



The Influence Branding of Social Media to Improve Digital Business in Training and Consulting on Instagram

Ridwan Kurniaji^{1*}, Nur Azizah², , Muhamad Yusup³ ,

^{1,2,3}Department of Digital Business, University of Raharja, Indonesia

¹ridwan@raharja.info, ²nur.azizah@raharja.info, ³yusup@raharja.info

*Corresponding Author

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ABSTRACT

In the post-pandemic era, Indonesian entrepreneurs are competing fiercely to promote and sell their products, aiming to boost economic growth and business resilience. HSP Academy, a company specializing in occupational safety and health training and consulting, is leveraging this momentum by adopting social media-based marketing to reach wider audiences. Recognizing Instagram's power as an accessible and popular platform, HSP Academy utilizes it to share information about its certified training programs, accredited by the Ministry of Manpower of Indonesia and the National Professional Certification Agency (BNSP). Instagram's mobile-friendly interface allows prospective clients to easily access information on certified courses, which supports HSP Academy's visibility and accessibility in the digital space. This article examines effective strategies for advancing business on social media, specifically focusing on Instagram as a key promotional tool. By analyzing the digital marketing techniques that resonate on this platform, the author explores methods for optimizing engagement with potential clients. Topics include content strategies, engagement tactics, and promotional techniques tailored to the digital marketplace. Through a focus on best practices for social media marketing, especially within a business like HSP Academy, this discussion aims to offer insights into enhancing business visibility and reach in today's digital-driven market.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Currently, the use of social media and the internet is ideal for marketing goods or services. Product marketing that uses the internet or can also be called E-marketing is an electronic marketing model which consists of work activities from business owners to introduce, provide socialization, and sell products that are prepared via the internet and with the help of several social media platforms. The high number of social media users is a great opportunity for brands to connect more directly with consumers in an interactive way. If a brand does not utilize social media influencer marketing as a more modern business strategy and attracts consumer interest, with this the entrepreneur can evaluate the promotion system if it is still in the conventional zone. The increase in brand influencers on social media is a business effort that is starting to be considered, especially those promoting branded products in the field of training and consulting. Brand influencer training and consulting focus on increasing the reach of consumers, on the other hand, being a promotional medium and at the same time an influencer for a brand. Smith and Doe stated that "branding through social media Instagram

has a significant impact on business training and consulting” (p. 45) [1].

This research aims to explore the influence of social media, specifically Instagram, on the growth of digital businesses in the training and consulting sectors in Indonesia. It seeks to answer two main questions:

- How does the use of social media, specifically Instagram, influence the growth of digital business in training and consulting companies in Indonesia?
- What social media-based marketing methods are most effective in reaching consumers in the training and consulting?

The following hypotheses guide our investigation into the role of Instagram in promoting digital business within the training and consulting sector:

- **H1** : The use of social media, particularly Instagram, has a significant impact on the growth of digital business in training and consulting companies.
- **H2** : Marketing strategies that leverage Instagram’s interactive features, such as Stories, Reels, and Live Sessions, can enhance customer loyalty and user engagement with training and consulting business accounts.

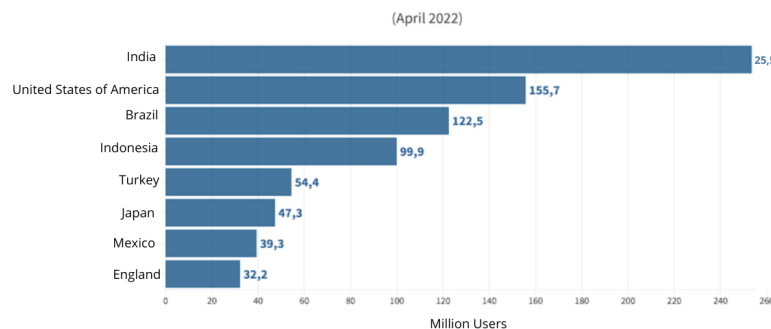


Figure 1. The number of Instagram reach from Hard Selling.

Instagram reach from hard selling strategy, which is different from the soft selling approach. Figure 1, you can see the amount of reach achieved by Reels posts in the form of more explicit direct promotion. This strategy, although more direct in conveying its products, often has different appeals depending on consumer preferences. The results of this hard selling strategy help entrepreneurs understand the impact of direct promotion compared to indirect promotion, providing valuable insights in adjusting marketing campaigns on social media.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Marketing management in the digital era plays a crucial role in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure). As businesses increasingly adopt digital platforms for marketing, they not only enhance their ability to reach and engage consumers efficiently but also create sustainable economic opportunities. By leveraging social media, digital marketing, and influencer partnerships, companies can foster growth, improve product accessibility, and enable more inclusive economic participation. This digital shift empowers smaller businesses to compete in global markets and supports innovation in marketing approaches, aligning with SDG 9 by building resilient business infrastructures. Furthermore, digital marketing’s adaptability to consumer needs aligns with SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), encouraging informed purchasing decisions and reducing environmental impact through targeted and efficient advertising. This literature review explores the various facets of marketing management in the digital landscape, including the role of social media, influencer strategies, and content-driven engagement, highlighting both opportunities and challenges in advancing sustainable growth and responsible consumption.

2.1. Marketing Management

Johnson and Lee outline that “an effective content strategy on social media can significantly improve marketing” (p. 98) [2]., Marketing is an important part of the management structure of a company to obtain satisfactory results in achieving a company. The marketing strategy should be right according to the market and adapted to the products offered are some things that marketing managers must pay attention to because the products to be sold must match consumer needs. In addition, the marketing strategy carried out by the company should pay attention to market segments and market developments from business competitors in the same field [3]. Marketing can consist of several types, including internet marketing, point of purchase, direct selling, and earned media. Internet marketing is a unique marketing activity using strategies and promotional activities with the internet more specifically with social media that can expand the sales area and do not require a lot of capital to carry it out [4]. Buyers also have the convenience of finding various types of information about products available on social media, this is because usually, consumers prefer to shop and choose the product they want from home compared to coming to the store in person. Taylor found that “customer loyalty can be built through direct interaction features on Instagram” (p. 25) [5].

2.2. Digital Marketing

is one of the modern marketing methods where it is digitally conceptualized and interacts through media connected to the internet. Williams and Brown compared “the advantages and disadvantages of social media platforms for business branding” (p. 50) [4]. The development of the internet can not only connect personal users with digital media but the media can also be used as a link between buyers on a wider scale than is provided by the platform. This makes it easier for buyers to determine what interactions are when interacting with the marketing promotion media provided. The high interest in digital marketing today makes communication between marketers, producers, and buyers very easy. Apart from that, digital marketing makes it easier for business owners to provide and monitor everything that is being sought in the market based on the needs of buyers. They can independently search for information about goods and simply access the internet from there, it can facilitate the process of finding information and goods from the store they want. It is expected that prospective buyers will be smarter in making a purchasing decision based on the information they see on the internet. Digital marketing methods can reach all internet users wherever they live according to the facilities and infrastructure available at that location. Some applications that are commonly used in marketing and are becoming a trend among entrepreneurs, namely Instagram social media. Therefore, if business owners want to continue to survive competitors in business development, they must utilize technology and one of them is the internet as an effective marketing medium. Garcia and Perez point out that “visual content on Instagram has a major impact on user engagement” (p. 33) [6].

2.3. Social Media

Davis and Green examined “the effectiveness of Instagram advertising for local businesses” (p. 88) [7]., social media is a set of applications that depend on the internet network which was initiated by Web 2.0, this program was discovered by Tim O’rei1y Web 2.0 which is a simple platform before social media familiar, this platform makes it easy to exchanging information for users and as a means of online interaction. Social media such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, and others are now commonly used as a medium to convey information accurately, and quickly and is very useful for many people [4]. Miller and White highlight influencer marketing trends and results on Instagram [8].

2.4. Social Media Marketing

is a marketing model that is run based on the internet and has the goal of providing information related to products and easy access to achieving broad marketing goals, by contributing through various types of social media. Running a business with social media improves consumer relations and increases their interest in buying these products for various needs. An attractive display of products can increase visitors on social media use. Nguyen and Thompson analyzed that “the role of hashtags and captions in user engagement on Instagram is very important” (p. 76) [9].

2.5. Influencer Social Media

Martinez and Gomez concluded that “brand loyalty can be established through Instagram case studies” (p. 56) [10]. Brands have a focus on targeting the wants and needs of their consumers with various approaches to consumers. the impression that a brand gets from a social media influencer is very helpful in communicating

directly with its main consumers, as well as encouraging the sustainability of the brand. then brands do not directly communicate with consumers, namely by making consumers change to the products we have. WChen and Wang observed that “social media stories influence brand perception” (p. 45) [11], social media platforms are part of the lifestyle of some people and a strategy for communicating with most consumers. According to Gillin, several factors have made influencer marketing increasingly popular [12]. Namely, the quality of the content that matches the product and target market, so that it can be a factor that makes it easier when searching for that product [13]. from a rapidly growing media platform, this criterion must have adjustments. In addition, the advantages of a market or community can be assessed Brown and Harris discuss “the role of user-generated content in Instagram marketing” (p. 22) [14].

3. METHOD

The methodology of this research is designed to explore the impact of social media, particularly Instagram, on the growth of digital businesses in training and consulting sectors in Indonesia. This section outlines the research design, data collection methods, sample selection, data analysis techniques, and validation methods used in this study.

3.1. Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design to quantify the influence of Instagram-based social media marketing strategies on business growth indicators such as customer engagement, brand reach, and revenue for training and consulting companies. To complement quantitative insights, qualitative elements are also incorporated through interviews with industry experts to gain a nuanced understanding of effective social media marketing techniques post-pandemic.

3.2. Data Collection Methods

The data for this research is collected through two main sources:

- **Primary Data:** This includes surveys distributed to digital business owners, marketers, and consumers in the training and consulting field. The survey consists of structured questions designed to capture perceptions, frequency of social media usage, and engagement metrics related to Instagram’s features (e.g., Stories, Reels, Live Sessions). Additionally, interviews with selected business owners provide qualitative insights into their experiences with social media marketing and customer engagement.
- **Secondary Data:** Instagram performance analytics (reach, engagement rate, and follower growth) from selected training and consulting businesses are reviewed to observe trends. This data provides concrete performance metrics to gauge the effectiveness of Instagram as a marketing tool.

3.3. Sample Selection

A purposive sampling method is used to select participants. The sample includes:

- **Business Owners and Marketers:** 50 representatives from training and consulting businesses with active Instagram accounts, selected based on follower count and engagement rates.
- **Consumers:** 200 customers who have interacted with these Instagram accounts, chosen to represent varied demographics relevant to the training and consulting sector. Participants are selected based on their relevance to the research objectives, specifically focusing on companies and consumers familiar with digital marketing practices on Instagram.

3.4. Data Analysis Techniques

The study employs a combination of descriptive and inferential statistical analyses:

- **Descriptive Analysis:** Provides an overview of Instagram usage patterns, preferred content types (e.g., Stories, Reels, Live), and general consumer perceptions about social media marketing in the training and consulting field.
- **Inferential Analysis:** Multiple regression analysis is conducted to test the hypotheses related to the relationship between social media strategies (independent variables) and business growth indicators (dependent variables). This approach assesses the strength and direction of associations, such as the impact of interactive content (e.g., Instagram Live) on consumer engagement.

- Thematic Analysis: For qualitative data from interviews, a thematic analysis approach is used to identify recurring themes and insights related to effective social media strategies and the impact on customer loyalty and brand perception.

3.5. Validity and Reliability

- Validity: The survey questionnaire is reviewed by experts in digital marketing to ensure content validity, with adjustments made based on pilot testing feedback.
- Reliability: Cronbach's Alpha test is applied to measure the internal consistency of survey responses, ensuring reliability in the measurement of Instagram's impact on business metrics.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

All participants are informed about the research's purpose and provided consent before participating. Anonymity and confidentiality are maintained for all survey and interview respondents to ensure data protection and ethical compliance throughout the research process.

Figure 1, shows the distribution of social media users across countries in April 2022, with India as the country with the largest number of users, followed by the United States and Brazil. The figures in this graph underline the huge potential of social media as a global marketing platform, with millions of users accessible across multiple regions. This is an important indication for businesses looking to expand their marketing reach through influencer strategies on social media, which can be an effective tool to attract a wide range of consumers.

3.7. Hard Selling

Direct selling is a promotion and sales method aimed directly at consumers, where in the hard selling approach, the seller immediately provides detailed information about the products being offered. This includes creating catalogs and brochures that contain comprehensive product descriptions. Additionally, the seller often provides added services in the form of community memberships. These communities may consist of members who need ongoing product information or alumni who have attended training sessions. This membership approach allows customers to stay updated and engage with others who share similar interests, thereby fostering a deeper connection to the product or service being promoted. This method is particularly well-suited for companies that generally require information on training products for budget planning purposes, especially to comply with occupational safety and health regulations [15].

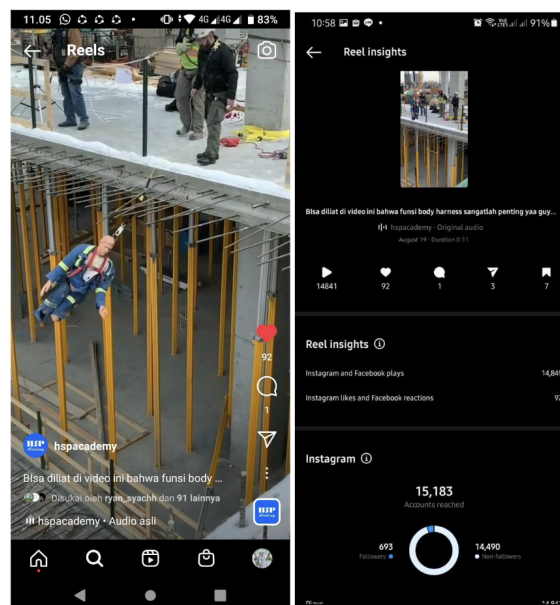


Figure 2. The number of Instagram reach from Hard Selling.

The hard selling strategy on Instagram stands in contrast to the soft selling approach, particularly in the way the promotional message is conveyed. Figure 2 illustrates the Instagram reach achieved by Reels

posts using a more explicit direct promotion. In this figure, the level of reach indicates the effectiveness of a direct and assertive approach in capturing users' attention. This strategy, while more straightforward in product delivery, often appeals to consumers differently depending on individual preferences. The results of this hard selling strategy provide entrepreneurs with valuable insights into the impact of direct promotion compared to indirect promotion (soft selling). This information is crucial for adjusting social media marketing campaigns, enabling businesses to determine the most appropriate strategy for their target audience. By understanding the differences in effectiveness between these two approaches, companies can be more flexible in selecting promotional methods that enhance consumer engagement and ultimately support the achievement of broader marketing objectives.

3.8. Soft Selling

Adams and Cooper found that “Instagram Stories have a huge impact on brand engagement” (p. 101) [16]. Because on Instagram consumers will usually feel bored with continuous advertisements, offering products directly, or inviting consumers to join the community, this soft Selling strategy can be a solution, where entrepreneurs do not post products directly, do not show off the products they sell in the form of brochures, but with the help of educational videos that are expected to attract consumers to ask questions related to the product [17]. The promotion software that will be used is analyzed regularly to attract attention and rating Instagram accounts. [10]

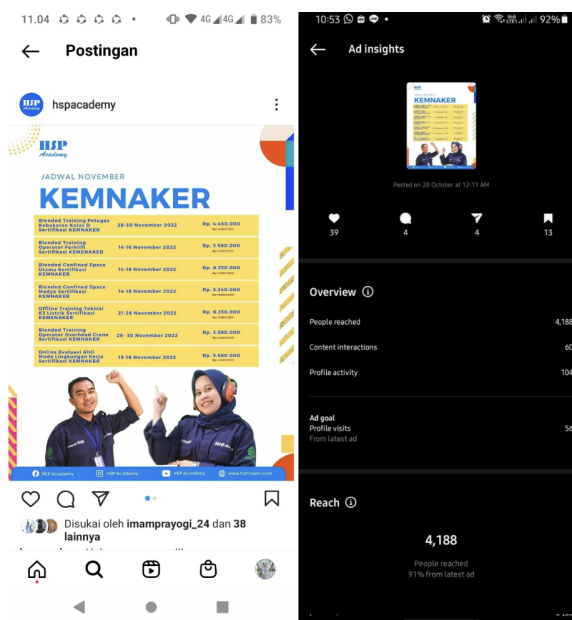


Figure 3. The number of Instagram reach from Soft Selling.

Figure 3 illustrates the reach and engagement achieved on Instagram through a soft selling strategy, where the promotional content focuses more on providing informative and visually appealing posts rather than directly pushing a sale. In this example, the content shared by the account “hspacademy” highlights a training schedule for Kemnaker, showcasing various training programs available for the month of November, along with the associated costs. This form of soft selling aims to attract potential customers by educating them about the offerings rather than aggressively promoting a single product or service.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

From the results of implementing the soft selling and hard selling methods, the soft selling method is faster to get reach from Instagram users in August, the highest reach was obtained from posting “Benefits of using a Body Harness when working at heights”, these results were obtained from the resume provided by Instagram and in November the reach of Instagram users reached 1600%.

Clark and Davis outline “the implications of Instagram metrics for business growth” (p. 89) [18]. Furthermore, consumers who have seen posts made on Instagram tend to look for additional information and

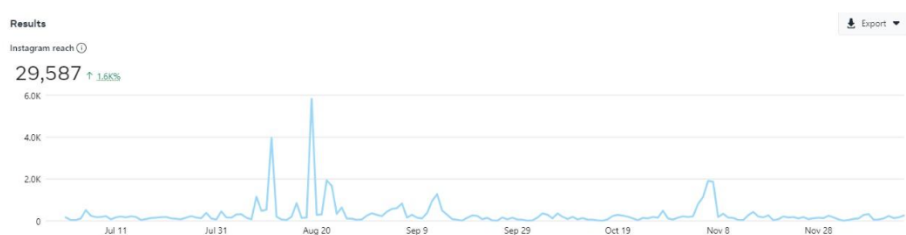


Figure 4. The the instagram chart reach from customer on Account HSP Academy.

search through the profile page of the Instagram HSP Academy, and it can be seen in the profile graph of the HSP Academy Instagram account that there has been an increase in total visits of 2196 Instagram users or 178% in November [19]. Reels are also made available for the content that is available, apart from in the form of posts, to show ongoing training activities at the HSP Academy. Hill and King examined “the effectiveness of Instagram Live sessions in increasing brand awareness” (p. 45) [14]. In their research, Hill and King found that using Instagram Live can significantly increase a brand’s visibility and engagement with its audience [20]. The research results show that these live sessions not only help expand brand reach but also deepen consumer engagement with the content presented. Thus, this strategy can be a very effective tool in digital marketing campaigns, especially in efforts to increase brand awareness and loyalty among social media users. Robinson and Lewis state that “user engagement trends on Instagram provide important insights for marketers” (p. 72) [15]. According to them, analysis of user interaction patterns on this platform can help marketers understand consumer preferences and behavior in more depth. By leveraging user engagement data, marketers can design more effective and relevant strategies, thereby improving the performance of their marketing campaigns [21]. This insight is key to optimizing content and interactions that can attract attention and maintain audience loyalty. Turner and Martinez concluded that “Instagram influencers play an important role in shaping brand perceptions” (p. 35). They found that influencers have the ability to influence an audience’s views and attitudes towards a brand through the content they share [22]. With high engagement and close relationships with their followers, influencers are able to create a positive and credible brand image. This research confirms the importance of collaborating with influencers as part of a marketing strategy, as they can help increase brand trust and attractiveness in the eyes of consumers.



Figure 5. The the instagram chart profile visit from customer on Account HSP Academy.

Evans and Scott measured “ROI from Instagram advertising campaigns” (p. 91) [23]. Their research shows that advertising campaigns on Instagram can provide a significant return on investment if managed well. Evans and Scott found that factors such as precise audience targeting, engaging creative content, and optimal advertising frequency contributed greatly to campaign effectiveness. They also highlight the importance of continuous data analysis to assess ad performance and make necessary adjustments [24]. The results of this study provide valuable guidance for marketers to maximize the ROI of their marketing efforts on these social media platforms. The main objective of hard selling, soft selling and information related to occupational safety and health is to get new followers which is to increase the Instagram HSP Academy rating, with a high number of followers enabling the success of promotional activities either in the form of hard selling or soft selling in the period July to December followers of the HSP Academy Instagram account increased by 265 accounts or 167.7%. Hernandez and Lopez provide “a guide to optimizing Instagram engagement for small businesses” (p. 65) [25]. In their guide, Hernandez and Lopez emphasize practical strategies that small businesses can implement to increase interaction and engagement with their audience on Instagram [26]. They include the use of engaging visual content, authentic stories, and leveraging Instagram features such as Stories and Reels to

reach more users [27]. Additionally, they also recommend the importance of consistency in posting and active interaction with followers to build a loyal community. This guide is designed to help small businesses grow their social media presence effectively and efficiently, with limited resources [28]. Young and Kim found that “visual aesthetics have a major impact on Instagram user engagement” (p. 48) [29]. Their research shows that visual elements such as color, composition, and image quality significantly influence user interaction. Visually appealing content is more likely to get likes, comments and shares [30]. These findings emphasize the importance of consistent and professional visual presentation to increase engagement on Instagram. Campbell and Morris discuss “best techniques and practices for brand storytelling on Instagram” (p. 30) [31]. They highlight effective strategies for conveying compelling and authentic brand stories, emphasizing the importance of consistency and creativity in content to build connections with the audience.

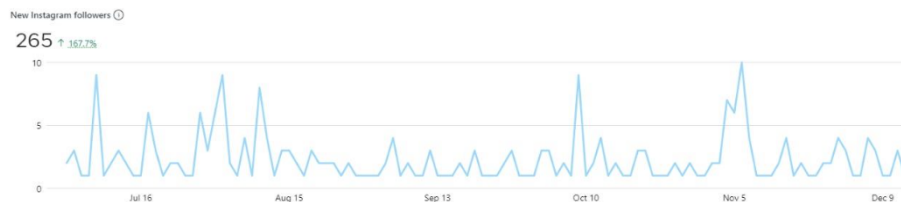


Figure 6. The the instagram chart Follower on Account HSP Academy.

Utilizing Instagram as a sales medium offers significant opportunities for business development. Both hardselling and softselling methods have their respective advantages and disadvantages, depending on the target audience [32]. To ensure these methods are effective, entrepreneurs must carefully plan and define their target market. Given that Instagram consists of various elements with diverse interests, it is crucial to build strong relationships with the audience to expand reach through persuasive approaches that foster loyalty. In conclusion, branding through Instagram has a significant impact on business training and consulting. For future research, it is recommended to delve deeper into the analysis of the effectiveness of various content strategies on Instagram across different market segments. Further studies could also focus on the impact of direct interaction through Instagram features such as Stories, IGTV, and Live on customer loyalty. Additionally, comparative studies between Instagram and other social media platforms in the context of branding and sales could provide more comprehensive insights into the strengths and weaknesses of each platform.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Utilizing Instagram as a sales medium offers significant opportunities for business development, allowing entrepreneurs to reach a broad audience through both visual and interactive content. The choice between hardselling and softselling approaches largely depends on the target audience's preferences and expectations. Hardselling tactics, which are direct and focused on immediate sales, can be effective for audiences already familiar with the product and ready to purchase. In contrast, softselling techniques, which emphasize storytelling and subtle persuasion, are better suited for audiences who require more engagement before making a purchase decision. By identifying and understanding their target market, entrepreneurs can strategically use these methods to optimize their engagement on Instagram, making it a versatile platform for both awareness and conversion.

Given Instagram's dynamic environment with a variety of features such as Stories, Reels, and IGTV, it's essential for entrepreneurs to build lasting relationships with their audience. Instagram's algorithm prioritizes engagement, meaning that the more businesses interact with their followers, the greater their reach and visibility on the platform. For this reason, developing a consistent brand voice and creating content that resonates with followers' values and interests is critical. Through a combination of visual storytelling, interactive posts, and personalized messaging, businesses can foster loyalty and encourage positive word-of-mouth. This approach not only helps expand reach but also enhances brand credibility, which is essential for long-term business growth in competitive industries like training and consulting.

For future research, it is recommended to delve deeper into analyzing the effectiveness of various content strategies on Instagram across distinct market segments. Studies could investigate how different audiences respond to specific types of content, such as educational posts, promotional offers, or customer testimonials. Additionally, further research could examine the impact of direct interaction through Instagram features—such

as Stories, IGTV, and Live Sessions—on customer loyalty and brand perception. Comparative studies between Instagram and other social media platforms, like Facebook and TikTok, could also provide valuable insights, highlighting each platform's strengths and weaknesses in branding and sales. These studies could guide businesses in selecting the most suitable platforms and strategies to enhance brand engagement and sales outcomes.

6. DECLARATIONS

6.1. Author Contributions

Conceptualization: RK; Methodology: NA; Software: MY; Validation: RK and NA; Formal Analysis: RK and NA; Investigation: MY; Resources: NA; Data Curation: MY; Writing—Original Draft Preparation: RK and MY; Writing—Review and Editing: NA and MY; Visualization: NA; Supervision: RK; Project Administration: NA; Funding Acquisition: RK. All authors, RK, NA, and MY, have read and approved the final version of this manuscript for publication.

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6.3. Declaration of Conflicting Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest, known competing financial interests, or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

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