

The Role Of Food Bloggers In Branding Activities For Traditional Food

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Abstract: Indonesia is rich for its traditional food. In addition, in this modern era, social media has been evolving rapidly. There is a tendency where certain people posting the food that they have tasted. They post it to their social media. These people are usually known as food bloggers. The purpose of this research is to find out (1) how food bloggers play their role in branding the traditional food (2) how is the process of branding the traditional food by food bloggers. The method that is used in this research is interviewing people that like to go to restaurants that offer Indonesian traditional food. The result of this research is; it is found that food bloggers play their role in branding Indonesian traditional food to their followers. The process of traditional food branding starts with coming to the restaurants and post the picture of the food to social media and thus resulting feedback from their followers.

Keywords: branding, role, process, food bloggers

1. Introduction

In this era of advanced technology, there are many people using social media in their daily activities. According to the research by We Are Social, a British media company that cooperates with Hootsuite, Indonesians on average spend 3 hours and 23 minutes per day to access social media. According to the research by APJII (Asosiasi Pengguna Jasa Internet Indonesia / Indonesian Internet Services User Association), Facebook and Instagram are the most visited social media. Based on the average social media users, there are 71.6 million who visit Facebook and 19.9 million who visit Instagram, and the most viewed content is online stores and personal business.



Picture 1. Internet users in Indonesia

Statistically right after it was launched, Instagram had drawn attention to 7 millions of new users that had uploaded 150 millions of pictures. Up to this day, there have not been any spams among the users and most of their activities are giving likes and comments in a picture. From users who are continually communicating with each other, the relationships among the users have become even tighter, especially if they know when they are in the same location. This occurrence led to the born of Instagram community or they are usually known as "iGers". With the existence of this community, getting feedback from other users has become an important thing when one user uploads a picture. Aside from socializing, people start using Instagram as a media to promote products that the users are selling. There are many means that the users do to promote their products, such as; uploading a picture via Instagram story. People tend to promote their products through other users that have a great number of followers. Celebrities who have an Instagram account are usually targeted to promote the products. The products that they

sell are usually various, from bags, shoes, clothes to food. According to Mullie Marlina, the owner of www.myfunfoodiary.com in a post on <https://lifestyle.sindonews.com/read/964786/152/food-blogger-makin-diincar-1424052558>, she said that there are many kinds of restaurants nowadays and those people who have eating hobby can help others to choose the right menu or eating place that attracts their attention. Many restaurants that promote their place through advertising on Instagram these days, for instance like uploading a picture on their social media or inviting people that considered to have a big influence on Instagram, also the people who have a great number of followers. The people who post pictures of food from different restaurants are known as food bloggers; where they post a picture of food that they have tasted and written a short article about the food, how it tastes, and how much it costs. The term 'food blogger' starting to evolve last year, although there are people who have been doing this since 4-5 years ago. According to Akhyaruddin, the director of Special Interest Tourism Development, Conventions and Incentives (KEMENPAR), cited from a post on <http://entrepreneur.bisnis.com/read/20130822/263/158136/kuliner-indonesia-potensi-masakan-nusantara-di-pasar-dunia>, at this moment, Indonesia has countless number of culinary delights. It is recorded there are more than 5.300 food from Indonesia. Unfortunately, up to this day, there has not been any Indonesian food that becomes a characteristic like sushi or tom yam from Japan. Thousands type of foods that Indonesia has makes it hard for the government to find food that represents Indonesia in particular. A restaurant called 'Nasi Box Office' offers various kind of Indonesian traditional food like; *Soto*, *Nasi Padang* to *Bir Pletok*. The restaurant that located in West Jakarta often invites food bloggers to taste and review the food that they offer. They are served with the restaurant's most favorite food, then they post a picture of the food on their social media, giving a review about it. With a good picture and catchy words, it can make their followers interested in visiting the restaurant and taste the food themselves. That what makes the researchers interested in doing a research regarding food blogger phenomena; this research is entitled "*The Role of Food Bloggers in Branding Activities for Traditional Food*". The research is done by interviewing a food blogger that has reviewed the food from Nasi Box Office located in West Jakarta. The researchers hope this research can give information on (1) how food

bloggers play their role in branding the traditional food (2) how is the process of branding the traditional food by food bloggers.

2. Literature Review

- 1) M.Fariz Syahbani, Arry Widodo in their research "FOOD BLOGGER INSTAGRAM: PROMOTION THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA", it is said that many culinary businessmen are interested in promoting their restaurants through food bloggers on Instagram to let people know about it. Mostly, food bloggers become an information center to people in deciding if a restaurant is worth enough to be visited or not. In addition, Instagram is considered as the most effective and efficient media to promote because they provide kinds of contexts with their best multimedia features.
- 2) Ika Damayanti, Shiqib Angriawan, Ryantono Puji S. in their research entitled "THE USE OF DIGITAL MEDIA IN STUDENT PRESS COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AS THE MEDIA FOR STUDENTS' MOVEMENT", most teenagers and young adults are using social media not only to find information, play, and socialize, but also to participate in society.
- 3) Solekhan, R Winarso in a research entitled "THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS MARKETING MEDIA BY SANGKAR BURUNG IN KUDUS DISTRICT" using technology guidance method, mentoring and strengthening in the production process will resulting an effective and efficient production process, so that it can produce a high-quality product.
- 4) Wenday Dwi Novi Kurniawati in a research entitled "THE USE OF INSTAGRAM BY GROBOGAN TOURISM COMMUNITY IN PROMOTING THE POTENTIAL OF REGIONAL TOURISM", the promotion of the potential of regional tourism can be operated smoothly using for steps, they are the presence of the communicator(s), the message, the media, and the communicant(s). The use of Instagram can provide benefits and profits for *Grobogan* tourism community in promoting the potential tourism in that region. It is because Instagram can attract the attention of the users and it is supported by the features that Instagram has.
- 5) Davcik brand or trademark is a producer guarantee that is given continuously and consistently complies with the guarantee, including the guarantee that is given explicitly or implicitly through the features of the product, and the benefits and the comfort felt by consumers.
- 6) Kotler and Keller, Branding is the process of giving meaning to certain products with creating and forming a trademark in the consumers' mind.
- 7) Rowles, digital branding is a whole experience that we earned about something digitally and what the impact of that experience is.
- 8) Caropeboka, M.S. (2017:1), communication is human activity to understand each other's message between the communicator and the communicant (*Konsep dan Aplikasi Ilmu Komunikasi, 2017*). Communication will last long

enough as long as there is a similarity of meaning in the message that is being delivered. The similarity of meaning in particular is the similarity of language that is used in a sentence or phrase that is being delivered in a certain language. Yet, it cannot guarantee that the similarity of meaning occur to the others because the meaning(s) can be misunderstood. It is called communicative if the communicator and the communicant speak the same language and they understand each other's meaning. Communicating is not only for giving information, but it can also be a mean to persuade, which means an activity that is done by persuading people in order to make them acknowledge an understanding or belief. The goal is to make people do something that is expected by the communicator.

- 9) Terence A. Shimp (*Periklanan Promosi, 2003:4*) marketing communication is an important aspect of marketing, it is also a determinant of the marketing process, whether it is successful or not. In the last decade, the component of marketing communication becomes more important. Even it is claimed that "marketing in the 90s is communication and communication is marketing, both cannot be separated". Marketing communication can be understood by elaborating the two main elements, which are communication and marketing. Communication is a process where thoughts and understandings are delivered between individuals, or between organizations and individuals. Marketing is a set of activities where a company and the other organizations transfer their values between them and their customers. Of course, the understanding of marketing is more general than marketing communication. If the two are combined, marketing communication represents the whole elements of brand marketing, which facilitates the occurrence of exchange by creating a certain meaning that spread to the customers or clients. The born of new media, especially the internet gives a chance for marketers to arrange a different marketing communication in approaching their targeted consumers. The existence of new media that offers interactive communication activities is one of the answers for the matter of marketing communication activities to generate a message that affects their targeted consumers. Robert C. Blatberg and John Deighton stated that the goal of a marketer is how to build an interactive relationship with their consumers personally, and the advanced innovation of technology that is based on the database will make their goal come true (Sugiyama & Andree, 2011:43).
- 10) West and Turner (2009) stated that there are 2 kinds of group, which are the problem-solving group and the task-oriented group. The problem-solving group consists of people that make decisions and provide policy recommendations. While the task-oriented group consists of people that have one goal, which is getting their tasks done. A small group communication consists of

people who cooperate each other to achieve common goals. A research regarding a small group focuses on a workgroup, in contrast to friendships and family groups in interpersonal contexts (Richard West and Lynn H. Turner, 2008:37).

- 11) Liliweri (2015) in "*Komunikasi Antar-Personal*", social media or social networking is the development of new media in contrast to traditional or industrial media such as print media and audio-visual media.
- 12) Ratri (2015), food blogger is a blogger that has a specialty in posting regarding culinary, not only talking about the kinds of foods, food bloggers are also often making a review on the ingredients and the recipes.

3. Research Method

This research uses a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach is a term to describe a work that is done by formulating an interpretation from the subject in order to gather information for further steps in a research (Baker & Hart, 2008). Qualitative method is done as a procedure of a research that will be resulting descriptive data, which consists of words, pictures, numbers are not included. Based on the definition of a qualitative method, this research consists of data in quotations form, where the researchers get from an interview session, field notes, pictures, and other documents (Moeleong, 2007). This research will be a descriptive research. A descriptive research is a research that describes certain circumstances in detail without any treatment of the object under study (Kountur, 2007) The purpose of this descriptive research is to answer all the questions mentioned in the statement of problems of this research. The method that the researchers use is a case study, where the researchers study food bloggers' characteristics on Instagram. The subject for this research is the restaurants that use Instagram and food bloggers as a promotion mean. The technique to collect the data that the researchers use in this research is an interview and observation. The observation is done to a few restaurants located in Jakarta. The next step is interviewing, where 2 people meet each other face to face with the participants (Cresswell, 2010). An in-depth interview is done by the researchers to Instagram users that have a great number of followers. In this interview session, the researchers as the interviewer have prepared a few open questions to be asked to the interviewees. Next is observation, which is an activity where a researcher goes to the field to observe the individuals' behavior and activities, then the researcher takes note from what happens in the field (Creswell, 2010). [13] According to Bogdan, data analysis is a process of finding and compiling the data that is earned by interviewing, field notes, and other techniques systematically, so that that the data can be interpreted, and the findings can be informed to the others (Sugiyono, 2015).

4. Results and Discussion

a. The role of food bloggers in branding traditional food

Based on the information that the researchers earned, it is said that food bloggers have succeeded in branding Indonesian traditional food so that their followers love to eat them. *Soto Betawi*, *Nasi Daun* and *Bir Pletok* are the food that has successfully promoted by food bloggers. The process of branding occurs according to the statement from Davcik (2015) that traditional food branding becomes a guarantee of the restaurant, what food bloggers continuously and consistently write have fulfilled their guarantee so that the traditional food is more widely known by their followers. This statement is written either explicitly or implicitly through the features of the products and the benefits also the convenience that the followers experienced. Compared to what Kotler and Keller have stated, the studied food bloggers have succeeded in giving meaning to their followers about the traditional food by describing its characteristics. This also in line with Rowles, food bloggers have done digital branding because they created the experience about the traditional food digitally and share their experience. In line with what Caropeboka stated, communication is an activity where humans understand a certain message between the communicator and the communicant, so that in this matter, food bloggers have succeeded creating the similarity of meaning regarding the traditional food through a review and talk about it on digital media. The goal of posting the traditional food on Instagram is to persuade their followers to do what food bloggers are expecting. In line with the result in a research entitled "FOOD BLOGGER INSTAGRAM: PROMOTION THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA", food bloggers play a big role for other people in deciding whether it is worth or not for a restaurant to be visited.

b. The process of food branding

Based on an interview with food blogger that has reviewed *Soto Betawi* and *Bir Pletok*, the restaurants are often inviting them to come and do a review on the food that they offer. Yet, in this traditional food matter, the food bloggers themselves who come without invitation, one of the restaurants is *Nasi Box Office*. Usually, after food blogger arrives and meets the owner of the restaurant, they order favorite menu of the restaurant, such as; *Nasi Soto* and *Bir Pletok*. Then they documented and taste the food. After the food blogger tastes the food, they will gather information from the owner of the restaurant regarding the food's origin, the price, the restaurant's operational hour and more information about it. After documenting the food, they post it on Instagram. With a great number of followers, of course their post will get many likes and comments. They also add hashtags that make their post will be easier to find with the search engine. Their followers usually will be asking about the taste, the price, the location of the restaurant, operational hour, even sharing their experience to the others who have also tasted the food. Besides posting on their Instagram feeds, they also post it to Instagram Story. The purpose of this is to make their friends who are interested in the post that they just shared, so that they can ask anything to them. Then the next step is the food blogger will give their testimonial about the food. The

interaction that occurs is communicating through social media.

5. Conclusion

Based on the result and discussion above, it is concluded that the role of food bloggers in reviewing food is to promote the restaurant, also for the process on how they do the promotion is taking pictures of the food that they have reviewed, and post it on Instagram and give general information about it. From their post, there will be an interaction between their followers and other users about regarding the restaurant. The food bloggers will give positive information about the restaurant, so that it can be a reference for the others to visit the restaurant and try the food themselves.

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