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Embracing New Horizons: A Fresh Start for 2025



As we stand at the threshold of a new year, I welcome you to RMU4U Third Edition (January 2025). The start of a new year symbolizes renewal, an opportunity to recalibrate our aspirations and refresh our collective commitment to academic excellence, research endeavours, and impactful scholarly contributions.

The year 2024 saw significant progress within our academic and research community. It was a testament to the passion, perseverance, and creativity of all members of the UiTM Kedah family. As we reflect on those accomplishments, let us also look ahead with determination to elevate our efforts in research, publication, and innovation. Let 2025 be the year we chart new pathways for discovery and collaboration, bringing our work to greater heights.

This year, I encourage all of us to reaffirm our scholarly goals by setting clear, measurable targets for research outputs, impactful writings, and knowledge sharing, aiming to contribute meaningfully to society both locally and globally. Let us strengthen research collaborations by building networks across disciplines, faculties, and institutions to foster cross-disciplinary solutions to real-world challenges. At the same time, we must focus on innovation by exploring new ideas, embracing digital tools, and pioneering creative solutions that align with global trends and local needs. Above all, let us support each other by sharing expertise, mentoring the next generation, and collaborating to overcome challenges, creating a thriving research ecosystem where everyone uplifts one another.

Let this be a year where we balance ambition with reflection, passion with purpose, and innovation with impact. The Research Management Unit (RMU) remains steadfast in supporting your research journey through resources, platforms, and opportunities for growth.

As we embark on this new chapter, I wish each of you the strength to pursue your aspirations and the resilience to overcome any obstacles. Together, let us make 2025 a year of breakthroughs, achievements, and shared successes.

Here's to a productive and inspiring year ahead.

Sincerely,

Prof. Dr. Roshima Said

Acting Rector, UiTM Kedah



A Message from the Chief Editor

Dear Readers,

I am pleased to announce the return of the RMU4U Bulletin with Volume 3, showcasing a diverse array of academic inquiries and professional perspectives across multiple themes. This edition continues our commitment to facilitating intellectual exchange and presenting research that engages with contemporary issues.

In this volume, the Law & Policy theme stands out with the highest number of contributions, featuring 14 papers that explore significant aspects of governance, justice, and societal well-being. These papers highlight the role of legal frameworks and policies in addressing current challenges and contributing to societal development.

Highlighted works include topics such as "Enhancing Access to Justice: The Role, Challenges, and Future of Small Claims Courts in Malaysia" and "Environmental Public Interest Litigation: Broadening Locus Standi to Safeguard Collective Interests," which examine the evolving landscape of legal rights and public interest. Additional discussions, such as "Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in Islamic Banking and Finance in Malaysia" and "Balancing Nature and Faith: Protection and Conservation of Water Resources from the Perspective of Islamic Law," shed light on the interplay between ethics, faith, and law in addressing societal challenges.

In addition to the focus on Law & Policy, this issue covers a range of topics that contribute to understanding innovation and societal change. Articles such as "AI-Driven Recommendations in Mobile Shopping Apps, Podcasts, Animations & Gen Z: Revamping Organizational Behavior Learning, and The Role of Social Media in Shaping Islamic Entrepreneurship" explore the intersections of technology, education, and culture in today's world.

This edition represents the collaborative work of our contributors, whose insights and expertise have shaped the content of this bulletin. We encourage readers to engage with these ideas and consider their implications for further research and practical applications.

I would like to thank the authors, reviewers, and editorial team members who made RMU4U Bulletin Volume 3 possible. We hope this publication serves as a resource for understanding key issues and inspires further exploration.

Thank you for being part of this endeavor. Let us continue to learn and exchange ideas

Warm regards,

Dr Azyyati Anuar
Chief Editor, RMU4U E-Bulletin



EMPOWERING MALAYSIAN GEN Y AND GEN Z: HARNESSING DESIGN THINKING FOR FASHION RETAIL INNOVATION AND CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT

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The Malaysian fashion retail industry is undergoing a profound transformation, driven by rapid digital advancements, globalisation, and shifting consumer preferences (Tan, 2022; Lee and Teoh, 2021). Today, the industry is shaped by the demands of two key generational groups: Generation Y (Millennials) and Generation Z.



Both generations bring fresh perspectives, each with distinct expectations surrounding personalisation, cultural relevance, and a strong commitment to uphold social and environmental responsibility (Amin, 2020; Wong and Tan, 2023).

Gen Y and Gen Z seek shopping experiences that reflect their values and identities, demanding brands to demonstrate authenticity, social consciousness, and environmental stewardship (Azman and Shamsudin, 2021; Lim, 2022). Design thinking provides a strategic, human-centred approach that places consumers at the heart of retail innovations (Brown, 2009).

This methodology allows brands to innovate with purpose by understanding and addressing the genuine needs of their consumers (Brown, 2009; Liedtka, 2018). In the Malaysian context, design thinking offers fashion retailers a powerful tool to stay in sync with global trends while tailoring offerings to the unique preferences of Gen Y and Gen Z (Goh and Tan, 2022). These generations are highly digital-savvy, seeking seamless shopping experiences that blend global fashion with local relevance (Mohamed and Chen, 2020).

By embracing design thinking, brands can create meaningful interactions and build connections that resonate deeply with these generations (Kaur and Azman, 2021).

The primary goal of this paper is to explore how design thinking can be applied to the Malaysian fashion retail sector to enhance customer engagement, align with the values and expectations of Gen Y and Gen Z, and ultimately foster brand loyalty (Bakker and Govaert, 2023). Through this exploration, we aim to identify ways in which retailers can create meaningful experiences, drive innovation, and gain a competitive advantage in a rapidly evolving marketplace (Koh, 2022).

Design thinking provides a robust framework for meeting the specific expectations of Malaysian Gen Y and Gen Z, whose behaviours are shaped by distinct preferences and values (Tan, 2022). Both generations are highly digitally native, seamlessly navigating online platforms and digital communities that play an essential role in shaping their fashion choices (Singh and Lee, 2022). For Gen Y, this digital fluency often combines with established brand loyalty, while Gen Z tends to seek novel, trend-driven experiences that reflect their personal values (Lee and Tan, 2021). Gen Y and Gen Z share a strong sense of cultural pride and prioritise ethical, sustainable practices in the brands they support (Lim, 2021; Mohamed and Chen, 2020). Design thinking proves particularly impactful in this context, as it enables retailers to create user-centred experiences that align with these values (Brown, 2009). By integrating cultural relevance and eco-consciousness into product development, brands can create offerings that resonate with the identity of these generations (Amin, 2020). For instance, design thinking allows brands to design culturally inspired styles or eco-friendly collections that reflect the authentic identities of Malaysian consumers (Wong and Tan, 2023).

Social media also plays a significant role in shaping purchasing decisions (Goh and Tan, 2022). Both Gen Y and Gen Z view social media not only as a source of inspiration but also as a platform that validates their fashion choices (Azman and Shamsudin, 2021). Retailers who leverage design thinking can tap into these digital communities, gathering insights and fostering real-time feedback loops that help refine product offerings (Mohamed and Chen, 2020).

By incorporating Gen Y and Gen Z at the heart of the creative process, design thinking enables brands to create experiences that are authentic and deeply personal, thus enhancing the overall brand experience (Kaur and Azman, 2021). Through empathy-driven insights, design thinking helps retailers understand the unique characteristics of Gen Y and Gen Z in Malaysia. By recognising their pride in cultural heritage and their desire to blend traditional and modern aesthetics, brands can design products and experiences that cater to these preferences (Tan, 2022). This is particularly effective for Gen Z, who seeks brands that align with their personal identity, and Gen Y, who values cultural relevance (Singh and Lee, 2022). Through a digital-first approach, design thinking empowers retailers to create mobile-friendly websites and interactive catalogues that reflect local weather, seasonal events, and cultural symbols, personalising the shopping experience for these generations (Bakker and Govaert, 2023).

The iterative nature of design thinking allows retailers to prototype and refine products quickly, adapting to the fast-changing tastes of Gen Y and Gen Z (Liedtka, 2018). With data-driven insights, brands can develop personalised features, such as "shop the look" recommendations, augmented reality (AR) try-ons, and style suggestions based on current trends in Malaysia (Lee and Teoh, 2021). As Gen Y and Gen Z are trend-driven and constantly seeking for personalised experiences, design thinking enables brands to rapidly release limited collections, inspired by real-time feedback from social platforms like TikTok and Instagram. This agility keeps the brands relevant and are always connected to their consumers, encouraging sustained engagement and fostering brand loyalty (Lim, 2022).

Sustainability is an essential value for Malaysian Millennials and Gen Z, who increasingly support brands that adopt eco-friendly practices and are transparent about their production processes (Mohamed and Chen, 2020). Design thinking's iterative approach empowers retailers to experiment with sustainable materials such as organic cotton and recyclable packaging, aligning with the environmental values of these generations (Tan, 2022). Through design thinking, brands can build transparency into their operations, providing a clear message about sourcing, production processes, and ethical labour practices (Kaur and Azman, 2021).

This transparency fosters trust and strengthens the connection between the brands and these value-driven consumers (Wong and Tan, 2023).

Gen Y and Gen Z also value immersive shopping experiences, and design thinking encourages retailers to create interactive and experience-driven environments that blend digital and physical elements (Bakker and Govaert, 2023). Through features like VR mirrors and interactive product displays, retailers can captivate the tech-savvy nature of these generations (Lim, 2021). Design thinking also inspires brands to host pop-up events, styling workshops, and influencer-led gatherings, transforming retail spaces into vibrant community hubs where Gen Y and Gen Z can connect socially (Goh and Tan, 2022). These experiences deepen brand loyalty and offer these generations a platform for self-expression, making the brand part of their personal identity and social lives (Kaur and Azman, 2021). AR and VR technologies also play a significant role in enhancing the shopping experience (Bakker and Govaert, 2023).

Gen Y and Gen Z expect convenience, engagement, and innovation from brands. Design thinking encourages retailers to incorporate AR features, such as virtual try-ons, allowing customers to visualise how products might look before purchasing the products (Lee and Tan, 2021). This meets Gen Z's demand for interactive shopping and reassures Gen Y by providing the confidence they need in their purchasing decisions. By adopting an omnichannel approach, retailers can create a seamless brand experience that spans online and offline platforms, delivering a cohesive shopping journey that resonates with Gen Y and Gen Z (Lim, 2022).

In conclusion, design thinking offers a transformative framework for fashion retailers in Malaysia to engage Gen Y and Gen Z effectively. By placing empathy at the core of the creative process, retailers can create culturally relevant and personalised experiences that resonate deeply with these generations. Through rapid prototyping, sustainable practices, and immersive experiences, brands can stay agile and responsive to the evolving preferences of Gen Y and Gen Z, ensuring sustained engagement and fostering brand loyalty. Ultimately, design thinking empowers retailers to build authentic connections with these generations, positioning themselves for long-term success in a highly competitive marketplace (Brown, 2009; Liedtka, 2018).

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