

# Marketing Communication Strategy at PADAHALSEKON Thrift Business through Instagram Social Media in Reaching Millennial Generation and Gen Z

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## Abstract

*The digital era presents new business opportunities for business people, one of which is the thrifting business in various regions. This thrifting business focuses on selling quality used clothing and is in demand by the millennial generation and Gen Z. PADAHALSEKON is a thrift located in Pekalongan city which has 54.2K Followers on Instagram. This research aims to analyze the marketing communication strategy implemented by the PADAHALSEKON thrift business through Instagram social media in reaching the millennial generation and Gen Z. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data was collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The results show that creative content-based marketing strategies, active interaction with audiences, and collaboration with influencers are effective in increasing audience engagement, brand loyalty, and product sales. Millennials and Gen Z are attracted to aesthetically pleasing visual communication styles, relevant product narratives, and sustainability values. Nonetheless, challenges such as market competition and changing social media algorithms need to be overcome to maintain marketing success. This research provides insights for thrift businesses and academics in understanding marketing communication practices that are relevant to the needs of today's digital audience.*

**Keywords:** Marketing Communication, Thrift, Millennials and Gen Z

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The digital era has presented new opportunities for businesses to expand their market reach, one of which is the thrift business. Thrift businesses, which focus on selling quality second-hand clothing, are increasingly in demand, especially by millennials and Gen Z. These generations tend to be concerned about sustainability and the circular economy, which is in line with the concept of thrift businesses. These generations tend to be concerned with sustainability and circular economy issues, which are in line with the concept of thrift businesses. In this context, social media, especially Instagram, has

become a strategic platform to build effective marketing communications (Rica Agatha et al., 2023)

Millennials and Gen Z are the most active social media users, with a focus on interactivity of content on social media. Millennials and Gen Z also have unique characteristics in content and product consumption preferences. They tend to be more responsive to content that is authentic, relevant and has sustainability value. Problems arise when businesses do not fully understand their audience's specific behaviors or needs, which can result in low engagement on content (Veirman et al., 2021).

The thrift business began to mushroom in 2023, this began with the condition of Indonesia being exposed to covid 19 which made people do activities at home and do all activities at home, both from studying, working and shopping done at home, this became an opportunity for several businesses that were originally selling offline now changing to online, genZ is the generation most affected by this, and is increasingly active in the world of social media, such as shopping for food and clothing on social media without having to leave the house, this is lyrics by used food and clothing business people or the term thrift (Agatha et al, 2023).

Instagram is an application that allows you to take photos or images and videos. Instagram users can also share content on various social networks such as Twitter, Facebook, or blogs. The use of the Instagram social network itself began in 2010. The difference between Instagram and other media is that Instagram is unique. Therefore, Instagram users must have a device that supports the application, i.e. iPhone and Android. Instagram users can also take advantage of company product promotions and use hashtags on Instagram (Fransiska, 2017).

An effective marketing communications strategy involves not only creating engaging visual content, but also includes a deep understanding of the audience's characteristics, their preferences, and their values. Millennials and Gen Z are known to be highly connected to technology, critical of information, and tend to prefer brands that have authentic values and are relevant to their lifestyle. Therefore, this research aims to analyze the marketing communication strategy implemented by PADAHALSEKON through Instagram in reaching out to millennials and Gen Z generations. This research

will also explore how visual elements, digital interactions, and brand narratives influence consumer purchasing decisions.

## **2. METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. This approach was chosen to deeply understand the marketing communication strategies implemented by PADAHALSEKON's thrift business through Instagram social media in reaching millennials and Gen Z. This research is descriptive-analytical in nature, aiming to describe and analyze the marketing communication strategies carried out by PADAHALSEKON. This research is descriptive-analytical, aiming to describe and analyze the marketing communication strategy carried out by PADAHALSEKON.

The focus is on the elements of marketing communication used, including messages, communication channels, and interactions with audiences. Research Subjects The research was conducted on thrift business PADAHALSEKON, which actively uses Instagram as its main marketing platform. The research subjects include, PADAHALSEKON's marketing team, millennials and Gen Z as the main audience (customers and Instagram followers).

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The thrifting business has been around for a long time, but it started to boom in 2017 (Fransiska). The history of thrifting began during the industrial revolution around the 19th century. At that time the price of clothing was so cheap that it made people at that time think that clothing was a disposable item. This made people become consumptive so they threw away used items. This made people consumptive so they threw away used goods. Furthermore, these used items were used by immigrants. In the 1920s, there was a great depression and the rise of thrift stores. At that time, there was a major crisis in America that made many people unemployed and unable to buy new clothes, and

they chose to shop at thrift shops that sold used goods. As for people who are well-off, thrift shops as a donation field to distribute their used goods.

Then, Kurt Cobain, an American singer with a grunge band in the 1990s, became a role model for teenagers at the time. Kurt indirectly promoted and introduced thrifting style, with his identical style using ripped jeans and flannel shirts. Kurt also often uses holey shirts when performing. Until the 2000s, many thrifting businesses began to emerge in Indonesia. Until now, there have been many e-commerce sites that also sell thrifted goods. Nowadays, second-hand is not a bad thing anymore, because thrifting has also become a pop culture in Indonesia.

Social media becomes a kind of space to find information about thrifting trends. The existence of information makes buyers have curiosity to find the clothes they want. The more massive the use of Instagram among gen Z, the faster the spread of knowledge about thrifting trends. Friends among friends can quickly influence by spreading photos of an outfit they see quickly to others. So that it can provide recommendations for friends quickly without having to see the distance and also time. Social media used by gen z creates a new reality that exists in society with the many posts seen. The reality formed in social media is an image formed by a person to be recognized by other social media users. Social media is a bit of a reflection of a person's life and even social media can be the opposite of real-life circumstances. The existence of social media forms a simulation, namely creation through models that have no origin, thus forming an illusion to appear real (Maradani 2014). The original reality of thrifting clothing is second-hand clothing that is still suitable for use. Thrifting clothes are considered as clothes that are not worth selling because they are used clothes, but with the existence of social media it can be reconstructed with the content in social media. The content is a code produced by social media. The code is then interpreted by someone as a social status through simulation and melts into life (Arsita 2017). Social media as a tool to create its own world or artificial reality on the internet. Artificial reality is made in such a way that it can give the impact of belief as a real reality, even more real than the real reality. Relationships that exist in social media are formed with goals and interests to achieve what is expected. Relationships built through social media are intertwined like the real world. Social media makes it easy to build complex relationships (Irwan, 2019).

Instagram as a popular social media platform has very intense competition, especially in the thrift market. Many similar businesses are competing to create interesting content, which makes it more challenging for PADAHALSEKON to stand out and build audience loyalty.

One of the problems that thrift businesses often face is the lack of consistency in branding. This includes the use of visual style, communication tone, and product narrative. Branding incoherence can reduce a brand's appeal to an audience that values a consistent aesthetic. Instagram algorithm changes often affect content reach, especially for small business accounts. This challenge makes PADAHALSEKON need to be more creative and strategic in utilizing Instagram features, such as Reels, IG Stories, and online shopping features. Businesses often underutilize data analytics to analyze content performance, understand audience preferences, or determine the best time to post. Without strong data, marketing communication strategies tend to be trial-and-error, which can reduce the effectiveness of campaigns.

Millennials and Gen Z are influenced by public figures or influencers who have a close relationship with their audience. Problems arise when thrift businesses are unable to select or collaborate with influencers that match their brand image. Younger generations are increasingly concerned about sustainability and social responsibility issues. Thrift businesses have great potential to capitalize on this sustainability narrative, but if not managed well, this opportunity could be missed. Instagram offers powerful visual features, such as photos, short videos, and stories, which allow businesses to create engaging and interactive content. However, with increasing competition in the digital realm, a key challenge for thrift businesses like PADAHALSEKON is how to design a marketing communication strategy that captures the attention of millennials and Gen Z, and encourages them to become loyal customers. PADAHALSEKON's thrift business was established in 2020 with a focus on selling high-quality second-hand clothing imported from overseas. The business adopts the concept of sustainable fashion, which suits millennials and Gen Z's interest in sustainable lifestyles. PADAHALSEKON's Instagram account has more than 50,000 followers, with the main target being young people aged 18-30.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The marketing communication strategy implemented by PADAHALSEKON through Instagram has proven to be effective in reaching millennials and Gen Z generations. The use of engaging visual content, active interaction with the audience, and collaboration with influencers are the keys to success. However, innovation and adaptation to market and technological changes are still needed to maintain a competitive advantage.

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