

Conference Paper

Instagram Marketing Techniques for Online Store: A Descriptive Study

Pijar Suciati

Communication Studies Program, Vocational Education Program, Universitas Indonesia, Depok, West Java, Indonesia

Abstract

Social media has become the newest form of marketing for companies, organizations, individuals, and also for small business and entrepreneurs. These small stores are growing rapidly in Indonesia; they're usually called—'Usaha Kecil dan Menengah' (UKM) or in English 'Small and Medium Enterprises' (SMEs). Most of them create innovative and creative products or services such as fashion using traditional Indonesian fabrics, creative and delicious instant foods, drawing services for art and logos, etc. Many of these entrepreneurs choose Instagram to promote their product and services. Instagram is one of the most popular social media for photo sharing in Indonesia. It gets more attention because it is indeed a shopaholic photo sharing, not social networking such as Facebook or micro-blogs like Twitter. As we know, people like visual more than text. For the shopaholics, Instagram feeds simple forms of collections of photographs that make Indonesian people like Instagram as a place to shop. There are specific marketing techniques to practice on Instagram, such as posts showing celebrity endorsements, customers wearing a company's product, hosting Instagram contests where a consumer will post photos for a chance to win a giveaway, etc. The aim of this study is to collect and describe the marketing techniques used by Indonesian online store owners to promote their store, earn more followers, and get good number of transactions.

Keywords: social media, Instagram, marketing, promotions, online stores, entrepreneur, small and medium enterprises, consumer behaviour

Corresponding Author:

Pijar Suciati

suciati.pijar@ui.ac.id

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1. Introduction

Nowadays, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) have become trend and supported Indonesian's economy. As a country with myriad users of social media, SMEs have opportunity for socializing and promoting its products using social media. They are used to expand the marketing of SMEs because of the large number of users it has. Social media also provide a clear market for selling and increase trust in new form of

word of mouth marketing. The benefit of word of mouth marketing is enhancing social interactions and helps decision-making in the transaction.

Instagram is one of social media that is commonly used for shopping. It is actually designed as photo and video sharing app, but somehow a marketplace is formed within Instagram. Accounts positioned as online stores are emerging and currently there are plenty of it. Photos or videos tagged with 'Jualan', a hashtag used to identify for sale product photos, reached more than 10 millions photos or videos by August 2014. This is depicting how tremendous the Instagram marketplace is. This study draws upon the phenomena happened in Instagram, as it becomes enormous online marketplace for fashion products in Indonesia [3].



Figure 1: Activities survey on Instagram. Source: <http://jakpat.net/>

According the aforementioned survey, 53% of activities in Instagram is exploring the Online Shop. It is a great opportunity for the SMEs Online shop to use Instagram for marketing and promotion purposes. Approximately 40 million photos are posted on Instagram each day. It also has a lot of competition when it comes to promoting businesses. In order to make good promotions on Instagram, you need serious effort in taking picture and strategic content.

Instagram, like most social networking sites, was not designed for businesses, but just like others, it has seen its fair share of business potential [7]. It is also the fastest growing social network platform.

We need to focus especially on the tools feature of Instagram through reciprocal likes, hashtags (#) and a lot of other techniques you will be able to find to take care of your account, your images and your followers, and how to run a business by sharing your images on this portal.

Hashtags or tags are keywords or terms assigned to a piece of information. This type of metadata helps describe an item and allows it to be found again by browsing or searching. Tags are chosen informally and personally by the item’s creator or by its viewer, depending on the system. Hashtags are also used for forming groups, such as #engagebookclub, or for expressing a state of mind, thought, or observation, such as “I am so tired after work, what to do? #timetorelax.” [6].

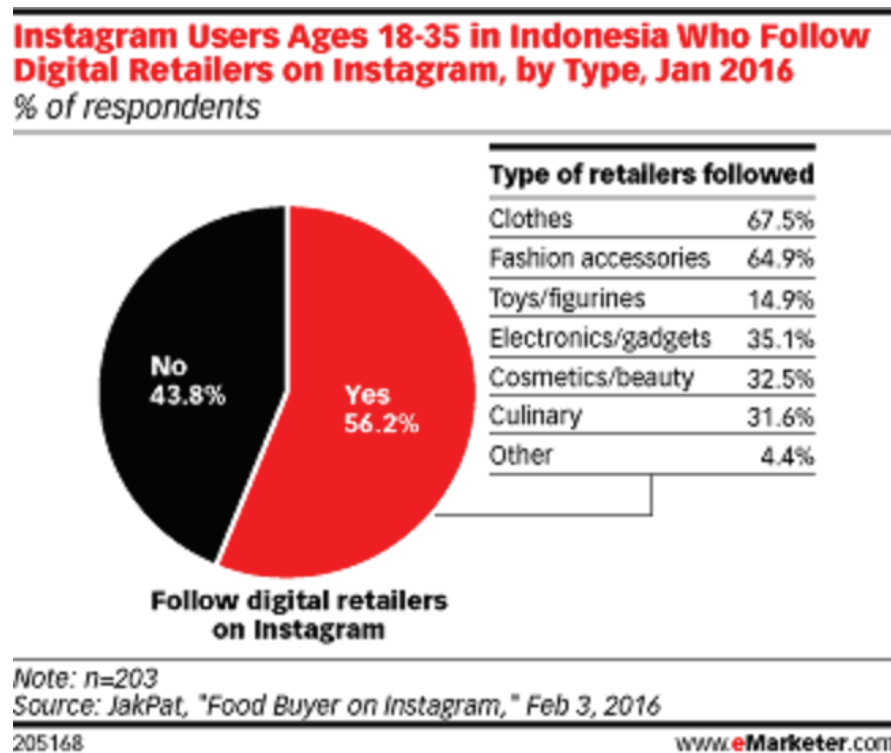


Figure 2: Survey on Instagram users in Indonesia who follow digital retailers.

These research shows us that youngsters are tending to follow retailers or online stores in Instagram. Most of their need is about lifestyle (clothes, fashion, and gadgets).

Many literatures born with the techniques, tips, and tricks how to sell and promote the online stores via Instagram. As an example, there are Instagram marketing techniques such as, posts showing celebrity endorsements, customers wearing a company’s product, hosting Instagram contests where a consumer will post photos for a chance to win a giveaway, etc. Indonesian online stores in Instagram have their own unique techniques to do marketing and gaining followers.

Indonesia, with large amount of user and rapid use of the app has become the great market for business, especially for SMEs online stores. Instagram provides everything to grab customers on the world’s most popular photo-sharing site. Once an image is shared, several social media standard behaviours can be used to engage with the image [9].



Figure 3: Survey on Instagram users in Indonesia. Source: <http://image.slidesharecdn.com/socialmediadeck-151111085317-lva1-app689195social-media-in-indonesia-8-638.jpg?cb=1447232083>.

The objective of this study is to know and collect as many marketing techniques used by Indonesian SMEs online store owners to promote their store, earn more followers, and get many transactions. Hopefully, the results can be shared and used to help another SMEs to be success in doing their online business.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Social media

Social media is the collective of online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. Websites and applications dedicated to forums, microblogging, social networking, social book-marking, social curation, and wikis are among the different types of social media (<http://whatis.techtarget.com>). Another definition, social media is forms of electronic communication (as Web sites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content such as videos (Miriam Webster Dictionary).

Social media could reach high level of efficiency in relatively low cost. This is what makes social media suitable for wide range of firms. But the firms face challenge where it has to find a way to make the use of social media profitable. Understanding

what social media is and what is it not can help firms to deal with the challenge. Kaplan and Heinlein (2010) classified social media by social presence/media richness and self-presentation/self-disclosure. It contains six types of social media. Which are collaborative project, blog, content communities, social networking site, virtual game worlds, and virtual social worlds.

At this present time, social media can make a big impact to companies in gaining great benefits. Derived from Bashar et al. (2012), Social Media Marketing is about understanding how technology is making it easier for people to connect socially with their social networks and how your business can profit from that understanding. From their findings we can know that social media marketing can be effective if only the companies present on the site to provide timely information needed by consumers.

On social media one can share sophisticated creations at no cost and thereby reach millions of users instantly [1]. Companies that desire to market themselves visually are able to do this through surroundings and illustrations via Instagram. Additionally, it is an effective and widely used tool for the purpose of communicating a brand [11]. For many people social media is a part of the everyday life and the number of users is constantly increasing [11], also there are various approaches to communicate a brand through social media as the world has become more and more connected. The American Marketing Association (AMA) (marketingdictionary.org, 2014) describes a brand as one or a combination of these attributes; design, symbol, sign, term or name, in order to identify and differentiate a product or service from its competitors [4].

There is a plethora of trendy business press but limited academic research in the area of social media that could provide marketing managers with direction as to how best to integrate this media into their Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) [8].

Social media have been applauded for revolutionising life for the consumer [5, 8], having dramatic influences on every stage of the consumer decision-making process including information acquisition, brand awareness, purchase behaviour, and post-purchase communication and evaluation, as well as influencing general opinions and attitude formation [8]. In spite of this, there is no empirical research to date which explores the relationships between social media participation and engagement and these influences on behavioural outcomes (Bond, 2010).

2.2. Instagram

According to Dan Frommer in Business Insider (2010), Instagram is an online photo-sharing, video-sharing and social networking service that enables its users to take

pictures and videos, apply digital filters to them, and share them on a variety of social networking services, such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and Flickr. The original authors of Instagram are Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger and release on October 6, 2010. Now Instagram is developed by Facebook, inc. Facebook acquired the service in April 2012 for approximately US\$1 billion in cash and stock.

To interact with other people, you can double tap an Instagram post to 'like it' or you can comment on the post by tapping on the comment button. To find other accounts to follow, you can press the Search tab. You can also find people by looking through suggested photos or a list of people. As the application continued to develop, more features were added. On January 2011, Instagram added the use of hashtags to help users discover both photographs and each other. A hashtag can be defined as a word or phrase preceded by a hash or pound sign (#) and used to identify messages on a specific topic. On December 2013, Instagram added Direct. This feature allowed users to send photos to specific people directly from the application as a messaging service. Through the last five years, Instagram has become a place where people can visually share and interact with each other in a new way [13].

Instagram has only been around for less than five years but the number of users grew immensely. Two months after the initial launch of the application, there were already 1 million registered users. By September of 2011, there were 10 million registered users. Only seven months later, the number of registered users tripled to 30 million (Digital Buzz, 2012). Facebook acquired Instagram in April 2012 for \$1 billion. Instagram continued to grow by 23% while Facebook only grew by 3% (Digital Trends, 2013). In December 2014, Instagram co-founder Kevin Systrom announced that Instagram has 300 million users accessing the site per month. When looking at the demographics of Instagram users, over 90% of the users are under the age of 35. Business Insider states that Instagram is largely made up of urban, youthful demographics with a significant skew toward women. Specifically, 68% of the users are female and 32% are male. With the heavy use of Instagram, companies have found this to be new niche for marketing [13].

Why are so many marketers excited about Instagram? It's the first significant social network built specifically to work on a mobile device. It's a pioneer in that regard. Whereas Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest were born on the web and adapted to mobile devices, Instagram is a mobile native. Surprisingly, Twitter didn't have a smartphone app until four years after it was founded. While Instagram, recently added a website version of the app for user profiles, the functionality all resides on mobile devices. The website version allows for simple viewing of the content and not much more. [9].

3. Methodology

This study is a study with positivist paradigm. Instagram promotional techniques are an objective reality that is outside the researcher, so she had to make the distance as far as with the object of research. Thus, the way that researcher use is through a polling method which is then analysed quantitatively. In this research, positivist researchers using quantitative data as well as the use of experiments, surveys and statistics. Positivist researchers looking for precise measurements and objective research and testing hypotheses carefully by analysing the numbers of measurements [10].

Polling used in this study is using one question only, which can earn rich, clear, and descriptive answer. Polling involves gathering information by asking people to report their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours (<http://www.encyclopedia.com>). Elements of scientific polling are:

1. Scientific polls have several major characteristics that distinguish them from non-scientific surveys.
2. Scientific polls use survey questions that are carefully constructed, clear and non-confusing, and free of biased or 'leading' language.
3. Element of scientific polling is accurate and thorough reporting of results.

An additional limitation of polling is that some respondents face questions they prefer not to answer, resulting in self-censorship, which can take several forms. Someone contacted by a pollster may refuse to answer some questions, refuse the entire survey, or give insincere answers. Insincere responses are especially likely on sensitive subjects, such as past drug use, sexual activity, or racial attitudes, where some respondents answer falsely to give more 'socially desirable' responses.

In this research, researcher asks one question to 32 well-established Indonesian Instagram online store owners (followers above 10,000). The question is: "What do you do to promote your Instagram store? (You may select more than one answer, and if your way do not exist among the options available, please write it in the 'Others')," this question is followed by 30 selectable answers and one open answer (semi opened question). This type of question combines the control of the closed and semi-closed questions with the fruitfulness of the open question (<http://www.law.cmu.ac.th/law2011/journal>)

The researcher use online polling, provide by the google form: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfZd9lSlzoBuBc-FD5TB1P1yTNWYrzt5N6Y9kyUtbtbet7sJw/vi ewform>

4. Results

Researcher tried to gather many Instagram marketing techniques from many sources by interview, literature study, online sources study, etc. These techniques are believed and proved can make the store famous, gain many followers and have more transaction in a quite easy way and low cost. Table 1 shows the results. These techniques are becoming the 30 answer options of the polling.

The objective is to explore more about which technique is more popular than the others. The open question is to get other techniques among the Indonesian Instagram store owners. Hopefully, the finding from the open question has uniqueness, because it hasn't been explored and stated in the literature about Instagram marketing technique before.

4.1. Polling results

These are the results of the polling, we can see that there are preferable and popular techniques among the Indonesian Instagram store owners.

Can be seen from the results of the poll, Instagram marketing techniques that get the most votes was "Integrate promotion posts with other social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Flickr, Swarm)" is to obtain a poll 73.3% or 22 out of 32 Instagram online shop owners use this technique to promote.

While in the second poll results, 66.7% or 20 out of 32 Instagram online shop owners use it for promotion, they are:

1. Using 'trending hashtags' on the promotion post
2. Not locking your account
3. The quick response in order chat or complain.

The third poll results is 63.3% or 19 out of 32 IG online shop owners use it for promotion, they are:

1. Post consistently (once a day, two times a day, every lunch hour, etc.)
2. Provide complete contact information and so that customers can order with ease

From the data and the poll results, it can be concluded that marketing techniques in Instagram most popularly used by the owners of SMEs is a voice equal to or more than

TABLE 1: Instagram promotion techniques.

1. Using 'trending hashtags' on the promotion post	16. Deleting post of a product if the product is already sold out
2. Tagging people in each post sale	17. Do not overwhelm customers and followers with so many postings that does not mean a lot
3. Like & Comment on followers feed, selebgram, and those who are considered to be essential	18. Doing endorsement to selebgram (someone with many followers)
4. Include locations on the promotion post (geo-tagging), so it can be easy to find.	19. Integrate Instagram post with e-commerce website (if any)
5. Promoting Instagram address in various media (Facebook, Twitter, LINE, WhatsApp, BBM, etc.)	20. Build a relationship with followers and selebgram, diligently commented, make conversation, and loves. Not by doing SPAM promotion in their account.
6. Create a unique hashtag	21. C7Make a sales promotion with terms and conditions apply post (such as a discount is given if you had me-first love, first follow, first message, etc.)
7. Make a contest or competition on Instagram with your product as the gift	22. Perform 'Paid Promote' in the accounts with many followers (Dagelan)
8. Post the photos of your products that have been worn/used by the customer (testimonial)	23. Using the SFS (Shoutout For Shoutout)
9. Displays 'behind the scenes' making of your product	24. Following customer accounts that follow online store account similar to your store
10. Displays video or motion pictures of your product	25. Not locking your account
11. Post consistently (once a day, two times a day, every lunch hour, etc.)	26. Provide bonuses, rebates, or gifts to loyal customers
12. Interact with followers (reply comments, love their post, conversing, etc.)	27. Include prices of products in each post
13. Posting something favoured by followers (your followers are food lovers, because the product you are selling is a food product, it can once in a while you post the tips recommended cooking or restaurant)	28. Provide complete contact information and so that customers can order with ease
14. Insert the right keywords in your account name so easily found by potential customers (Beautiful Hijab, Frozen Food Delicious, etc.)	29. The quick response in order chat or complain.
15. Do not use a 'photo filter' for posting the products	30. Integrate promotion posts with other social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Flickr, Swarm)

50% based on polling results from this study. Such techniques sequence according to the poll of the most are:

1. Integrate promotion posts with other social media (Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Flickr, Swarm)
2. Using 'trending hashtags' on the promotion post
3. Not locking your account
4. The quick response in order chat or complain.
5. Post consistently (once a day, two times a day, every lunch hour, etc.)

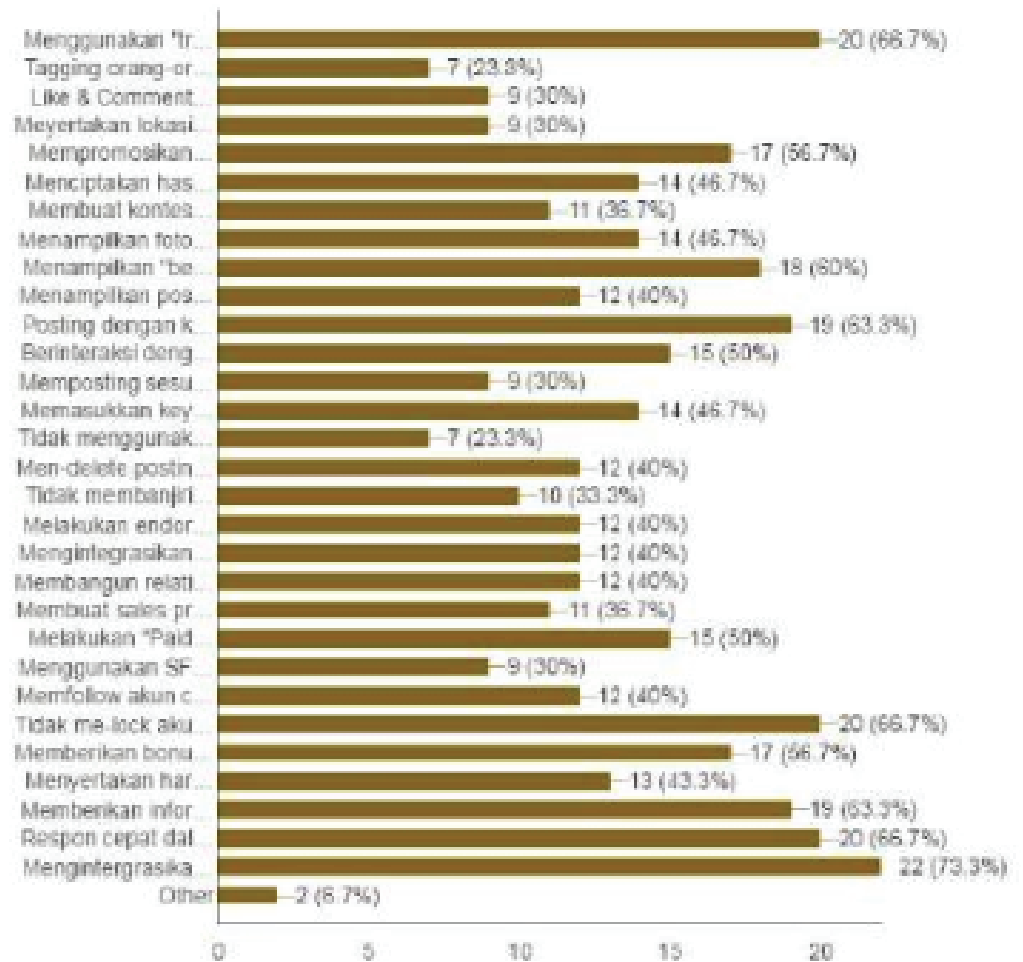


Figure 4: Polling results.

6. Provide complete contact information and so that customers can order with ease
7. Displays 'behind the scenes' making of your product
8. Provide bonuses, rebates, or gifts to loyal customers
9. Promoting Instagram address in various media (Facebook, Twitter, LINE, WhatsApp, BBM, etc.)
10. Perform 'Paid Promote' in the accounts with many followers.

This polling results suggest these 10 best Instagram marketing techniques to be used by the SMEs online stores to promote their product and services.

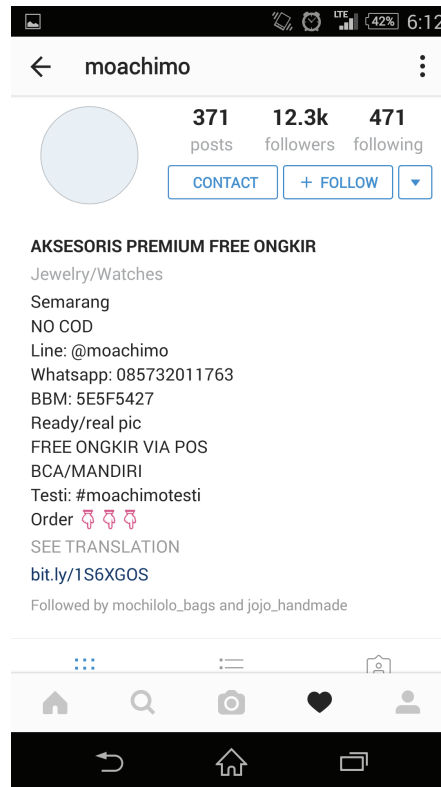


Figure 5: An online shop that followed the technique.

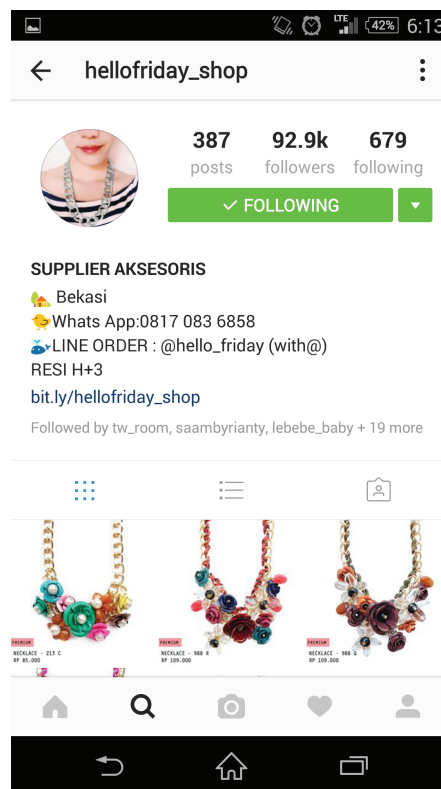


Figure 6: An online shop that has similar product as 'Moachimo'.

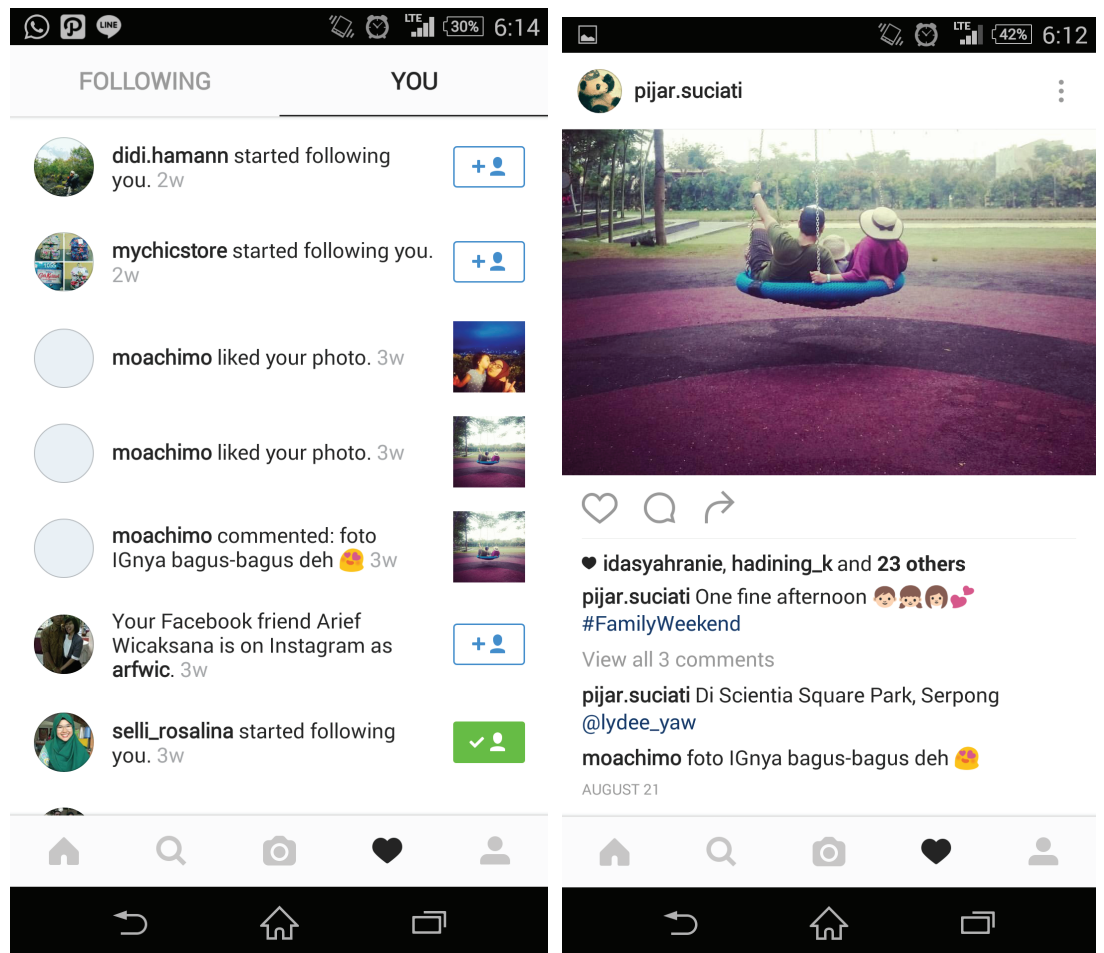


Figure 7: Likes and comments activities.

4.2. Other results

Aside from the 30 options provided by the researchers, there are two online store owners who enter answers in the 'Others'. It turns out that although the two answers are answered in different ways, but it has the same purpose. The two owners of the shop, take steps long enough to complete the marketing technique in Instagram.

Equipped with activity on Instagram picture example, the steps are:

1. The shop owners do research every day in Instagram, pay attention to explore tab and examining other similar online shops.
2. And then, they see the followers in similar online shops account as a reference.
3. They can also follow the online shop accounts that have similar product or services.

4. Next, they follow as many consumer accounts that also follow the similar online shops account.
5. Further activity is liking the posts from the consumer account or leave a comment on the post.
6. The activities such as follows, likes and comments will go notified to the consumer.

Apparently, the effects resulting from these techniques is quite interesting and significant. If the technique happened to me as a consumer, minimum action is clicking on the account. If I find that the product in the online store interesting and happen to want or need it, maybe I will buy something from the store. If I do not want to buy, but the items in the store is good, then I will follow that account to be seen again when I needed it.

Consumer behavioural effects of that marketing activities cannot be generalized. Need further research to examine the behaviour of consumers as Instagram user that being targeted by promotion of the online store. However, this behaviour is match with the theory that has been delivered at the beginning. The theory by Mangold and Faulds state that social media promotion having dramatic influences on every stage of the consumer decision-making process including information acquisition, brand awareness, purchase behaviour, and post-purchase communication and evaluation, as well as the Influencing general opinions and attitude formation

Talking about Instagram, there will be always another new innovations and developments to provide better features for its users. It is nearly impossible to make complete guidance how to use Instagram for marketing due to its rapid feature development. It need sustain further research following its sustain feature development.

According to this poll results, we know that there are several popular Instagram marketing techniques that successfully promote the SMEs online shop. They believed and proved that these techniques can increase their followers and online orders. So, by revealing this, researcher hopes that the result of this research will be useful for other SMEs and all communication practitioners to develop their promotion and marketing content through Instagram.

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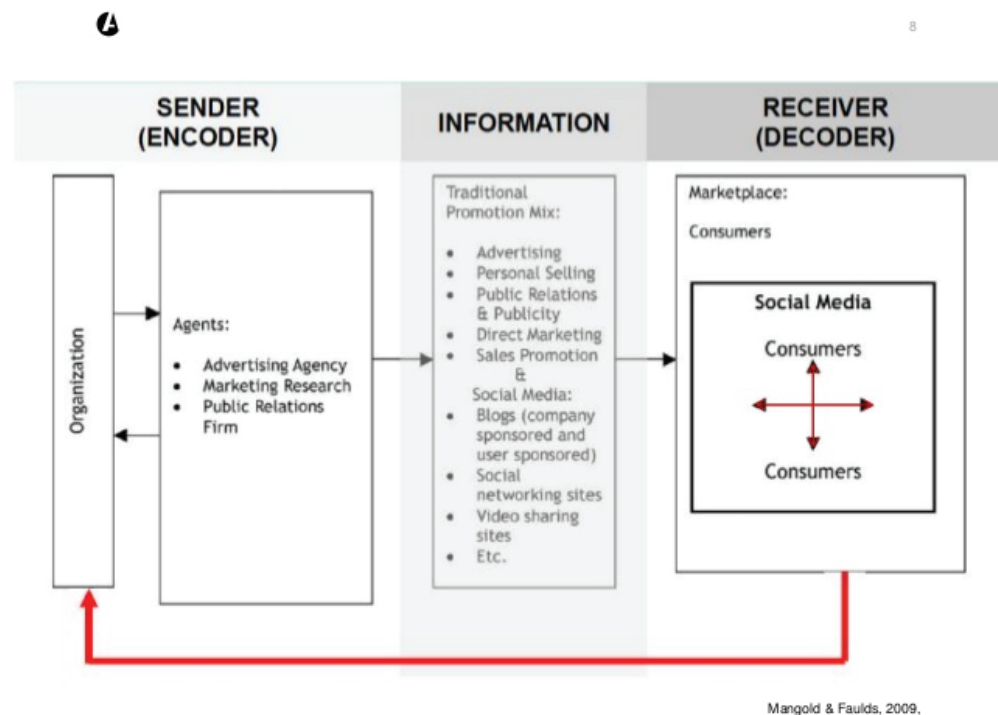


Figure 8: Theoretical framework of Mangolds and Faulds' consumer behaviour.

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