

# VIRTUAL ETHNOGRAPHY STUDY ON INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT @GADINGFESTIVAL AS PROMOTION MEDIA OF FOOD FESTIVAL

Sigit Surahman<sup>1</sup>, Wichitra Yasya<sup>2</sup>, Hamida Syari Harahap<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Faculty of Communication Science, Universitas Bhayangkara Jakarta Raya  
([saleseven@gmail.com](mailto:saleseven@gmail.com))

**ABSTRACT.** Technological developments have changed the communication process, including in promotional activities. This study aims to identify the use of Instagram social media as a form of marketing communication and a form of promotion of Sedayu City at a food festival conducted by the Instagram account @gadingfestival. The research uses a qualitative method with a virtual ethnographic approach. In-depth virtual observation revealed that the Gading Festival committee was promoting tourism through the @gadingfestival account by uploading digital posters, photos, videos and photo clips. Of the four forms of digital promotion on the @gadingfestival account, posters are the main promotional tool because posters contain considerable amount of information, including the time and place of the festival, performers, contact numbers that can be contacted and social media that can be traced. The use of social media, especially Instagram, is one of the media that is widely used for food promotion because it can increase public awareness to be able to attend a real place with the help of information from cyberspace. The use of social media is one of the media that is often used for tourism promotion because it can increase public awareness to be able to attend a real place with the help of information from the virtual world.

**KEYWORDS:** virtual ethnography; student exchange program; virtual exchange

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Product development of goods or services not only requires attractive packaging but also needs marketing to support consumer interest. To attract consumers, marketing strategy communication is appropriate. In this discussion, marketing promotion is one part of the eight main marketing communication models, namely advertising, promotion, sale, connection Marketing direct; marketing interactive marketing; word of mouth; and sales force are all examples of public events, festivals, and experiences. Promotion is a purposeful activity to influence someone to be interested in a product offered and then buy it, thereby achieving an exchange in marketing. Promotion is the one step that can be used to introduce a product or service and invite customers to try it. In today's digital era, promotions can be carried out with various media. With the development of technology and information, the public can easily and quickly get information. An easily accessible information center is sometimes required to obtain information obtained online such as in social media.

Instagram is a type of social media widely used by the public. Instagram itself is a photo-based social media where there is interaction between users based on what is uploaded on Instagram. Instagram users alone could display photos – photos that they had previously edited using Instagram's effects or filters. Besides its use for interacting with other users, Instagram itself has now become an opportunity to do business, which means users could promote goods, merchandise, or their services.

Based on survey data conducted by a survey agency in America, United States in the year 2019, it is known that Instagram occupies the first position as the most popular social media platform used for advertising. The survey was conducted on 4,800 people from around the world, with the majority of respondents coming from micro enterprises, as much as 60%. Based on the results of this survey, it is known that the existence trend shifted from Facebook to Instagram in Thing promotion. The public is

more interested in learning about Instagram due to a decline in Facebook usage and an increase in Instagram users.

The current development of the internet is with the existence of social media. Social media is deep into public life in the era of digital. Media social makes man more transparent in communicating, and everyone's activities can easily be known by others, even known to the whole world. Besides being able to be used as a medium for promoting goods or services, Instagram can also be used as a medium for promoting events or festivals. Because in this era now, everyone is always using Instagram. Therefore, Instagram is an effective place to promote events or festivals throughout the local community. The food festival itself is an activity that is held with a destination besides for event entertainment for the public. Food festivals can also introduce various types of culture to a city or region through food. The Indonesian Food Festival is an Indonesian food bazaar that has a culinary concept typical of the archipelago from various kinds of areas in Indonesia. At bazaar food, visitors could enjoy a variety of culinary delights which were served at the Food Festival with their uniqueness in the decoration.

Food festivals have become a trend nowadays in various cities. Festivals like this are already scheduled every year or month. This food festival has become one of today's popular tourist destinations. This is due to promotion on social media such as Instagram and food and beverage products that are hunted by foodies. Many food and beverage business people regard the festival as an effective medium for marketing the brand and its products. Through this food festival, business people can have consumers spend more.

Instagram is unique in showing photos or videos that expand opportunities—food business opportunities. The food business is getting more popular and growing among young people who often download food photos on their Instagram accounts. This phenomenon is here to be an opportunity to open up business opportunities. Culinary promotion through social media offers There are many new and unique ways to develop a culinary business. The impact of digital development is that much more happens at the business level rather than in food processing activities. As a result, the use of media has increased. Social media like Instagram are very popular. Information provided through social media provides an attractive influence on consumers. To participate in this festival, tenants must go through a curation process that is diverse. Festival, this could be followed by the public, which already has a restaurant physique or no. Despite the fact that he does not yet have a restaurant physique, he has already introduced his business on social media platforms such as Instagram.

The uniqueness of Instagram and the ease of accessing Instagram are used by several people to market an event or event. Like at a food festival, using Instagram, they could promote the program and what is just available in festival food. Start by posting posters, photos of the situation at the festival, re-uploading people's posts or videos of people at the food festival. This method is very effective in expanding festival promotions of food. And this method is used by the Instagram account @gadingfestival in promoting the festival food there.

The variety of products being promoted is also a big influence on the smooth running of this food festival. The large variety of products offered is a plus so that consumers are interested in coming and enjoying this food festival. There are 35 culinary entrepreneurs and more than 100 kinds of Indonesian products, creating a Food Festival that is held every year. This allows consumers to try various kinds of products from the culinary archipelago. Variety products, which vary, also reach consumers from different backgrounds and from different regions, so that every existing consumer can, with suitable food, try food which they desire.

The account @gadingfestival utilises social media and Instagram as a medium for media promotion, inviting the public to attend the food festival and increasing public interest in culinary events in Indonesia. The promotion which is conducted is with the upload of photos of food which will be peddled and provide information to users about the food and where the location of the festival will take place. There are many types of food and snacks that can be enjoyed while enjoying the atmosphere of the capital.

In order to promote the photos they upload, the account @gadingfestival uses the hashtags #gadingfestival #sedayacity #culinarytour #kulinerjakarta. The hashtags contain several categories of uploaded photos. Not only photos, but there are poster uploads and videos. The @gadingfestival account manager is also able to produce photos with interesting shots and, naturally, with results that are good.

The manager account @gadingfestival also gives a description price to a clear location in the uploaded post, making it easier for followers to come directly to the location.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

This research makes use of a method known as virtual ethnography, which is an approach that investigates communities of people who utilize the internet (Hine 2000). Kozinets (2013) employs the method of virtual ethnography in order to understand people's social interactions in cyberspace and the manner in which humans create meaning to their social reality in conjunction with the development of new technologies (Kozinets 2013). This strategy demonstrates the usefulness of social media in another way. In the virtual ethnographic method, data was collected using the online observation method through two procedures: investigation and detailed documentation in the form of screenshots of activities on the @gadingfestival Instagram account. These screenshots were taken from the account that was used to document the festival. This investigation began in December 2021 and continued through January 2022. It was conducted on the social media platform Instagram (@gadingfestival). As can be seen, the Instagram account @gadingfestival uses the social media platform to carry out promotional activities for food events or festivals and then communicates those actions to the general public via Instagram. The researcher employed a method known as triangulation in conjunction with interactive data analysis in order to determine whether or not the data were reliable. This methodology involved the reduction of data, the display of data, and the drawing of conclusions with verification.

## 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the Instagram account activity @gadingfestival, it can be seen that the title or photo caption is used to briefly describe the uploaded photo, usually containing the message or information of the photo. In Figures 1 and 2, the Instagram account @gadingfestival uploaded 2 photos. The upload is a poster for the Sedayu City – Kelapa Gading food festival.

On the poster in Figure 1, it is explained that there is a special promotion in honor of Independence Day, which is buy one get one free for food and drinks only for three days. Then there is the information regarding the date, the location, and the details of the free parking. Although the caption in the upload provides an explanation of the poster and is still related to it, neither the poster nor the caption explains what kinds of food or drinks will be offered at the festival.



Figure 1: Poster posted on Instagram account @gadingfestival on August 8, 2019

On June 6, 2021, the @gadingfestival account uploaded a poster. The poster explains that there will be an opening of Bakmi Gang Kelinci soon at the food festival Sendayu City – Kelapa Gading. There is a date and location where the food is opened. The caption explains some of the menus available at Bakmi Gang Kelinci. And there is an explanation that all the food is halal.



Figure 2: Poster posted on Instagram account @gadingfestival on June 6, 2021

Hashtags are one of the items available on Instagram. Hashtags have a function to categorize content or topics and make it easier to find according to the hat you want to meet. By doing a hashtag search in the search option to find which topics you want to search for and then clicking on it, Instagram will display all posts that contain that hashtag in the photo caption. Hashtags are symbolized by a hashtag sign (#).

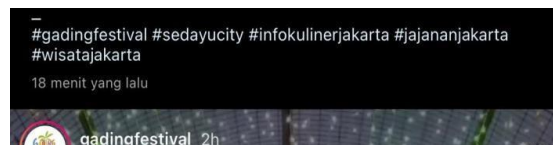


Figure 2: Hashtag used by Instagram account @gadingfestival in 2021

The hashtag symbol (#) is included in each and every post that is uploaded to the Instagram account @gadingfestival. This makes it much simpler for followers to locate topics of interest. Picture 4 is an example of this, and it was uploaded on December 30th, 2021. In the caption of the photo that was uploaded, there are five hashtags listed. These hashtags are as follows: # gadingfestival # sedayucity # infokulinerjakarta # jajananjakarta # wisatajakarta. At the food festival, the activities for promoting food using the hashtags that are listed have been finished.

One of the features that can be used on Instagram to display information about the location where a photo was taken and then uploaded is called geotag, which is also referred to as location. It has been determined, through research conducted online, that the Instagram account @gadingfestival, which is used for the promotion of a food festival, always uses geotags or locations for each photo that it uploads. This is done in order to make it simpler for followers to locate the location that they are interested in visiting. The photo that was uploaded to the @gadingfestival Instagram account on June 7, 2021 is shown in Figure 5 as an example of the use of geotags and locations in uploads from that account.

On Instagram, one of the features that can be used to indicate that a user enjoys a photo or video post is called "Like." On Instagram, users are able to give "likes" to their own posts as well as any other post. According to the author's calculations, the @gadingfestival Instagram account will have posted a total of 846 times between November 2018 and December 2021. The author keeps a tally of the total number of likes throughout the years. According to our research, in the year 2018 there were 27 food promotion photo uploads that received a total of 162 likes, in the year 2019 there were 35 food promotion photo uploads that received a total of 231, in the year 2020 there were 39 food promotion photo uploads that received a total of 267 likes, and in the year 2021 there were 45 food promotion photo uploads that received 31 likes. According to the results of these computations, the number of people who liked promotional uploads in the year 2021 was the highest it had ever been compared to 2018, 2019, and 2020. This makes sense, considering that in 2021 they will upload additional photos promoting food products.

The researcher also observed the comment column on the @gadingfestival Instagram account. On October 25, 2021, the @gadingfestival account uploaded a food promo promotion poster. The poster's upload received a response in the form of comments from the followers of this account. In the poster upload, there are 4 comments containing questions about events and information, as well as several followers who mention other people's accounts (friends, family, or colleagues) to be invited to see the poster. Some of these comments have the purpose of informing followers or other accounts. Some also ask about the information on the poster and express opinions and support for the event.

At the food festival, there will be all kinds of food, from heavy meals to snacks. This festival has been going on for 3 years. Food festivals are growing from year to year. Starting from visitors who are increasingly crowded and various types of food are increasingly available, the attraction of the community is getting stronger to visit. With views and places that are decorated so nicely and beautifully, it makes visitors more comfortable enjoying the cuisine at the food festival.

Through the @gadingfestival Instagram account, the organizers of the event used four forms of online promotion, namely by uploading digital posters, photos, and promotional videos. Each of these three forms of promotion has its own strengths. Digital posters are the main form of promotion used by the Gading Festival committee because they contain information related to the holding of the food festival. The photo as a form of promotion is supported by a caption because the photo used is a form of promotion that is carried out subtly or softly by indirectly inviting followers to attend the event. The caption serves to explain the purpose of uploading the photo, which is an invitation or contains an element of persuasion. The Gading Festival committee also uses videos to promote this event by showing people who have gone to the festival and reviewing the food available at the Gading Festival to invite followers to come watch and feel the euphoria. The video is also assisted by a caption that provides information about the name of the person in the video as well as the time and place of the event. The three forms of promotion are the efforts of the Gading Festival committee in promoting the event for the last 3 years on the @gadingfestival Instagram account.

Promotion using conventional media requires a large amount of money. In terms of time, promotion using conventional media is slower and information is difficult to reach the public. So now digital food promotion is being used using social media, such as Instagram. Conventional methods are still used in promotion through social media, namely by using digital posters uploaded through social media. Another conventional way is to use video. However, promotional videos are not broadcast on television but are uploaded to social media accounts. Social media can distribute messages at a faster rate and at very minimal cost. Digital posters do not need to be printed like the posters that are usually posted in public places. Social media will be where the digital posters will be. People who read posters are virtual people who are followers or followers of personal social media accounts or unintentionally look at and explore Instagram.

#### **4 CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of this investigation, it is now found that @gadingfestival account engages in three distinct types of digital promotion, namely the distribution of digital posters, promotional photos, and promotional videos. These three different types of promotion are efforts made by the Gading Festival committee so that the general public is aware that there is a food festival included in it and is interested in coming directly to this festival and tasting the culinary that is available there. It is hoped that the committee in charge of organizing the Gading Festival will be able to promote this event even more effectively on Instagram by making use of the features that are currently available on Instagram.

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