COMMUNICATION STYLE OF INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT FOLLOWED BY MILLENNIALS

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Abstract: This study investigated the communication style used by an Instagram account to engage millennials. A qualitative approach with document study was used. This shows Instagram posts are part of the personal documents that can be analyzed based on types of communication styles. The source of data was the *Folkative* Instagram account which has approximately 6000 postings with a hundred thousand likes and thousands of comments. In this study, ten captions were taken as the data. The data were analyzed through data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The result found three communication styles were used by *Folkative* namely structuring style, equalitarian style, and controlling style. To sum up, *Folkative* engages the millennials through structuring style, equalitarian style, and controlling style.

Keywords: *communication style, instagram, millennial*

INTRODUCTION

The millennial generation makes extensive use of technology in the fields of information and communication. Social media technology, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, is frequently regarded as a means of communication (Afifi et al., 2018). Social media is also used to obtain various types of information and to engage with others (Ardi & Putri, 2020).

Social media is a type of internet media in which people may simply interact, share, and produce content. Instagram is one of the most used forms of social media by

people around the world (Massing-Schaffer & Nesi, 2020). It invites anyone interested in contributing by providing feedback, commenting, and sharing information quickly and without limit. Millennials use social media as a tool for socialization, developing, and negotiating mediated identities within online communities (Ramachandiran & Mahmud, 2019).

Millennials can quickly search for and receive general information, such as the most recent news, entertainment, hobbies, and information about the outside world, among other things. Through the activity of searching and obtaining information, language and verbal communication appear to facilitate social bonding (Oesch, 2019). The social process of creating ties among humans always requires the intervention of language and verbal communication. Language is an essential element since people can be connected simply between partners or across the larger community (Thomas & McDonagh, 2013).

Language and verbal communication can result in social bonding depending on the communication style itself. The communication style in interacting on social media is dynamic which means it can change influenced by psychological factors and the interests of each social media user (Fajrie, 2018). The communication style in Instagram is the communication style of Instagram users who act as communicators to followers as communicants in cyberspace.

One of the Instagram accounts that focuses on millennials is *Folkative*. *Folkative* is an online media platform that focuses on news, art, culture, and local Indonesian products. *Folkative* is a group of companies that target young people, particularly millennials. *Folkative* was founded to inspire, enlighten, and express the voice of Indonesian youth's creative culture. *Folkative* provides this by producing interactive online information and events worthy of being known by young people (Fadhlan & Putri, 2021).

The communication style reflects values and beliefs where it comes from culture and personality (Juarsa, 2016). Through the communication style, values and beliefs of certain cultures or person's personalities will be recognized, such as using memes on *Instagram* to share social life (Lestari, 2018). Moreover, a previous study found celebrities on Instagram used more than one communication style and the style changed depending on the situation (Zhafirah, 2018). In addition, Pratiwi (2017) found a

comedian used two types of communication styles; the controlling style dan the equalitarian style when interacting with his fellows. Also, communication style influenced a positive impact to improve brand awareness on an Instagram account (Aisah & Prasetyawati, 2018). These studies showed the communication styles reflected the value in which it is used.

As *Folkative* focuses on producing interactive online information and events worthy of being known by millennials, it has its way to reflect the value to engage its followers. This is supported by (Fadhlan & Putri, 2021) that the communication style and online engagement of *Folkative* Instagram accounts are positive. However, this finding raises the question of how the *Folkative* communication style engages its followers. This present study tries to describe the communication style used by *Folkative*.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Communication Style

Communication refers to the activity of one or more people to convey messages in verbal or nonverbal form from communicators to communicants through communication channels or media that occur in a certain context and cause certain effects or influences to get feedback to achieve the intended goal (Devito, 2018).

According to Tubbs and Moss (1996), there are six communication styles, namely: controlling style, equalitarian style, structuring style, dynamic style, relinquishing style, and withdrawal style. 1) *The controlling style* is detected by the willingness or intention to limit, enforce, and control the actions, thoughts, and reactions of others. Those who use this style of communication are known as one-way communicators or one-way communicators; 2) *The equalitarian style* which is detected by the act of communication is done openly. This means that all members can reveal their ideas and opinions in a relaxed and casual atmosphere. In this atmosphere, all members of the organization can reach mutual consensus and understanding; 3) *The structuring style* is detected by utilizing verbal messages, both written and oral, to establish a structure that must be carried out, scheduling tasks, and organizational structure. Those who use this style desire to influence others by sharing information; 4) *The dynamic style* tends to be dynamic because those who use this style or sender of the

message understand that the work environment is action-oriented; 5) *The relinquishing style* reflects a willingness to accept the suggestions, opinions, or ideas of others rather than a desire to dictate, even though the sender of the message has the power to command and control others; 6) *The withdrawal style* weakens the act of communication, meaning that people who use this style have no desire to communicate with others because these people face some problems or difficulties between individuals.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach with a document study. Document study is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning to an assessment topic (Bowen, 2009). One of the primary types of documents is a personal document which includes first-person accounts of individual actions, experiences, and beliefs (O'Leary, 2014). This shows Instagram posts are part of the personal documents that can be analyzed based on communication style (Tubbs & Moss, 1996). The source of data was the *Folkative* Instagram account whose style used the Indonesian language for its in-text image and English for its captions. It has approximately 6000 postings with a hundred thousand likes and thousands of comments. In this study, 10 captions uploaded in the first week of April 2022 were taken as the data. The data were analyzed through four steps (Miles & Huberman, 1994) namely data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The data were collected and analyzed based on the communication style theory (Tubbs & Moss, 1996). The data were displayed in Table 1.

Table.1 Communication Style Used in Instagram Captions

Captions	Indicator	Communication Style
• The government, through an announcement made by President Joko Widodo (6/4), decided that the Eid al-Fitr 1443 Hijri holiday would fall on April 29 and May 4-6,	Sharing information about the Eid al-Fitr holiday	Structuring

2022. Meanwhile, May 2 and 3, 2022, are designated as Eid holidays. [Photo: @wibisono.ari] • Lebaran pada kemana tahun ini?	Asking for followers' ideas about where they will go for the holiday	Equalitarian
• Twitter is launching a new feature where users can edit a tweet that has been posted before. However, this feature is intended for Twitter Blue users, which is a monthly paid subscription service. Twitter affirms that they are serious in developing this feature and will be available in the near future. What do you think?	Sharing information about Twitter's new feature	Structuring
	Asking for followers' opinions about the Twitter new feature	Equalitarian
• Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs, Airlangga Hartarto, said as many as 8.8 million workers with salaries below Rp. 3.5 million will receive Wage Subsidy Assistance (BSU). The BSU will be given to 8.8 million workers with salaries of less than Rp. 3.5 million. This program is part of the Covid-19 Handling and National Economic Recovery (PC-PEN) for the 2022 fiscal year.	Sharing information about Wage Subsidy Assistance	Structuring
• BTS' V was caught flirting with Olivia Rodrigo during BTS" James Bond opening. What do you think they are talking about?	Asking for followers' opinions about an event	Equalitarian
• In this diverse world, you will meet different people with various types of backgrounds. You might already hear the uproar caused by the Free Fire x BTS collaboration. In this social experiment video, both opposite parties invited to play Free Fire without knowing each others' background and difference. Could they find something in common?	Persuading the followers to watch the Free Fire x BTS collaboration	Controlling
	Asking for followers' idea about the collaboration	Equalitarian
• Semarang Mayor announced they are launching SHIELD (Spatial Holistic Integrated Environment and Land Division) as an effort to improve performance at the City Spatial Planning Office. Though netizens are buzzing over the fact that the logo they used looks like the one from a certain multi-billion dollar movie franchise. Does the logo look familiar to you?	Asking for followers' opinion about the SHIELD logo that looks similar to other.	Equalitarian
• Muslims in the United States hold Tarawih prayers in the open, precisely in the center of Times Square, New York. This Tarawih prayer is organized by SQ, the Muslim community in America. This event aims to introduce everyone to the true face of Islam.	Sharing information about Tarawih prayer in Times Square, New York	Structuring
• Sometimes to be relieved, you need to tell what you feel. And with just a story and someone listening to you. it may not necessarily help you solve your problem, but the burden on your shoulders will feel lighter and more relaxed. You can try to relax, both your mind and body.	Trying to regulate followers' behavior	Controlling

#sobatjompowarriors		
• The Minister of Manpower, Ida Fauziyah, affirm that employers must pay the holiday allowance (THR) in full in Eid 2022. Considering the economic condition that is gradually recovering, entrepreneurs are not allowed to pay THR in installments this year. Previously, since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Fauziyah provided concessions for entrepreneurs in terms of paying THR for workers, such as in installments to delaying.	Sharing information about the holiday allowance for workers	Structuring
• From the many activities on weekdays, there's nothing wrong if you have a budget and want to refresh on the weekend. Moreover, you can recharge by doing "STAYcation heMAT" at @traveloka and find your dream Hotels & Holiday Stays every Friday from 7-12 pm. Any recommendations for the best staycation places?	Persuading the followers to use Traveloka	Controlling
	Asking for followers' recommendations for the best place to stay	Equalitarian

After analyzing the captions, three communication styles used by *Folkative* to engage its millennial followers namely structuring style, equalitarian style, and controlling style were found. Firstly, the structuring style is indicated by the captions which share information in a good structure. Secondly, the equalitarian style is indicated by asking followers' opinions to meet the equality of sender and followers. Lastly, the controlling style is indicated by persuading followers to do the same as them.

Discussion

There were three communication styles used in *Folkative* captions. Firstly, it used a structuring style by providing up-to-date news in a simple and good structure. It encompasses local and international information including religion, politics, technology, and entertainment. Through this style, *Folkative* influenced the followers particularly millennials to stay updated waiting for new upcoming posts on the topic which is relevant to their lives (Hermans & Prins, 2020). This current study empirically supports positive engagement happens not only because of news interest but also the way the news is reported (Drok et al., 2018).

Folkative used an equalitarian style through two-way communication to build engagement with millennials. The captions always ended up asking for opinions about the topic. This led the followers actively engaged through the comment box whether they agreed or understood the topic because millennials are interested in sharing information by giving comments or their thoughts. The same style is also used by a non-millennial YouTuber to reach millennial viewers (Martianto & Toni, 2021). Moreover,

a comedian also used an equalitarian style to interact with his fellows (Aisah & Prasetyawati, 2018). The point is equalitarian emphasizes interaction among the sender and followers to get mutual agreement or understanding.

Lastly, controlling style is used when *Folkative* wanted to endorse a brand. It has its way of controlling the followers' minds by representing current conditions and using reasonable sentences. Thus, the followers were attracted to do the same as they offer. The controlling style is also used by a celebrity on Instagram (Asiah, 2021) by using persuasive sentences to influence the followers.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

Instagram accounts nowadays are widely used by millennials to gain information or to give information to others. Millennials tend to pick Instagram accounts they like which relevant to their needs. One of the Instagram account followed by millennials is *Folkative*. *Folkative* tries to build its way to engage followers, especially millennials. Here, communication style becomes an important aspect. The communication styles used by *Folkative* are structuring style, equalitarian style, and controlling style.

Suggestions

Based on the finding and the conclusion, it is suggested that other researchers investigate other millennial or Gen Z social media accounts that are now widespread, and hopefully, this study can be a reference for further research.

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