

Siti Khadijah Apparel: The Beauty of True Love via Social Brand

Authors: Anis Amira Ab Rahman, Noor Raihani Zainol, and Sathiswaran A/L Uthamaputhran

Abstract

Siti Khadijah Apparel (SKA) Sdn. Bhd. is a well-known brand for Muslimah prayer outfits in Malaysia. SKA has led this innovative design starting from 2009 and expanding with over 30 stores all over Malaysia including Indonesia and United Kingdom. The idea began with the problem faced by most users of the telekung who could not find a comfortable wear and would always resort to do alterations to make it fit and suitable. Hence, thanks to SKA due to their innovative facial design and quality material that help the muslimah to perform their prayer comfortably. Eventhough, there are many brand that focus on outfit prayers, the customer prefer to SKA more than others. There are many designs available at SKA based on the customer preferences offering the options to select according to their needs. Therefore, SKA must consider their marketing strategy and business model innovation in the challenging world to ensure sustainability of their business and growth.

Prologue

Mr. Munzir is thinking something and look up on the house ceiling. He remembers clearly how his mother (Puan Padzilah) start the business with the small order from their relatives because of her interest in sewing. Now, his mother and his family did not expect it can be number one choice of prayers outfit not only in Malaysia, but at international level. Munzir's mother always told him to not give up and perseverance if he wants to excel his business. He smiles, because his mother always give them an advice even they are adult. He feels proud with his mother, every time he mentioned his mother names. Her mother admirer Siti Khadijah (prophet wife's) as one of the pure islamic role model for muslim women. This inspiring her to put Siti Khadijah name as their outfit prayers brand and hope that they will have that's spirit and character in developing their business. Munzir always shows calm face when mentioned about what his family going through to overcome the difficult situation during his family difficult time. He suddenly feel excited when mention that SKA will make a new move in the future with new strategy and promotion. The impact of pandemic COVID 19 not put them down but give them more motivation for success in this business.

THE AUTHORS

Anis Amira Ab Rahman, Noor Raihani Zainol, and Sathiswaran A/L Uthamaputhran are based in the Faculty of Entrepreneurship and Business, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan

Correspondence email:
anisamira@umk.edu.my

Keywords:

Entrepreneurship, Muslimah outfit, innovation, marketing

Disclaimer

This case is written solely for educational purposes and is not intended to represent successful or unsuccessful managerial decision-making. The authors may have disguised names; financial and other recognizable information to protect

Company's and Entrepreneur Background

The tagline “A symbol of eternal love” for Siti Khadijah apparel has become increasingly well-known household name in Malaysia, Indonesia and United Kingdom market. It is not only attracted women fan, but man is also interested in making Siti Khadijah apparel as a souvenir for loved ones, mothers, wives, sisters and others. Siti Khadijah Apparel Sdn Bhd was founded in 2009 by Puan Hajah Pazdilah Enda Sulaiman. She started this idea when she noticed that women often struggle to find a *telekung* that fits well and comfortable that encourage her to help followers of the faith feel equanimous in their prayer. Each piece is designed to the finest thought out detail to help them feel a mindful connection when performing your spiritual obligations. The aspirations to ensure that women could opt for a better, more comfortable telekung through innovation as well as to improve their experience during praying activities. Siti Khadijah purposes to be a reputable global brand that championed modest niche for lifestyle products.



Figure 1: Siti Khadijah Telekung

The reason of Siti Khadijah is still remained on the market until now because of the quality, variety of choice, online store, well known people, and its serve the purpose. This make Siti Khadijah Apparel Sdn. Bhd. sustain in the business even they have competitors that sold the same product. Puan Padzilah won Women Entrepreneur Award 2016 awarded by SME Corp Malaysia and Deloitte. In 2017, Perdana Award and Digital Marketing Award Syariah Compliance by Bank Islam and Utusan respectively. Table 1 illustrated the uniqueness of Siti Khadijah Telekung.

Table 1: The Uniqueness of Siti Khadijah Telekung

DESIGN		
	Design	Details
1.	Signature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design that has gracefully endured the test of time. • Designed with a classic look that brings a pious visage to wearer. • It is also embellished with cotton fabric lace, giving it a contrast effect against the plain fabric, be it white or coloured.
2.	Modish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A touch of modernist while still retaining its originality. • A modern style in using lace/combi (applied on top of plain fabric to add appeal)
3.	Broderie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For those who appreciates fine and artistic detailing. • This design is detailed with full or semi embroidery, inspire from wide array of beautiful designs, giving it an edge texture wise without paying the price of comfort.
4.	Flair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A true manifestation of "less is more". • This design is known for its simplicity, neat and minimalist feature. • It strictly uses fabric or pattern manipulation without having any need for additional adornment.
5.	Deco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For those who prefers to be outstanding yet with moderation. • It uses patterned fabric rather than plain ones. • This patterned fabric comes in various type such as printing, embossed, jacquard, opal or doobby, providing a sense of uniqueness to each product line.
6.	Nefertari	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Egyptian queen, the symbol of ancient beauty. • This design focuses on providing the feel of extravagance. • Every product line under Nefertari is very limited in number. • It is adorned with luxury traits, through the usage of exclusive laces such as net lace.
LABEL		
1.	White label (basic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SK collections that utilizes Khadijah Basic Poplin garment, complemented by the usage of minimal cotton lace, intricately sewn on it. • Price Range: RM159.00 - RM199.00

2. Maroon label (premium)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SK best-selling collection that is designed with latest engineering technology to produce softer and cozier fabric. • This label uses premium fabric material such as Khadijah Signature Poplin, Khadijah Ultra Fine, Pure Cotton (100%) and Khadijah Opal Print. • Price Range: RM200.00 - RM499.00
3. Black label (Exclusive)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SK's avant-garde that strictly uses highest quality fabric such as satin silk to retain its elegance. • It could also be made with premium fabric material but with extra detailing, special embellishment or added feature to the material. • Price Range: RM500.00 & above
TARGET CUSTOMER	
1. Lovely daughter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deco cilik Sofea • Cilik Samira • Broderie Cilik Tuberoze • Cilik Qaleisya • Cilik Ameena • Modish Kids Ayana
Lovely mother	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broderie Hawa • Deco Zawiya • Deco Lavender • Modish Amna • Signature Rumi • Signature Saidia
Better half	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broderie Hawa Sulam • Modish Amna • Harmony Signature Kekwa • Classic signature Kekwa • Modish Casa
Special friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broderie Hawa • Deco lavender • Signature Rumi • Modish Amna • Harmony signature • Classic signature • Modish casa

Marketing Perspectives: The Product worth for money and customer

Like others company, SKA faced with issues and challenges in maintaining its position, especially during pandemic. For the first time opening of SK Apparel Sdn. Bhd. about 200 pieces of *telekung* has been cancelled when they question about the prices, that are too expensive. The supplier worried that no customer will buy because of the higher prices. However, the team of SKA never give up and continue their promotion and marketing via website, newspaper, magazines, and etc. Nowadays, we can see that all people noticed SKA product that make their product (*telekung*) number one in Malaysia and also expanded into Indonesian market. It means that no one has been able to deny immense success of *Telekung Siti Khadijah*, but wonder about these prayer outfits are really worth the hype or it just another fashionable trend. The SKA customers includes the Permaisuri Agong, popular Malay artist, and all the Datins and Datin Seris. Obviously, the market penetration focus on high income or who have disposable income to buy these *telekung*, meanwhile, the low-income also wants to look their best when they are about to face the Almighty Allah. This scenario is such questionable for the money spent or fashion trend. There are different range of price, cost up from RM159 to RM500 and above. The difference price based on different feel and label of the outfit prayers that bring the customers experienced the fabric and design. The customers are guided by SKA on how to choose face design in wearing the suitable outfit prayer (*telekung*). It is because the muslimah uncomfortable feeling towards facial area especially the Asian facial shape.

When the *Telekung SK* increasingly known by all the people, they are another problem arise regarding on the copyright issue. Even though the *Telekung SK* have their own quality and design, the competitors still can imitate and claimed as their own designed. That issue makes the customers confuse and start argue about the product. The situation will impact the promotion and also the growth of *Telekung SK*, when the customer feels that someone else can imitate and sell a fake one or counterfeit SKA products. SKA Sdn. Bhd. should care about that issue early to avoid any problems in future. SKA also doing a lot of efforts to ensure that customer know that *telekung SK* were made from Malaysia and not Vietnam. Since *telekung SK* have many competitors for outfit prayers, their team needs to maintain the quality and design that focus on serving the purpose with comfortable materials. Currently, SKA added another product line such as *Baju Kurung Kedah* for women and *Baju Melayu* for men to ensure the customer have another choice of product. However, the SKA needs to be careful when they add diverse product line. It will influence the perception of the customer towards SKA, as well their sustainability in the business. Most of the company offered various product which is not related with the core product will not sustain for the long term. Hence, they need to carefully implemented innovation on their product without changing core product line. This strategy will impact the customer perception about the reliability of the business. Accordingly, Mr. Munzir on behalf of Puan Padzilah mentioned that:

"It is not about marketing only, It's start from the strength of the product that valuable for the customer"

SKA needs a skill worker to maintain the quality of outfit prayers to ensure that each apparel as well as accessories are made perfectly. The SKA need to confirm that the high cost are worth for the customer to gain and to minimize as much doubts possible while performing ibadah. Who can expect that only outfit prayers can hit the market place in local and international.

Business model Innovation

The other issue highlighted is the ability to create a sustainable business model which seems crucial for any entrepreneur. Sustainable entrepreneurs such as Siti Khatijah is considered to be a key actor as they further their efforts of sustainable development through the execution of innovation in their business that create positive social and environmental impacts. They have connected various components that taken the operation together depict a ventures value creation activities. According to En Munzir one of the main areas which has become a major enabler of sustainable business is research and development (R&D). His fourth brother has been assigned to be in charge of R & D which helps to support the introduction of new products, getting more information about targeted customers and use supporting technologies in business operations. Digital technologies such as cloud computing and social media support the development of value proposition and helps to boost the stakeholder's integration. SKA believe that innovation has play an important role in creating and shaping the sustainable business model which beneficial both entrepreneurs and customers.

Digital entrepreneurship is a new business model which allows the entrepreneur to start their business online. As technologies advances, it provides a new opportunity for the entrepreneur to create through the use of technological platforms and other information communicating equipment. These include identifying the opportunities, raw material identification and penetration to the new market. Mr Munzir narrates that the SKA has actively involved in online selling through its own website and other platforms such as Lazada and Shopee.

Mr Munzir said;

"...Talk about online, we do have our own website Siti Khadijah.com and the marketplace such as Shopee and Lazada which contributes to our sales..."

SKA website is a user-friendly that allow the customers to choose and buy products directly from the website. He also mentioned that involving in online selling foster an environment for them to develop new products and services. Data and information from these platform help them to understand what customers need, improving their products and collect feedbacks from customers and it more faster than surveys and focus groups. Also, SKA has been actively involved in training that can foster the knowledge and skills that associating with the innovation and creativity. It is crucial for any entrepreneur to understand the combination of information and new ideas, a skilled entrepreneurial team and knowledge sharing attitude results in developing a successful companies. It clearly practiced by this Siti Khadijah company which started to transform the company into more innovative based company. In conclusion, we believe that a new way of doing business is derived from open innovation, customer development, agile development which helps to build products and sustain in the business. Technology advancement have created a new regimes of integration and balance between customer, supplier and entrepreneur.

Epilogue

Mr. Munzir seems very confident with his family business, which is started by his mother Puan Padzilah and looks like he can get overcome the current issues in his company. Mr. Munzir is one of the management team in SKA Sdn Bhd, who manage the operation to support her mother business growth. For him, he love the company and he believe that as an entrepreneur, the individual not only should have a passion towards brand and but an agility character which allows the individual to change his thoughts, mindset and business model according to the current situation.

Acknowledgement

The research is funded by the Global Entrepreneurship Research and Innovation Centre (GERIC), Universiti Malaysia Kelantan