

The Challenges of Implementing Instagram as Platform in Writing Caption of Digital Marketing

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Abstract

Expressing ideas in writing caption of promoting products was not easy for students, therefore the researchers tried to optimize the use of social media especially Instagram to establish students' interest in writing. This research was focused on investigating the strengths and weaknesses of implementing Instagram in writing promotional caption. A descriptive qualitative method was applied in doing the investigation. 31 students of Vocational High School were participated as the subject of this research. To achieve the objective of the study, three instruments were used, they were test, questionnaire, and interview. The test was writing caption through Instagram. The questionnaire was distributed online, meanwhile, the interview was done face to face. Next, the data were analysed and described using qualitative methods. Research findings showed that Instagram contributed positive things to doing writing projects. By using Instagram, students' writing could be reached by the readers everywhere. Since the material was caption, the students could develop their writing skill of promoting something through Instagram. However, there were found the problems in writing caption using Instagram. It was found that 11 students confused in determining the caption model and did not have any idea about the product to be promoted. In addition, the problem in finding the topic and developing the sentences to be an attractive promotional caption was faced by 16 students. In conclusion, Instagram could be used as a platform to post students' writing projects, however, the students need to enrich the ideas in writing.

Keywords: Social Media, Instagram, Digital Marketing, Caption, Writing.

INTRODUCTION

Learning is the most important thing in education. In learning, we can use some media and methods. Learning activities must also be

designed in such way as to suit the students. Excellent learning is not boring and can be accepted by students well. One way is to use media and methods that are hype and modern right now.

Miranty et al., (2023), explain that technology is increasingly being used by English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher and as a medium to help students improve their skills. The significant development of information technology every year has triggered the creation of new programs to facilitate teachers in improving their language skills. Social media are one phenomenon that cannot be separated from human life. Along with the development of creativity and ideas from digital actors, social media is increasingly becoming a wild and wide thing with its endless innovations. Istiqomah et al., (2018) said that the use of Internet media is very influential in the development of technology right now. Nowadays, social media has penetrated all age groups, especially teenagers and adults. Teenagers and adults are age groups that still really need a lot of information, not only information from their environment but information from various directions to broaden their horizons.

With the success of social media as information technology, especially among students, it can finally be linked to their daily teaching and learning process at school. Social media is no longer a new thing for them, the ease of downloading and posting anything there makes them proficient in using it even if only by themselves. According to Sudjana, (2017), learning and teaching are two concepts that cannot be separated. Learning points to what a person must do as a subject who receives lessons (target students), meanwhile teaching points to what the teacher must do as a teacher. Nowadays, the teaching and learning process displayed or provided by teachers must also be innovative and keep up with the times.

The education system in schools cannot be separated from the curriculum because it is the thing that underlies the teaching and learning process. Currently, many types of curriculums applied, but what is still often applied to schools is the k13 curriculum and the latest is the *Merdeka* curriculum. Curriculum 2013 (K13) is an education curriculum implemented in Indonesia and introduced in 2013 replacing the Education Unit Level Curriculum (KTSP). According to Yusuf, (2018), the 2013 curriculum is a set of subjects and science-based education programs provided by an educational institution with the aim of preparing the birth of the golden generation of the Indonesian nation, with a system where students are more active in teaching and learning activities. The *Merdeka* Curriculum is a curriculum with diverse extracurricular learning where the content will be more optimal so that students have enough

time to deepen concepts and strengthen competencies. Teachers have the freedom to choose various teaching tools so that learning can be tailored to student's learning needs and interests. The *Merdeka* Curriculum gives educators the freedom to create quality learning that suits students' needs and learning environment. Qomariyah & Maghfiroh, (2022), stated that the *Merdeka* Curriculum is a simplification of the 2013 curriculum. The *Merdeka* Curriculum learns as an option for education units in the context of restoring learning.

Writing skills are one of the things that can be learned, especially here using social media which runs parallel to students' daily lives. Javed et al., (2013) stated that writing skill challenges students' cognitive competence since the process of writing is recalling their ideas. Writing skills on social media to promote something can also be called captioning. Hartini et al., (2017) reveals that a caption is a sentence term found in a photo uploaded on Instagram and in another language can be called a status that contains a word conveyed by someone. Caption becomes one of the important things when we upload something on social media.

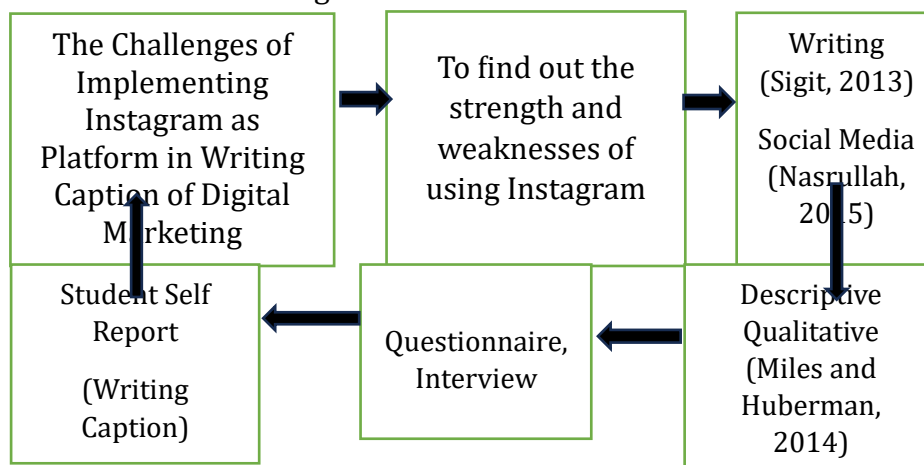
The use of social media as a learning medium has become one of the right things in this day and age. In addition, students who are familiar with the technology will also be more flexible and creative in pouring their ideas there. Moreover, writing is something that has been very commonly done by a student. According to Puspitasari et al., (2014), writing is one of the language skills needed today. Writing skills are not easy to have and require a long time to acquire. In addition, Nisa et al., (2023), stated that writing is one of the activities that involve the expertise to present ideas and the ability to string words to produce readings that are easily understood by the reader and have a positive effect on the reader. However, the skills in writing something are also very necessary, one must understand how systematic writing is good and correct so that the reader can understand the purpose of the text. The selection of diction and language style also affects whether or not a reader is interested in the text we make. Writing captions is also a common activity among school children, considering that almost every day they access the internet. There they will find a lot of captions and even write their captions to complete uploads on social media, especially on Instagram.

Previous researchers, Natsir et al., (2019) determined the student's ability to write social media advertisements. The results showed that social media such as Instagram can be developed as the writing material, and students' ability in writing using social media

can be implemented in e-marketing to design an advertisement. In addition, Avivi & Megawati, (2020) stated that Instagram captioning through a process approach has a positive effect on developing English writing skills. More specifically, the students can use their Instagram account as an alternative way to learn English by sharing their experiences, strengthening their steps in writing skills through editing, revising the draft based on the teacher's feedback, and publishing writing products. Moreover, Putra, (2019) claimed that Social Media can be used to interact with one person with another, social media can also be where we start a business in a more effective way efficiently. Furthermore, Ulya, (2022) found out that Instagram can be used as platform to post students projects in writing text types.

The focus of this research was how Instagram was used and what difficulties were experienced by the students. It was viewed from the process of determining ideas and writing captions, next posting them on their respective Instagram accounts. The students tend to be used to using Instagram in their daily lives. Instagram allows users to capture, edit, and share visual content with their followers or public. In addition, according to Kaplan & Haenlein, (2010) users can also add captions, locations, hashtags, and links to their posts. In this research, students were asked to choose one of the products to promote through Instagram with appropriate and attractive promotional captions. Hartini et al., (2017) explain that the caption is a sentence term contained in a photo uploaded on Instagram and another language can be called a status that contains a word or meaning conveyed by someone. Javed et al., (2013), stated that in this case, writing skills are needed by students to create good captions that can make readers interested in buying the products we offer. Writing is one of the four basic skills. The students start learning to communicate through written form as they begin to interact with others at the school level. The writing skill is more complicated than that of other language skills. Even sometimes a native speaker of the English language may experience complications in a tricky situation.

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework



Method

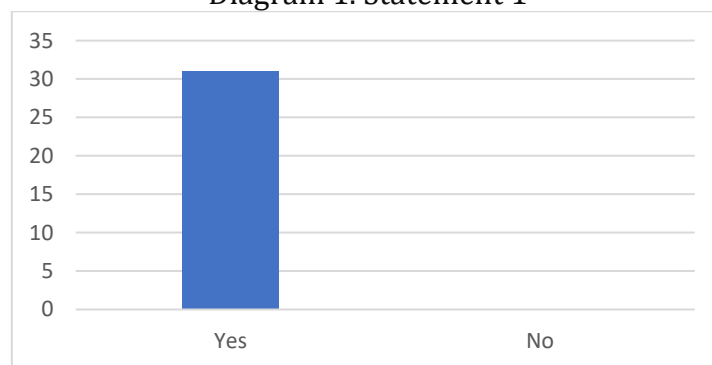
The method used in this research was Descriptive Qualitative. This method was chosen because the research method analysed and explained the problem in depth. Data collection techniques in this research used tests, questionnaires, and interviews. The test was in the form of writing promotional captions on Instagram. Questionnaires were answered by all students in the class later the answers were analysed, then interviews were conducted with 3 students as samples. The research subjects were 31 vocational high school students. The data source of this research came from the answers to questionnaires filled out directly by students and interview documents in the form of the researcher's notes. The results of the data that have been collected were analysed based on the theory of Miles and Huberman in their book written by Palazzolo (2023)

Findings and Discussion

Findings

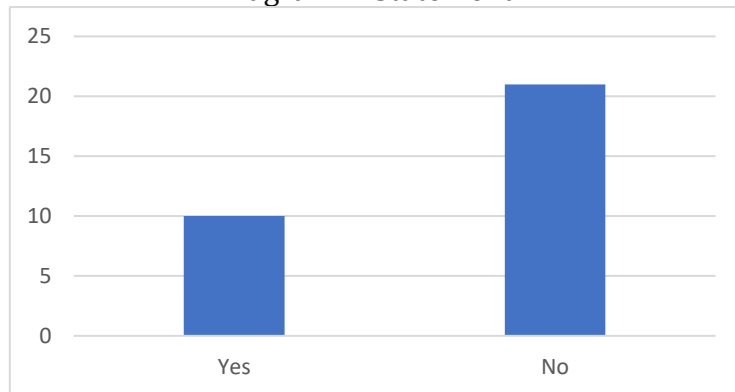
After the researcher took data from the questionnaire to the students, the researcher found out how Instagram was used and it turns out that there were still many students who have difficulty in writing promotional captions on Instagram, it can be seen from the statements of the students in the questionnaire.

Diagram 1. Statement 1



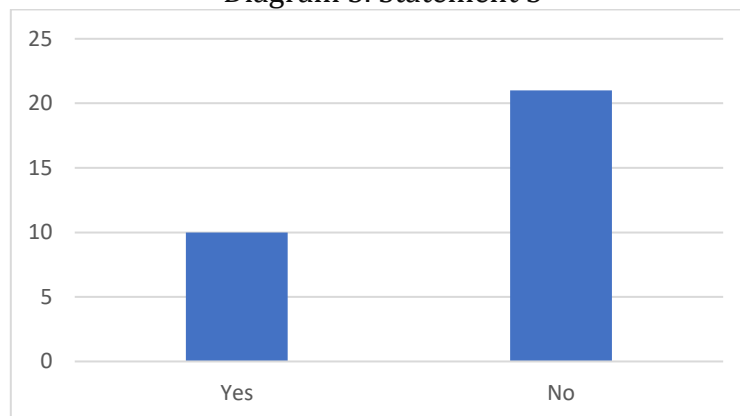
Based on the response of first statement that is “Do you have an Instagram account?”, it was found that 31 students have Instagram accounts. As previously stated, in this increasingly modern era, societies have followed the development of existing technology. One of them was the use of Instagram among students. Therefore, a teacher should be able to take advantage of this phenomenon. Use learning media that is familiar to students so that they easily accept the information conveyed.

Diagram 2. Statement 2



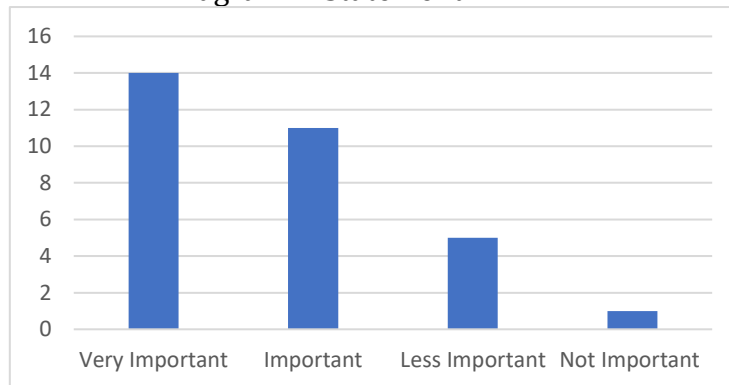
The second statement was “Have you ever written a caption?”. From 31 research participants, there were 29 students who answered YES, meanwhile, the rest answered NO. Most students who have written captions on Instagram usually share moments of their daily activities, vacation moments with family, describe their idols, or just share their own quotes.

Diagram 3. Statement 3



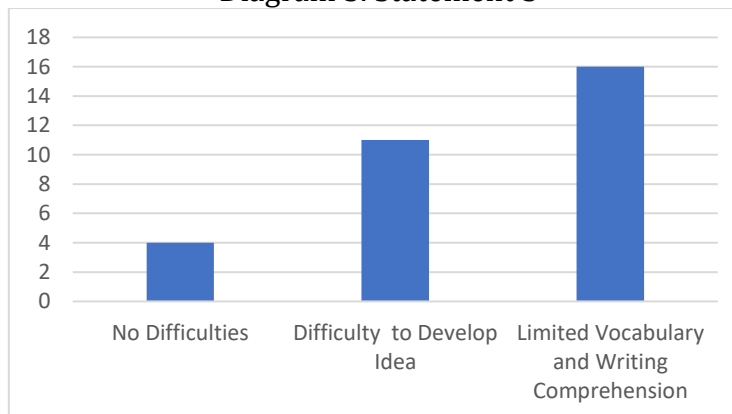
The statement in this part was “Have you ever written a product promotion caption on Instagram?”. The result showed that 10 students answered YES, meanwhile, 21 students answered NO. Most of them have never written promotional captions on Instagram. However, they admit that they often see promotional captions posted by others. so even though they have never written promotional captions, they are familiar with the form and concept of promotional captions.

Diagram 4. Statement 4



The statement in this part was “How important are writing skills needed to write product promotion captions on Instagram?”. The result showed that 14 students answered “Very Important”, 11 students answered “Important”, 5 students answered “Less Important”, and 1 student answered “Not Important”. The researchers conclude that if we don't have good writing skills then the captions written cannot attract readers, writing skills can influence readers' interest in the products we offer through the captions made, and if we have good writing skills then can choose words and arrange sentences that are interesting and appropriate.

Diagram 5. Statement 5



The last statement was “What difficulties do you experience when writing product promotion captions on Instagram?”. From Questionnaire number 5, there were 11 students answered that they had Difficulty Developing Ideas, 16 students answered that they had Limited Vocabulary and Writing Comprehension, and there were 4 students answered that they did not have any difficulties.

After the researcher found out what difficulties the students experienced through the questionnaires they answered, the researchers took several students as samples from each type of difficulty and who had no difficulty in writing captions. Through this

interview, researchers wanted to know what strengths and weaknesses they find when using Instagram as a platform in writing captions of digital marketing. From the interview asked by the researcher, students answered as follows:

Table 1. Question 1

Question
How important is the role of Instagram as a promotional platform?

The respondent stated that the role of Instagram was very important, because on Instagram we can also interact directly. It made easier if audiences were interested in the products offered. It made an endorsement through Instagram users who have many followers (*celebgrams*), and promotion on Instagram is more efficient and easier because most people now have an Instagram account.

Table 2. Question 2

Question
What are the advantages of Instagram as a promotional platform?

The student claimed that Instagram has a wide reach and it was more interesting because they could post photos and videos there. The post often offers new things, and there are so many Instagram users in this day and age, so it is easy to get a wider audience.

Table 3. Question 3

Question
What are the disadvantages of Instagram as a promotional platform?

The student stated that on Instagram there are too many users, so there's more competition. In addition, there were more interesting featured that have to be paid when they were used. On Instagram the trends change quickly, so the users have to always keep up with the trends in order to keep attracting customers. The competition is also quite tight on Instagram. The users need to have a lot of followers to make their accounts look good and classy. There are already so many users that sometimes it's hard to reach new customers, especially if they are new to Instagram.

Discussion

Based on the results of the tests, questionnaires, and interviews that have been carried out, the result was discussed below.

In using Instagram as a platform to write product promotion captions, the students maximized Instagram features, selected products to promote, and wrote promotional captions that are in accordance with the context that was taught previously. In posting pictures and adding captions, the students did not experience difficulties with this. As stated earlier, Instagram has become a familiar

thing among students, so Instagram is one of the choices of learning media that is suitable to be applied in the classroom.

Based on the promotional posts they made and the questionnaires that have been answered by all students in class, there were still many students who experienced difficulties during the process of writing promotional captions. Although they are used to use Instagram in their daily lives, most of the students have never written a promotional caption for a product. Through the questionnaire, students conveyed that they still confused when determining whether the product would be promoted. In addition, they were also confused about the concept of the caption that would be uploaded. Not only that, choosing the right words and interesting sentences is also a difficulty for students during the caption writing process. Based on the questionnaire, only about 4 students did not have any difficulties when writing captions. This is because they have done product promotion before.

From interviews conducted with several students in the class, the researchers found several statements from their answers about the role of Instagram as a promotional platform. As well as the advantages and disadvantages of Instagram as a product promotion platform, all interviewees stated that the role of Instagram was very important as a platform for promoting the products we offer. That is because through Instagram we can interact directly so that it made easier if readers are interested in the products we offer. The students also said that by using Instagram they can endorse products through Instagram users whose followers are already many or commonly referred to as Instagram celebrities, and the use of Instagram as a promotional media tends to be more efficient and easier because most people now have Instagram accounts.

For the advantages of Instagram as a promotional platform, the students said that by using Instagram the reach obtained was very wide and more interesting because it is not only photos that we can post, but also videos through the reels feature. It was also conveyed that Instagram has many interesting features and often offers new things so that it is not monotonous, Instagram is also very easy and simple to be operated.

The last one was the disadvantages of Instagram which were conveyed by the students based on their experience using the media. It was conveyed that now Instagram has so many users, so the competition is also more, some interesting features must be paid for, such as placing advertisements. Not only that, trends on Instagram change quickly over time, so a user must always follow trends to keep attracting customers on Instagram. In addition, the user must also

have many followers so that the account looks good and classy. As a new user of Instagram, especially to promote something, it is sometimes difficult to reach the audience especially if you are trying out Instagram.

Conclusion

Based on the research that was conducted, it could be concluded that the use of Instagram can be maximized as a platform for writing product promotion captions. The researchers also know how important Instagram is as a medium for promotion and what advantages and disadvantages Instagram has as a platform for promotion. The use of Instagram as a promotional platform was also supported by students' writing skills. This research contributed to the development of students' writing skills, especially in writing promotional captions.

Practically, teachers can be more creative in choosing what kind of learning media which is suitable for their students. Understanding popular social media is one way to attract students' interest in learning. With careful procedures and adequate supporting facilities, better results can be obtained. Since this research was limited to product promotion captions on Instagram, this research can be a recommendation for future researchers who want to conduct similar research on this topic. In addition, future researchers are advised to examine other Instagram usage strategies that have not been discussed. Exploring other potential features of Instagram, participant levels, different writing approaches, and research methods are also opportunities for future research.

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