

---

# International Journal of Research Innovation and Entrepreneurship

<https://journal.unnes.ac.id/sju/index.php/ijrie>

---

## Fashion Marketing on Instagram Platform

Salma Qurrotu Aina

Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

---

### Abstrak

Fashion photography that was previously distributed through printed media such as magazines, is now also distributed online through social media such as Instagram. Seeing this change in trends, this study aims to examine the form, visual appeal, and messages conveyed by fashion photography in Instagram's content. This study used a descriptive qualitative research approach with a visual analysis methods. Observations and interviews were used for the data collection, sourced from fashion marketing accounts on Instagram, and from other Instagram users with photography and fashion education backgrounds. The results showed that the form of fashion marketing photography varied depending on the concepts and products being sold. Photos that were unique, different, and use good compositions were favored by the followers. Each photo had its own theme and message concept. In addition, each photo showed that anyone can look cool and attractive if they use the fashion products shown in the photos. So, the fashion photography used in Instagram content should look unique and different, with good photographic composition, as well as easy-to-understand messages.

**Kata Kunci** : fashion photography; Instagram, visual appeal; message

---

### INTRODUCTION

In this digital era, social media has become one of the platforms used by the general public to socialize and interact with one another. Instagram is one of the most popular social media used today. According to a website that specializes in providing data and statistics called "statista" ([www.statista.com](http://www.statista.com)), Instagram was ranked as the fifth most popular social media in the world in January 2021, with 1221 billion users (Statista Research Department, 2021). Instagram has been recognized as a social media used to share personal and organizational content, in the form of photos or videos publicly.

There are many types of content shared on Instagram, including fashion. On Instagram, fashion's photography can be used to document and promote various products from businesses focusing on fashion. By sharing it on Instagram, they can expand their reach and attract more attention from social media users, especially Instagram users.

Most of the research that has been done on content on Instagram was food photography, as well as photos of tourism places such as landscape/nature photography and architectural photography. Meanwhile, research on fashion photography on Instagram content is still rare, especially in Indonesia. "Visibility labor: engaging with influencers' fashion brands and #OOTD advertorial campaigns on Instagram" written by Abidin (2016) was one of the studies that raised the theme of fashion in Instagram contents. However, this research focused more on the fashion marketing aspect than fashion photography on Instagram content. In addition, there was a study from Indonesia entitled "A study of visual elements in promotional photos of 'cotton ink' local fashion products on Instagram" by Irawan *et al.* (2021). However, the research focused on one fashion brand and only examined the visual elements, without discussing the message aspects of the fashion photography. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the form, appeal, and messages conveyed from fashion photography, especially fashion marketing on the Instagram contents.

**METHOD**

This research is a descriptive qualitative research. The data was collected online for the prevention of the spread of the pandemic, with observation techniques obtained from resource persons from 5 fashion business accounts on Instagram. These accounts adequately represented the research target. In addition, interviews were also carried out through chats or voice notes on the WhatsApp application to 10 followers with photography and fashion education backgrounds, which were in accordance with the subject of this research.

The analysis stage covered three aspects, i.e., the analysis towards the form, attraction, and message conveyed. The analysis was performed using visual methodologies or visual methods described by Rose (2016). This method paid attention to several aspects in examining images/photographs, including the image itself, the way it was made or produced, its distribution, and the audience or observers.

In analyzing the fashion photography, the image itself based on its elements or composition was taken a good care. Meanwhile, the photographic technique was analyzed to evaluate the production aspect. Furthermore, in the analysis of the attractiveness of fashion photography, photography in the previous analysis and the audience or observers was correlated. In the last analysis, the aspect of its distribution and the audience to find out the message conveyed will be carefully investigated. For the aspect of distribution, the cellular circulation communication model was used, while the interpretation of fashion photography messages was assisted by the results of interviews that have been conducted with the audience.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Form and Attractiveness of Fashion Photography on Instagram Content**

In the first part of the analysis of this research, the form of fashion photography on Instagram content was analyzed. The photos studied came from 5 Instagram fashion marketing accounts, namely the @cottonink, @sepatukompass, @adorableprojects, @vanillahijab, and @kasmaranindonesia accounts. The five photos were chosen because they corresponded to the research subject and were the significant photos from the accounts.

Cotton Ink was a fashion brand from Indonesia that offered clothing products targeted at women. The products offered were casual style clothing from patterned fabrics to knitted materials. Like many other brands, this brand also had an Instagram account called @cottonink. Cotton Ink's Instagram account shared a variety of content from fashion photography, events, collaborations, and campaigns, to memes and quotes. The visual, composition and photography technique used for the photo chosen from @cottonink Instagram account (Figure 1) was analyzed. The results are presented in Table 1.



Figure 1. The chosen photo being analyzed from @cottonink Instagram account.

Table 1. Analysis results towards the fashion photograph from @cottonink Instagram account.

Aspect analyzed	Analysis results
Visual element	Shape – the dot element on the pants buttons, and the line element on the clothing stitch Form – a human figure represented by seven female models wearing clothing products. One

	<p>female model with short hair and chubby body stood at the back, two models sat on a high chair – one model wore a hijab and the other had short hair, two skinny models with different hair lengths sat posing in a low chair, one model with glasses sat on the floor, and the last model in the front posed half-lying on the floor.</p> <p>Texture – there was a texture of folds or wrinkles of the fabric on the clothes worn by the model. In addition, there were curly hair textures in two models and straight hair in four models.</p> <p>Contrast – the left side of the photo looked lighter than the right. This indicated that the lighting source was from the left side of the shooting area.</p> <p>Color – photos used neutral and matching color tones on clothes such as black, white, gray, beige, and brown (on pants). Then the background used a plain white color.</p>
Composition	The composition was asymmetric because the right and left sides of the photo were not the same and were not aligned. In addition, this photo also used the rule of thirds which can be seen through the blue line in Figure 1. The position of the dominant object was on the right vertical and bottom horizontal line so that the point of interest (POI) was at the meeting point of the lower right line.
Photography technique	Lighting came from the front left side so that shadows or darker areas appeared on the right. Normal camera angle was used.

The photo in Figure 1 was uploaded by @cottonink. Most of interviewees liked the photo because of its simple impression, various models, and asymmetrical compositions formed from the position and pose of the model. N.J, a participant with a fashion background said that “the background looked plain, didn’t stand out, so the eyes immediately focused on seeing some of the models and clothes they were wearing. Models looked beautiful, equal, and look confident.”

Then, the next analyzed fashion photograph was from the Kasmaran Indonesia brand (see Figure 2). Kasmaran Indonesia offered handcrafted products made in Indonesia such as tops, bottoms, dresses and masks. These products used traditional Indonesian fabrics such as jumputan, lurik, and batik. In addition, this brand also offered multi-wear clothing products, which can be worn in various ways. Most of the content on this account was about product information and photos, as well as “shout outs” or thank you calls to customers. The analysis results are listed in Table 2.

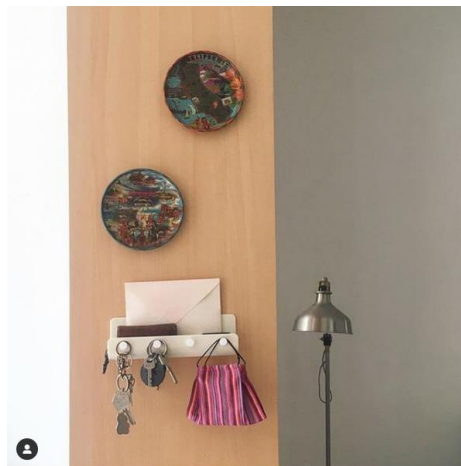


Figure 2. A fashion photograph by @kasmaranindonesia Instagram account.

Table 2. Analysis results towards the fashion photograph uploaded by @kasmaranindonesia Instagram account.

Aspect analyzed	Analysis results
Visual element	<p>Shape – vertical line elements formed on the wall because the two sides had different colors, curved line elements on light wires, square and triangular elements on envelopes, and circle elements on painting decorations.</p> <p>Form – the shape of the object of lights, keys, key chain racks, and masks.</p> <p>Pattern – there was a striated motif on the mask.</p> <p>Textures – the texture of wood on the walls, the texture of folds of cloth on the mask, the texture of shiny metal on the lamp, and the texture of the painting.</p> <p>Contrast – the purple color and pattern of the mask stood out from the rest.</p> <p>Color - a combination of neutral colors such as gray, white, and brown on the background in the form of walls and keychain shelves, as well as the striking purple color of the mask.</p>
Composition	The composition was asymmetric because the placement of objects in the photo was not balanced and parallel. This photo (Figure 2) also used the rule of thirds, as seen from the blue line in Figure 2, whose meeting point was at the bottom left. The POI can also be seen based on the rule of third, which is on the key chain rack. However, masks can also be POIs because they

	have striking motifs and colors.
Photography technique	The photo used a normal camera angle with front-top exposure indicated by the small shadows. In addition, objects were not sufficiently separated from the background.

Most of interviewees liked the photo of @kasmaranindonesia in Figure 2 because the object showed an asymmetrical and structured composition but was also neatly arranged by following the rule of thirds. Consequently, it gave a balanced impression and was comfortable to look at. Some followers also liked the hanging masks, with purple elements and striking striated motifs. D.T.P.M, one of the followers with a photography education background said that “the balance displayed was interesting. There were several hanging elements, one of which was a mask that looked striking.”

The next fashion photography analyzed came from the @sepatucompass Instagram account as shown in Figure 3. Compass shoes was a local brand that was founded in 1998. This brand offered shoes with a vintage style, original made from Indonesia. Like the @cottonink account, @sepatucompass content posts varied from product photos, events, to memes.



Figure 3. A fashion photograph from @sepatucompass Instagram account.

Table 3. Analysis results towards the fashion photograph uploaded by @sepatucompass Instagram account.

Aspect analyzed	Analysis results
Visual element	<p>Shape – curved line elements on trishaws and power lines on the roadside, circular elements between line elements on trishaws, and curved shape elements on shoes.</p> <p>Form – The shape of a rickshaw, and a shoe box with a Compass label, as well as a human figure, i.e., the rickshaw uncle who was wearing Compass Shoes.</p> <p>Pattern – there was a pattern or repetition of line elements on the rickshaw.</p> <p>Textures – the textures of roads, trees, and fabrics on clothes.</p> <p>Contrast – the light from the sky in the background coupled with the rickshaw hood made the figure of the rickshaw uncle looked a bit dark</p> <p>Color – a blend of natural colors from the background in the form of natural surroundings such as green on the leaves on the tree, blue on the sky, brown on the sand, and gray on the asphalt. Then there was the red color that made the trishaw and shoebox stood out, as well as the black, white, and cream colors on the clothes.</p>
Composition	The rule of third was located at the top of the rickshaw which was the divider between the object or subject matter and the background. The feet of the rickshaw uncle were also parallel to the vertical line in the rule of thirds. However, even though using the rule of thirds, the POI was on the shoes that look very clear and not blurry or dark.
Photography technique	The lighting was naturally from the sun. The light from the sky on the background with the roof/hood of the rickshaw caused the face of the rickshaw uncle looked a bit dark. A normal camera angle was used.

The majority of interviewees found the @sepatucompass photo interesting because it was different from other fashion photography. It used a model of a gentleman with the property of a rickshaw, as well as the POI of the shoe object which looked very clear and conspicuous. MC, who has a photography education background, was interested in this photo and commented, “Usually, this kind of clothing was often worn by young people to take pictures in places that seem modern and expensive,

such as malls or cafes. However, this photo showed an object that was identical to the impression of the people on the poor outskirts, so that added to the appeal of this photo”.

The next fashion photography analyzed came from the @adorableprojects Instagram account. Adorable Projects was a brand that offered fashion products with casual style for women. The products sold are among others jackets, overalls, bags, and shoes.



Figure 4. A fashion photograph from @adorableprojects Instagram account.

Table 4. Analysis results towards the fashion photograph uploaded by @adorableprojects Instagram account.

Aspect analyzed	Analysis results
Visual element	<p>Shape – the line element showing the zipper on the jacket, the line element on the word “hey” on the sling bag, the curved line element on the jacket and sandals pocket, the rectangular shape element on the tote bag.</p> <p>Form – sling bag and shoes with volume. Jackets and pants were shaped and styled as if a model was wearing them. In the left picture, one of the sleeves looked as if it was holding a bag strap, while in the right photo one of the jacket sleeves was tucked into a pocket. Then the pants and shoes were arranged to look like walking feet.</p> <p>Texture – the texture of denim jackets and pants</p> <p>Contrast – there was a contrast in the black on the pink jacket, and the dark blue on the denim pants.</p> <p>Color– Colors that matched pink, black and white, and blue. The most dominant color of this photo was pink, which was found on the jacket and background objects.</p>
Composition	Did not use the rule of thirds. Objects were arranged vertically and placed in the center of the photo, so the type of photo composition was a vertical central composition
Photography technique	Flatlay photography technique was used. The object in this photo was arranged on a flat surface so that the photo was taken with the camera position from above or a bird's eye angle, although in the end the photo angle looked like a normal eye. The lighting was directly in front of the object in the photo so that the shadow was completely invisible.

The next analysis of the attractiveness of fashion photography was done towards the two photos uploaded at once by @adorableprojects account. The observers were influenced by their familiarity with the photo, the type of photo (color or black-and-white), and the dynamics or elements of "motion" in the photo when observing the attractiveness of a photo (Axelsson, 2007). The majority of interviewees liked these two photos due to its dynamics or its element of "motion". These photos were composed in such a way that the objects looked "alive" even though the object of the photo was an inanimate object, i.e., clothing, as well as familiarity with the arrangement of the clothes as worn by a model, and not just folded or hung. Some interviewees also liked the color combination.

The last photos analyzed were from the @vanillahijab Instagram account as shown in Figure 5. The Vanilla Hijab brand sold muslim clothing products targeted at women, such as tops, tunics, pajamas, and hijabs, from plain to patterned. Vanilla Hijab also offered matching clothes for moms and kids.



Figure 5. A fashion photograph from @vanillahijab Instagram account.

Table 5. Analysis results towards the fashion photograph uploaded by @vanillahijab Instagram account.	
Aspect analyzed	Analysis results
Visual element	<p>Shape – elements of flower shape in hijab.</p> <p>Form – three human figures, namely a female model wearing a hijab product. In the photo on the left, the models were posing with their heads resting on the shoulders of the model in the middle. All were facing backwards. While in the photo on the right, all models were facing the front of the camera except the model sitting on the right facing the side. The left and right models were holding the arms of the model in the middle. Each model were wearing the hijab with the same model, but in various color variants.</p> <p>Pattern - floral elements form an irregular motif on the hijab as a decoration for the hijab model.</p> <p>Texture – there were fabric textures on the background, hijab, and clothes.</p> <p>Colors – color tones were soft pastel colors, such as pink, lilac, mint green, and white.</p>
Composition	<p>The composition was approaching the type of symmetrical composition because the position of the model facing the back of the camera on the left and right looked similar and parallel, with the left and right models both leaning on the shoulders of the model in the middle. It's just that the texture of the fabric on the background was not the same.</p> <p>While the composition in the second photo was asymmetrical because there were two models facing the camera and one model facing the side. The photo used the rule of thirds and the meeting point falls on the right side of the model facing the side.</p>
Photography technique	<p>Lighting was from the front-top so the shadows appeared small and the object was not sufficiently separated from the background. A normal eye camera angle was used.</p>

The majority of interview participants liked the combination of the pastel colors in this photo which looked soft and soothing, and the floral motifs on the headscarf which looked beautiful. Some of them like the expression and make-up of the model. However, there were also those who didn't like the photo of the model with the pose facing the front because it was a common thing to find in fashion photography. S.N said that "The combination of pastel colors was cool to look at, suitable for Muslim products. The composition was also good, the product arrangement and the three models could represent the Muslim product." While N.J argued that he was more interested in the photo in Figure 5(a) than that in Figure 5(b). He said that "I was more interested in photos that show the hijab motifs (the models were facing the back) because it was clearly visible. I'm not quite interested in that of the front-facing models because it looks normal."

**Messages that Fashion Photography Conveys in the Instagram Content**

In the last part, the photos posted by the five fashion business accounts were analyzed to find out the message conveyed. The messages are one aspect of the communication process. Therefore, before finding out the meaning conveyed by each photo, the communication process was examined first. After that, the messages were interpreted based on the caption on the photo and with the help of the results of the interview.

To determine the communication process, a cellular circulation communication model based on Schramm and Osgood (Budi, 2010) in Figure 6 was used. This model was chosen because the communication process can circulate continuously. For example, an account conveyed a message by posting a photo on Instagram. Then the account got feedback in the form of comments asking about the photo. The account that was originally the sender of the message can be the recipient of the message from the comment, and can respond back to the comment so that the communication process can

continue.

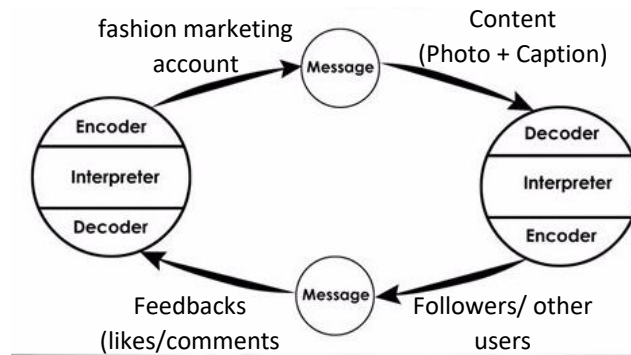


Figure 6. A cellular circulation communication model for the analysis of the communication process.

Based on the cellular circulation model in Figure 6, the communication process started from the Instagram fashion marketing account as an encoder, which sent messages in the form of posted photos and captions through Instagram social media, to their followers and other Instagram users as decoders, who can provide feedback in the form of likes and/or comments. Specifically for the message interpretation aspect of the communication model described in Figure 6 was explained based on the caption on the photos and from the results of interviews that have been conducted, where participants were in a decoder position who received and interpreted messages from the fashion marketing account.

In the fashion photography content uploaded by @cottonink account, the caption for the photo showed that Cotton Ink has released their products with a wider choice of sizes up to size XXL. This was represented in photos with models with different body shapes, races, and styles wearing Cotton Ink products. Based on the results of the interview, the interview participants could understand the message of the photo. N.J, who has experienced in the fashion department said that the message she got was "the products sold can fit anyone regardless of race or body shape, so that all women need not be afraid or hesitate to buy it".

The fashion photography content uploaded by @adorableprojects implied that pink color could also give the impression of a powerful style if combined well. This was represented by two photo posts, where the first photo in Figure 4(a) combined a jacket and pants with a black bag and shoes, while the second photo (Figure 4(b)) combined it with white. There were some participants who didn't get a clear message from these photos, but the majority understood that looking stylish could be achieved by a good combination of clothes and color.

The fashion photography from the @kasmaranindonesia account featured one of their products, i.e., lurik masks (please see Figure 2). Cloth mask products were displayed by hanging, different from the majority of photos of other mask products that were usually worn by models. The caption of the photo described a reusable cloth mask product hung near the entrance and was ready to be used. In addition, they also gave shout outs and thanks for one of their customers who had donated and bought the lurik mask products, as well as the person who took the photo.

The interview participants had different perceptions about the message conveyed by the photo in Figure 2. S.N, who has studied photography said that the message he got from this photo was about "reusable masks made of lurik fabric that look elegant and minimalist. Besides being used to protect us, this mask can be used for fashion and can be placed anywhere." Another interview participant, D.T.P.M said that the message he got was about "tidiness and cleanliness and a depiction of health or a pandemic period marked by masks". Meanwhile, N.J, who initially had difficulty catching the message, said that "at first I was confused because I thought it was a bag that was hanging, but after seeing the caption, then I understood that the photo showed a mask product". Moreover, the participant with a fashion education background, N.K said that the message he got from the photo was "tidying things up will make it easier for us to find them".

The next message aspect analyzed in fashion photography was the photo uploaded by @sepatucompass (Figure 3). The photo and caption conveyed a message like a story about Pak Sukamin, a pedicab driver who was shown wearing new shoes from the Compass shoe brand. The post featured fashion photography as well as the theme of the Compass Shoes campaign, namely "Compass for All". N.J said that the message from the photo was "the product can be used regardless of one's age

and profession, and the product was made of strong material so that it can protect the feet of consumers, as a rickshaw uncle who delivered the customers by foot".

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the analysis of the fashion marketing photography from the five Instagram accounts, it can be seen that the form of fashion marketing photography varied depending on the brand, content concept, and product being sold. However, there are some similarities, among others, the majority of photos use the rule of third composition and the lighting techniques that may come from artificial light such as lamps, and normal eye angles. In addition, there were two photos that used different model figures from the usual fashion photography models, who usually look young and have ideal bodies. Meanwhile, photos that did not use models or only use inanimate objects have a good compositional arrangement. The color combinations of the photos were also the same and there were elements of motifs and textures that supported the photos. The contrast element in the photo was used to highlight the product being sold.

The analysis of the attractiveness of fashion marketing photography showed that most of interview participants liked the photographs because they were different from other fashion photographs and unique in both using a human model or not. In addition, the arrangement of objects and the selection of color combinations can also add to the appeal of fashion photography.

The message analysis in fashion marketing photography showed that each photo had its own theme and message. There were several similar messages conveyed by the five photos, i.e., even though they may look different from the others, everyone can look cool with their own fashion style with their confidence when wearing fashion products in photos. Therefore, it is better if the concept of fashion photography used is unique and different from before but easy to understand. Moreover, the photos should still use good composition and highlight the products offered.

## REFERENCES

- Abidin, C. 2016. Visibility labour: engaging with influencers' fashion brands and #ootd advertorial campaigns on Instagram. *Media International Australia*, 161(1): 86–100. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878X16665177>.
- Axelsson, Ö. 2007. Towards a psychology of photography: dimensions underlying aesthetic appeal of photographs. *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 105(2): 411–34. <https://doi.org/10.2466/PMS.105.2.411-434>.
- Budi, R. 2010. *Pengantar Ilmu Komunikasi*. Kretakupa, Makassar.
- Irawan, E.F., Haswanto, N. & Ratri, D. 2021. Kajian elemen visual pada foto promosi produk fashion lokal 'cotton ink' di Instagram. *Jurnal Desain Indonesia*, 3(1): 11-18.
- Rose, G. 2016. *Visual methodologies: an introduction to researching with visual materials*. 4th ed. SAGE, London.
- Statista Research Department. 2021. What is the most popular social media platform worldwide?. available through <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/>, accessed Dec 21, 2021