

The Role of Creative Content in Digital Marketing Strategies in Educational Institution Social Media (Case Study: Instagram of Vocational Education Program, Universitas Indonesia) [†]

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Abstract: The development of the digital and creative industry today opens up more opportunities to carry out marketing activities, both products and services; especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced us all to switch to digital platforms. Social media still plays an important role in the digital marketing process. Currently, social media marketing is no longer carried out by the creative industry, but also by government agencies, organizations, private companies, and educational institutions, including the Vocational Education Program at the Universitas Indonesia. One of the social media that is actively used is Instagram. Instagram is the primary social media used, in addition to other social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Mostly, the UI Vocational Education Program Instagram contents were still in photo or image format. The other content formats are needed and expected to increase engagement with the audience. With the increasing variety of social media and competition with other educational institutions, marketing content that is published also needs to be made creatively to attract audiences consuming the content. This study will discuss the role of creative content in the marketing strategies of social media educational institutions. The research was conducted qualitatively through literature study and observation. Not only explaining the importance of the role of creative content, this research will also explain what details should be in the creative content.

Keywords: creative content; social media; educational institution; digital marketing



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1. Introduction

In today's digital era, the rapid growth in communication and information technology has contributed to the development of the internet. Based on the survey results (Figure 1) of the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) in January 2022, the internet penetration rate in Indonesia reaches 77.02% or around 210 million people from the total population of 272.68 million Indonesians in 2021. Around 98.02% users use the Internet to access social media [1].

Along with these developments, the Internet can also be used as marketing communications. According to Kotler and Keller [2], marketing communication is where companies or institutions try to notify and remind consumers directly or indirectly about the products and brands being sold. Today's marketing communications also take advantage of new media by adapting the internet as an alternative to increase the awareness of potential consumers. Marketing with the use of information technology that is growing rapidly in the current digital era is known as digital marketing. Marketing communication is the mix definition of marketing communication with digital marketing, which is a means and

process by which business actors, inform, persuade, and remind consumers about products and services sold through digital media, such as the internet and social media.

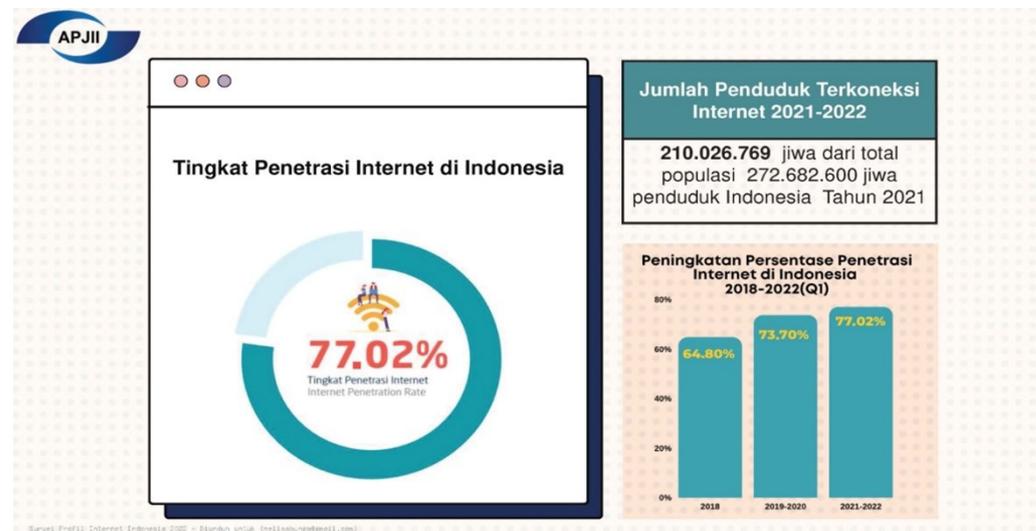


Figure 1. Penetration rate in Indonesia in 2022.

Companies or institutions must have various strategies that will be carried out when implementing marketing communications so that each set target can be achieved. According to the Indonesian Digital Marketing Association, there are at least 10 types of digital marketing that can be applied in business activities, including:

- Content marketing;
- Search engine optimization (SEO);
- Search engine marketing (SEM);
- Social media marketing (SMM);
- Pay-per-click advertising;
- Affiliate marketing;
- E-mail marketing;
- Instant messaging marketing;
- Radio marketing;
- Television advertising.

In Indonesia, the expenditure made by companies or institutions to use digital marketing strategies as their marketing communications reaches around 2.12 billion US dollars which is depicted in Figure 2 [3]. Many digital marketing strategies are carried out by various agencies, ranging from government agencies, private sector, media, to educational institutions.

In educational institutions, especially in universities, prospective students are the main target of digital marketing. In this case, the Vocational Education Program, Universitas Indonesia (hereinafter referred to as UI Vocational) uses a digital marketing strategy in the form of social media marketing to increase the awareness of the target market. UI Vocational has various marketing tools, such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Spotify. One of the marketing tools highlighted in this research is Instagram. According to Miles, Instagram is a very effective tool to attain a large number of consumers [4]. They also found that Instagram is a user-friendly and easy-to-use social media platform for marketing. This is because Instagram can be used as social media in general, does not require special skills, and is able to cut operational time and costs.

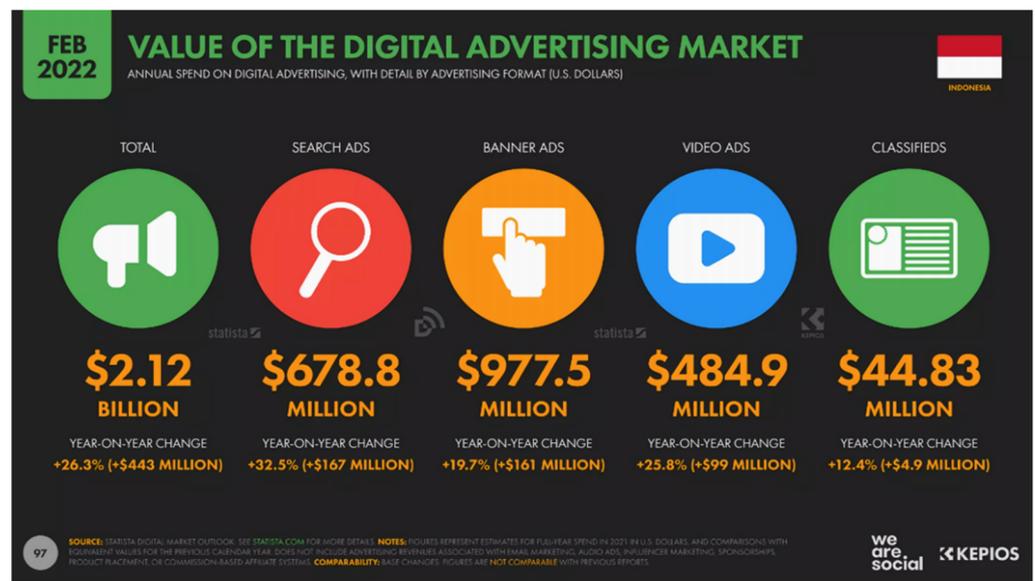


Figure 2. Value of the digital advertising market in Indonesia, 2022.

The use of Instagram as the main social media by UI Vocational is based on business of apps data quoted by Databoks Katadata. In the first quarter of 2022, the number of Instagram users increased rapidly to reach 1.96 billion people [5]. These data show the popularity of Instagram, which will have an impact on the content coverage, content distribution, and the possibility of the message being received by the audience.

Figure 3 is UI Vocational’s official Instagram account (@vokasi_ui (accessed on 1 October 2022)) [6]. Currently, it has more than 12 thousand followers and more than 1500 posts. Based on this data, Instagram is used as the main marketing communication medium with various types of published content.



Figure 3. The official Instagram of the UI Vocational Education Program.

Figure 4 is Data analytics of UI Vocational’s official Instagram account per October 2022. Segmentation, targeting, and positioning of UI Vocational’s official Instagram account are young boys and girls with an average age range of 18–24 years who are looking for a lot of information about further education after high school; cheerful, up-to-date, active, and want to choose UI as their campus. In content production, UI Vocational considers its target audience, competitors (vocational education at other universities), determination of the upload times, and marketing needs. Based on Instagram analysis data, the UI Vocational’s Instagram audience is dominated by women as much as 62.2% and men as much as 37.8%. The age of most of the followers is in the range of 18–24 years by 55.1%.

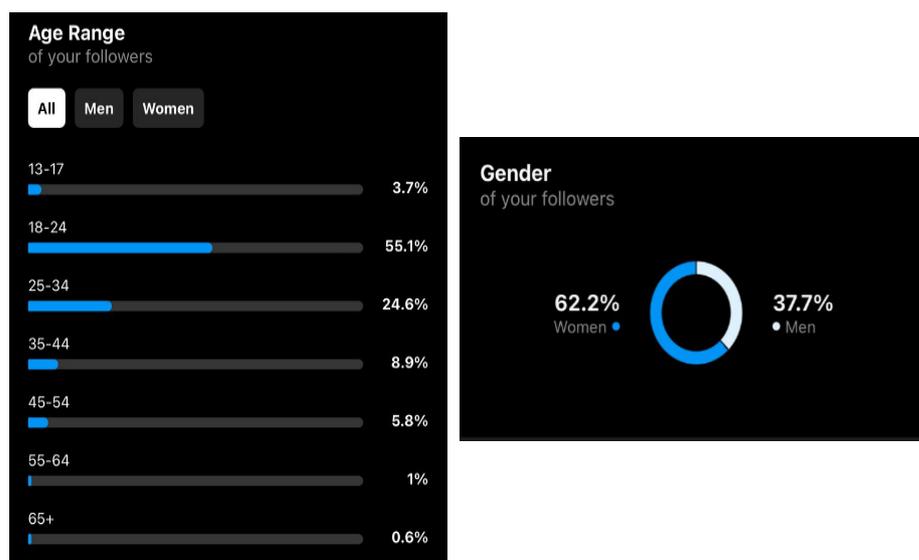


Figure 4. Data analytics of UI Vocational’s official Instagram account per October 2022. The data show the distribution of gender and age range of followers.

According to Mandibergh [7], social media is a medium that accommodates collaboration between users or content creators (user-generated content). Thus, the use of social media as a forum for digital marketing can be performed by creating varied content [8]. The packaging of each content needs to be made as attractive and creative as possible in order to compete with other content; thus, digital marketing can reach the target market. The content-creation process is carried out through a creative process as outlined in the form of effective communication by implementing and developing concept ideas that can put forward marketing strategies. The result of the creative process in content creation will generate creative content.

The importance of creating creative content also needs to be conducted by educational institutions. Digital marketing carried out by educational institutions can touch the target market through soft selling. UI Vocational has attempted to present a variety of creative content tailored to the market share, namely prospective students. Through the content that is presented in a variety of ways, the followers of the UI Vocational’s official Instagram account are increasing. This phenomenon makes researchers want to test the validity of the data in the form of the role of creative content in digital marketing strategies on Instagram social media for UI Vocational.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Digital Creative Content

According to Kasali [9], creative is the ability of a person or group of people that allows to produce a new breakthrough from an event or problem that is seen from how to solve problems using new ways or breakthroughs that are unique, different, or better than the previous way. Creativity is closely related to the development of ideas in marketing strategies in order to form an effective communication. Creativity according to Semiawan [10] has characteristics, such as:

- High-curiosity feeling;
- High imagination;
- Offering new ideas or opinion;
- Seeing problems from multiple perspectives;
- Expressing original ideas.

Gilson in Kasali [9] also mentions that creativity is needed for communicators to convey messages. The message conveyed should use elements that attract attention, such as novelty, contrast, interesting images, distinctive formats, available news formats, and

evocative of the audience. In developing creativity, it can create new innovations, namely creative content using various kinds of elements.

Creative content is information that is presented from various kinds of new breakthroughs, which have never been carried out before; however, they are packaged according to the times [11]. The creative content in question can be in the form of articles, audio, video, images, or other media. Currently, creative content has spread to new media called digital creative content. The available content can be entertainment, news, or other information that is packaged in an original way in new media.

The new media frees its users to increase their creativity in producing various content independently and with little capital. Content that is commonly seen on television is content with large production costs. With digital content, users can create their ideas with relatively more affordable production costs, or even earn money. For this reason, the use of creative content is very important to improve marketing alternatives.

2.2. Digital Content Marketing Strategy

Digital content marketing strategy is a marketing strategy centered on the creation and distribution of creative, valuable, and unique content that aims to encourage audience interest to generate profits. Digital content marketing consists of several types, namely informative content (containing profile profiles, addresses, and how to order a business), educational content (containing tips, how to use, or the benefits of a product being offered), and interaction content (loading user complaints and reviews on a product). Digital content marketing is used by business people to market their products, which aim to increase sales [12]. However, in the current digital era, the role of digital content marketing is not only used by business people, but also educational institutions.

Educational institutions that serve consumers and collaborate to achieve educational goals are in dire need of a marketing strategy. Educational institutions formulate problems regarding the inhibiting or supporting factors related to stakeholders. Stakeholders have different characteristics, gender, age, occupation, income level, lifestyle, and culture. Thus, educational institutions can adjust their vision and mission to market needs [13].

The marketing strategy carried out by educational institutions is a way to improve the image so that the community provides positive values, so that people are interested in sending their children to school in these educational institutions [14]. Digital marketing is a marketing communication that is generally used by educational institutions. Some of them have left conventional marketing and switched to new media. This is conducted in order to obtain a broad reach and make it easier to provide information and communication processes that can be carried out in real time.

2.3. New Media

New media is defined as a medium of communication using technology with digital methods. New media consists of various types of media that are connected to the internet. New media has the advantage of being more flexible, inexpensive, efficient, and the process of exchanging information is very fast [15]. It is also explained by Flew [16] that new media has the characteristics of digitization, convergence, interactivity, and the development of a network in the process of creating and delivering messages.

New media has different characteristics from old media, such as television, radio, magazines, and newspapers because it has an interactive nature. Old media is not lost and replaced with new media, but the term new media is a term to distinguish characteristics from old media. Junaedi [17] in the book *Communication 2.0* states that new media is a combination of interpersonal communication and mass communication because it has a wider audience reach, while the messages created are consumed personally; thus, it is called interpersonal communication.

New-media users make it possible to sort out the information that will be consumed and control the messages that are obtained and desired. In addition, interactivity is also the main understanding of new media because the exchange of information is very fast.

This interactivity makes users carry out communication activities more effectively and optimally; thus, causing changes in society because they are free to express their opinions. Currently, communication activities on new media are also seen in the use of social media, such as in Instagram.

2.4. Instagram Social Media

Social media according to Suharto in Alyusi [18] is a collection of several users who interact with each other in a community. The interaction that occurs is between individuals or institutions. Individual interaction is an intimate relationship between individuals that creates an emotional bond, while institutional interaction is the interaction between the vision, mission, and goals of the organization with other organizations. This interaction will lead to a mutual trust, which may be due to similarities in hobbies, goals, and so on. Users will be free to exchange ideas using various media, one of which is Instagram social media.

According to Enterprrise [19], Instagram is an application for taking, editing, and sharing photos between one user and another. Instagram has a very large gallery capacity that makes it easier for users to easily see the work of other users and create a network of friends. Instagram has advantages, including being used for free, photo editing tools being available, and the potential to obtain a meeting network because of its users who have reached billions of people. In addition to taking, editing, and sharing photos, Instagram can now be used as a business medium. Various kinds of marketing can be carried out on Instagram.

2.5. Instagram Marketing Social Media

Ardiansah and Maharani [20] explain that social media marketing is a marketing method carried out on social media that provides benefits for a business, namely increasing product popularity, making it easier to obtain new customers, increasing website visitors, improving search engines, improving good relationships with customers and improving customer satisfaction. Social media marketing has seven tips that must be considered, namely client research; set clear goals; analyze competitors; create interesting and relevant content; determine the upload time; take advantage of ads; and evaluate various kinds of social media platforms that can be used for marketing, one of which is Instagram.

Instagram marketing is a marketing activity carried out on Instagram by using all the available features to increase sales and establish communication between sellers and customers [21]. Currently, various institutions have started using Instagram marketing as a promotional medium, one of which is educational institutions.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The research method used in this study is qualitative, which aims to understand a phenomenon [22]. In his presentation, to interpret the results of the study, the researcher will use a descriptive method.

The purpose of using the descriptive method is to describe the phenomena obtained from the data collection [23].

3.2. Object, Location, and Sample Research

This research was conducted using research objects derived from the official Instagram content of the UI Vocational (@vokasi_ui) with a posting period of January-September 2022. This period was chosen because it is a period for new officials faculties to start. All the content in that period will be curated and analyzed; then, it will be linked to current phenomena based on appropriate literature studies.

UI Vocational's official Instagram account is managed by the Public Relations unit and has a monthly content plan. The formulation of content planning is carried out by exploring activities/holidays, internal routine activities, educational promotion activities, as well as other public information (both internal and external).

3.3. Data Collection Techniques

The data collection technique used in this research uses direct observation. Observation is an activity of collecting data through direct observation to see the state/phenomenon of the object of research. Observation activities carried out include observing, describing, analyzing, and interpreting the results obtained.

In its preparation, the researcher uses participant observation where the researcher is involved as a producer of content in the object being observed. All the data obtained will be analyzed using various related literature studies.

4. Finding and Data Analysis

4.1. Finding

Like almost all organizations or institutions, UI Vocational also utilizes social media, especially Instagram, as one of the communication capitals in disseminating messages to the public. The aim is to increase brand awareness and introduce UI Vocational to the public, and to inform the various activities organized by UI Vocational.

Along with the characteristics of Instagram, which are that it has ease of use, can reach a large audience, and content that is easy to create, UI Vocational makes Instagram as the main social media in conducting digital marketing strategies. Consistency in posting is one of the efforts made to maintain a good interaction with the audience. Figures 5–9 is posts published through the @vokasi_ui. During the January–September 2022 period, the number of posts on Vocational UI IG feeds was 355 posts. This means that every month, there are about 29 pieces of published content or one day of content. The content published in UI Vocational’s official Instagram account varies. Starting from promotional content, introduction content, activity information, general information integrated with UI, announcements, to interaction content such as quizzes or trivia. Here are some examples of posts published through the @vokasi_ui.

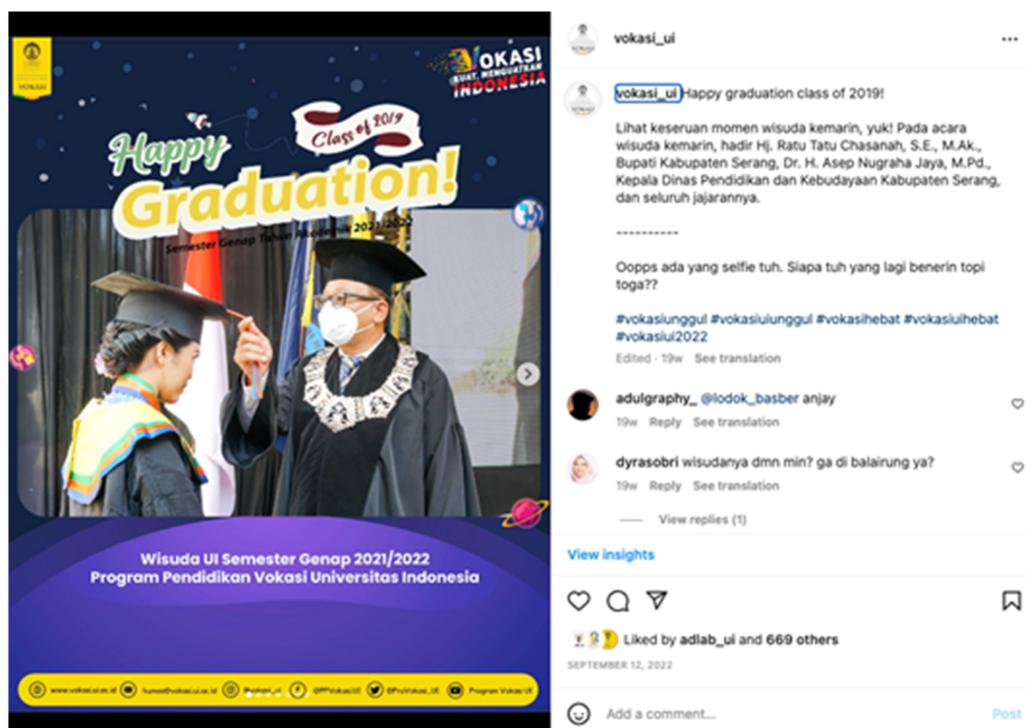


Figure 5. Post for even semester graduation for the 2021/2022 academic year.

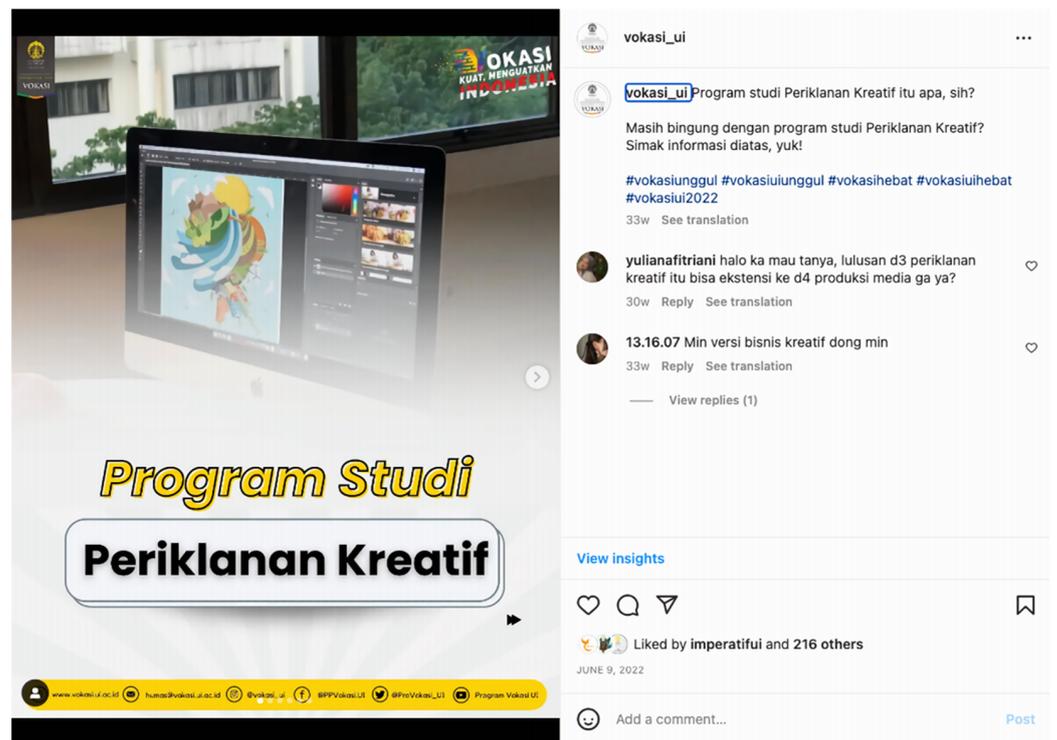


Figure 6. Educational promotion.

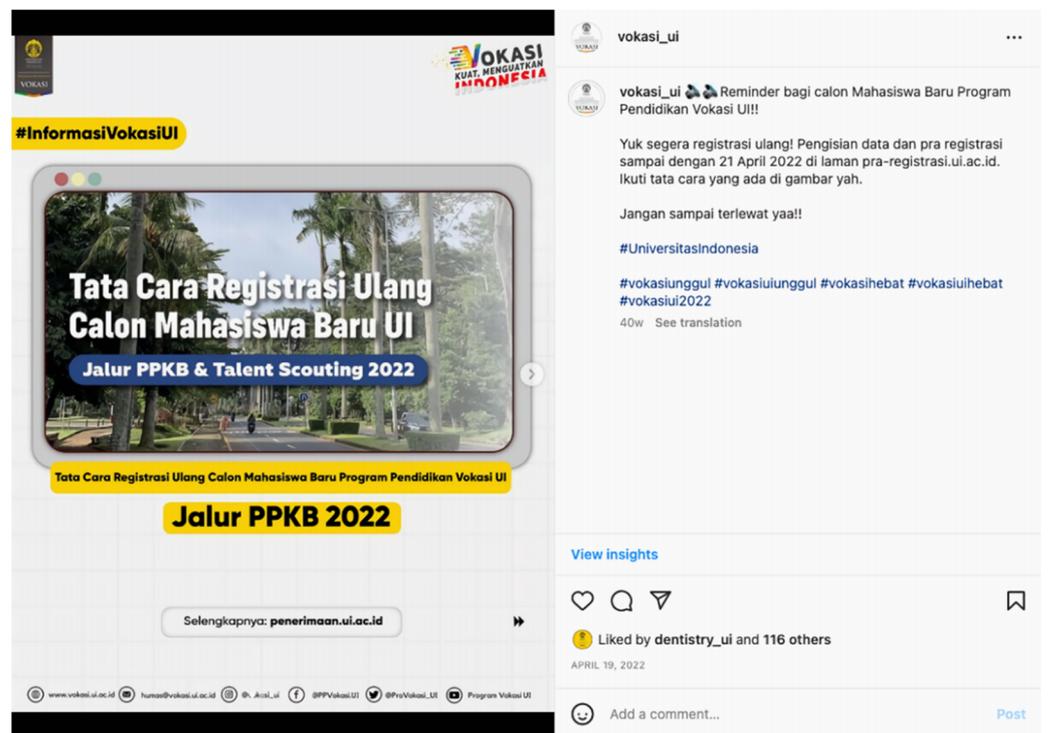


Figure 7. Information integrated with UI.

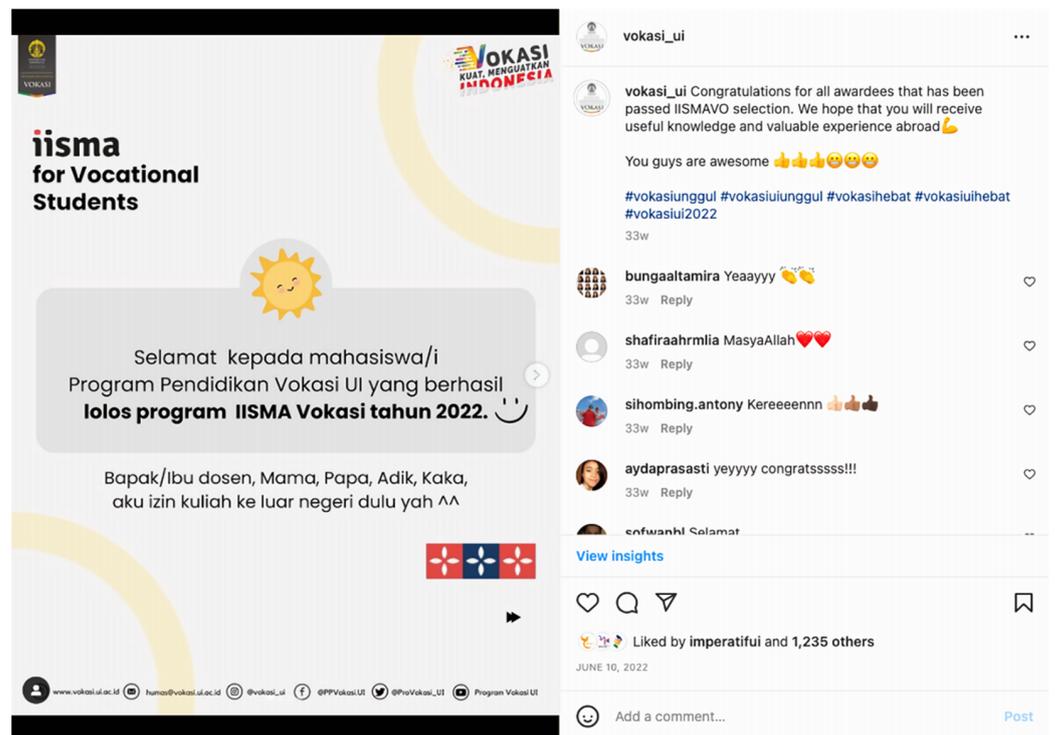


Figure 8. Most liked post, 1.238 likes.

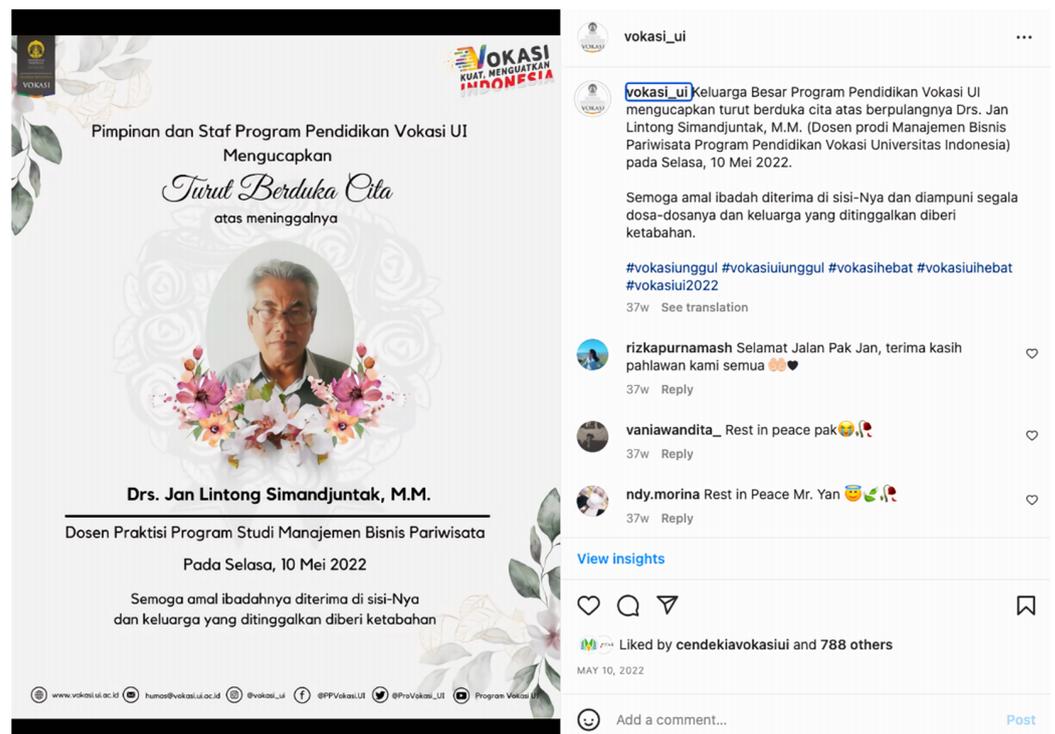


Figure 9. Most commented post, 82 comments.

In the process of publishing content, the UI Vocational’s Public Relations team formulates content planning first. Content planning formulation usually includes monthly trends or themes. All the content planning is recorded in an Excel document. The next process is the production process. The production process is carried out using several tools/software according to the type of content to be created. Content will be produced with a creative concept to appeal to the audience. The tools/software used in the content

production process are Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Premiere, CapCut, and Canva. The last process is the content distribution process, which includes scheduling content publication through Facebook Creator Studio. Based on this planning, here are some examples of posts that reap positive interactions from the audience:

4.2. Data Analysis

Today's social media cannot be separated from daily life, both individuals and organizations. It is well-realized by UI Vocational that social media nowadays is one of the communication capitals that acts as a forum for exchanging information with the audience.

In line with the interactivity character of the new media, UI Vocational's official Instagram account provides a variety of information that encourages the audience to actively seek information from trusted sources. In line with these needs, UI Vocational's official Instagram account is also committed to providing accurate and up-to-date information.

Not only playing a role as a two-way communication platform with the audience, UI Vocational's official Instagram account also functions as a marketing platform, especially to promote education. Social media marketing is currently one of the most effective tools for introducing and selling products to the public. As seen in Figure 6, UI Vocational's official Instagram account is used to carry out marketing activities for study programs.

To maximize the functionality and use of Instagram, UI Vocational takes every published content seriously; in terms of design, message, message value, to content format. The design concept that characterizes every UI Vocational Instagram's post is simple, a narrative that is tailored to the target audience, using cheerful design elements, with a white background or pastel colors to give a clean impression. The typeface used is of the sans serif type, namely Poppins, which gives a minimalist and modern impression.

Meanwhile, the content formats produced are quite diverse, ranging from still photos/images, video, audio, to multimedia formats. Content packaging is made as creative as possible to be attractive to the audience.

5. Conclusions and Suggestions

5.1. Conclusions

From the overall creative content observed, the content created by UI Vocational's official Instagram account is varied, representing all the related activities to become the main source of information for stakeholders. It comprises a variety of content that is regularly published, such as educational information (public lectures, student exchanges, etc.), community service, research, information integrated with UI (acceptance of new students, lecture schedule, midsemester test schedule, final exam schedule, graduation, etc.), interaction content (quizzes, trivia), redistribution of other UI Vocational social media content (Spotify, YouTube, etc.), campus introduction, to education promotion. Social media, especially Instagram, is one of the communication strategy tools used by UI Vocational to create an institutional image through audience perception.

The entire content is packaged with dynamic, non-rigid design concepts, varied content formats (photos, videos, audio, or visual graphics), as well as following current trends, according to the main target audience, namely prospective new students (high school/vocational/vocational school students, etc.). The social media management team (known as MinVoks) continues to maintain interaction with the audience through the comments column or private chat rooms.

The analysis show that good and creative content on social media, especially Instagram, will be a competitive advantage for an institution. For this reason, UI Vocational continues to create content that can function as marketing content that can attract audiences, educate or socialize issues or policies to the audience, and increase the credibility of the institution through the level of audience trust, to convince the audience (especially prospective new UI Vocational's students) to be confident in choosing UI Vocational as their main choice to continue their education.

Criteria for good and creative content include: (1) design consistency as identity; (2) messages that are easy to read and understand, through the selection of appropriate fonts and colors, as well as clear narration; (3) various formats (photo, video, audio, visual graphics, or combined/multimedia); (4) the potential to invite conversations from the audience; and (5) the ability to increase the interaction between the audience and the social media manager (two-way communication). Through good and creative content, two-way relations and communication will be created, which will increase engagement; thus, the institution will always be known, develop, and be able to survive.

5.2. Suggestions

Based on the results of observations and literature studies, the following are suggestions that researchers can give:

1. In order to further increase the credibility of the account, efforts should be made to make the @vokasi_ui a blue tick/verified account. Given the large number of followers and posts, obtaining a verification mark will further strengthen Instagram's role as a communication platform between UI Vocational and its audience.
2. Take advantage of the various features available on Instagram, both paid (sponsored posts) and unpaid (IG Reels, IG Stories).

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