum to get intimate with other Indonesian brands and other Indonesian people.

- Internet Marketing: *Konsep Dan Persoalan Baru Dunia Pemasaran*

This theory mentions various components of recently-developed considerations in marketing on the internet. #AnakBangsaBisa commercial campaign use one of this theory's considerations, and that is a personalized marketing, where Go-Jek clearly targets the Indonesian people. Not just that, the nationality of Indonesia in this campaign was also emphasized visually and emotionally. Go-Jek uses the billboard as literally an Indonesian traditional congratulatory rectangular-shaped-wreaths. The target audience is affected by pampering yet familiar visuals, so that those emotions of pride can also be felt, and of course then be shared.

- A new Marketing Paradigm for E-commerce

In this theory, Donna L. Hoffman mentioned, "The Web (internet) as both a medium and a market is more likely to be successful if it frees consumers from traditional passive role as receivers of marketing communications."

According to that theory, Go-Jek is very concerned about this aspect to be a part of his viral marketing. Go-Jek clearly asked their audiences to participate actively in spreading this appreciation message through social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. This method freed the target audience from their traditional status as recipients of passive messages, now they are the actives in the propagation of Go-Jek #AnakBangsaBisa campaign message.

- Determinants of Viral Marketing

The determinants mentioned in this theory can not be evaluated in this case study, because apparently this theory is discussing some different sides inside the viral marketing topics. In short, this theory is not related in any ways with the commercial campaign Go-Jek #AnakBangsaBisa.

- The Dynamics of Viral Marketing

This theory mentioned, "Since viral marketing was found to be in general not as epidemic as one might have hoped, marketers who want to develop normative strategies for word-of-mouth advertising should analyze the topology and interests of the social network of their customers. " (Jure Leskovec, Lada A. Adamic, dan Bernardo A. Huberman, 2007) Go-Jek is clearly concerned about this aspect in the #AnakBangsaBisa campaign. For a campaign to be viral, it requires a common interest. Go-Jek took advantage of the momen-

tum of independence day as an attraction that almost all Indonesian people will certainly feel and celebrate. This, for Go- Jek and their customers, is a huge and undeniable common interest.

CONCLUSION

The use of marketing strategies by Go-Jek in the #AnakBangsaBisa campaign was optimal and fit in the category of viral marketing, because it uses the target audience as a media channel, or Internet words-of-mouth, analyzed according to theories.

However, there is one theory that cannot be linked to the #AnakBangsaBisa Go-Jek case, and that is the theory of Viral Marketing Determinants. That theory describes specific viral marketing strategies by e-mail. This, should be analyzed further to be sure but, might be indicating a shift in the technical meaning of "viral" from time to time. As one time, "viral" was hugely done in the e- mails, one of the first social networking services in the internet. Looking at the fast-changing trend of communication strategies, I would suggest advertisers to always carry out a comprehensive re-evaluation of the marketing strategies used, because of the dynamic relevance of marketing strategies, especially viral marketing strategies, where the achievement is determined by the target audience itself.

REFERENCES

- Michel S., J., L. (2004). "Advertising and millennials". *Young Consumers*, 5(4) 62–73, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/17473610410814355>.
- Bertha S., S. (2006). *INTERNET MARKETING: KONSEP DAN PERSOALAN BARU DUNIA PEMASARAN*.
- Donna L., H, Thomas P., N. (1996). A New Marketing Paradigm for Electronic Commerce
- Leskovec, J., Adamic, L., A., & Huberman, B., A. (2007). The dynamics of viral marketing. DOI = 10.1145/1232722.1232727 (<http://doi.acm.org/10.1145/1232722.1232727>)
- Aditya W. & Mahir P. (2016). "Viral Marketing Determinants of Top Online Shop Brands in Indonesia"
- Go-Jek: #AnakBangsaBisa - Produk & Karya Anak Bangsa Bisa Mendunia
<https://www.go-jek.com/blog/anak-bangsa-bisa/>
- Maulana & Amelia E. (2008). The End of the Line: Mengakhiri Istilah ATL vs BTL, dimuat di Bisnis Indonesia <http://amaliamaulana.com/popular-article/the-end-of-the-line-mengakhiri-penggunaan-istilah-atl-vs-btl/>
- Saiidi, U. (2017). "A ride on Indonesia's first and only 'unicorn'". CNBC.
- The Jakarta Post. (2019). "Go-Jek becomes Indonesia's first decacorn".