The Road to Legitimate Engagement for Social Media Influencers Followers

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study is to reveal the role of social media influencers, especially @chintakharisma and @anone033, in promoting products and institutions on the TikTok platform. By focusing on content strategy, direct interaction with followers, and its effect on consumer behavior, this study highlights the significant contribution of influencers in digital marketing. Using qualitative research with a cyber phenomenology approach. This research model uses a simple design with Triangulation Theory. The data collection techniques used are observation, interviews and documentation. The data analysis technique used is the Manual Data Analysis Procedure (MDAP). The findings show that the use of value-based content, responsiveness to questions and feedback, and strong community development can increase follower engagement and support the success of marketing campaigns. The practical and theoretical applications of this study are outlined, providing guidance for digital marketing researchers and directions for further research in this domain.

KEYWORDS: social media influencers, TikTok, digital marketing, follower engagement, interaction, consumer behavior.

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, social media has become an important platform that allows individuals to share information (Höttecke & Allchin, 2020), interact, and shape public opinion widely. One prominent phenomenon is the emergence of social media influencers, individuals who have significant influence over their followers through the content they produce (Dubois et al., 2020). These influencers are often able to build strong and authentic relationships with their audiences, leveraging platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok to promote various products, ideas, and lifestyles (Olan et al., 2024). Their influence is not only limited to entertainment, but also extends to sectors such as fashion, beauty, health, education, and politics (Iosifidis & Nicoli, 2020). Influencers' success in creating strong and authentic engagement makes them invaluable partners for brands and organizations looking to reach a wider audience in a more personal and compelling way. The study of social media influence and the role of influencers is becoming increasingly relevant to understanding the dynamics of modern communication and effective marketing strategies. This research focuses on how influencers can build legitimate and official engagement with their followers, as well as their impact on audience behavior and perception, providing deep insights into the power of social media in shaping consumer opinions and decisions (Appel et al., 2020).Platforms like TikTok have experienced rapid growth and become important means for individuals and institutions to interact with a wide audience (Yarchi et al., 2021). The important role of social media influencers in building official engagement with their audience, using the case study of the TikTok account @anone033, brand ambassador for the Institute for Internal Government (IPDN), and the TikTok account @chintakharisma, brand ambassador for @ayucitrahijab. Social media influencers have become a global phenomenon that has a major influence on various aspects of life, including education and business (Balkin, 2021). In this digital era, influencers have the power to influence the opinions, behavior and decisions of their followers through the content they share (Reisach, 2021). The TikTok account @anone033, which promotes IPDN, shows how social media platforms can be used to introduce and communicate the values of educational institutions to prospective students and the general public (Li & Feng, 2021). Through creative and informative content, @anone033 not only promotes IPDN but also builds closer relationships with prospective students and the community, increasing awareness and reputation of the institution. This account not only provides entertaining content, but also provides in-depth insight into life and activities at civil service schools (Luqiu & Yang, 2020). With the number of followers continuing to increase, this account has succeeded in building official and legitimate engagement with its viewers, creating an effective communication bridge between IPDN, prospective students and the general public. Given the important role of social

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media influencers in shaping followers' perceptions and interest, this research seeks to identify the factors that drive such engagement, the most effective types of content, and their impact on followers' perceptions and interest in joining IPDN. In contrast, the TikTok account @chintakharisma, as brand ambassador for @ayucitrahijab, shows how influencers in the fashion industry can build deep engagement with their followers. By sharing content featuring hijab products from @ayucitrahijab, @chintakharisma is able to reach a wider audience and create an emotional connection with them. The use of influencers in this marketing strategy helps brands become better known, trusted and loved by consumers, which in turn can increase sales and customer loyalty and provide important insight into how to leverage social media to build a positive image and attract consumers more effectively (Halpin et al., 2021).The study "Social Media Influencers: A Route to Official Engagement for Their Followers" makes a significant contribution to the field of digital marketing by highlighting the strategic role of social media influencers in building official and authentic engagement between brands or institutions and their audiences (Boulianne & Larsson, 2023). Case studies on TikTok accounts @anone033, brand ambassador for the Institute of Domestic Government (IPDN), and @chintakharisma, brand ambassador for @ayucitrahijab, offer in-depth insights into how influencers can optimize the use of social media platforms to create stronger and more influential connections with their followers. Through an analysis of the content, interactions, and impact of these influencer campaigns, this study reveals effective techniques that educational institutions and fashion brands can use to increase their audience visibility, reputation, and trust (Yoo et al., 2020). This study also emphasizes the importance of authenticity, consistency, and relevance in influencer marketing strategies to achieve higher engagement and positive impact. Thus, this study provides practical guidance for digital marketers in designing and implementing successful influencer campaigns, as well as enriching the literature on the effectiveness of social media influencers in the context of digital marketing (Costello & Biondi, 2020).In addition, this study also underlines TikTok's potential as a powerful platform for digital marketing, showing how the platform's creative features and algorithms can be leveraged to reach a wider and more diverse audience (Wies et al., 2023). Thus, the contribution of this study is not only limited to a theoretical understanding of the role of influencers, but also provides practical tools and strategies that can be applied by marketing practitioners to improve the performance of their campaigns in the digital era (Heavey et al., 2020).

II. THEORITICAL REVIEW

The Social Media Influencer (SMI) Theory

The Social Media Influencer (SMI) theory is a conceptual framework that examines the role of individuals with significant influence on social media platforms in shaping the opinions, behaviors, and decisions of their audiences (Nafees et al., 2021). Social media influencers differ from traditional celebrities in that they often start out as ordinary individuals who have built large, loyal followings through content that their audiences perceive as authentic and relevant (Hudders et al., 2021). The theory highlights several key elements, including trust, credibility, and engagement (Heavey et al., 2020). Trust and credibility are two fundamental components that determine the extent to which followers perceive an influencer as a credible source of information (Vrontis et al., 2021). Engagement refers to the active interaction between influencers and their followers, which can take the form of likes, comments, sharing content, and responding to content (Enke & Borchers, 2021). SMI theory also includes the concept of authenticity, where an influencer's success is largely dependent on followers' perceptions that the content presented is genuine and not merely for commercial purposes. In a marketing context, the theory explains how influencers can influence consumer behavior, from increasing brand awareness to driving purchase decisions, through personalized and trustworthy marketing strategies (Tanwar et al., 2024). As such, SMI theory provides an important framework for research into the dynamics of social media interactions and their implications for digital marketing (Cheng et al., 2024).

Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) Theory

Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) theory is a conceptual framework that explores how informal communication and recommendations between individuals occur on digital platforms, and how they influence consumer behavior and purchasing decisions (Babić Rosario et al., 2020). eWOM differs from traditional Word of Mouth (WOM) because it occurs in digital spaces, such as social media, forums, blogs, and review sites, allowing information to spread faster and wider (Verma & Yadav, 2021). The theory highlights several important aspects, such as source credibility, content relevance, and the motivations behind consumer participation in spreading information (Belhadi et al., 2023). Source credibility includes consumers' perceptions of the trustworthiness and expertise of the reviewer or recommender. Content relevance refers to how well the information matches the consumer's needs and interests (Berne Manero et al., 2023). Motivations for participation can range from personal satisfaction, a desire to help others, to an intention to influence public perception of a product or service (Nisar et al., 2020). eWOM has a significant impact on consumer purchasing decisions because information from fellow users tends to be perceived as more authentic and credible than traditional advertising (Shankar et al., 2020). The theory also includes the dynamics of social

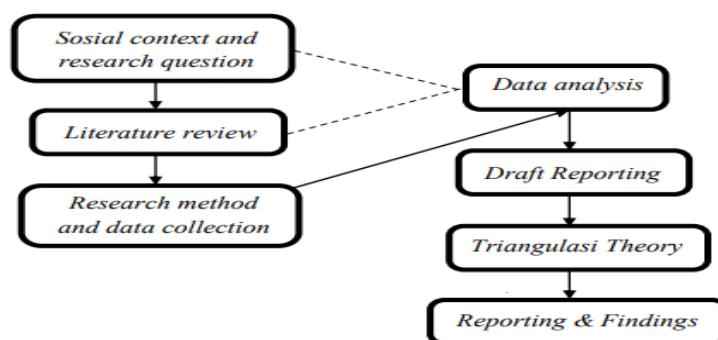**The Road to Legitimate Engagement for Social Media Influencers Followers**

networks, where interactions and connectedness between users strengthen the spread of information. In a marketing context, understanding eWOM helps companies develop effective strategies to leverage positive reviews and manage negative feedback, with the goal of enhancing brand reputation and positively influencing consumer decisions (Akdim, 2021).

TikTok's For You Page (FYP)

TikTok's For You Page (FYP) is a conceptual framework that focuses on the algorithm used by TikTok to determine and display relevant content to users on their homepage (Maris, E., Caplan, R., & Thach, 2024). The FYP is a key feature on TikTok that plays a significant role in content discovery and virality on the platform (Darvin, 2022). The FYP algorithm uses a variety of factors to personalize each user's experience, including previous interactions (such as likes, comments, and shares), video information (such as captions, sounds, and hashtags), and device and account settings (such as language and location preferences) (Peterson-Salahuddin, 2023). The theory explains how a combination of these factors is used to assess the relevance and engagement potential of content for each user, with the goal of increasing the time users spend on the platform and their satisfaction with the viewing experience (Zurovac et al., 2023). Additionally, the FYP algorithm utilizes machine learning to continuously refine and adjust recommendations based on changing user behavior (Issar, 2023). In a marketing context, understanding the FYP theory is critical because it provides insight into how content can be optimized to reach a wider audience and increase its chances of going viral (Boucher, 2022). Content that makes it to the FYP has the potential to gain significant exposure and generate significant engagement, making it a highly effective tool for brands and individuals looking to maximize their impact on TikTok (Haslem, 2022). Thus, TikTok FYP theory is not only important for understanding the dynamics of content on the platform but also an effective digital marketing strategy (Zeng & Kaye, 2022).

III. RESEARCH METHODS

In this research, the research method used by researchers is qualitative research (C. Rofiah, 2023), using a phenomenological approach. In this research, researchers used a cyber phenomenological approach (Rofiah, 2023). Phenomenology procedures (methods) are adapted for the social world that takes place in a cybercommunity mediated by communication media technology (CMT) devices. Phenomenology as a social research method which has been used to explore community life, exploring people's experiences in their social life, in their first life, in their basic social life, is no longer able to answer the challenges of human life in cybercommunity as a human's second life. The limitations of ontology and epistemology cause phenomenology to have obstacles that it cannot overcome without being innovated into a new approach. So, the new world faces new problems, and new problems require new approaches, to meet the challenges of humanity's new world. This is an opportunity to criticize phenomenology for becoming cyberphenomenology. That cyberphenomenology is a new method procedure that can be used as a research method in cyberphenomenology. Netnography previously existed as a procedural method in cybercommunity, which studied the culture of social groups in cybercommunity. The presence of cyberphenomenology is to study people's experiences. What they experience and how they experience it in the cybercommunity. What they experience and how they experience it in cybercommunity (Bungin et al., 2021).This research uses Simple Research Design Methods With Triangulation Theory. Simple qualitative research can still be prepared without having to carry out long-winded discussions but can still be accounted for (Rofiah & Bungin, 2021). When modifying the model from a simple design to a simple design model with triangulation theory/simpleresearch design with triangulation theory. There are 7 main steps, namely the following is an explanation of these steps:

Source: Rofiah & Bungin, 2021

1. Select a social context and develop research questions.
2. Conduct a literature review, in which research questions about social context are answered based on the literature explored.

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3. The literature review continues by exploring the research methods that will be used as well as using research methods to collect data in the field.
4. Researchers carry out data analysis in the field and use theory as a pen for data analysis.
5. Researchers prepare a draft report.
6. Researchers carry out theoretical triangulation.
7. Researchers report the results of their research while still including the findings that have been obtained in the field

Research Locus

The focus of the research is the object and data source from the place being studied so that the information obtained can provide accurate data and truth in the research. This research will be conducted online by conducting research on Social Media Influencers, namely @anone033 Tiktok media. Starting in February 2024 until this research is completed.

Data Collection Technique

To obtain data, researchers used the following techniques (B. Bungin, 2023) Cyberphenomenology Procedures :

1. Determining The Problem
2. An Interesting Phenomenon To Be Studied
3. Recognize And Determine
4. Broad Philosophical Assumptions Of Cyberphenomenology
5. Data Collected From Individuals Who Have Experienced Cyberphenomenon
6. Informants Are Asked General Questions
7. Cyberphenomenology Data Analysis Steps

Informants and Implementation of Data Collection

Data (Cyber-data) Obtained through online interviews, online questionnaires, online participatory and online sensing; Subject Cyberphenomenology What is experienced and how they experience it in cybercommunity; WHAT and HOW of people in this cybercommunity forms a cyberphenomenon. To reveal cyberphenomenon: Big Data; Non-Big Data data. Big Data: Data Mining. Non-Big Data data: Traditional / participatory data: online interviews, observations, online questionnaires, online materials, etc. Big Data/non-Big Data Data Can be used by Cyberphenomenology as primary or secondary data, depending on the research problem (B. Bungin, 2023). This study uses the research area on the @anone033 account as a Social Media Influencer. The focus of this study is TikTok FYP Strategy, Social Media Influencer and Electronic Word of Mouth on the TikTok account @anone033. The data sources in this study are primary data and secondary data. The primary data sources in this study are. The secondary data sources in this study are information from previous research, books, journals, articles and the internet that are still related to this study. Data collection techniques in this study are observation and interviews. The researcher conducted interviews with informants who own the account through the TikTok social media account @anone033, and also on @chintakharisma to this phenomenon.

Profile of Research Informants at Social Media Influencers: The Road To Legitimate Engagement For Their Followers:

No	Informant Code	Position	Long Time To Join	Number of Followers
1	Rahmad Firdansyah	TikTok account owner @anone033	3 Years	33.9 thousand
2	Chinta Kharisma	Tiktok Account @chintakharisma	3 Years	37.1 thousand

Source: Researcher, (2024)

Triangulation

Cyberphenomenology is a postcritical procedure (method) which also has a postmodern and pragmatism paradigm, where the need for triangulation is adapted to research needs (B. Bungin, 2023). Source triangulation and theory triangulation are two types of triangulation used in this research (Rofiah, 2021).

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IV. DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE

In this research, the data analysis used is the Manual Data Analysis Procedure (MDAP) by Rofiah, (2022). According to Rofiah, (2022), the proposed data analysis method is comprehensive and systematic but not rigid; providing a space that designs intuition and creativity as optimally and maximally as possible. This method makes researchers come out of their isolation and the analysis process is seen as a team activity rather than a purely individual process. The analysis process began immediately after the first interview and continued until the data saturation point had been reached. The analysis process consists of four parts: (1) Through preparation of the coding process;(2) Categorization process; (3)The process of determining the theme; (4) Proposition Formation Process.
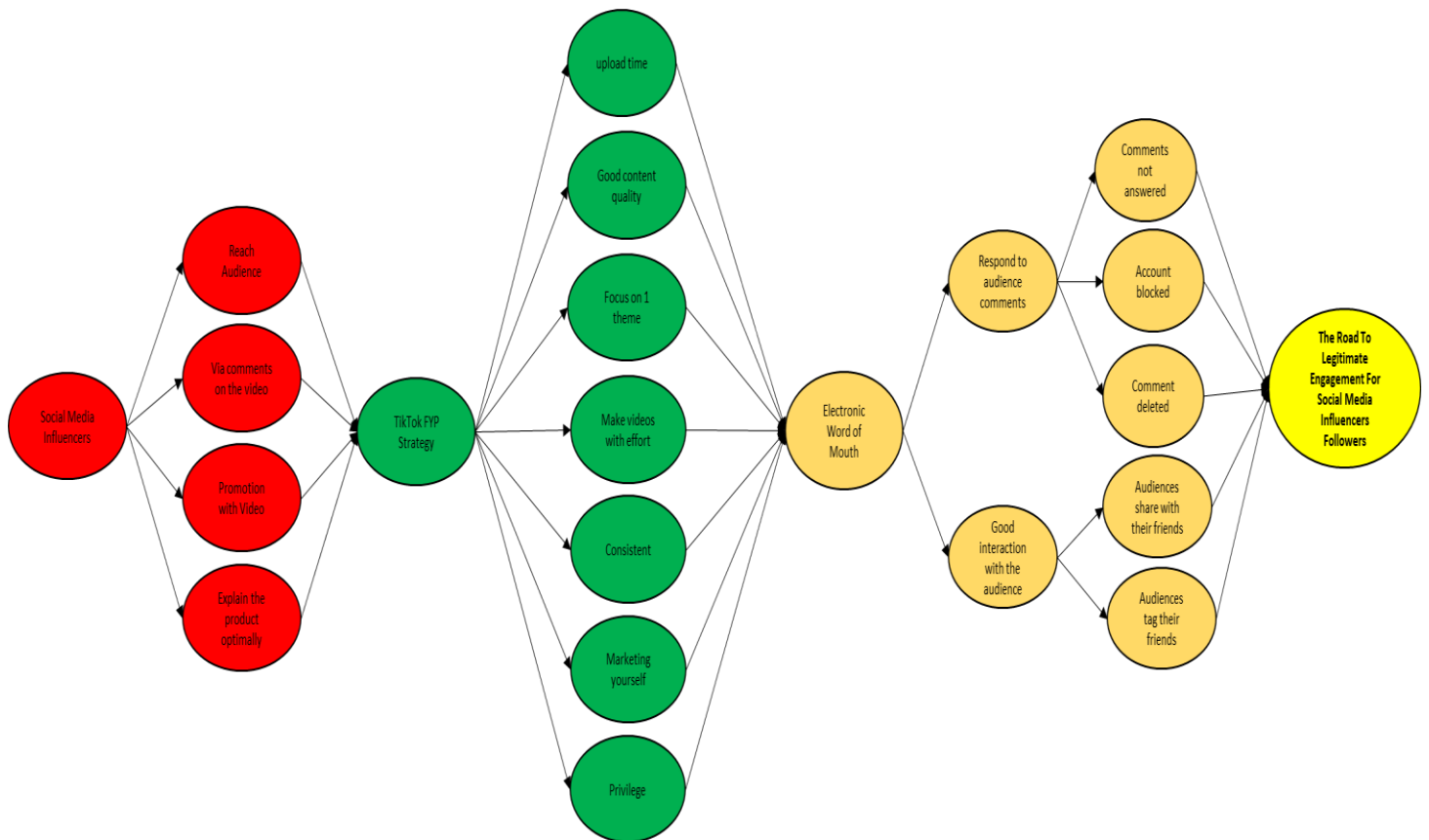
Research Line of Thought

The framework of this research can be described as follows:
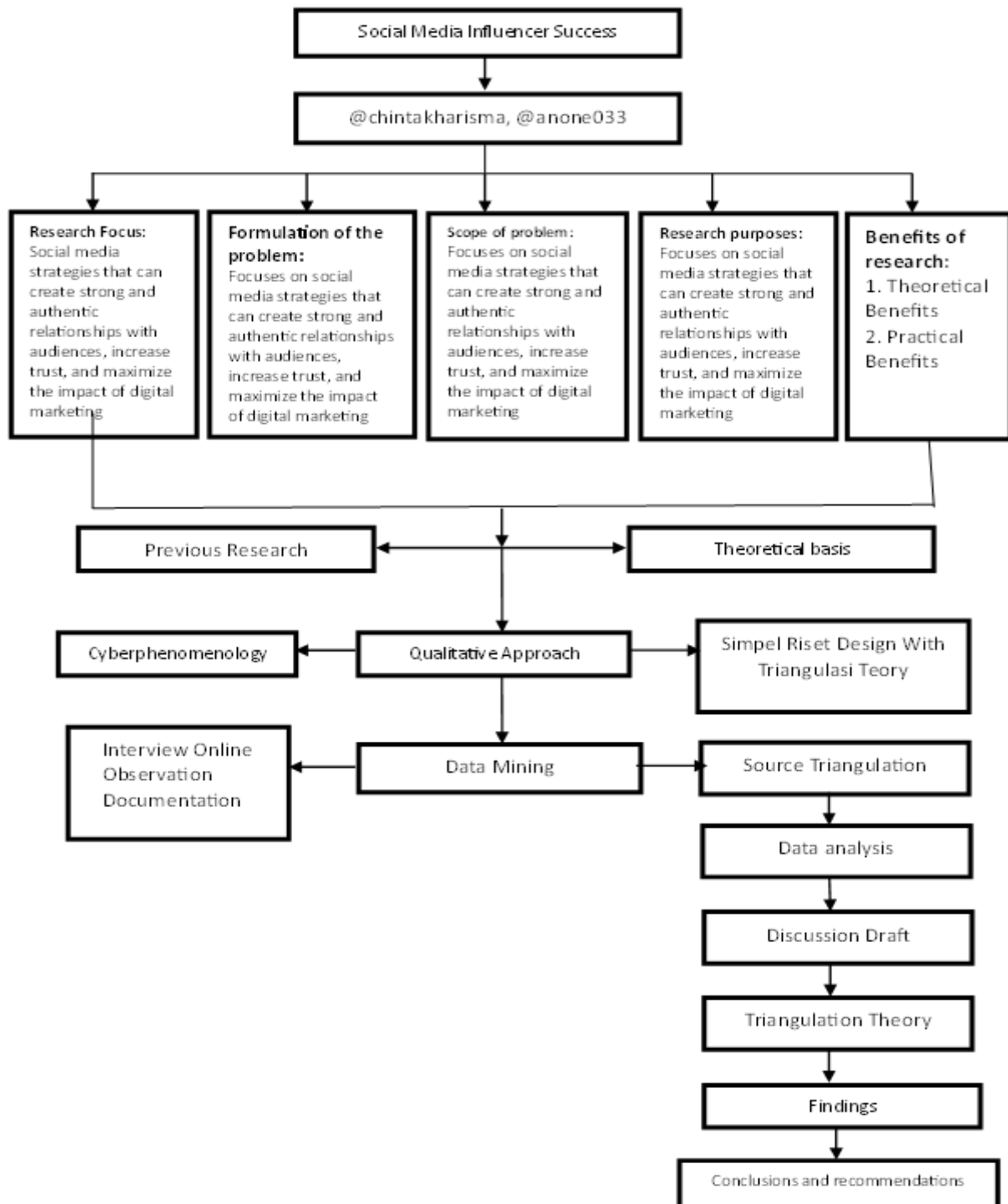
Source: Researcher, (2024)

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V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Source: Research proposition, 2024

DISCUSSION

Social Media Influencer

Reaching Audiences

"……So directing it... for example, maybe there is an audience asking about my study tips on how I passed 5 PTN, PTS and PTK, right? Okay, I answer with tips, I give 3 tips, maybe most of them follow my learning style, because humans try, right? I give study tips and I include my products like books, hehe, I think that's one way to direct the audience to what I want…..", (Rahmad, 2024)

"…….Read more comments and make videos that they request. Sometimes I also like to go live so I can interact directly. Or most often I like to reply to comments……", (Chinta, 2024)

From the results of interviews with informants, that reaching the audience by answering audience comments and providing solutions to the audience's questions, then inserting the promoted products. Social Media Influencers play a vital role in reaching audiences and building deeper, more authentic relationships with their followers. One effective way to achieve this is by actively responding to comments and questions from their audience. By responding to comments, influencers show that they value and care about their followers, which can increase trust and loyalty. Providing solutions to audience questions not only helps address any concerns or confusion they may have, but also strengthens the influencer's position as an expert or trusted figure in their niche or industry. Additionally, in the process of answering and providing solutions, influencers can subtly and effectively include the products they are promoting. For example, if a follower asks about fashion tips or a particular way to style a hijab, an influencer like @chintakharisma can respond with a product recommendation from @ayucitrahijab that is relevant to the question. In this way, the promoted product becomes an integral part of the conversation and the solution provided, which not only increases product visibility but also builds positive associations between the brand and solving the audience's problems. In addition, @anone033 plays a vital role in reaching audiences and building strong relationships with their followers, especially in the context of promoting the Institute of Domestic Government (IPDN). One effective way used by @anone033 is by actively responding to comments and questions from the audience. By responding to comments, @anone033 shows that they pay attention and value every interaction with followers, which can increase trust and loyalty towards IPDN. In answering questions and providing solutions, @anone033 can easily insert information about IPDN. For example, if a prospective student asks about the registration process or campus life at IPDN, @anone033 can answer with detailed information needed, while highlighting

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the advantages and facilities offered by IPDN. In this way, IPDN promotion becomes part of the solution provided, strengthening the positive image of the institution and providing added value to followers. This strategy allows @anone033 to combine personal interactions with educational promotions, creating an environment where the audience feels valued and heard. When followers feel they are getting adequate answers and relevant solutions, they are more likely to trust and consider IPDN as a good choice. This can also increase interest and further participation from prospective students, encouraging them to seek more information or even register with IPDN. Thus, by reaching out to the audience with responsive interactions and providing solutions integrated with IPDN promotions, @anone033 not only builds a closer relationship with followers but also strengthens IPDN's reputation and appeal in the eyes of prospective students and the general public. This strategy proves that active and relevant engagement on social media can be a very effective tool in marketing and promoting educational institutions. This strategy combines personal interactions with product promotions, creating an environment where the audience feels valued and heard, while also receiving relevant and useful product recommendations. The result is deeper and more meaningful engagement, which can lead to increased trust in the influencer and the brands they support, as well as encourage higher actions such as purchases or further participation from the audience. Thus, reaching out to the audience through responsive interactions and solutions integrated with product promotions is an effective approach that can strengthen the relationship between the influencer, followers, and the promoted brand.

Promotion With Videos

"…….So my way to recommend the audience, how do I make FYP, I usually package it in the form of information. So at the beginning I give information, tips or registration, I give important things, then continue with video promotion. So if we promote directly, usually no one watches, so the audience is less interested, like there is something they are not looking for. Maybe with the information I give, they usually watch my video until the end. Well, I use a strategy concept like that to make it busy……………",(Rahmad, 2024)

"…….Usually I use the items and don't use them for VT and there are many people asking. I also gave them a yellow basket…………", (Chinta, 2024)

It is important to understand that the informant's approach in creating videos that are needed by the audience first, before including product promotions, is an effective strategy in attracting and retaining the audience's attention. This approach is known as value-driven content. Both the @chintakharisma and @anone033 accounts use this method to build strong relationships with their followers by first providing relevant, informative, and useful content. For @chintakharisma, who acts as a brand ambassador for @ayucitrahijab, providing fashion tutorials, hijab styling tips, or discussions about fashion trends before promoting specific hijab products allows followers to directly benefit from the content. Thus, the audience feels valued and cared for, and this builds trust and a more personal relationship. Once the audience is satisfied with the content provided, they are more open and interested when @chintakharisma then introduces hijab products from @ayucitrahijab as part of the solution or recommendation. Similarly, @anone033, which promotes the Institute of Domestic Government (IPDN), can provide educational content about the student admissions process, tips for success in the IPDN entrance test, or a guide to campus life. By providing useful and relevant information, @anone033 helps prospective students and parents better understand IPDN. This creates greater trust and interest before directly promoting specific programs or facilities offered by IPDN.

This approach is effective because audiences tend to be skeptical of direct promotions that feel like advertising. Helpful and relevant content naturally attracts their attention and builds a sense of trust and credibility towards the influencer and the product or institution they represent. When audiences feel they are getting more value from content that is not solely focused on selling, they are more likely to be open to promotional messages that are included later. This results in higher engagement rates and a more positive response to the product or institution being promoted.

Thus, the strategy of creating videos that are needed by the audience first before including product videos can increase audience interest and engagement, as well as strengthen the effectiveness of digital marketing campaigns for both @chintakharisma and @anone033.

Explaining the Product to the Fullest

"…….To improve a product, I usually investigate first how the product is, whether the product is guaranteed or not. For example, maybe there is an endorsement from a tutoring center, so I investigate first what the tutoring center is like, then when we have a dialogue, what are the benefits of tutoring here, what are the things that are not obtained from other tutoring centers. Well, I make sure first if the data they provide or the data in the field is good, then I approve it. So that I can explain what the benefits of tutoring here are and its benefits and that can support the increase in a product….. ",(Rahmad, 2024)

"…..If I usually show the product, so I use the product and there are people who ask….." (Chinta, 2024)

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Understanding the informant's strategy in increasing the promotion of a product is the key to revealing the effectiveness of a digital marketing campaign. This strategy begins with conducting in-depth research on the product to be promoted. First, the informant must clearly understand the features and specifications of the product. This knowledge includes all technical and functional aspects of the product, allowing the informant to provide accurate and detailed information to the audience. The informant must identify the main benefits of the product. This involves not only the practical benefits that are directly felt by the user, but also the emotional or social added value that the product can offer. By understanding these benefits, the informant can communicate why the product is worth considering and how it can meet the needs or solve the audience's problems. The informant needs to conduct a comparative analysis with other similar products on the market. This involves assessing the advantages and disadvantages of the product compared to competitors. By knowing these differences, the informant can highlight the unique features and competitive advantages of the product they are promoting. This knowledge allows the informant to clearly differentiate the product and provide a strong reason why the audience should choose the product over other alternatives. With a combination of in-depth understanding of product features, key benefits, and differentiation from other products, the informant can design a strong and effective marketing message. They can create content that is not only informative but also persuasive, which communicates the value of the product to the fullest. For example, in the promotion of hijab products by @chintakharisma, she can explain the premium materials used, the comfort offered, and how the hijab design is different and superior to other brands. While @anone033 can explain the uniqueness of the educational program at IPDN, the career benefits offered, and the significant differences from other educational institutions. This strategy allows informants to build trust with the audience because they are not just promoting products haphazardly, but providing information based on in-depth research and analysis. This not only increases the credibility of the influencer but also increases the audience's interest and trust in the promoted product, which can ultimately drive increased sales and customer loyalty.

Through Comments On Videos And Live

"……So maybe when I make a video they ask in the comments column, it is also my material to reach the audience, then the audience sometimes asks when I do a live broadcast on the TikTok platform and that is also my media to reach or interact with the audience….", (Rahmad, 2024)

"……If the comment is not good, I just leave it and don't respond……", (Chinta, 2024)

Informants' interactions with their audience in the comments section of videos or during TikTok live sessions are crucial strategies in building strong, authentic relationships with their followers. These interactions involve responding directly to questions, comments, and feedback from their audience, which has several profound benefits. First, interacting with their audience in the comments section shows that the influencer values and cares about their followers. This creates a sense of inclusion and attention, making their audience feel valued and heard. When followers feel acknowledged, they are more likely to build loyalty and trust in the influencer, which can strengthen long-term relationships. Second, live interaction sessions such as TikTok live give informants the opportunity to communicate in real-time with their audience. This allows for a more dynamic two-way dialogue, where informants can answer questions directly, provide clarification, and show their personal side. Live sessions also provide an opportunity to capture nuances of expression and emotion that can't always be conveyed through written comments. For example, @anone033 can use TikTok live to explain the IPDN admissions process in detail, or to answer specific questions from prospective students, providing a sense of direct and deep engagement. Third, these interactions help informants gather direct feedback from their audience. This information is invaluable because it can be used to understand the needs, preferences, and concerns of the audience. By knowing what matters to their followers, informants can tailor their content and marketing strategies to be more relevant and effective. For example, if many of @chintakharisma's followers ask questions about skin-friendly hijab materials, she can highlight that aspect in her next content or provide more information about the materials used in @ayucitrahijab's hijab products. Fourth, interactions in the comments section and TikTok Live can also increase engagement metrics on the platform. TikTok's algorithm tends to promote content that gets a lot of interactions, including likes, comments, and shares. By actively engaging with followers, informants can increase the visibility of their content, reach a wider audience, and attract more new followers.

Overall, engaging with the audience in the comments section and during TikTok Live is not just about answering questions or providing information. It is an integral part of a broader digital marketing strategy, which aims to build a strong community, increase follower loyalty, and gather feedback that can be used to optimize content and marketing campaigns. These interactions create a more personal and authentic experience, which is especially important in the era of social media being overloaded with information and choice.

TikTok FYP Strategy
TikTok Upload Time

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"So for the time so that many people watch it, I usually upload it during my office break at 12 o'clock if not when I go home from work at 5 o'clock if not at 6 pm. Usually I upload it in the morning at 9 am" (Rahmad, 2024)

"There isn't any, so far when the content is ready to be uploaded, we just share it straight away…." (Chinta, 2024)

According to the results of the interview conducted by the researcher with the informant, that according to him there is a special time to upload videos to increase the number of people watching the video after it is uploaded. TikTok Upload Time is an important strategy used by content creators to determine the optimal time to upload videos in order to reach a larger audience and increase the chances of their content appearing on TikTok's For You Page (FYP). The right upload time is key to maximizing content visibility as it ensures that videos are uploaded when the target audience is active and engaged with the platform. Data analysis and understanding of TikTok user behavior helps content creators identify peak times when users tend to be more active, such as in the morning before work hours, during lunch breaks, and in the evening after dinner.

Choosing the right time to upload content also involves considering factors such as the target audience's local time zone, user demographics, and ongoing content trends. Additionally, using TikTok's feature that allows upload scheduling can also help content creators plan the optimal upload time, especially if they have an audience spread across different time zones.

By paying attention to TikTok Upload Time, content creators can increase the chances of their content appearing on the FYP, which is key to increasing their visibility, engagement, and growth on the platform. Thus, a deep understanding of upload time is an important strategy for TikTok content creators to maximize their impact and success on the platform.

Focus on 1 Theme

"So my tip is to improve the quality of the content, with good quality content with a good concept, don't mix your content, you focus on just 1 theme, that can increase the audience. For example, I'm currently focusing on educational content, so my content is about education, right?" (Rahmad, 2024)

According to the results of the author's interview with the Informant, focusing on just 1 theme when making videos on TikTok will improve the quality of the content so that it can be easily remembered by the audience. Focusing on a single theme in TikTok content is an important strategy used by creators to strengthen their brand identity, attract a more relatable audience, and build stronger engagement. By choosing one main theme or consistent topic in their content, creators can explore the subject in depth, create a consistent narrative, and build strong brand awareness among their followers. Focusing on a single theme also allows creators to reach a more specific and engaged audience, as consistent and focused content has a greater appeal to those who have a particular interest and affinity for the topic. Furthermore, focusing on a single theme allows creators to become an authority in the field, building trust and credibility among their followers. It also makes it easier for followers to identify content that is relevant to their interests and increases the likelihood that they will engage and interact with it. By maintaining consistency in theme, creators can create deeper and more sustainable relationships with their followers, which in turn can lead to steady growth in their follower count and content engagement on TikTok. Thus, focusing on a single theme is an effective strategy in building a personal or business brand on TikTok and achieving broader marketing and communication goals.

Good Content Quality

"……Actually, it's like this, if the content on TikTok is good, it can reach the audience, but maybe adding good content, clear videos, clear audio can definitely increase viewers too……",(Rahmad, 2024)

It turns out that to support many viewers watching, the video quality and audio quality must be clear so that later it can be recommended by TikTok for a wider reach. Good content quality is one of the key elements in a creator's success on TikTok. High-quality content not only grabs users' attention, but also keeps them engaged and builds a strong relationship with their audience. High-quality content has several characteristics, including compelling visuals, a strong narrative, relevance to user trends or interests, and unique originality. Compelling visuals include the use of visual effects, creative editing, and aesthetic composition, all of which can grab users' attention as they scroll through their feeds.

In addition, content with a strong narrative is able to convey a message or story clearly and hold users' attention throughout the duration of the video. A strong narrative can come in the form of comedy, useful information, or strong emotion, depending on the creator's goal and style of content. Relevance to user trends or interests is key to ensuring that content has a strong appeal to the target audience. High-quality content should also have an element of originality that sets it apart from similar content on the platform.

Overall, high-quality content on TikTok is content that is able to entertain, educate, or inspire users, while maintaining a high level of visual and narrative quality. This type of content tends to get positive responses from users in the form of likes, comments, and shares, which in turn can increase the visibility of the content and expand the reach of the content creator on TikTok. Therefore, focusing on content quality is an important strategy for content creators who want to succeed and grow on this platform.

The Road to Legitimate Engagement for Social Media Influencers Followers

Consistent

"…….So I try to be consistent in this field and making videos requires effort in my opinion……..", (Rahmad, 2024)

"…….The TikTok algorithm is unpredictable, but it is consistent, yes, sometimes VT is less interesting or difficult to understand…..", (Chinta, 2024)

According to the results of interviews with informants, being consistent in the field of making videos and making videos with effort will maximize our content so that it minimizes our videos from not being on FYP. Consistency is one of the key factors in a creator's success on TikTok. Consistency means uploading content regularly, maintaining a consistent style and theme, and providing a reliable experience for followers. Consistent creators demonstrate their commitment to the platform and their audience, which can strengthen the bond between creator and followers, and build trust in the long run.

By maintaining consistency in their upload schedule, creators can ensure that their audience stays engaged and engaged on a regular basis. Followers will expect new content from creators they like, and consistency in uploads helps meet this expectation. Additionally, consistency in content style and theme helps strengthen a creator's brand identity or personal character, making it easier for followers to identify and connect with their content amidst the vast amount of content available on TikTok.

Consistency also has a positive impact on the TikTok algorithm. The TikTok algorithm tends to prioritize content from consistent creators, as this indicates that the content has the potential to retain follower engagement over a longer period of time. As such, content from consistent creators has a greater chance of appearing on the For You Page (FYP) and reaching a wider audience.

By maintaining consistency in their uploads, creators can build a strong following, increase the visibility of their content, and create a lasting relationship with their audience on TikTok. Therefore, consistency is an important strategy for creators who want to succeed and grow on the platform.

Privilege

"……Well, you all have privileges because you are IPDN students, you can motivate, you can provide information to those who need it……..", (Rahmad, 2024)

Privilege is also important in this case for branding and making people more confident when making videos. Privilege plays a significant role in building brand image and fostering self-confidence among individuals when creating videos, particularly in the context of social media platforms like TikTok. In this case, privilege refers to the advantages or benefits afforded to certain individuals or groups due to factors such as social status, access to resources, or existing visibility. When it comes to brand building and content creation, privilege can manifest itself in a number of ways. First, privileged individuals may have access to better resources, including high-quality equipment, professional editing software, or even mentorship opportunities, which can significantly improve the production value and overall quality of their videos. These advantages can contribute to building a strong and visually appealing brand presence, ultimately attracting more viewers and followers. Additionally, privilege often entails existing visibility or social capital, which can give individuals a head start in building their personal brand image on platforms like TikTok.

Those who already enjoy a certain level of privilege may find it easier to gain attention, engagement, and recognition from their audience due to their pre-existing network or social status. This visibility can serve as a confidence booster, encouraging individuals to create content more assertively and with greater confidence. Additionally, privilege can impact the perception of credibility and authority associated with a brand or content creator. Individuals who are perceived as having privilege may be viewed as more credible or trustworthy by their audience, leading to increased trust among viewers when engaging with their videos. This trust can play a significant role in building a loyal and supportive community around a brand, further enhancing its reputation and influence. In conclusion, privilege plays a significant role in branding and content creation on platforms like TikTok by providing individuals with advantages such as access to resources, visibility, and perceived credibility. Recognizing and leveraging privilege can empower content creators to develop a strong and authentic brand identity, instill trust in their audience, and ultimately establish a meaningful presence in the digital landscape. However, it is important to acknowledge the importance of promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion to ensure that opportunities are accessible to all individuals, regardless of their background or level of privilege.

Make Videos with Effort

"…..Making videos requires effort in my opinion, it can affect when on FYP. So, I once made a video that didn't make an effort, it was actually difficult to FYP……", (Rahmad, 2024)

"……As creative as possible and we must have personal branding……", (Chinta, 2024)

According to the results of interviews with informants, making videos with effort is easier to FYP than making videos carelessly. Creating videos with effort involves dedication and creativity to produce high-quality content that captivates the

audience. In the context of digital content production such as on the TikTok platform, creating videos with effort is not just the process of recording and uploading, but encompasses the entire content creation process, from planning to execution. Videos made with effort are characterized by compelling narratives, skillful visuals, and careful editing, all of which contribute to capturing the attention of the audience and building a strong connection with the content. One important aspect of creating videos with effort is crafting a compelling narrative or concept to capture the audience's attention from the start.

This can involve brainstorming ideas, writing dialogue scripts, or planning the overall structure of the video to ensure coherence and impact. By investing time and energy in developing a compelling story or theme, content creators can increase the entertainment value of their videos and leave a lasting impression on the audience. Additionally, creating videos with effort often involves attention to production quality and aesthetics. This includes considerations such as camera angles, lighting, sound design, and visual effects, all of which contribute to the overall look and feel of the video. By prioritizing these elements and striving for a professional end result, content creators can increase the perceived value of their content and increase its appeal to the audience. Additionally, editing plays a vital role in creating a video with effort. Skillful editing techniques, such as smooth transitions, creative cuts, and dynamic pacing, can enhance the narrative and visual impact of a video. Creators can also incorporate music, sound effects, or additional text to enhance the viewer's experience and convey additional layers of meaning or emotion. Overall, creating a video with effort involves a combination of creativity, skill, and attention to detail to produce engaging and entertaining content. By investing time and energy in crafting a compelling narrative, improving production quality, and implementing effective editing techniques, creators can create videos that stand out in a sea of digital content and sink into the minds and experiences of viewers.

Marketing yourself

"…….Sometimes I am invited as a resource person in webinars or seminars, then I have filled the material boothcamp in several tutoring centers, that's also how I build my personal branding………",(Rahmad, 2024)

"….In my opinion, the tip for increasing followers is that you have to have personal branding…..",(Chinta, 2024)

According to the results of interviews with informants, building personal branding can be done by coming when invited to be a resource person or filling an event so that it can be known by more people. Self-marketing is the process of promoting and building one's personal or professional brand, and TikTok is a powerful platform to do so. In the context of TikTok, self-marketing involves creating content that reflects one's unique personality, interests, skills, or expertise to attract an audience.

Through creative and authentic videos, individuals can build awareness of their personal brand, attract followers, and expand their professional network. Self-marketing strategies on TikTok often involve sharing informative, entertaining, or inspiring content, allowing individuals to stand out and differentiate themselves from millions of other users. Additionally, TikTok provides a variety of creative features such as special effects, filters, and sounds that allow individuals to express themselves in unique and engaging ways. By harnessing the power of TikTok's creativity and broad reach, individuals can build a strong reputation, attract job opportunities or partnerships, and develop an influential personal brand in the digital world.

Electronic Word of Mouth

Sharing And Tagging

"……Yes, often, sometimes I tag my friends related to me giving information, motivation, and of course videos about selling to them and also now TikTok has a feature to share with friends. It's like you watch my video, you can also share my video with your friends, so they often comment and share with their friends….." (Rahmad, 2024)

"……so that everything you share will be awaited and people will repost vt…" (Chinta, 2024)

The audience's frequent tagging and sharing with their friends is an important indicator of the effectiveness of the content and engagement strategy implemented by the informant. This practice not only expands the reach of the content, but also has several profound implications that can affect the success of a digital marketing campaign. When viewers tag and share content with their friends, it shows that the content has value that is considered important or interesting enough to be shared. It shows that the content is relevant, interesting, and triggers a strong emotional or intellectual response. For influencers like @anone033 and @chintakharisma, this is a sign that their content strategy has succeeded in attracting attention and resonance among their followers. The act of tagging and sharing also serves as a form of social proof. When someone shares content with their friends, they are implicitly giving a personal recommendation for the content. This recommendation is very influential because it comes from someone the recipient trusts. In the context of promoting a product or institution, this recommendation can be much more effective than direct advertising because it comes from a source that is considered more neutral and trustworthy. Tags and shares help in expanding the organic reach of the content. The algorithms of social media platforms like TikTok often give preference to content that gets a lot of interaction, including tags and shares. Thus, when viewers frequently tag and share content, it can increase the visibility of that content on the platform, reaching a wider audience without the need

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for additional investment in paid advertising. This is crucial for influencers to maximize the impact of their content and reach more potential followers. It also creates an opportunity to build a stronger, more connected community. When content is shared among friends, it sparks further discussion and interaction among them, which can deepen engagement and connection with the content and influencer. For example, content shared by @anone033 about her experience at IPDN or hijab tutorial content from @chintakharisma can spark further conversations among friends who share similar interests or needs.

Finally, analyzing tag and share patterns can provide influencers with valuable insights into their audience's demographics and preferences. Knowing who tags whom, as well as the types of content that are shared most often, can help influencers identify specific trends and needs among their audience segments. This information can be used to refine their content strategy, ensuring that they continue to produce content that is relevant and engaging for their audience. Overall, the practice of viewers tagging and sharing content with their friends is a key element in a successful digital marketing strategy. This not only extends the reach of the content but also increases the trust, engagement, and relevance of the content in the eyes of the audience. For influencers and marketers, understanding and leveraging this dynamic is essential to optimize the impact of their campaigns.

Responding to Negative Responses

"…..If it's insults, I usually delete it, if it's not like that, I don't reply. If it's really excessive, sometimes I respond, but if the conversation doesn't find a middle ground, I just block it, I delete his comment and then I block it. Thank God, there haven't been any complaints about the products I sell………" (Rahmad, 2024)

"….In my opinion, the number of comments is not unimportant but rather has no influence / because some people give more to the like button if there is content / vt fyp on their homepage…", (Chinta, 2024)

Understanding how to handle negative responses to videos created by informants is key to managing their reputation and maintaining positive relationships with their audiences. Negative responses are an inevitable part of being on social media, where opinions and reactions can vary. How informants respond to criticism or negative comments can greatly affect public perception and the continued engagement of their audience. It is important for informants not to respond emotionally to negative criticism. Responding calmly and professionally shows that they have self-control and can handle criticism maturely. This also helps prevent the situation from escalating into a larger conflict in the public space. For example, if @anone033 receives criticism about the information conveyed regarding IPDN, he can respond by thanking the feedback and providing clarification or additional information that is more accurate. Informants should use constructive criticism as an opportunity for improvement. Identifying valid points in criticism can help them understand areas where they can improve their content or delivery. By showing that they are open to feedback and committed to continuous learning and growth, informants can build an image as professionals who are focused on improving quality. For example, @chintakharisma can use feedback about the style or format of a video to create content that better suits her followers' preferences.

Transparency and honesty in responding to criticism are essential. If there is an error or mistake in a video, acknowledging it and showing an effort to fix it can increase audience trust. Transparency shows integrity and sincerity, which are highly valued by followers. For example, if @anone033 makes an error in information about IPDN, she can immediately correct it and provide a correct update, showing that she takes responsibility for the content she shares. Focusing on positive comments and building a supportive community is also an important strategy. Directing attention and energy to audiences who provide support and appreciation helps create a positive and empowering environment. This does not mean ignoring criticism, but rather balancing attention so that it is not too burdened by negative responses. By interacting more with followers who provide support, informants can strengthen positive bonds within their community. In some cases, if negative comments contain personal attacks or are not constructive, informants can use the platform's moderation features to manage these comments. Removing or reporting comments that violate community guidelines can maintain a safe and positive environment for all followers. Thus, responding to negative responses well and wisely involves a combination of calm, openness to improvement, transparency, a focus on positive support, and the use of moderation when necessary. This approach not only helps maintain the reputation and trust of the audience, but also strengthens the professional and integrity image of the informant, as demonstrated by @anone033 and @chintakharisma in their activities on social media.

Responding To Positive Responses

"……Usually there are people who ask about books, then I recommend them, so I make a video from their questions and then there will definitely be someone who buys from there…….." (Rahmad, 2024)

"……There is definitely a way to repost/repost VT, there is also a way to invite or recommend products to friends…..", (Chinta, 2024)

The strategy of influencers in responding to audience questions about products and then recommending them through videos is important in the context of digital marketing and consumer behavior. When followers or audiences ask about a

particular product, it indicates an interest and need for deeper information. Informants take advantage of this moment to provide relevant product recommendations, which not only answer the individual's question but also have the potential to influence the purchasing decisions of the wider audience. This process begins when followers ask questions about the product, for example about its functionality, quality, or how to use it. Informants such as @anone033 and @chintakharisma then respond by creating videos detailing the product's features, benefits, and how to use it. In the video, they can provide live demonstrations, personal testimonials, or even stories of other users' experiences. This visual and narrative content helps the audience understand the product better and see the practical value and real benefits it offers. By creating recommendation videos, influencers not only provide answers to the individual asking questions, but also create content that can be accessed by all their followers. This expands the impact of a single question into a message that reaches a larger audience. This technique leverages the psychological principle of "social proof," where people tend to follow the actions of others, especially if those actions are recommended by someone they trust or admire. When @anone033 explains the benefits of an educational product at IPDN or @chintakharisma promotes a hijab from @ayucitrahijab by giving a positive review, their followers are likely to be influenced by the review and are more likely to consider purchasing the recommended product. In addition, this strategy strengthens the informant's image as a trusted source who provides recommendations based on their knowledge and experience. Audiences tend to appreciate useful and authentic information, delivered in a transparent and convincing manner. By answering questions and providing recommendations through videos, informants build a closer relationship with their followers, increase engagement rates, and strengthen loyalty to the brand or product being promoted.

Overall, this strategy is effective because it creates content that is not only informative but also persuasive, leveraging the power of visual media to reinforce messages and influence audience purchasing behavior. By providing product recommendations through videos, influencers like @anone033 and @chintakharisma can maximize the reach and impact of their communications, encouraging their audiences to trust more and ultimately purchase the products they promote.

Triangulation of Theory
Social Media Influencer
1. Reaching the audience by answering audience comments and providing solutions to the audience's questions, then inserting the products being promoted.
2. Promotion with Video, by providing information needed by the audience and then inserting the products owned.
3. Explaining the product to the maximum, before being able to explain the product to the maximum, first investigate the product to be promoted first.
4. Through comments on videos and live, informants interact with the audience in the video comments column or even on their TikTok live

Based on Research Pop, R. A., Săplăcan, Z., Dabija, D. C., & Alt, (2022) A trusted Influencer can direct consumers to accept advice and make purchases of the goods they promote through social media. There are 3 factors that a social media influencer must have, namely : R each - The ability to deliver content to the target audience, R elevance - The strength of the connection to the brand or topic, R esonance - The ability to direct the desired behavior of the audience.

TikTok FYP Strategy
Interview results with Rahmad Firdansyah Regarding TikTok's FYP Strategy which are set as follows:
1. There is a separate time to upload videos on TikTok to increase the number of people watching the video after it is uploaded.
2. Focusing on just 1 theme when making videos on TikTok will improve the quality of the content so that it can be easily remembered by the audience.
3. Good content quality so the video and audio quality must be clear so that later it can be recommended by TikTok for a wider reach
4. Privilege is also important in this case for branding and making people more confident when making videos.
5. Consistency in the field of video making and making videos with effort will maximize our content so that it minimizes our videos from not being on FYP
6. Making videos with effort like that is easier to FYP than making careless videos.
Building personal branding to be better known to many people
Based on relevant research conducted by Romero Moreno, (2020) on Avan who explained that by maintaining consistency in uploading content regularly, maintaining video quality and also actively providing comments on his own uploads and uploads from other content creators. This is not only a form of appreciation, but also a strategy to maintain its existence on TikTok and TikTok (FYP).

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Electronic Word of Mouth

1. Audience Shares TikTok Videos and tags their friends
2. Responds to negative responses and is wise in responding to them
3. Responds to audience comments which are then recommended with products

Based on research conducted by Arenas-Márquez, F. J., Martínez-Torres, M. D. R., & Toral, (2021) Influencers have a very vital role in forming Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) in society, which can ultimately improve brand perception. This is the focus of a study that aims to explore the contribution of influencers in the eWOM process to improve brand perception. As described in previous studies, eWOM is known to have a significant impact on the marketing realm. When this marketing strategy is implemented on social media platforms, its positive impact becomes even more visible. Entrepreneurs acknowledge that positive eWOM is key to the success of their business, especially in the digital environment.

Findings
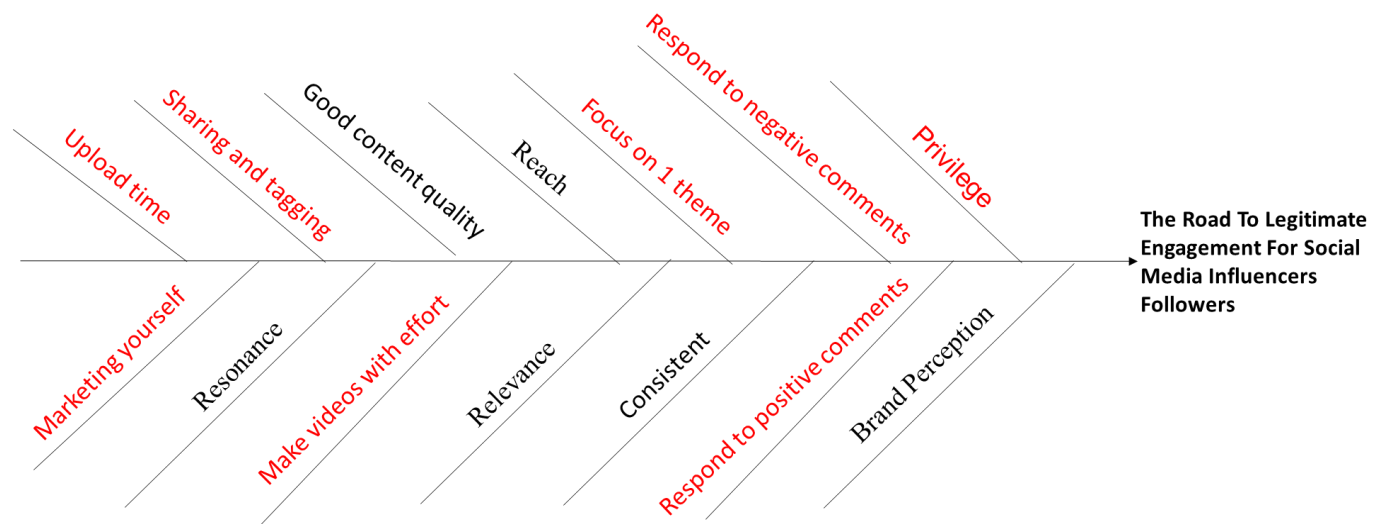
Source: researcher's findings, 2024

In this study it was found that:

1. Upload Time

On the TikTok account @anone033 there are several specific hours for video upload hours so that the video is faster for FYP such as at 12 o'clock, 5 o'clock or 6 pm and 9 am.

Prime Time is the best time to upload content to get higher engagement. The time to upload content is related to the type of content. For example, content with horror and sexual topics is better uploaded at night, while cooking content is more suitable to be uploaded in the morning or afternoon according to cooking productivity hours. OOTD content or fashion styles are more appropriate to be uploaded when someone is getting ready to go to the office or college.

2. Marketing Yourself

In building personal branding there may be many ways, one of which is Rahmad Firdansya using the method of coming to seminars that invite him and he fills the seminar events as a resource person.

Like a brand on a product that reflects the value and position of the product, a person's personal branding also needs to be promoted and marketed to the public, which is often referred to as "marketing yourself."

3. Make videos with effort

That making videos with effort or being serious in making the video will increase the chance of getting FYP TikTok compared to making the video carelessly.

4. Focus on 1 Theme

Making videos that are more concentrated on just 1 theme will make it easier for TikTok to suggest to the audience and make it easier for the TikTok algorithm to recognize, so that the audience can also recognize what the content is about.

5. Privilege

Privilege in this case is a plus. In the TikTok account @anone033, he has the privilege of being a graduate of the IPDN cadets so that the audience who wants to enter the civil service school trusts and believes in the video content he makes.

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Privilege means special privileges that are only owned by certain individuals or groups. This is usually due to the position or wealth they have.

6. Sharing and Tag

On Rahmad Firdansyah's TikTok account, the audience has the initiative to share videos or tag their friends who need information or even need the product being promoted

7. Responding to Positive Comments

There are several audiences who ask about education such as Rahmad Firdansyah's learning method, then comments like that are made into video materials by first providing information and then inserting products that are relevant to the question. So that from that video many audiences transact because they are satisfied with the video.

8. Responding to Negative Comments

It is undeniable that there are also negative comments. Their responds to them well and wisely, such as replying politely if they do not find a middle ground, then deletes the negative comment or even blocks the account so that the account that commented negatively cannot comment anymore and Rahmad Firdansyah can maintain his good account name and negative comments can also make it develop better if the comments are not blasphemous or degrading.

Hate speech contradicts the concept of politeness in language and communication ethics. Identified several factors that drive someone to make hate speech, including personal emotional problems, fake news, and even just for entertainment. Cases of hate speech that appear on social media vary widely.

VI. CONCLUSION

By focusing on the role of social media influencers, especially @anone033 and @chintakharisma, in promoting products and institutions on the TikTok platform, this study makes an important contribution to the understanding of today's digital marketing dynamics. Our findings highlight effective strategies in building engagement and trust with audiences, including the use of value-based content, direct interaction with followers, and providing product recommendations. We found that these strategies not only increase follower engagement but can also drive significant purchase actions. Thus, this study provides a deeper understanding of how social media influencers can be valuable partners for brands and institutions in achieving their marketing goals in the digital era. By highlighting the importance of relevant content strategies, direct interactions, and strong community building, this study provides practical guidance for digital marketing practitioners to harness the full potential of influencer partnerships.

SUGGESTION

For social media influencers, it is recommended to continue to strengthen interactions with their followers. Building closer relationships with audiences can increase engagement, trust, and loyalty, which in turn can increase the impact of the content shared. In addition, influencers also need to continue to pay attention to the quality of the content they produce. Relevant, useful, and authentic content will attract more followers and have the potential to go viral. Finally, collaborating with brands or institutions that are in line with their values and interests can also be an effective strategy to expand reach and obtain beneficial collaboration opportunities.For further researchers, it is recommended to continue this research with a deeper focus on the interaction between influencers and audiences, and its impact on consumer behavior. Further research can also explore the role of influencers in specific industries or different geographic contexts. In addition, further research can consider the long-term effects of influencer partnerships on brand image and customer loyalty. By deepening the understanding of these dynamics, further research can provide broader and deeper insights into the influence of influencers in digital marketing.

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ATTACHMENT

Question Guidance

Topic	Question
Social Media Influencers	1. Communication Methods
	2. Ability to Disseminate Information
	3. Influence the Purchasing Decisions of Others
	4. Authority,
	5. Knowledge,
	6. Position or Relationship with Their Audience.
	7. Collaboration to Achieve Marketing Goals
	8. Promoting Brands Through Their Personal Lives
	9. Focus on Specific Target Markets
	10. Reach - The Ability to Deliver Content to Target Audiences.
	11. Relevance - The Strength of Connection to a Brand or Topic.
	12. Resonance - The Ability to Drive Desired Behavior from Audiences
Electronic Word of Mouth	13. Communication Channels Expanded To One-To-Many, One-To-One, Or Many-To-Many
	14. Increased Audience Both Positive And Negative Electronic Word Of Mouth Because It Becomes Globally Accessible
	15. Allows Sharing Between Strangers While Traditional- Ally Word Of Mouth Refers To Opinions From Friends And Family.

	16. Electronic Word Of Mouth Can Be Spread Across Multiple Channels, Some Of Which Allow Online Anonymity
	17. Has Overcome The Transience Of Traditional Word Of Mouth Because It Can Be Collected And Preserved