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DIGITAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY OF THE @TEATERKELILINGIND INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT IN PROMOTING *IMMORTAL THE MUSICAL: SI PITUNG*

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the digital communication strategy implemented by the @teaterkelilingind Instagram account in promoting the production of Immortal The Musical: Si Pitung. The research focuses on how Teater Keliling packages traditional cultural content to make it relevant and appealing to the younger generation through social media. A descriptive qualitative approach underpinned by the Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) theory was utilized in this study. Data collection was conducted through content observation, documentation, and in depth interviews with the production manager, head of social media, and a key informant from the audience. The results indicate that @teaterkelilingind successfully builds audience engagement by implementing a "stick to the value" strategy, modifying narratives with modern romance, and optimizing Instagram features such as Reels, Feeds, and Stories using the inclusive greeting "warga". From a CMC perspective, this digital interaction overcomes the limitations of physical cues through interactive, hyperpersonal communication. Despite facing obstacles like algorithmic opacity, consistent content planning remains the primary supporting factor for the promotional success of this production.

Keywords: *Digital Communication Strategy, Instagram, Teater Keliling, Computer Mediated Communication (CMC).*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi komunikasi digital yang diterapkan oleh akun Instagram @teaterkelilingind dalam mempromosikan pementasan Immortal The Musical: Si Pitung. Fokus penelitian diarahkan pada bagaimana Teater Keliling mengemas konten budaya tradisional agar relevan dan menarik bagi generasi muda melalui media sosial. Pendekatan yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan landasan teori Computer Mediated Communication (CMC). Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi konten, dokumentasi, serta wawancara mendalam bersama manajer produksi, kepala media sosial, dan informan kunci dari penonton. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa @teaterkelilingind berhasil membangun kedekatan audiens dengan menerapkan strategi stick to the value, memodifikasi narasi dengan unsur romansa modern, serta mengoptimalkan fitur Instagram seperti Reels, Feeds, dan Stories. Dari perspektif CMC, interaksi digital ini mampu mengatasi keterbatasan isyarat fisik melalui komunikasi hiperpersonal yang interaktif. Meskipun menghadapi hambatan berupa algoritma

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Instagram, konsistensi perencanaan konten tetap menjadi faktor pendukung utama keberhasilan promosi pementasan ini.
Kata Kunci: Strategi Komunikasi Digital, Instagram, Teater Keliling, Computer Mediated Communication (CMC).

I. INTRODUCTION

The creative industry in the increasingly expanding digital age has brought major changes to various aspects of life, from the way individuals share and get information, to how individuals or organizations distribute promotions, to the tools and platforms they use. Social media is present as an internet-based virtual platform that allows every user to represent themselves, interact, and establish social connections without geographical boundaries. This transformation also touches the world of theater performances, which now do not only rely on conventional media, but are starting to actively utilize new social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and X. Based on empirical data from DataIndonesia.id as of December 2025, as many as 83% of respondents stated that the most widely used social media by Generation Z in Indonesia is the Instagram platform. This confirms that the selection and use of the right social media platform is a crucial need in the successful dissemination of information and promotional strategies to the target audience.

The success of the interaction and dissemination of information is inseparable from the design of a digital communication strategy. Digital communication strategies are understood as a series of plans that utilize information technology to facilitate online communication so that it can run on target according to the surrounding environmental conditions (Ramadhani, 2020). A structured strategy acts as the main reference for *communication planning* and communication *management* in order to achieve its operational goals (Lestari, 2020). In practice, social media teams not only focus on finding ideas through trend research or creating visual narratives that match the identity of the account, but also must ensure that the video content produced is interesting to interact with and able to increase audience knowledge. The execution of a mature content strategy ultimately determines how strong *engagement* can be built between an organization and its followers.

Instagram was chosen as the main forum for facilitating digital communication strategies because its visual and interactive nature is able to reach the younger generation optimally (Febritania & Riyanto, 2020). Various interesting features such as *Feeds, Story Add*

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Yours, Question and Answer Box, Polling, Reels, and *Highlights* provide their own advantages in strengthening *brand* awareness. Social *Media Engagement* theory itself categorizes audience interaction into three main dimensions, namely cognitive (content processing), emotional (emotional attachment), and behavioral (real actions such as commenting or resharing content). The characteristics of Generation Z who have a short attention *span* but are very responsive to aesthetic visual stimulation demand good management of color composition, typography, and content cinematography. The process of mediated interaction on the device screen is theoretically a manifestation of the *Computer Mediated Communication* (CMC) framework, in which humans exchange messages and share meanings through technological intermediaries (December, 1997).

II. THEORETICAL STUDIES

Communication and Communication Elements

Communication is a dynamic social process that underlies every form of human interaction to exchange messages or information through certain media in order to achieve a common meaning between communicators and communicators. Mulyana (2023) emphasized that communication is the process of sharing meaning represented through symbols or behaviors, both verbal and nonverbal. Structurally, Lasswell maps this process into five fundamental elements: *Who* (communicator), *Says What* (message), *In Which Channel* (media), *To Whom* (communicator/receiver), and *With What Effect* (influence or effect caused).

Instagram Social Media as a Means of Information

Social media is a web-based service that facilitates individuals or groups to build public profiles in an integrated system to establish relationships and exchange information in cyberspace (Indrayani et al., 2023). This platform is able to transform conventional one-way communication into widespread interactive dialogue (Cahyono, 2021). In the realm of promotional communication, Instagram is recognized as one of the most effective instruments to build a *brand image* and trigger public awareness. Instagram optimization is supported by a full suite of internal features, including *Feeds* (permanent content for visual branding), *Carousel* (multi-image for in-depth information), *Reels* (short videos based on a widely distributed algorithm), and *Stories* along with its interactive features such as *Question Boxes* and *Polls* that stimulate active audience engagement.

Teori *Computer Mediated Communication* (CMC)

Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) is a conceptual framework that dissects how digital media influences the way individuals create, exchange, and perceive messages in cyberspace. The theoretical framework of John December (1997) explains that in the CMC process, individuals mediated by technology can still form certain social situations to share messages with each other according to their respective motivations. CMC is divided into two main variants based on time dimensions: synchronous communication (*real-time* such as video calls or instant chat) and asynchronous communication (using time lags such as *e-mail* or draft social media posts). Asynchronous characteristics provide the advantage of having time for communicators to selectively edit, parse, and refine messages. Furthermore, Walther (1992) through *Social Information Processing Theory* and *the Hyperpersonal* perspective explained that message exchange via digital media that is managed consistently and interactively has the capacity to produce closeness of interpersonal relationships that are no less intimate, or even equivalent, to face-to-face interactions. This perspective breaks the assumption of *the Cues Filtered Out approach* which considers digital communication rigid and emotionally poor due to the absence of direct physical cues.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

This research applies a descriptive qualitative approach, a method that aims to comprehensively understand and explain the phenomenon of communication strategies based on the reality in the field. The research object is focused on digital communication and content management activities on @teaterkelilingind official Instagram account in the pre-production period until the promotion of the performance of *Immortal The Musical: Si Pitung* in 2026. The determination of data sources is based on a purposive technique to select informants who have direct involvement and a deep understanding of the research object. The research informants consisted of: Haikal Ilmi Akbar (Informant 1 as Production Manager and member of the Mobile Theater Social Media Team), Nabila Zalfa (Informant 2 as Head of Social Media), and Putra Bintang Ramadhan (*Key Informant* as a representative of the audience of followers/audience of the performance).

The data collection technique was carried out through three main methods simultaneously, namely: (1) Semi-structured *in depth interviews* with informants to explore the content planning process, message tactics, and interaction retention, (2) Careful digital observation of non-participants on all uploads of visual content, captions, the use of

interactive features, and comment reply patterns on @teaterkelilingind accounts, and (3) Documentation in the form of Secondary data collection such as visual archives of performances, digital posters, screenshots of interactions, and public statistical data in the form of *likes*, *comments* and *views*. Furthermore, the data processing and analysis process applies the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which flows through three stages of the iterative cycle, including data reduction (separation of essential data), data presentation and conclusion drawing or final verification

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS

Content Target Orientation and "*Stick to the Value*" Tactics

Based on the results of an in-depth interview with the Teater Keliling social media team, it was found that the design of the digital communication strategy of the @teaterkelilingind account in promoting the performance of *Immortal The Musical: Si Pitung* was strictly guided by three main targets (*content goals*). The first target is the fulfillment of the community's idealistic vision to promote local Indonesian culture, especially Betawi traditions, whose implementation momentum is aligned with the celebration of the City of Jakarta. The second target is oriented towards strengthening brand *image (brand awareness*) to affirm the existence of Teater Keliling as the oldest professional theater pioneer in Indonesia that still exists and is adaptive in the modern era. The third target is a non-commercial conversion tactic, where this performance is presented for free (*free admission*) to the public by implementing a *lock seat* system to adjust the physical capacity of the performance stage. To achieve these three targets into the digital space, the social media team applied *stick-to-the-value tactics combined* with creative format modifications that are relevant to the current consumption trends of the younger generation. The concept of Si Pitung's traditional culture, which was initially often portrayed as rigid and old-fashioned, has been deconstructed into a fresh digital narrative. This is confirmed by Haikal Ilmi Akbar in the following interview excerpt:

1. "Actually, the vision of the Mobile Theater is to promote Indonesian culture. That's why we always bring folklore or regional history. But how do the community or young people today want to know and participate in conservation? Therefore, our approach to them is more towards the trend of young people now. We want to keep informing about the culture or stories of Pitung, but it is made in a very fresh format. We go through the Instagram and TikTok platforms, then we adapt to the latest trends to stay relevant to the present times."

2. Through this tactic, the historical content and moral message of Si Pitung's heroism is still maintained as a *core value*, but repackaged by inserting elements of modern romance, casual humor, and a trendy visual approach so as not to move empty in the eyes of digital followers.
3. Instagram Feature Optimization in a Mediated Communication Perspective

The results of digital observations show that @teaterkelilingind accounts comprehensively optimize the variety of Instagram's internal features as a promotional message distribution channel. This optimization is managed thematically to meet the three dimensions of audience engagement (*social media engagement*). First, in building cognitive attachment, *the Feeds* and *Carousel* features function as instruments for long-term *digital branding* formation . The social media team consciously crafted a highly planned visual curation by applying a consistent color palette that reflected the identity of *the Immortal The Musical: Si Pitung* performance. The integration of traditional Betawi graphic elements with modern typography in the neat grid arrangement succeeded in breaking the stigma of rigid conventional theater into something dynamic and of high aesthetic value. Furthermore, *the Carousel* format is used to map the details of production information in its entirety to facilitate the flow of information search by ordinary audiences. Second, efforts to trigger emotional attachment are carried out through optimizing *the Reels* short video feature to present light entertainment content (*fun content*). In this case, the team produced a variety of *behind-the-scenes videos*, the actors' physical training process (*rehearsal*), video footage (*teaser*), to content creation experiments that adapt trends or cyber audio that are currently viral on social media. Cinematic visual stimulation through *Reels* has proven to be effective in attracting the spontaneous attention of young audiences who generally have the characteristics of short attention spans. Third, to stimulate engaging behavior to spark real action from your audience, @teaterkelilingind make intensive use of interactive features in *Stories*, such as *Q&A* Boxes, *Polls*, and *Add Yours Stories*, as well as actively manage the comments column. One unique finding in this study is the consistent use of the communal inclusive greeting "citizen" by account admins, which psychologically cyber-manages to create the illusion of intimate social closeness. The active action of responsive and witty admins in replying to comments and reposting daily appreciation of the audience's stories ultimately succeeded in building a solid digital ecosystem around the staging of *Immortal The Musical: Si Pitung*.

1. Hyperpersonal Perspective Analysis and "*Collaborative Boosting*"

2. Judging from the theoretical foundation *of Computer Mediated Communication* (CMC), the digital communication activities carried out by the Mobile Theater represent a real implementation of the Hyperpersonal Perspective initiated by Walther. The asynchronous nature of social media provides a strategic advantage for social media teams to selectively proofread, edit, and curate messages before they are posted to the public. This allows the formation of a group image (staging branding) to be ideally and professionally arranged to foster cyber interest. This positive assessment was supported by the statement of the key informant from the audience, Putra Bintang Ramadhan: "Yes, it's cool. Westernized by the story of Pitung, it's local history, right, it continues to be combined with stage art theater. The packaging is modern on Instagram as well. Well, so I think it's just interesting and suitable for children today." In addition to the use of asynchronous aspects, the acceleration of content reach @teaterkelilingind driven by an internal tactic termed as Collaborative Boosting. This strategy relies on the solidarity of the movement of all elements of the staging team to trigger Instagram's algorithm system to disseminate content organically. The mechanism of this tactic is explained by Haikal Ilmi Akbar. "At most, the first one follows the most up-to-date trend. That's very effective in my opinion, because from there people are immediately interested in seeing it and the algorithm immediately goes up because it's considered very updated. The second is to boost at the same time. In my opinion, when we post, and all the teams like and share together at the same time, the content immediately appears on other people's social media. That really adds to the amount of reach." The collective mobilization movement in the form of liking, commenting, and sharing content simultaneously in the early minutes of the broadcast by the *cast* and crew acts as a crucial sparker. Based on *Social Information Processing Theory*, the quality of responsive feedback and the consistency of intimate interactions have been proven to be able to break the assumption of the limitations of digital emotions (*Cues Filtered Out).* This pattern of mutual communication successfully transforms passive cyber attention into a social *presence* in the form of a commitment to real action of the audience to make a reservation for performance tickets.
3. Digital Communication Barriers

   Although digital promotion strategies @teaterkelilingind run massively, researchers identified three main obstacles faced in the field. The first obstacle is technological in the form of fluctuations and unclarity in social media algorithms (algorithmic opacity) which often change at any time, causing uncertainty in the amount of content reach. The second

obstacle is operational-internal, namely the time management constraints in the joint content production process. The tight schedule of physical training per individual on the field ahead of the performance made it difficult for the social media team to match the time for creative video shooting with the cast).

4. The third obstacle is related to cyber characteristics, namely the high speed of change in trends on social media. Very short virality cycles require digital communication teams to have high thinking agility. Regarding this obstacle to rapid adaptation, Haikal Ilmi Akbar explained: "The challenge is more about how we can quickly and flexibly adapt to social media now. Because social media trends are changing so fast! When we don't update at all, we have to catch up (catch up) very quickly. So the ability to adapt within seconds on social media is what really needs skills." Delays of days, or even hours, to respond to a viral cyber phenomenon can cause the promotional content produced to become obsolete, drowned, and lose its appeal in the eyes of digital audiences.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on data analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that the Instagram account @teaterkelilingind succeeded in implementing an adaptive and effective digital communication strategy in promoting the traditional cultural performance *of Immortal The Musical: Si Pitung* to the younger generation. This success is underpinned by the alignment between clear content target orientation and the execution of stick to the value tactics, where local historical values are repackaged into a modern creative format that the digital market is interested in. Through the lens of *Computer Mediated Communication* (CMC), Teater Keliling succeeded in optimizing the asynchronous characteristics of social media to carry out selective curation of messages in order to form a professional staging image (Hyperpersonal Perspective). The limitations of digital physical cues were successfully broken through intensive two-way interaction management, the use of inclusive greetings "citizens", and the application of Collaborative Boosting tactics that were solidly driven by the entire crew. The combination of these aspects succeeded in transforming cyber attention into a form of real behavioral attachment in the form of a commitment to the physical social presence of the audience in the performance room.

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