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INFLUENCER DYNAMICS IN THE DIGITAL CULINARY LANDSCAPE: UNVEILING THE IMPACT AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES OF @KULINERSBY ON INSTAGRAM

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Article Information

Abstract

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Keywords: Content Marketing, Key opinion leader, Social Media, Influencer The study aims to analyze social media, which has emerged as a medium influencing perceptions and behaviors. In the dynamic landscape of digital media, social platforms have fundamentally reshaped how individuals navigate and express their identities, ushering in a new era of online influence. At the forefront of this transformative wave are social media influencers, whose ability to craft compelling personas within specific niches has garnered them significant sway over audience perceptions and behaviors. This qualitative study delves deep into the intricate methods employed by influencers to shape their online presence, with a particular focus on Instagram and the renowned account @kulinersby. Through meticulous observation and content analysis, this research unveils the nuanced strategies utilized by influencers, including the strategic deployment of authentic storytelling, visually captivating content, and interactive engagement tactics. By shedding light on these key findings, this study not only offers valuable insights into the influential role of influencers but also provides a deeper understanding of the evolving dynamics between influencers and their audiences in the digital age.

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INTRODUCTION

The transformative trajectory of social media platforms, with a specific focus on Instagram, has engendered a paradigm wherein individuals assume roles as micro-celebrities or influencers, wielding considerable sway over their followers. As users engage in visually-driven narratives, the impact of influencers transcends mere content consumption, exerting influence over users' attitudes, behaviors, and intentions. A study conducted by Pan et al. (2022) on female TikTok users in China sheds illuminating insights into the intricate nexus between influencer viewership and self-objectification, thereby influencing the inclination to modify one's physical appearance. The intersection of social media consumption and personal identity the underscores nuanced psychological ramifications of influencer content, necessitating a profound comprehension of its potential effects on user well-being.

Moreover, this contextual milieu assumes heightened significance, given Instagram's pivotal role as a stage for influencer dynamics. Within this digital landscape, influencers transcend their role as mere purveyors of visual trends, also assuming the mantle of narrative architects who motivate and shape their followers' perceptions. A nuanced comprehension of these complex interactions becomes imperative for discerning the social and psychological consequences of sustained exposure to influencer content on this platform.

Research by Rayasam and Khattri (2022) on influencer endorsements introduces additional complexity to interpreting consumer behavior in the epoch of social media. Trust, expertise, brand congruence, and transparency in sponsor disclosure emerge as pivotal determinants shaping audience attitudes towards endorsed brands. This study underscores the importance of transparency and authenticity within the context of Instagram's influencer marketing landscape. Brands and

influencers alike must navigate collaborations judiciously to align with the influencer's persona and values, fostering genuine connections with their audience.

Furthermore, the research conducted by Sun et al. (2021) provides nuanced insights into the gender-specific impacts on follower attitudes from influencer comportment. arising Acknowledging the heightened susceptibility of female followers to the direct influence of their influencers' attitudes, marketers are compelled to tailor their strategies to resonate with the diverse preferences of their target demographics. In environments such as Instagram, where visual narratives aesthetics and intertwine, understanding these gender-specific dynamics is paramount in crafting effective and resonant content.

It is imperative to underscore that, within the realm of influencer marketing, an awareness of gender preferences is not merely an ethical imperative but also a pivotal determinant of campaign success. Building upon the findings of Sun et al. (2021), marketers are poised to leverage insights into the more direct influence on female followers, thereby formulating strategies that meticulously consider the specific values and needs of this target segment. The deliberate utilization of visually sensitive gender aesthetics and the crafting of narratives aligned with female perspectives fortify engagement and connection with female audiences. Thus, influencer marketing strategies that manifest a profound comprehension of gender-specific dynamics on Instagram can potentially yield a more substantial and sustainable impact.

Content marketing strategies on social media proactively center around creating captivating content strategically tailored to align with audience interests. In consonance with Yumna's (2022) perspective, this theoretical framework assumes a central role in content creation within social media, with its primary objective being the captivation and motivation of audiences towards actionable engagement. In this context, the influence of social media influencers, as posited by Audrezet et al. (2018), assumes a significant role. Acknowledged as domain experts, influencers possess the acumen to shape the attitudes and behaviors of their followers. Among the accounts emerging as vanguards in shaping social interactions and influence on social media is Kulinersby, a culinary-centric account on Instagram.

Within the social media landscape, Kulinersby has effectively garnered the attention of 615 thousand active followers, positioning itself as a fount of culinary inspiration, particularly within the environs of Surabaya. However, this phenomenon signifies that, within the boundless expanse of the internet, accounts such as

Kulinersby wield the potential for a broader global impact, reaching diverse regions worldwide. The presence and interactions of this account on the Instagram platform facilitate the creation of a dynamic social network, thereby reinforcing the pivotal role of the influencer in shaping culinary preferences and culture.

This article seeks to derive its objectives from a meticulous inquiry into the demographics of Kulinersby's Instagram followers and the content strategies strategically employed to captivate the audience's attention. Drawing upon antecedent findings, this study systematically dissects the intricate interplay between the content disseminated by Kulinersby and the ensuing responses from its followers. The outcomes of this research serve as a foundational underpinning for more expansive discussions within this article, thereby affording a more nuanced comprehension of the culinary community dynamics associated with Kulinersby and the evolution of the relationship between influencer and audience within the contextual milieu of social media.

Furthermore, the purview of this article extends to furnish in-depth insights into how Kulinersby has adeptly forged a diverse and actively engaged community within the digital epoch of culinary pursuits. Encompassing extant theoretical frameworks, this research explores how Kulinersby nurtures relationships with its followers and architects' content that engenders active engagement. Consequently, this article not only engenders the establishment of a robust knowledge foundation but also furnishes a substantive contribution towards comprehending the role of influencers and the construction of communities within the contemporary social media ecosystem.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the ever-evolving digital landscape, the emergence of social media platforms has fundamentally altered how individuals navigate, communicate, and construct their identities. At the forefront of this digital revolution are social media influencers, individuals who have risen to prominence by cultivating engaging personas and narratives within specific niches. These influencers, are perceived as authorities in various domains such as fashion, lifestyle, photography, travel, and more, leveraging their online presence to craft compelling stories that resonate with their audiences (Audrezet, De Kerviler, & Moulard, 2018).

Freberg, Graham, McGaughey, and Freberg (2011) characterize influencers as independent third-party advocates capable of shaping audience attitudes and behaviors through various digital mediums, including blogs, tweets, and other social media channels. By curating

captivating visuals, personal anecdotes, and lifestyle content, influencers construct robust online identities that project authenticity and relatability to their followers (De Veirman et al., 2019; Ki et al., 2020; Lou & Yuan, 2019). This strategic narrative construction enables influencers to forge deep connections with their audience, fostering a sense of intimacy and trust that transcends the digital realm (Audrezet et al., 2018; Childers et al., 2019; Khamis et al., 2016).

Aral (2011) posits that influencers often serve as early adopters, introducing novel products and services related to their interests before they gain mainstream traction. This preemptive exposure affords influencers unique insights into the compatibility of these offerings with their followers' lifestyles, allowing them to provide authentic product reviews recommendations, and do-it-yourself (DIY) tutorials (Ki et al., 2020; Ladhari et al., 2020). Influencers seamlessly integrate promotional content into their narratives through strategic collaborations with commercial entities, creating synergistic partnerships that resonate with their audience (Kim & Kim, 2020).

Follow as dated by Aggarwal & Kumaraguru (2014) play a pivotal role in amplifying an influencer's message and legitimizing their status within the digital ecosystem. These active subscribers actively engage with and advocate for influencers, fostering a sense of community and belonging within their online spheres (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). The interactions between influencers and followers elicit various psychological responses, including parasocial relationships, a sense of ownership, and emotional attachment, underscoring influencers' profound impact on their audience (De Veirman et al., 2019).

Drawing from social capital theory, followers on social media serve as valuable assets whose support can significantly influence outcomes through network effects (Lin et al., 2001). Followers' perceptions of an influencer's popularity, credibility, and authenticity shape the extent of their influence, highlighting the importance of cultivating genuine connections and rapport with one's audience (Kapitan & Silvera, 2016; Sokolova & Kefia, 2019). This reciprocal relationship between influencers and followers underscores the symbiotic nature of their dynamic, wherein influencers provide material or psychological resources to help followers achieve their goals (Kelman, 1974, 2006).

In addition to their roles as content creators and trendsetters, influencers also serve as Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) within their respective niches, exerting significant influence over their followers' attitudes, behaviors, and decision-making processes (Rogers & Cartano, 1962).

Their ability to shape audience perceptions and preferences makes them instrumental in creating opinion leadership within digital platforms like Instagram, influencing consumer behavior and brand perception (Casaló et al., 2020).

Influencers employ various content strategies rooted in established theoretical frameworks to engage their audience and drive action. The AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) model, developed by Kotler & Keller (2012), guides marketers in crafting content that captures audience attention, arouses interest, stimulates desire, and prompts action (Yumna, 2022). Moreover, understanding new media and interpersonal communication theories informs influencers' content creation strategies, enabling them to create tailored narratives that resonate with their audience's needs and preferences (Ricko & Junaidi, 2019).

Social media influencers play a multifaceted role in shaping digital culture, influencing consumer behavior, and fostering online communities. By leveraging their authenticity, creativity, and strategic partnerships, influencers wield considerable influence over their followers, driving engagement and facilitating brand connections within the digital landscape.

METHOD

A meticulous research methodology was crafted to unravel the intricate dynamics between influencers and their audiences on Instagram. Embracing a descriptive research approach with a quantitative lens, the study embarked on a journey to illuminate the contemporary landscape of social media influencer dynamics.

As illuminated by Sudjana and Ibrahim (2004), descriptive research emerged as the method of choice to paint a vivid picture of the phenomena, events, and occurrences unfolding in the realm of Instagram influencer interactions. This approach was fitting for capturing the essence of the present moment, providing a panoramic view of the evolving relationship dynamics between influencers and their followers.

Augmenting this methodological foundation was the quantitative approach, as advocated by Arikunto (2013), which accentuated the significance of numerical data in decoding the intricacies of influencer-audience interactions. By embracing this approach, the study set out on a quest to collect, interpret, and present numerical data meticulously, thereby enriching the depth and breadth of its analysis.

At the heart of this research endeavor lay a commitment to meticulous data collection and analysis. Drawing upon a multifaceted strategy, data was garnered through a blend of surveys and analytics tools embedded within the Instagram

platform. Surveys were disseminated among Kulinersby's followers, inviting them to share insights into their demographics, preferences, and behavioral patterns. Concurrently, analytics tools provided by Instagram served as a treasure trove of quantitative data, offering invaluable insights into follower demographics, engagement metrics, and content performance.

With data in hand, the study ventured into rigorous analysis guided by descriptive statistics and correlation analysis principles. The data was meticulously summarized and interpreted descriptive through including statistics, frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, finally, correlation analysis provided a deeper understanding of the intricate relationships between various variables, shedding light on underlying patterns and trends within the dataset.

Throughout the research journey, ethical considerations remained paramount. Upholding the principles of integrity and respect, the study ensured that the rights and privacy of participants were safeguarded at every turn. Informed consent was diligently sought prior to data collection, and measures were implemented to preserve the confidentiality and anonymity of respondents. Moreover, adherence to Instagram's terms of service and data usage policies underscored the study's commitment to ethical data collection and analysis standards.

In conclusion, the fusion of descriptive research with a quantitative approach provided a robust framework for delving into the complexities of Instagram influencer dynamics. Through meticulous data collection, analysis, and ethical considerations, the study endeavored to illuminate the evolving landscape of influencer-audience interactions, offering valuable insights that contribute to our understanding of this dynamic and ever-evolving digital ecosystem.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this section, we delve into the pertinent findings that shed light on our research questions, providing fresh insights into the characteristics of followers and the content preferences they desire on the Instagram account Kulinersby. Furthermore, we delve into the content strategies implemented by this account, offering a nuanced understanding of the interaction between Kulinersby's content and the responses its followers elicit. These analyses unveil the underlying dynamics of the relationship between influencers and audiences within social media.

In the context of its extensive reach, Kulinersby has amassed a significant following of 615 thousand on Instagram. Between January 5th and February 3rd, Kulinersby reached 7,208,838 individuals, with 276 thousand followers of the account, while the remainder, approximately 6.9

million individuals, comprised non-following audience members (Pan et al., 2022). These reach metrics signify the substantial influence wielded by this account across various regions, with intriguing breakdowns.



Figure 1. Accounts reached

A notable 31.1% of the total reach was in Surabaya Raya, indicating Kulinersby's strong influence and high follower loyalty in the region. Additionally, 10.2% of the total reach originated from Jakarta, signifying a sizable follower base in the capital city. This phenomenon illustrates the allure of Kulinersby not only at the local level but also on a national scale. The remaining reach, which constitutes the majority of the total, emanated from other regions in Indonesia.

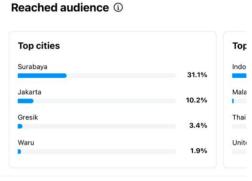


Figure 2. Region reached

Impressions displayed on the Kulinersby Instagram account depict intriguing trends in the behavior of both followers and non-followers toward the types of content produced. With a total of 7.2 million impressions, reel content exhibits significant appeal to the audience, whether they are existing followers or not (Pan et al., 2022).

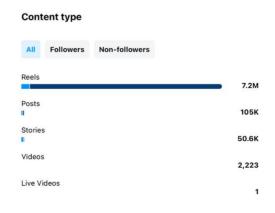


Figure 3. Content type

Moreover, we discovered that Kulinersby influences not only significant decisions among its followers regarding conventional culinary destinations but also showcases a variety of options from street food vendors, which surprisingly garner more interest from followers. Empirical evidence indicates that content featuring street food has a more extensive reach than content reviewing other establishments, as evidenced by the higher number of likes and comments received (Sun et al., 2021). These findings indicate that Kulinersby's followers have a significant interest in culinary experiences from street food vendors. This insight provides a deeper understanding of followers' preferences and interests in diverse culinary experiences, demonstrating that content featuring street food is vital in enriching their culinary experiences.



Figure 4. Kulinersby's viewers



Figure 5. Street food contens



Figure 6. Street food contents

One highlighted aspect is the dispersion of Kulinersby's followers from various places, not limited to the Surabaya region. This finding underscores the success of Kulinersby's content strategy, which not only focuses on locally-centric content but also portrays the geographic diversity of its followers, extending to areas such as Madura, Gresik, Malang, and even Yogyakarta and other cities. Additionally, the extensive reach of Kulinersby's account from various regions is also due to Surabaya being one of the major cities in Indonesia, serving as a hub for economic, cultural, and culinary activities in East Java. Thus, Kulinersby's presence as a leading culinary influencer in Surabaya, characterized by its appeal to followers from various regions, attracts those interested in exploring and experiencing the diverse culinary offerings of this city (Pan et al., 2022).



Figure 7. Others area contens



Figure 8. Others area contens

Another content strategy implemented by the Instagram account Kulinersby involves utilizing reel content, which has proven more favored and effective than other content types. The success of reels in capturing the audience's attention indicates that visual, brief, and informative content is increasingly favored among social media users, particularly on platforms like Instagram. The brief duration of reels, typically 60 to 90 seconds, makes it suitable for the digital era's fast-paced and concise consumption patterns. User engagement with short and direct content provides an immediate experience, aligning with the fast-paced and busy lifestyle, making reel content more appealing and easily absorbed by users.

Additionally, the ability to reach a broad audience through Instagram's Explore feature makes Reels a highly potential platform to enhance the visibility and growth of Kulinersby's account. With this feature, reel content can be easily discovered by users who still need to follow the account, opening opportunities to attract new followers and expand Kulinersby's influence in the culinary world on social media. Thus, using reels as part of Kulinersby's content strategy provides an engaging experience for followers and a strategic move to broaden the account's reach and impact within the digital community (Sun et al., 2021).

We also found another content strategy where Kulinersby not only influences significant decisions among its followers regarding more conventional culinary destinations but also showcases a variety of options from street food vendors, which surprisingly garner more interest from followers. Our findings indicate that street food experiences are not only the focus but also play a significant role in attracting the attention and interest of followers. This is because street food is often considered a representation of authentic and diverse local culinary delights. Beyond just tasting the food, content featuring street food vendors often brings personal stories and close relationships with the vendors. Followers can feel emotional closeness with the stories behind the food and the lives of street food vendors, making the culinary experience more meaningful and satisfying. The relationship between Kulinersby and its followers reflects the concept of influencers as Key Opinion Leaders (KOL). By showcasing content that introduces MSME products and street vendors, Kulinersby not only builds a reputation as a trusted source of information but also helps raise awareness about the importance of supporting local businesses. In this context, the KOL theory explains how influencers like Kulinersby can influence their followers' preferences and purchasing decisions. By understanding the uniqueness and appeal of content from small businesses or street vendors, Kulinersby can optimize its content strategy to provide followers with a more diverse, authentic, and valuable culinary experience and strengthen their engagement in the broader culinary digital community.

In fostering closer communication with its followers, the Instagram account Kulinersby demonstrates an effective strategy by directly interacting and responding to comments on their posts. In practice, this proactive step allows Kulinersby to create closer and more personal relationships with its followers. This strategy is based on social capital theory, one of the keys to building a strong community on social media platforms. By directly responding to comments from followers, Kulinersby shows that they value the opinions and participation of their followers in every post. This enhances trust and engagement among followers and creates a friendly atmosphere on the Kulinersby Moreover, by interacting directly through comment replies, Kulinersby can provide additional information, answer questions, or show appreciation to followers who actively participate in shared content. This strengthens the bond between Kulinersby and its followers, and it has a positive reputation as a responsive and caring account that values the needs and desires of its audience.

Overall, the content strategies used by Kulinersby reflect their commitment to providing valuable, varied, and engaging experiences for their followers while expanding their reach and impact within the culinary community.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Kulinersby's role transcends that of a mere culinary influencer; it embodies the essence of a Key Opinion Leader (KOL) within social media gastronomy. Its significance lies in disseminating culinary trends and in curating authentic experiences that resonate deeply with its audience. Through its platform, Kulinersby showcases the culinary creations of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and the narratives and histories behind each dish. This concerted effort goes beyond promoting local businesses; it forges emotional bonds with followers, establishing Kulinersby as a trusted culinary exploration and discovery source.

Kulinersby's approach goes beyond surface-level engagement; it delves into the intricacies of its followers' preferences and aspirations, enhancing its content's relevance. This understanding underscores Kulinersby's commitment to fostering community and shared culinary experiences among its followers. By acknowledging and embracing the diversity of culinary traditions and tastes, Kulinersby becomes more than just an influencer—it becomes a conduit for cultural exchange and appreciation.

Kulinersby demonstrates its dedication to cultivating meaningful connections with its audience by maintaining direct interactions, mainly through responses to comments. This active engagement not fosters trust but endorses the perception of Kulinersby as an approachable and empathetic figure within the digital culinary landscape. Through these interactions, Kulinersby solidifies its position as an influencer and a facilitator of culinary discovery and connection.

This multifaceted approach to content strategy, grounded in a profound understanding of audience dynamics, underscores Kulinersby's commitment to delivering enriching and diverse culinary experiences. Through its concerted efforts, Kulinersby emerges as a culinary influencer and a catalyst for fostering community, celebrating diversity, and enriching culinary exploration within the digital realm.

Moreover, the theories of Key Opinion Leader (KOL) and social capital further elucidate the profound impact of Kulinersby's content strategy. By embodying the role of a trusted advisor and curator of culinary experiences, Kulinersby leverages its social capital to foster engagement, trust, and loyalty among its followers. This strategic utilization of social influence not ones Kulinersby's reach but balances its effectiveness in shaping culinary preferences and behaviors within the digital sphere (Yuanita & Dini, 2021). Thus, Kulinersby's holistic approach to content creation and engagement strengthens its position as a culinary influencer

and underscores its role as a transformative force in digital gastronomy.

Kulinersby must continue to engage in more direct communication with its followers if it hopes to keep its status as a key opinion leader (KOL) in the social media culinary space. Kulinersby can maintain its reputation as an approachable personality, build relationships with its audience, and increase follower loyalty by keeping up its active response to comments. In addition, highlighting the culinary creations of micro, small, and medium-sized businesses (UKM) will offer a great deal of value. In addition to improving Kulinersby's content, working in tandem with SMEs will directly aid in the development of nearby towns. Finally, Kulinersby might think about creating more in-depth content by, say, delving into the background information and tales of each dish's food. This approach will not only interest the audience but will also increase their understanding of the local culinary and cultural heritage. By implementing these suggestions, Kulinersby can strengthen its position as a culinary influencer and expand its influence in digital gastronomy.

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