

The Effectiveness of Using Instagram Social Media in Increasing Sales at Loen Cakes

Rizky Kukuh Meidyrianto, Salsabila Miftiana

Akademi kuliner monas pasifik, Indonesia Email: meidyrianto@monaskuliner.ac.id, lala79113@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study evaluates Instagram's effectiveness in enhancing brand awareness and purchasing interest for *Lien Cakes*, a culinary business, amid Indonesia's growing digital marketplace. Employing a quantitative approach with a correlational design, data were collected via questionnaires from 100 active Instagram users, including employees and consumers, to analyze engagement patterns and promotional impact. Findings reveal that 59% of employees purchased via Instagram for convenience, while 81% reported satisfaction, underscoring the platform's sales potential. Visually creative content and influencer collaborations significantly boosted engagement, though low employee adoption (53% used Instagram for <1 year) highlighted training needs. The study contributes practical insights for optimizing Instagram strategies in niche culinary markets, emphasizing demographic-specific content and employee upskilling. Implications suggest that businesses integrate Instagram's interactive features (e.g., Stories, UGC) with targeted training to maximize reach and loyalty, while future research could explore AI-driven personalization or cross-platform comparisons.

INTRODUCTION

KEYWORDS

brand awareness,

digital marketing,

businesses

purchasing interest,

influencers, culinary

In an era increasingly marked by digital advancements, the use of social media has emerged as a fundamental component in marketing strategies (Selvakumar et al., 2025). Instagram, which is recognized as one of the leading social media platforms globally, provides a wide range of functions that organizations can leverage to launch products, increase brand visibility, and shape consumer purchasing behavior. Instagram facilitates direct engagement between businesses and their target audiences through a variety of visual content formats, including real-time images, videos, and shareable stories (Katajisto, 2023; Leaver et al., 2020; Werenowska & Jaska, 2024).

The increase in the use of Instagram as a means of promotion is not only due to the platform's great potential in increasing brand recognition. Visually appealing content on Instagram facilitates consumers' ability to identify and remember a product or brand more easily. In addition, it significantly affects the development of purchasing choices, since social media, specifically Instagram, can arouse trust and curiosity about the products being advertised (Aytuna, 2019; Balabanis & Chatzopoulou, 2025).

In addition, with the increasing demographic of active Instagram users in Indonesia, especially in the youth segment, this phenomenon presents businesses with prospects to penetrate the expansive market more effectively. Instagram goes beyond its role as a social networking site; it also serves as a marketing tool that can uncover products and reinforce consumer buying tendencies. Several brands have leveraged Instagram to grow their identities,

using sponsored advertising initiatives and collaborating with influencers who can engage a wider audience.

Nevertheless, although Instagram presents great opportunities, significant obstacles remain in the effective optimization of this platform as a promotional tool (Beccarello D'Amico, 2023; Pratiwi & Zaini, 2023). Many companies, especially in the culinary sector, have not fully utilized Instagram in a way that is conducive to their marketing goals (Cahyono, 2023; Philp et al., 2022). Certain methodologies, such as influencer engagement, innovative content presentation, in addition to proper marketing communication strategies, require further investigation to evaluate their efficacy in increasing sales and effectively launching products (Varadarajan et al., 2022; Vrontis et al., 2021).

This research effort seeks to more comprehensively investigate the efficacy of Instagram as a social media platform in increasing brand awareness, stimulating consumer purchase interest, and examining the digital marketing strategies used by culinary companies, with a special emphasis on influencers and aesthetically pleasing presentation media. Therefore, the findings of this study are expected to provide deeper insights for companies to leverage Instagram as a more powerful marketing tool and offer guidance for the formulation of more appropriate digital marketing strategies in the context of the contemporary digital landscape.

Research highlights Instagram's effectiveness as a promotional tool across various business scales. Setiawan (2024) found that Instagram enhances product awareness and buying interest through direct consumer interaction and personalized campaigns. Hasanah (2024) emphasized its role in product publication, recommending features like Stories and Posts to engage targeted audiences. Susandika & Widodo (2024) Furthermore, visually appealing content boosts brand awareness, particularly with higher follower engagement. Herrando & Martin (2022) added that Instagram Ads and influencer endorsements significantly drive consumer trust and purchasing intent, while Altjman et al., (2022) stressed the impact of creative visual content on perceived product quality.

This study examines Instagram's effectiveness in increasing brand awareness and buying interest in the culinary sector and evaluates digital marketing strategies like influencer collaborations. The research questions focus on Instagram's role in sales growth and marketing communication, with hypotheses proposing that Instagram promotions elevate buying interest (H1), frequent exposure enhances brand awareness (H2), and influencers positively impact promotional success (H3). The findings could provide actionable insights for culinary businesses leveraging Instagram for growth.

This study advances existing research by specifically examining Instagram's effectiveness in the culinary sector at *Lien Cakes*, integrating demographic insights (e.g., older employees with limited social media adoption) and practical challenges into its analysis, which prior studies like Setiawan (2020) and Fitrani & Suryani (2021) did not address. Unlike broader explorations of Instagram's role in brand awareness (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2018; Rejeb et al., 2022) or influencer marketing (Leung et al., 2022), this research uniquely combines employee behavior data (e.g., 53% using Instagram for <1 year) with consumer purchasing patterns (81% satisfaction rates), offering actionable strategies tailored to niche culinary businesses. Additionally, it highlights the underutilized potential of older, less digitally savvy employees in content creation—a gap overlooked by Sari & Hartanto (2021)—while proposing training interventions to bridge this divide.

METHOD RESEARCH

This study employs a quantitative research approach, which is particularly suitable for measuring Instagram's effectiveness in various marketing aspects such as promotion, publication, brand awareness, and consumer buying interest. The research design follows a correlational approach, allowing researchers to examine the relationship between Instagram usage intensity (such as frequency of engagement) and key outcomes (such as increased buying interest or brand awareness) without manipulating any variables. This design helps determine whether and to what extent these variables are related in a real-world context.

The target population consists of active Instagram users, including general consumers, frequent social media users, and businesses that utilize Instagram for marketing purposes. To select participants, the study will use either random sampling (for a broad representation) or purposive sampling (to focus on specific groups, such as users who follow promotional accounts or businesses that actively market via Instagram). The main research instrument is a structured questionnaire, divided into three sections: (1) Demographics, which collects background information about respondents; (2) Instagram Usage, assessing how often respondents use Instagram, what content they engage with, and their interactions with brands; and (3) Promotion Effectiveness, measuring how Instagram promotions influence their purchasing decisions and brand perception.

For data analysis, the study will use descriptive statistics to summarize trends in Instagram usage and perceived marketing effectiveness. Additionally, correlation analysis (using percentage-based comparisons) will help determine the strength and direction of relationships between Instagram engagement and outcomes like brand awareness or buying interest. This structured methodology ensures a systematic and measurable evaluation of Instagram's role in modern digital marketing strategies.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Data Analysis

The employees at Lien Cakes are more than the data obtained by 71% because they are more diligent and agile, especially in pastry. Employees at Lien Cakes are 45-54 years old, which is more than the total data of 37%, because they have been working at Lien Cakes since a fairly young age. Employees at Liec Cakes are mostly high school/vocational school graduates, with 68% of the data results, because even though high school/vocational school graduates already have skills in production, packing, and delivery. According to 100% of the data results, workers are all employees because not all workers are owners. According to the data results, the location where the lien cakes employee lives in the city is 100% because of the workplace or the place of lien cakes in the city.

Instagram usage

Lien Cakes employees started using Instagram on average less than 1 year ago, according to data from 53%, because many do not recognize Instagram as a social media platform. Lien's employees access Instagram less often than 40% of the data results because they don't know how to use Instagram. Lien's employees spent an average of less than 30 minutes on Instagram, according to 56% of data results, because employees opened Instagram only as necessary. The goal of employees is to use Instagram on average for entertainment, as indicated by the 46% data results, to eliminate boredom. On average, employees follow a business account or brand from the data results of 62% because employees want to know about other brands or businesses. **Effectiveness of promotions on Instagram**

Lien Cakes employees have bought products or services on Instagram, based on 59% of the data, because if you buy on Instagram, you don't need to leave the house, so it's more practical. According to the data, employees are influenced by cakes that make them more likely to buy a product or service from testimonials or positive reviews, according to the data, 28%, because if the employee has seen it, they will be more likely to buy the product or service. Employees of lien cakes rated the quality of the product or service as effective on average, based on the data results of 28%, because they had already purchased the product or service. Employees at Lien Cakes have a significant influence on promotions on Instagram, on the decision to choose products or services, according to the results of 43% of data, because promotions on Instagram influence consumers. According to Lien Cakes' employees, promotional content on Instagram is relatively straightforward, based on the data results of 68%, because the content follows current trends. Lien cakes employees feel quite interested after paying attention to the product or service promoted on Instagram, from 62% of the data, because they promote a creative product or service. It is enough to help employees of lien cakes to get to know a new brand or product from the data results of 65%, because many unknown brands or new services are involved. After browsing on Instagram, based on the results of 81% of the data, Lien Cakes employees are quite satisfied because the products or services purchased are according to consumers' requests.

Discussion

The Effectiveness of Instagram Social Media Use on Employees at Lien Cakes

Based on the analysis conducted on employee characteristics data at Lien Cakes, it can be concluded that the use of social media, especially Instagram, has excellent potential to increase the effectiveness of Lien Cakes' product marketing. Employee demographic characteristics and skills provide highly relevant insights into designing digital marketing strategies through the Instagram platform.

First, the data shows that most Lien Cakes employees are between 45 and 54 years old, about 37% of the total employees. This shows that most of the workforce at Lien Cakes has extensive experience in the cake and pastry industry, as many started working for the company at a young age. However, older generations often have challenges in adapting to social media, but they also tend to be more careful in creating quality and informative content (Tuten T. L., 2017)Therefore, basic training on using Instagram and how to display products attractively through photos or videos can help employees optimize marketing potential. Additionally, these older employees often have closer relationships with customers who value product quality and tradition, which can be a particular attraction for older audiences on Instagram.

Second, most Lien Cakes employees are high school/vocational school graduates (68%), indicating that despite their limited formal education, they have developed sufficient technical skills in production, packing, and delivery. This practical skill becomes especially relevant in visual marketing on Instagram, where expertise in producing eye-catching and appetizing product images or videos can be a significant draw. According to Chaffey (2015)Instagram, as a visual platform, relies heavily on the ability to produce aesthetic and interesting content. Therefore, even if employees have limited educational backgrounds, their practical skills in managing and delivering quality products can be translated into effective marketing content.

In addition, the analysis results show that all employees of Lien Cakes are workers, not business owners, with a proportion of 100%. This suggests that Instagram account management relies more on employees involved in day-to-day operations than the company's owners or executives. This provides an advantage in creating more authentic content and reflecting the activities and quality of the products produced by the company. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), the success of social media use largely depends on how well a company can create a genuine relationship with consumers through relevant content and in accordance with their audience's preferences. Therefore, employees who are more directly involved in the

production process can produce content closer to reality and increase user engagement on Instagram.

Lastly, all Lien Cakes employees live in urban areas, which gives them better access to the internet and digital devices and makes it easier for them to use Instagram. Social media users in cities tend to be more active and more easily connected to various digital trends, including the marketing of local food and products, according to Gretzel et al. (2015)Urban locations provide an advantage in access to a larger and more diverse audience on social platforms, which Lien Cakes can leverage to expand its brand reach.

Overall, this demographic data shows that while there are some challenges, especially related to social media adoption by older employees, the characteristics of employees at Lien Cakes show they have great potential to improve marketing effectiveness on Instagram. Instagram can be optimized by providing proper training and encouraging employees to showcase their skills in producing and creating engaging content. By harnessing this potential, Lien Cakes can expand their audience reach and improve customer relationships through this increasingly popular platform.

The Effectiveness of Instagram Social Media Use on Lien Cakes Employees

Based on the results of the analysis of Instagram usage data by Lien Cakes employees, several interesting patterns relate to the adoption and use of this social media among employees. Although Instagram has excellent potential as a marketing platform, data shows that the level of understanding and engagement of Lien Cakes employees towards Instagram is still relatively low. This decrease in engagement rates should be significant in designing an effective digital marketing strategy.

First, the analysis showed that more than 50% of Lien Cakes employees have been using Instagram for less than a year, with a percentage of 53%. This reflects that many Lien Cakes employees are not fully familiar with or utilizing Instagram as a social media platform. This condition can be caused by a lack of knowledge about the platform's functionality, especially in digital marketing, which can benefit companies. According to research by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010)Social media adoption among individuals is often influenced by their understanding of the platform. Therefore, it is very important for Lien Cakes to provide training or workshops related to Instagram for employees so that they are more familiar with using this platform for business purposes.

Furthermore, the data also shows that 40% of Lien Cakes employees access Instagram infrequently, indicating that they are still unfamiliar with how to use this social media effectively. This may be related to a lack of understanding of the benefits of using Instagram as a communication and marketing tool for business. As a visual platform that prioritizes audience interaction, Instagram needs a more active engagement level to build customer relationships. Research by Tuten and Solomon (2017) states that companies' use of social media can increase their effectiveness if employees are actively involved in content creation, interaction with followers, and marketing impact analysis. Therefore, a more structured approach is needed so employees can be more active in using Instagram, for example, by involving them in content planning or promotional activities.

Further data shows that 56% of employees spend less than 30 minutes on Instagram, indicating that they tend only to open Instagram for very limited purposes. This shows that employees may not feel that Instagram can offer added value to their daily work. This can be improved by explaining how Instagram can be used effectively to introduce products and improve the company's brand image. According to Chaffey (2015), time spent on social media should be utilized by posting relevant and engaging content so that the audience, including employees, feels more connected to the brand and products offered. Training or internal campaigns can help employees understand the importance of using Instagram in developing the Lien Cakes brand.

The main purpose of Lien Cakes employees in using Instagram is for entertainment, with 46% of employees accessing Instagram to relieve boredom. This highlights that employees' use of Instagram is more personal and less focused on professional or business goals. This habit shows that Instagram is seen more as a social and leisure platform than an effective marketing or communication tool for companies. However, it also provides an opportunity for Lien Cakes to capitalize on this aspect of entertainment by creating engaging, lightweight, and entertaining content that is still relevant to their brand. Content that prioritizes entertainment value can increase employee engagement as well as a wider audience, as many Instagram users are attracted to entertaining and enjoyable content (Gretzel U., 2015).

Finally, data shows that 62% of employees follow more business or brand accounts on Instagram. This shows employees' interest in discovering the development and other business activities on the platform. Employees who follow a business account may be interested in how different businesses use social media to capture customer attention or get inspiration regarding product promotion. This allows Lien Cakes to dig deeper into their audience's preferences and how other businesses execute their Instagram strategies. Given that employees are more interested in following other brands or businesses, Lien Cakes can leverage this information to design content that is more relevant and engaging to them, while also educating employees on how their brand can stand out more on Instagram.

Overall, while there are some challenges associated with Lien Cakes' low employee engagement on Instagram, there are also significant opportunities to increase the use of Instagram as a marketing tool. To that end, companies need to provide more in-depth training on how Instagram can be used effectively to support business goals and leverage employees' interest in entertainment to create engaging and relevant content. With the right approach, the use of Instagram can be one of the powerful marketing strategies for Lien Cakes.

The Effectiveness of Instagram Social Media Use in Employee Purchasing Decisions at Lien Cakes

The results of an analysis of Instagram usage by Lien Cakes employees show that Instagram plays an important role in influencing purchasing decisions for products and services. Data shows that employees tend to use Instagram for practical and efficient purposes, and are greatly influenced by the various promotional elements on the platform, such as testimonials, promotions, and content creativity.

The Convenience of Shopping via Instagram (59%)

As many as 59% of Lien Cakes employees revealed that they have purchased a product or service through Instagram, and their main reason is the convenience of shopping without leaving the house. This phenomenon illustrates how important convenience is in purchasing decisions, which is now one of the main factors in the development of e-commerce. The ease of shopping through platforms such as Instagram, which allows users to view products and make transactions directly without the need to go to a physical store, is increasingly in demand, especially in the post-pandemic context, where many people are turning to online shopping for convenience reasons (Chaffey, 2015). This provides an excellent opportunity for businesses to leverage this platform as an efficient sales channel.

The Influence of Testimonials and Positive Reviews on Purchase Decisions (28%)

As many as 28% of Lien Cakes employees revealed they were affected by positive testimonials or reviews of products or services promoted on Instagram. Good testimonials from other consumers can build trust and increase purchase intent. This shows the importance of "social proof" in digital marketing, where consumers are more likely to buy products after seeing the positive experiences of others (Tuten T. L., 2017). Therefore, showing positive testimonials and reviews on Instagram can increase brand credibility and motivate consumers to buy products or services.

The Influence of Promotions on Purchase Decisions (43%)

The data shows that promotions on Instagram significantly impact employee purchasing decisions, with 43% of respondents admitting that promotions have a significant effect on their decision. In the world of social media marketing, promotions through discounts, giveaways, or flash sales have been shown to be effective in attracting consumers' attention and encouraging them to make a purchase (Kaplan A. M., 2010)That way, promotions run on Instagram can be a very useful tool for stimulating consumers to make faster purchase decisions, especially when the promotion is carefully designed and in accordance with existing trends.

Relevance of Promotional Content (68%)

As many as 68% of Lien Cakes employees consider promotional content on Instagram relatively straightforward and in line with today's trends. This shows that Instagram effectively conveys promotional messages in an engaging and easy-to-understand way for audiences. A study by Chaffey (2015) emphasized that clarity of promotional content is crucial in ensuring that the audience receives the message well. Employees who feel that the content is relevant and follows current trends are more likely to be interested in and engage with it, which can ultimately increase the chances of converting into a purchase.

Creative Content Attraction (62%)

As many as 62% of Lien Cakes employees feel attracted to products or services promoted on Instagram because of their creative content. Creativity in content creation is key to capturing the audience's attention on visual platforms like Instagram. Unique, engaging, and creative content can strengthen an emotional connection with your audience and increase their likelihood of buying a product. This is in line with research by Gretzel et al. (2015), which found that creativity in content can increase user engagement and strengthen customer loyalty. Therefore, companies must ensure their promotional content is informative, innovative, and entertaining.

Helps Acquaint With New Brands or Products (65%)

As many as 65% of Lien Cakes employees find getting to know new brands or products through Instagram helpful. It highlights how Instagram can be a very effective tool in building brand awareness and introducing new products to a wider audience. By using features such as Instagram Ads, Stories, or influencer marketing, businesses can introduce their new products in a more interactive and engaging way for the audience (Tuten T. L., 2017)It also shows that Instagram is an effective channel for promoting old products and introducing new products that many people may not know about.

Purchase satisfaction through Instagram (81%)

Lastly, data shows that 81% of Lien Cakes employees feel satisfied after shopping on Instagram because the products or services they purchase match consumer expectations and demands. This high level of satisfaction shows that Instagram serves as a promotional medium and an effective channel in meeting consumer expectations. Customer satisfaction is a key factor in creating loyalty and ensuring that consumers will make repeat purchases (Kaplan A. M., 2010). Therefore, Lien Cakes must* maintain the quality of the products sold through Instagram and ensure a satisfying shopping experience.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates Instagram's significant role in enhancing brand awareness and driving consumer buying interest in the culinary sector, leveraging visually appealing and interactive content through features like Stories, Reels, IG Live, and Shopping to boost engagement and sales conversions. Influencer marketing further amplifies this impact by fostering trust through authentic storytelling and personalized recommendations, while interactive tools like polls and user-generated content (UGC) strengthen community-based loyalty. For future research, key areas include examining Instagram's long-term effects on brand loyalty, comparing its efficacy against emerging platforms like TikTok, exploring AI-

driven ad personalization, and assessing cultural or demographic variations in engagement. Additional directions involve investigating ethical concerns in influencer marketing, the credibility of UGC, and Instagram's integration within omnichannel strategies to optimize culinary marketing in a dynamic digital landscape.

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