BEYOND LIKE AND SHARE: OPTIMIZING POTENTIAL OF INSTAGRAM IN A HIGHER EDUCATION ADMISSION

(A Study on the Admission Office at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta)

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ABSTRACT. Uses of social media in the millennial generation, especially Instagram, is increasing. This generation accesses various information through the media, particularly New Student Admission (commonly called PMB-Peneriman Mahasiswa Baru). Data in 2020 showed that 95.2% of active students had Instagram, and 45.8% of them accessed the PMB information through Instagram. In the next year, 96.3% of active students had Instagram, and 71.2% accessed the PMB information through Instagram. From this data, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Admission optimizes Instagram features as a promotional media. This manuscript discusses how the Admission Office of UIN Sunan Kalijaga utilizes potential of Instagram to promote its new student admission, the PMB. This study found that there are five Instagram features that can be optimized to promote the PMB information, specifically posting, caption, hashtag, instastory and paid promote features. To optimize these five features, it is necessary to prepare a timeline based on time habits of the millennial generation in using the Instagram.

KEYWORDS: Instagram, Advertising Media, University Admission, New University Student

INTRODUCTION

Instagram is not only an entertaining media by sharing personal experiences but also a new media widely used for various purposes. Its various features may allow its users to use it as a promotional media. Accordingly, the Admission Office of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta also optimizes the Instagram to attract new prospective university students, the digital native generation of it.

The new university students, as digital natives of Instagram, are able to operate its features that allow them to like and share photos, short videos, information, live streaming, stories, comments and so forth. Consequently, these features can be utilized for various purposes, such as advertising and promotion media. As an application, Instagram has significant active users in the world as reported that there were two billion monthly active users (MAU) on October 2021. Meanwhile, the number of active users reached 191 million users in Indonesia on January 2022; based on a report of We Are Social, this number increases by 12.35% compared to the previous year (dataindonesia.id).

In line with the report of We Are Social, Napoleon Cat through his survey demonstrated that Instagram users in Indonesia are dominated by 18–24-year-old users, and their number was 33.90 million consisting of 19.8% females and 17.5% males (https://databoks.katadata.co.id/). Thus, Instagram is a proper application for promotion, especially for universities, because their targets of information, promotions and advertisements are school age individuals.

Furthermore, one of the leading universities in Indonesia, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta strives to provide information about New Student Admission (commonly called PMB-Penerimaan Mahasiswa Baru). This university has three levels of programs, starting from undergraduate program, master program

and doctoral program. The university requires media to inform its programs. Based on data of We Are Social and Napoleon Cat, Instagram is a proper choice to attract new students.

Regarding the Indonesian universities, according to data from Directorate General of Higher Education in 2020, there were 3,403 universities and 1,190 vocational universities. In details, there were 3,044 private universities (PTS), 1,240 religious universities (PTA), 187 government-affiliated colleges (PTK) and 122 state universities (PTN). Then regionally there were 135 universities either state or private universities in Yogyakarta.

LEMBAGA *INSTITUTIONS*

Jumlah Perguruan Tinggi berdasarkan Bentuk Pendidikan
Number of Higher Education Institutions based on Form of Education

Jumlah Perguruan Tinggi (PT) berdasarkan Kelompok Pembina
Number of Higher Education (HE) Institutions based on Supervising Group

Source: Statistic of Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology

Then according to Directorate General of Islamic Higher Education, Ministry of Religious Affairs, there were 898 Islamic universities (58 state universities and 840 private universities). Of the 58 state universities, there were 23 universities (UIN), 29 institutes (IAIN) and 6 higher colleges (STAIN). Of the 840 private universities, there were 88 institutes (IAI), 641 higher colleges (STAI) and 111 faculties (FAI).

Lembaga PTKI
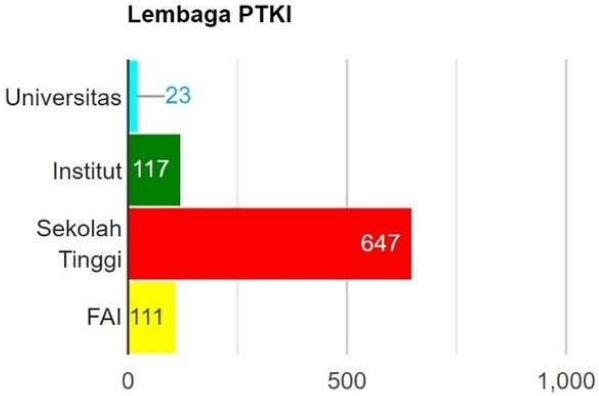
Source: *http://diktis.kemenag.go.id/*
Table of Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia

The data above portrays distributions of the universities and their characteristic, that may lead to competition among the universities in national, regional or local levels. This competition also occurs based on institutional levels starting from universities, institutes and high colleges, either state or private universities. UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, a State Islamic Religious University (PTKIN), is under the Directorate General of Islamic Higher Education and is a university that organize study programs under the Directorate General of Higher Education. This university coordinates with two ministries that organize higher education, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology.

The number of universities in Indonesia above provides challenges and opportunities for UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta in terms of competition both directly or indirectly. In the competition either nationally or regionally, the state and private universities need appropriate responses and strategies, especially in terms of marketing strategies in socialization and promotion. According to Koltler and Armstrong (2015: 2), marketing strategy is a set of processes to convey advantages and uniqueness to customers and to manage customer relationships to achieve benefits for an organization. Simonson (1993) suggests that efforts to satisfy desires of customers are a key to success in a competition. Some of the efforts are approaching to the consumers to identify what they want and gaining customer feedback or potential customers to control organizational changes (Bergin, 1997). Universities as education service providers need to develop strategies and build initiatives by improving quality of advertising to their targets. Some of the strategies or initiatives are using appropriate media and being closer to potential targets.

A study by Thallita Affifah Nugroho and Farah Citra Azzahra (2022) portrayed that Brodo, a social commerce business, utilized publication characteristics on Instagram. Through Instagram, Brodo conveyed that it is a local brand and has the best quality. Also, it told any stories about Brodo itself. Brodo chose Instagram as a main media of its publication because it was the most reliable platform compared to other platforms that Brodo has. Then A study by Andriya Risdwiyanto and Yuli Kurniyati (2015), focusing on marketing strategies of private universities in Sleman, found that this study had succeeded in in replicating and testing its proposed hypothesis and strengthening some previous research, indicating a significant influence of marketing stimulation factors in choosing private universities in Sleman Regency. Next, the regression model used in the study was quite good because the marketing stimulus variable was able to explain variables in choosing the private universities by 84.5 percent. Then its beta coefficient analysis indicated that product, location, and price were three main factors influencing in choosing them. In addition, a study by Siti Arpah (2021) on marketing strategies of STAI NW SAMAWA Sumbawa Besar, presented that STAI NW SAMAWA had applied a marketing mix consisting of three types of marketing, namely advertising, personal selling and public relations.

Based on the previous studies, the authors conclude that Instagram as a means of advertising in universities, especially at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, is an interesting focus. The target market of universities is school age individuals, and most users of it are school age individuals, so there is a strong meeting point between the target market and the proper platform.

Behavior changes in using social media are influenced by the development of smart mobile technology, so there is a migration of conventional media into smart mobile media. This development affects the development of various applications, and one of them is Instagram. As a platform, Instagram is a gateway to digital marketing. In Jason G. Miles' book, Instagram Power (2014), there are six powers of Instagram in building a brand and reaching more consumers through image power. The first is migration of media to mobile; the second allows marketing activities on Instagram; the third is bonding and branding, the fourth is selling on Instagram, the fifth is integrating Instagram into online marketing; and the sixth is enabling tools to improve the Instagram user experience.

One of ways to increase consumers through Instagram is advertising. In Indonesia, advertising (pronounced *Iklan*) originates from the Arabic "I'lan". Meanwhile, "advertising" is from English, and in Dutch is called "edvertesi." "Advertising" itself is originally from the Latin "edvertere" meaning to divert attention; therefore, advertising can be interpreted as something that can distract public's attention (Zein, 2015: 4). Furthermore, Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA) defines that advertising is an effort to persuasively deliver a message to the most appropriate potential buyers to buy products either goods or services at the lowest possible cost (Santosa, 2002).

Based on definitions of advertising above, it can be understood that advertising is not only to divert attention but also to persuade or to influence. Frank Jeffkins simply defines advertising as a way of selling through dissemination of information. Then according to an advertising expert, Fred Danzig in Santosa (2002), advertising can make individuals buy something that they do not need, and they even are willing to pay with higher price.

Sandra Moriarty et al. (2009) in their book define that advertising is a paid form of communication by using mass media and interactive media to reach a broad audience and to connect a clear sponsor with a

buyer (target audience) and provide information about products (goods, services and ideas). More specifically, Kotler and Keller (2012) in Zein (2015: 5) explain that advertising is a paid promotional form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services through printed media (newspapers or magazines), broadcast media (radio and television), network media (telephone, cable, satellite, wireless), electronic media (audiotape, videotape, videodisk, CD-ROM, web page), and display media (billboard, sign system, poster).

Based on several definitions of advertising above, advertising has various meanings depending on its focal point. Some of them understand it based on its communication patterns, contexts of selling and information dissemination. Disseminating commercial information can apply a paid form or an approach in the realm of psychology and creativity.

METHODS

This study is descriptive qualitative research. The authors conducted field research to collect information or data about factual conditions by a case study approach. Through the case study, the authors explained what were found in the field. Yin (1996) states that case studies are a process of seeking empirical knowledge to investigate and examine various phenomena in factual-life contexts. In its implementation, this case study needs much information and data integration. This integration process can be obtained from other methods to provide more detailed information (Bimo, 2010).

The authors also applied an empirical approach by addressing existing facts regarding the PMB information at the Admission Office of UIN Sunan Kalijaga. The authors described factual conditions seen in the field. The authors also observed the situation of staffs and managers in the Admission Office. The authors also applied a theoretical approach by understanding theories related to strategic communication, marketing and promotion to make deeper description and analysis on marketing strategies applied by the Admission Office. Subjects of this study were staffs and managers of the Admission Office. The objects of this study were strategies, tricks, socialization techniques, promotion and target markets of the PMB carried out by the Admission Office.

The primary data of this study were data of socialization and promotion strategies of the PMB program, and these data were obtained through in-depth interviews. The authors applied structured interviews as they used interview guidelines arranged systematically and completely, but the authors still referred to the AASL standards. Meanwhile, secondary data of this study were obtained through observation and documentation. The authors directly observed and gathered with the staffs and managers at the Admission Office. Then all obtained data were analyzed by the Miles and Huberman model analysis technique. This technique included data reduction, data presentation and conclusion/verification. To test the validity of the data, the authors used source and theory triangulation techniques.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Admission Office of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta is an executive unit of the PMB program. One of its responsibilities is to make promotional and advertising activities. Advertising media implemented by the Admissions Office can be classified into four groups. The first is conventional media such television, radio, newspapers, billboards and videotron. The second is social media such as Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter and Facebook. The third is bottom-line media such as brochures, catalogs, posters, pens, keys, maps and others. Then the fourth is direct media through socialization forums or promotional visits. Of the four media, the Admission Office often utilizes some social media. Posting, paid promote and story are performed on the Instagram; blasting is maintained in WhatsApp; posting is created on the Facebook and Twitter; and promotional videos are uploaded on YouTube. Of these social media, Instagram is mostly used.

Before implementing promotional and advertising activities, the Admission Office makes a plan starting from making a timeline, determining content, creating visualization and making copywriting for a caption and a paid promote.

Chart 1 Stages of Promotion and Advertising
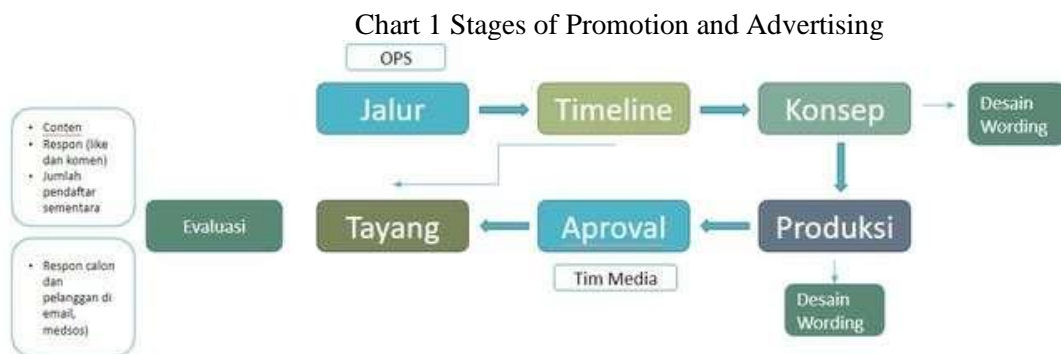
Source: Admission Office of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta

Producing the content, the Admission Office follows paths of the PMB. Data from team managing the PMB schedule for each path then are translated by media team to create a timeline. The timeline is made one month before the current path is opened by considering survey results, paths and schedule. Next, a concept starting from designs to wording process for captions is created. After that, the content waits to be approved. After the content has passed the approval stage, it will be broadcasted on chosen media. Furthermore, an evaluation is followed up in terms of responses (both like and comment).

Table 1 The Number of Advertisement Broadcasted by the Admission Office

Month	Media					
	Newspaper	TV	Radio	Billboard	Videotron	Social Media
January	-	-	-	-	-	17
February	-	-	-	-	-	22
March	2	-	-	-	-	30
April	7	2	15	1 month	-	51
May	6	2	14	1 month	1 month	21
June	1	3	14	1 month	1 month	20
Total	16	7	43	3 months	2 months	161

Source: Admission Office of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta

The number above is based on PMB period. During the months of registration and admission, the amount of advertising will increase, as in the schedule below:

Figure 1 Schedule of PMB for Bachelor Program (S1)

Figure 2 Schedule of PMB for Magister dan Doctoral Program

JALUR	PENDAFTARAN	UJIAN SELEKSI	PENGUMUMAN
Gelombang 1 Ganjil	15 Februari – 05 Mei 2022	12 Mei 2022	19 Mei 2022
Gelombang 2 Ganjil	02 Juni – 04 Agustus 2022	11 Agustus 2022	18 Agustus 2022
Gelombang 1 Genap	25 Agustus – 06 Oktober 2022	12 Oktober 2022	19 Oktober 2022
Gelombang 2 Genap	25 Oktober 2022 – 05 Januari 2023	12 Januari 2023	18 Januari 2023

Source: Admission Office of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta

Optimizing Instagram

In 2020, based on a survey on 2,946 active students of batch 2019, 95.2% of them had Instagram and 45.8% of them accessed the PMB information through Instagram. Then in 2021, based on a survey on 1,420 active students of batch 2020, 96.3% of them had Instagram and 71.2% of them accessed PMB information through Instagram (Admission Survey Data, 2020 and 2021). From this data, the Admission Office of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta selects Instagram as mostly used social media to advertise.

According to Keegan & Green (2008), targeting is a process of evaluating segmentation and focusing on marketing strategies on a country, province or potential people to provide responses. The target market can also be interpreted as an activity of assessing and selecting one or more market segments by a company. Then the target of the Admission Office is students of secondary education level (SMA, SMK, MA, MAK and other equivalent education) with a maximum of two-year time of graduation. Then at this time, students who graduated in 2021 are students with online class due to the COVID-19. Therefore, an approach in promoting and advertising is to use online media close to them, the Instagram.

The Instagram is maintained by two units in the university. The first is by Public Relations (HUMAS) focusing on content about general university information and public relation news. The second is by Admission Office focusing on content about PMB information. Its account is @uinsk with 80.7 thousand followers, and the number of its posts has reached 2,987 on June 14, 2022. Activities in the Instagram are posting, creating captions, creating hashtags, creating stories and applying paid promote.

Posting

The posts consist of four categories of information. Those are schedule information, application and requirement information, general university information (Faculty, Department, Accreditation and Facilities), advertising information (soft-selling and hard-selling), and announcement information.

Diagram 1 Information Mostly Searched on Instagram @uinsk
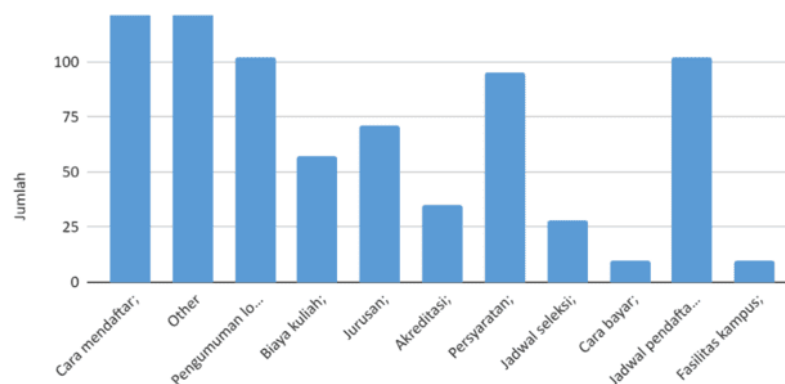
Source: Admission Office of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta (2021)

From the survey above, information about schedule, registration and requirement of the university is the most dominant postings. On table 1, it can be seen that content in the Instagram uploaded more in May and April with 30 and 51 posts than other months. The content is about admission paths as seen in Figure 1 (Schedules of UTBK-SBMPTN, SPAN-PTKIN, UM-PTKIN, CBT 1, CBT 2, Mandiri Prestasi and Mandiri Portofolio Keberagaman).

Figure 3 A Post of an Admission Path

Source: Instagram @uinsk

The post above got more than 2,406 likes from its followers with 77 comments responding to the path information. This is in accordance with a survey in 2021 obtained by the Admission Office. Content and design of an image attracts more dominant interest as shown in the following diagram:

Diagram 2 Data of Interest to See the PMB Information
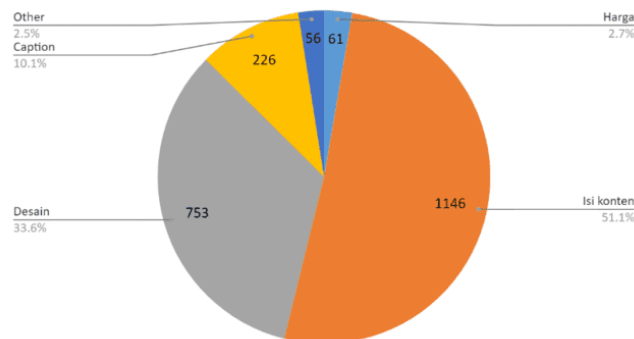
Source: Admission Office of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta (2021)

Caption

Caption is a short copywriting containing additional information or storytelling. Even though the caption in the survey (Diagram 2) is only 10.1% in attracting the followers' interest in the PMB content, it may strengthen information that is not included in the post.

Figure 4 A Post about an Admission Path

Source: Instagram @uinsk

The captions are made attractively with a language approach according to the target market. In this case the language is not rigid and standard so that it is easy to read by its followers.

Hashtag

Hashtag is a mark and a greeting to followers, namely #KalijagaMuda. The word "Kalijaga Muda" has been used since 2019 as a greeting for students of the university. It is also used to simplify the search as well as to increase engagement.

Figure 5 A Post of an Admission Path

Source: Instagram @uinsk

The hashtag is re very simple and don't use a lot of hashtags. This aims to make the audience focus to find the content.

Instastory

Story on Instagram aims to help followers find highlighted information or the latest information. Story on Instagram is commonly called Instastory to share stories both in short videos and live streaming videos. Instastory is also used to personally get closer to the audience.
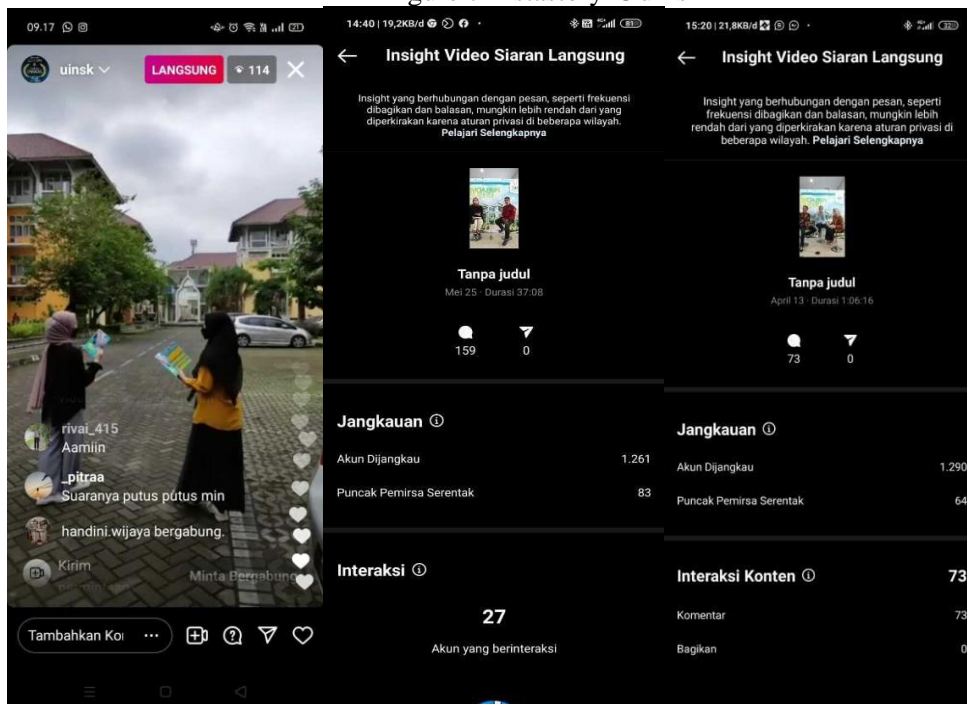
Figure 6 Instastory @uinsk
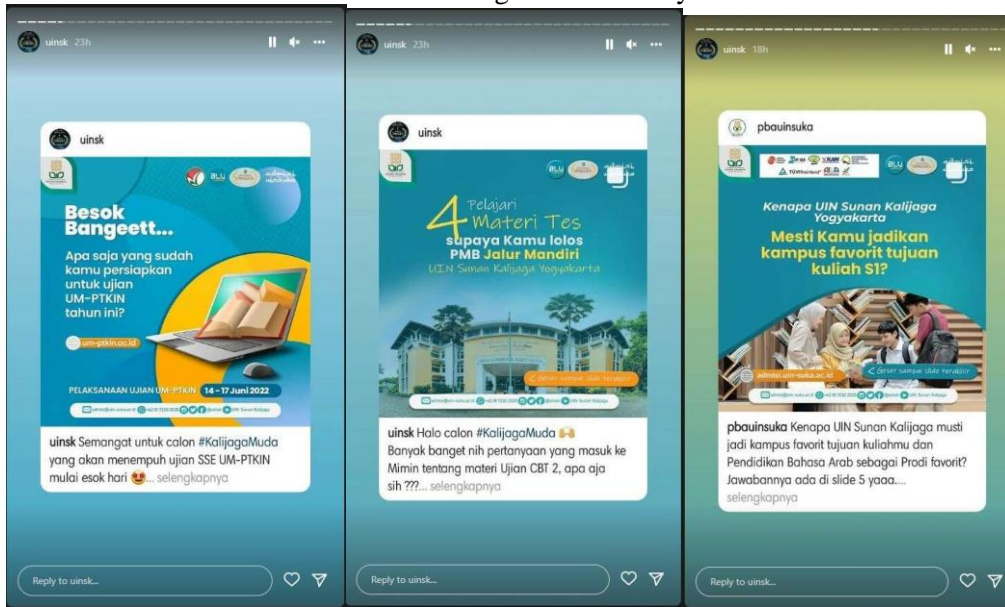
Source: Instagram @uinsk

Instastory in a form of live streaming video is to reach the audience and interact directly through immediate questions and answers in the comment column.

Figure 7 Instastory @uinsk

Source: Instagram @uinsk

Paid Promote

Paid promote content on the Instagram is to increase awareness, exposure and reach of targeted accounts other than its followers. Paid promote is used at a determined time including the first week of registration and the last week of registration.

Figure 8 A Post with Paid Promote on Instagram @uinsk
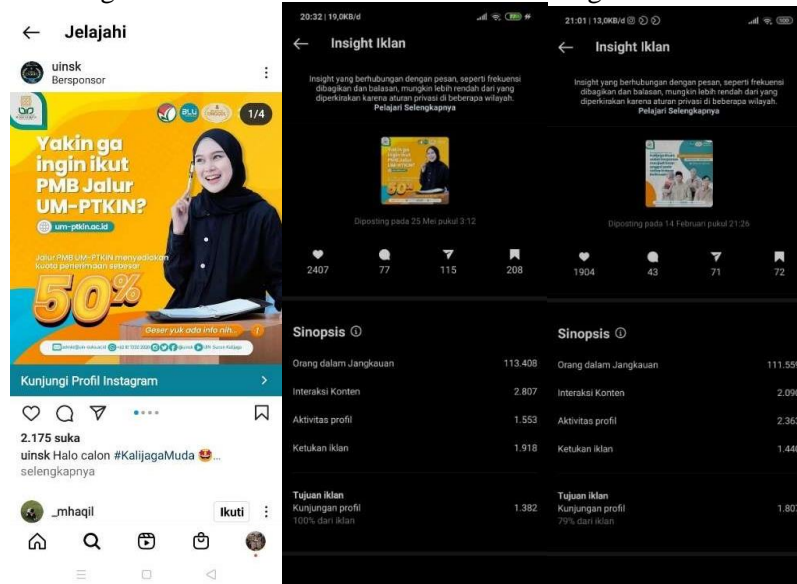
Source: Admission Office of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta

The time of paid promote is based on determined schedules. The paid promote content is also based on urgency of the content and schedules of the PMB. The time is between 7 to 10 days by cost more than one million with a target exposure of more than 100,000 accounts.

CONCLUSION

Currently, optimizing Instagram s as a promotional media is common, so universities such as UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta needs to utilize it, considering their target audience are the digital native generation. Universities as an educational institution should implement transparent, open and accessible process of accepting new students for public. Therefore, advertising and promotion activities is not only to create brand awareness but also to invite the public to understand more about higher education.

UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta applied Instagram in its advertising and promotion activities, by optimizing its features such posting, caption, hashtag, instastory and paid promote. From a survey conducted by the Admission Office, Instagram is the most dominant main advertising media as it is mostly used by prospective new students. In addition, the pandemic condition requiring students to do activities online make the advertising messages directly conveyed to the target market.

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Journal

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Siti Arpah yang berjudul "Strategi Pemasaran Perguruan Tinggi dalam Meningkatkan Jumlah Mahasiswa Baru di STAI NW SAMAWA Sumbawa Besar"

Thallita Affifah Nugroho dan Farah Citra Azzahra dengan judul "Pemanfaatan Instagram Sebagai Media Promosi Social Commerce Usaha Bro.Do"

Regulation

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