

Malaysian model
Nia Atasha
*(first ever
Malay VS model)*
stars in Aldo x
Barbie's latest
campaign



Exploring why consumers in
Malaysia embraced Barbiecore
and why brands should
be inspired!

THE POWER OF **Barbiecore** AND WHY IT MATTERS

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Why were we inspired by Barbiecore?

From our office in Mid Valley, we couldn't help but notice the wave of pink that swept across the world this past July.

The Barbiecore trend didn't just dominate retail spaces and consumer outfits - it took over social media. As curious qualitative researchers, we were compelled to dig deeper.

This piece is not a commentary on the Barbie movie. Instead, it is an exploration of Barbiecore as a consumer phenomenon. We've peeled back the layers of this fascinating trend to understand its impact, particularly in Malaysia, for consumers and brands.

Let's unravel Barbiecore and uncover the insights that this unexpected trend has to offer.



Anjani
Sabrina
Hykarl
Haikal
Ella
Wai Chun
Ann Marie

A wave of pink has engulfed the world

Simple joy during complex times

Amidst a 'polycrisis' — the convergence of multiple crises occurring concurrently. Life after the pandemic has continued to be a challenging one.

However, the buzz of a single movie has colored the world, pink! It is a movement that is encouraging people from all walks of life to take a moment and *live like Barbie in the real world.*

The stunning revival of Barbiecore reignited sparks of joy, escapism and fantasy during challenging times.

What can brands learn from the powerful resurgence of Barbiecore?

Why consumers are connecting with Barbiecore

Escaping through Nostalgia

The allure of breaking away from current struggles, to be reminded of sweet simpler moments and to enjoy the power of fantasy.

Power in Conventional Femininity

Embracing overt feminine energy as a source of empowerment. To enjoy flaunting color, glam and explicit feminine expression.

Borderless Inclusivity

Connecting with those from all over the world, going beyond borders, age bands, genders and socio-economic boundaries.

How brands are leveraging Barbiecore

Bringing a brand to life in real world

The current wave of Barbiecore exemplifies the power of a comprehensive sensory branding strategy, encapsulating the essence of a brand across a range of diverse consumer touchpoints.

Riding on powerful brand codes

The use of Barbiecore across various categories goes beyond brand collaborations. Many brands are strategically employing the semiotics of Barbiecore.



Escaping into Nostalgia

In the face of escalating living costs and complex geopolitical challenges in the post-pandemic world, the need for respite has become ever more poignant. According to Ipsos Global Trends 2023*, 74% of Malaysians yearn for simpler times.

The lure sweet memories of the past and indulging in the escape of fantasy taps into an important need of the times.

Barbiecore evokes memories of a time when fashion, dreams, and creativity were intermingled in the imaginary worlds created around these iconic dolls.

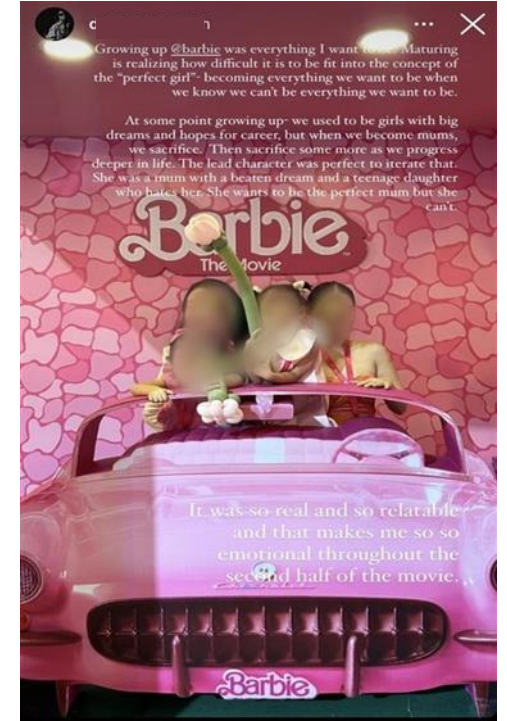
For many, Barbiecore is a form of comfort—a visual and emotional return to the past that resonates with the joy, whimsy, and oftentimes, the straightforwardness of youth.



Duck x Barbie line 2023



People started purchasing Barbies again when the wave hit Malaysia



Enjoying Barbie alongside the younger generations

Tapping into nostalgia is a potent strategy for brands aiming to engage with millennials.

Rekindling joyful recollections from simpler times not only fosters an emotional connection but also creates sharable experiences for millennials and their children, thus enhancing the impact of these interactions.

*Base: 48,579 adults aged 16–75 across 50 markets, interviewed online between 23 September and 14 November 2022
Source: Ipsos Global Trends 2023

Power in Conventional Femininity

The celebration of vibrant hues, glamour, and unapologetic feminine expression in Barbiecore embodies a striking manifestation of feminine empowerment. This is a departure from the recent trend in feminist narratives, which often aligns more closely with traditionally masculine traits such as independence, and assertiveness.

By advocating an unapologetically feminine aesthetic, it elevates inherently feminine qualities as not just ornamental, but as sources of self-affirmation.

Barbiecore's engagement with these elements not only challenges traditional norms but also provides a platform for women to enjoy their femininity while embracing it as a source of strength.

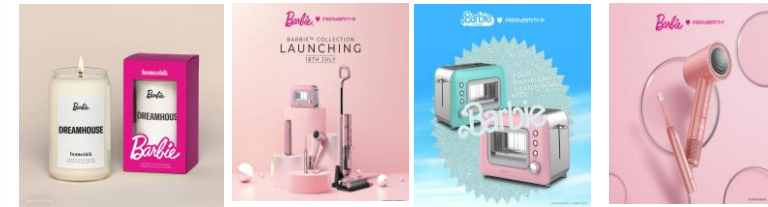


Fashion Barbie



Fashion brands such as **Fossil**, **Room808**, **Duck**, **Forever 21**, **Aldo**, **Celovis** and **Pomelo** have offered exclusive collection of fashion accessories, and clothing.

Household Barbie



Perysmith has launched a range of household appliances in Barbie theme.

Brands that choose this celebration of overt femininity can connect to those who identify with these expressions of femininity and self-affirmation.

It opens opportunities for branding, packaging, and campaigns that echo themes of glamour, and unabashed femininity. Moving away from current modern codes of feminine empowerment can provide a differentiated narrative and a fresh take on femininity.

Borderless Inclusivity

Barbiecore, with its celebration of vibrancy, glamour, and explicit feminine expression, inherently promotes the concept of "borderless inclusivity."

The universal appeal of nostalgia that it encapsulates, transcends geographic boundaries, age demographics, genders, and socio-economic classes.

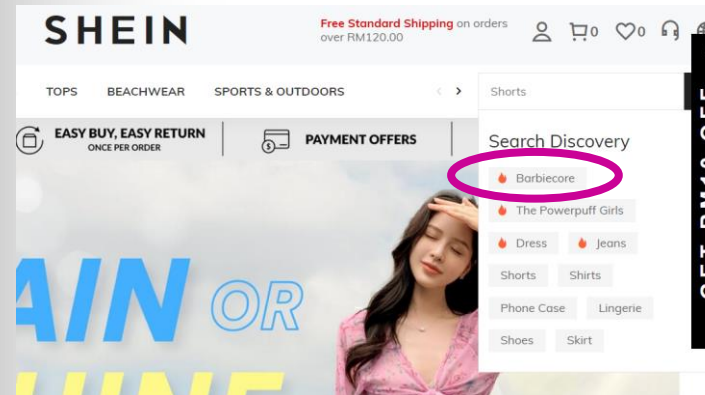
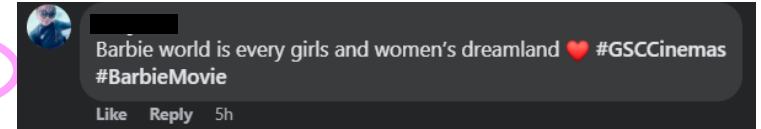
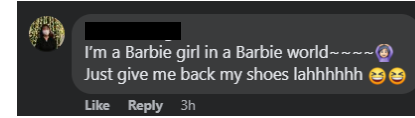
The Barbiecore aesthetic, retro and kitschy yet modern and trend-setting, establishes a shared cultural reference point that many can identify with, regardless of their background.



Everything, Everywhere; Barbie, across channels



GSC launched a giveaway activity, and it reached a total of 360 comments and shares within five hours.



'Babiecore' became the top-search word on SHEIN (Chinese online fast fashion retailer).

Buying agent to buy barbie collaboration of Forever 21 in Malaysia for their China followers.



Brands that leverage this global sentiment through Barbiecore semiotics can foster a broader, more diverse consumer base, fueling both relevance and growth in today's interconnected world.

Bringing a Brand to Life... in the Real World

The contemporary surge of Barbiecore underscores the dynamism of a holistic sensory branding, effectively distilling the essence of a brand across an array of consumer touchpoints.

This real-world infusion aids in breaking down the traditional barriers between a brand and its customers. It enables the brand's ethos to be not just visually and theoretically appreciated, but physically experienced - thereby heightening engagement.

This sensory movement from the virtual to the physical realm, often results in significantly stronger brand affinity.



F&B Barbie

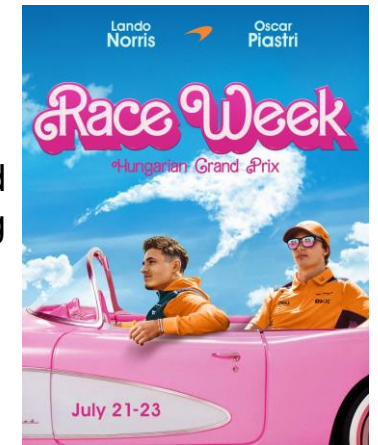


Golden Screen Cinema & Inside Scoop had offered snack and desserts catered to the Barbie-themed flavor for customers to enjoy with the Barbie experience.



Sports Barbie

Sportscar company **Mclaren** collaborated and promoted Barbie with featuring Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri



By providing an environment where consumers can experience the brand in all its dimensions, creates a foundation for lasting, emotive connections.

Riding powerful brand codes

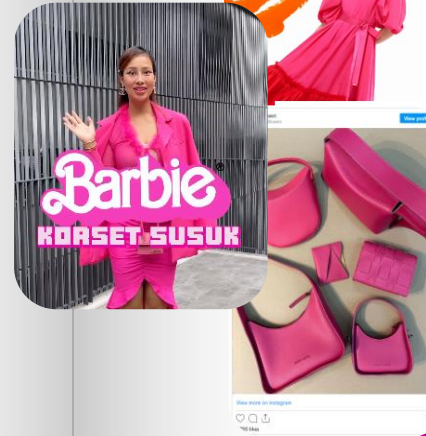
Harnessing the strength of potent brand codes, the incorporation of Barbiecore transcends categories and extends beyond official brand partnerships.

Many local and global brands are judiciously leveraging the characteristic semiotics of Barbiecore - its unique synergy of vibrancy, glamour, and girl power - to create a distinctive visual and emotional language in their branding narrative.

The power of the Barbiecore codes can be seen by how seamlessly they are translated across categories and geographies.

Nazif Nasri, Khoonhooi, Superwomen HQ

These local brands are joining the 'Barbie' color trend.



You don't need to collab with Barbie to surf the PINK wave

HSBC

Mid Valley Oh So Sweet event. This event is a collaboration with HSBC credit card. The event theme is very summery with pink flamingo decorations, which matches the vibe of Barbie.



EL&N London Cafe

The London Café had debuted in Kuala Lumpur recently and it features unique design of pink aesthetic flowers and furniture. Good timing to open the café during the Barbie wave which makes consumers even more excited to try.



Chanel

The new Chanel Codes Couleur, the color "Diva" was displayed at the front of the store. The color may refer as the 'Barbie' collection, show casting the brand's connection to the upcoming 'Barbie' movie feel even more fitting.



What can we take away from the Barbiecore trend?

1

Amid complex times, people need an **escape into positivity**; **Barbiecore, with its nostalgic allure and escapism, offered a sweet respite** - a pair of rose-tinted glasses that reflected optimism and joy; positivizing life!

2

In today's interconnected world, powerful brands are touchpoints that can truly provide a universal narrative to **connect people from across geographies, age groups and genders.**

3

Brands should not hesitate to embrace the full spectrum of femininity, including aspects stereotypically labeled as 'girly'. Women globally are seeking to revel in every dimension of their femininity and celebrate its empowering charm.



"My whole philosophy of Barbie was that through the doll, a little girl could be anything she wanted to be.

Barbie always represented the fact that a woman has choices."

- Ruth Handler, Inventor of Barbie

THANK

YOU

LET'S TALK!

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