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Strategic Planning and Digital Engagement: A Theoretical Analysis of Marketing Communication on Instagram (A Case Study of @setangkaiproject)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the marketing communication strategy implemented by the photography service account @setangkaiproject through Instagram. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach based on Edmund Husserl's framework and analyzed through Planning Theory and the Circular Model of SoMe, this research reveals the strategic planning, implementation, and evaluation processes in digital marketing communication. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with account managers and thematic analysis of Instagram content. The findings indicate that @setangkaiproject's strategy is systematically organized, structured, and consistently implemented. Content planning is conducted through theme development, visual concepts, and color tones aligned with brand identity. Strategy implementation follows the four stages of the Circular Model of SoMe: Share, Optimize, Manage, and Engage. Evaluation based on Instagram insights is used to assess content effectiveness and adjust subsequent strategies. This study concludes that the designed communication strategy successfully supports the formation of a professional image and increases audience interaction and interest in @setangkaiproject's photography services.

Keywords: *Marketing Communication Strategy, Instagram, Photography Services, Planning Theory, Circular Model of SoMe, Digital Marketing.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has transformed global communication patterns, particularly in the marketing sector. In the current Industry 4.0 era and digitalization, societal communication patterns have shifted from conventional media to digital media, especially social media (Kudadiri et al., 2024). This transformation directly impacts how organizations and businesses design communication strategies with their audiences.

Instagram, as one of the most popular visual-based social media platforms, has become a primary choice for creative service businesses, including wedding photography services. With features such as feed, stories, reels, and various interactive capabilities, Instagram offers significant potential for building brand identity, displaying portfolios, and creating emotional connections with potential clients (Siregar et al., 2023).

In the creative services industry, particularly wedding photography, marketing communication holds an extremely important position. Wedding photography is a personal and emotional service, requiring businesses not only to convey technical information about their products but also to build perceptions, trust, and emotional closeness with potential clients through appropriate communication strategies (Darmawan et al., 2022). High competition in this industry, especially in areas like

Bekasi, requires each business to design communication strategies that demonstrate visual uniqueness, service quality, and emotional value that differentiate them from competitors.

@setangkaiproject is one wedding photography service actor that actively utilizes Instagram in its marketing communication. Founded in 2021 and based in Bekasi City, this account builds an intimate, warm, and personal visual approach as its main image. However, the effectiveness of these strategies needs deeper examination, particularly in how these strategies are designed, implemented, and evaluated systematically.

This research aims to analyze the marketing communication strategy of photography services through Instagram on the @setangkaiproject account using Planning Theory and the Circular Model of SoMe. Through a phenomenological approach, this study seeks to understand the essence of the lived experience of account managers in constructing effective marketing communication strategies.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Marketing Communication Strategy in the Digital Era

Marketing communication strategy is a planned approach involving message delivery to target audiences through various channels, with the main goal of influencing consumer attitudes and actions (Arfan & Hasan, 2022). In the digital era, this strategy encompasses not only the content conveyed but also how interaction is built with audiences through available digital channels.f social construction by Berger and Luckmann (1966) states that reality is socially constructed through habitualization, institutionalization, and legitimization processes. The phenomenon of living together can be seen as a form of social construction where individuals interpret and give meaning based on their social interactions. In the context of students, this meaning is formed through interactions with peers, exposure to social media and popular culture, and life experiences in a more open urban environment.

B. Planning Theory in Communication Strategy

Charles Berger's Planning Theory (2013) explains that plans are "hierarchical cognitive representations of goal-directed action sequences." This theory emphasizes that individuals need to plan specific actions so that desired goals can be achieved effectively. In the context of marketing communication, the main consideration is strategic message composition. The core of this theory is that individuals must plan communication processes and actions systematically to achieve predetermined goals.

C. Circular Model of SoMe in Social Media Management

According to Regina Luttrell (2015) in her book "Social Media: How to Engage, Share, and Connect," the Circular Model of SoMe is a conceptual framework describing strategic stages in effective social media management. This model consists of four main components: Share (sharing), Optimize (optimizing), Manage (managing), and Engage (engaging). These four elements are interconnected and work

synergistically to form directed, interactive, and sustainable social media communication strategies.

D. Previous Research on Instagram Marketing

Previous research shows that Instagram is effective as a marketing tool for creative businesses. Research by Fariastuti & Azis (2019) shows that Instagram can increase brand awareness through consistent visual branding. Meanwhile, Siregar et al. (2023) found that creative promotion strategies and building emotional relationships through personal interaction can attract customers in the wedding decoration service industry.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological method. Phenomenology was chosen to understand the essence of the lived experience of @setangkaiproject account managers in implementing marketing communication strategies. Research participants were account managers directly involved in planning and implementing marketing strategies through Instagram. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with a semi-structured interview guide. Interviews were conducted to explore participants' experiences in planning, implementing, and evaluating marketing communication strategies. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis process includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data validity was ensured through source triangulation by comparing interview data from various participants and using supporting documents from Instagram content observations.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Strategic Planning in Marketing Communication: A Hierarchical Cognitive Process

The planning process of marketing communication at @setangkaiproject reveals a sophisticated hierarchical structure that aligns closely with Berger's Planning Theory. The research findings demonstrate that strategic planning is not merely an administrative task but a complex cognitive process involving multiple layers of decision-making.

1. Collaborative Planning Structure

The planning ecosystem at @setangkaiproject involves a multi-tiered collaborative approach. Aditya, as the owner, functions as the strategic architect, while the operational team implements the tactical elements. This hierarchical structure reflects what Berger (2013) describes as "hierarchical cognitive representations of goal-directed action sequences." As Aditya explained "The involved parties are roughly the relevant teams - there's the admin team, content team, photographer, and I myself am involved in creating content for Instagram. We have regular planning sessions where we discuss not just what to post, but why we're

posting it and what we hope to achieve." (Interview Results with Informant Aditya, 2025)

This collaborative approach ensures that the meta-goals of brand building and client acquisition are translated into actionable content strategies. The planning sessions serve as what Littlejohn & Foss (2009) term "canned plans" pre-established communication strategies stored in organizational memory and adapted to current needs.

2. Content Planning as Strategic Architecture

The content planning process begins post-production, creating what Dessy describes as a "strategic content pipeline." This systematic approach ensures visual consistency and thematic coherence "Content planning usually starts after the client's photo editing process. We don't just randomly select photos; we analyze which images best represent our brand aesthetic, which stories will resonate with our audience, and how they fit into our overall content calendar. We consider factors like seasonal trends, cultural events, and even the emotional tone of each image." (Interview Results with Informant Dessy, 2025)

This meticulous planning reflects what Darmawan et al. (2022) identified as crucial for wedding photography businesses - the need to balance technical excellence with emotional storytelling. The planning process transforms raw visual assets into strategic communication tools.

3. Visual Identity and Brand Consistency

The maintenance of visual identity represents a core planning consideration. Refan's comments highlight the strategic importance of visual consistency: "Themes and posting styles are chosen to remain consistent with the characteristics and visual concept of @setangkaiproject. We've established specific color grading protocols, composition guidelines, and even caption tone standards. This isn't just about aesthetics; it's about building immediate brand recognition in a crowded digital space." (Interview Results with Informant Refan, 2025).

This approach aligns with Fariastuti & Azis's (2019) findings that consistent visual branding significantly enhances brand awareness and recall. The planning team operates as visual gatekeepers, ensuring every piece of content advances the brand's strategic positioning.

B. Strategy Implementation through Circular Model of SoMe: An Integrated Ecosystem

Students The implementation phase at @setangkaiproject demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of social media as an integrated communication ecosystem. The application of Luttrell's Circular Model of SoMe reveals a dynamic, multi-platform approach to audience engagement.

1. Strategic Content Distribution (Share Phase)

The Share phase at @setangkaiproject involves careful platform selection and content adaptation. Aditya's explanation reveals a nuanced understanding of platform-specific strengths "Our strategy is mixed - there's feed, reels, story. Feed serves as our digital portfolio, reels function as our audience acquisition tool, and stories act as our relationship-building space. Each platform serves a distinct strategic purpose in our marketing ecosystem." (Interview Results with Informant Aditya, 2025)

This multi-platform approach reflects what Kudadiri et al. (2024) describe as "omni-channel social media strategy," where different platforms serve complementary functions in the customer journey. The sharing strategy is not random but follows a carefully calibrated distribution plan.

2. Content Optimization Strategies (Optimize Phase)

The optimization efforts extend beyond simple timing considerations to encompass sophisticated content adaptation. Dessy's insights reveal a data-informed approach "We've conducted extensive testing to understand our audience's behavior patterns. Beyond just posting times, we optimize content formats, hashtag strategies, and even the emotional tone of our captions. For instance, we found that behind-the-scenes content performs best in stories, while finished portfolio pieces generate most engagement in feeds." (Interview Results with Informant Dessy, 2025).

This optimization mindset aligns with Luttrell's (2015) emphasis on continuous improvement through data analysis. The team treats each post as both a communication artifact and a data point informing future strategy.

3. Systematic Management Practices (Manage Phase)

The management phase involves sophisticated coordination and quality control mechanisms. The team utilizes multiple tools and processes to maintain strategic alignment "We operate through a centralized WhatsApp group where all content is reviewed and approved before publication. This isn't just about error checking; it's about ensuring every piece of content aligns with our strategic objectives and brand voice. We maintain a content calendar that maps out themes, campaigns, and key messaging points weeks in advance." (Interview Results with Informant Refan, 2025).

This systematic management approach reflects what Siregar et al. (2023) identify as characteristic of successful social media management in creative businesses the balance between creative flexibility and strategic discipline.

4. Active Engagement Cultivation (Engage Phase)

The engagement strategy represents a core component of @setangkaiproject's communication approach. The team recognizes that interaction quality directly impacts relationship building "We treat every comment and DM as an opportunity to strengthen our relationship with potential clients. Our response protocol includes specific time frames, tone guidelines, and even escalation procedures for complex

inquiries. This isn't customer service; it's relationship building through digital dialogue." (Interview Results with Informant Dessy, 2025).

This engagement philosophy supports Arfan & Hasan's (2022) contention that in the digital era, marketing communication must be interactive, personal, and real-time to meet modern consumers' expectations.

C. Evaluation and Continuous Improvement: Data Driven Strategy Refinement

The evaluation process at @setangkaiproject demonstrates a sophisticated approach to performance measurement and strategic adaptation. The research reveals an organization committed to evidence-based decision making.

1. Multi Dimensional Performance Assessment

The evaluation methodology extends beyond basic metrics to encompass multiple performance dimensions. Aditya's explanation reveals a comprehensive assessment framework "Evaluation is crucial for understanding what strategies actually work. We look beyond surface-level metrics like likes and examine deeper indicators - save rates, share patterns, profile visits, and most importantly, conversion rates from engagement to client inquiries. This helps us distinguish between popularity and effectiveness." (Interview Results with Informant Aditya, 2025).

This multi-dimensional approach aligns with contemporary social media analytics best practices, recognizing that different metrics illuminate different aspects of performance (Kudadiri et al., 2024).

2. Iterative Strategy Refinement

The evaluation process directly informs strategic adjustments in an ongoing cycle of improvement. Dessy's comments illustrate this iterative approach "We conduct weekly performance reviews where we analyze what worked, what didn't, and why. This isn't about assigning blame but about collective learning. For example, we discovered that client testimonial posts generate 3x more inquiries than portfolio only posts, so we've increased their frequency in our content mix." (Interview Results with Informant Dessy, 2025).

This continuous improvement mindset reflects Berger's (2013) concept of strategic adaptation, where organizations modify their communication plans based on feedback and results.

3. Audience Insight Integration

The evaluation process serves as a mechanism for deepening audience understanding. Refan emphasizes the importance of qualitative insights "Beyond the numbers, we pay close attention to the qualitative feedback the comments, the DM conversations, the emotional responses. These insights help us understand not just what our audience engages with, but why they engage with it. This understanding directly shapes our content strategy and brand messaging." (Interview Results with Informant Refan, 2025)

This integration of quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods supports Darmawan et al.'s (2022) argument that successful social media strategies balance data-driven decisions with human insight.

4. Strategic Pivot Capability

The evaluation framework enables strategic agility and timely adjustments. The team demonstrates an ability to pivot based on performance data "When we notice certain content types underperforming, we don't just make minor tweaks we're willing to fundamentally rethink our approach. For instance, when we realized our educational content about photography techniques was generating significant engagement but few conversions, we shifted to a more client-focused storytelling approach that better aligns with our business objectives." (Interview Results with Informant Aditya, 2025).

This strategic agility exemplifies what Luttrell (2015) describes as the essential "manage" function in the Circular Model of SoMe - the ability to monitor, measure, and modify strategies in response to changing conditions and performance data.

D. Theoretical Integration: Planning Theory and Circular Model in Practice

The research findings reveal a sophisticated integration of theoretical frameworks in @setangkaiproject's marketing communication strategy. The interplay between Planning Theory and the Circular Model of SoMe creates a robust strategic foundation.

1. Hierarchical Planning in Digital Context:

The application of Berger's Planning Theory in a digital context demonstrates the continued relevance of structured communication planning. The research shows how meta-goals are translated through hierarchical planning into specific social media actions "Our planning process operates at multiple levels - from broad annual marketing objectives down to daily content decisions. Each level informs the others, creating a cohesive strategic framework that guides everything from major campaigns to individual posts." (Interview Results with Informant Aditya, 2025).

This hierarchical approach ensures strategic consistency while allowing for tactical flexibility - a balance that Berger (2013) identifies as crucial for effective communication planning.

2. Circular Model as Operational Framework

The Circular Model of SoMe provides the operational structure for implementing planned strategies. The research reveals how the four phases create a self reinforcing strategic cycle "The Share-Optimize-Manage-Engage cycle isn't just a theoretical concept for us; it's our daily operational reality. Each phase informs the others, creating a continuous loop of content creation, optimization, measurement, and relationship building." (Interview Results with Informant Dessy, 2025).

This operationalization of Luttrell's (2015) model demonstrates its practical utility for small creative businesses navigating complex digital landscapes.

3. Integration for Strategic Advantage

The combination of structured planning and dynamic implementation creates significant competitive advantage. The research suggests that this theoretical integration drives both consistency and adaptability "The Planning Theory gives us our strategic foundation - it ensures we're building toward clear objectives. The Circular Model gives us our operational rhythm - it keeps us responsive and engaged with our audience. Together, they create a marketing approach that's both deliberate and dynamic." (Interview Results with Informant Aditya, 2025).

This theoretical integration addresses what Siregar et al. (2023) identify as a common challenge for creative businesses - maintaining brand consistency while adapting to rapidly changing digital environments.

E. Practical Implications and Industry Applications

The research findings offer valuable insights for photography businesses and creative service providers more broadly. The successful strategies employed by @setangkaiproject provide actionable guidance for industry practitioners.

1. Strategic Planning Protocol : The research suggests that formalizing planning processes significantly enhances marketing effectiveness. Industry practitioners should consider implementing structured planning sessions, content calendars, and brand guidelines to ensure strategic consistency (Fariastuti & Azis, 2019).

2. Platform-Specific Content Strategies : The findings demonstrate the importance of tailoring content strategies to specific platform strengths and audience behaviors. Creative businesses should develop distinct approaches for different social media features rather than employing one-size-fits-all content strategies (Kudadiri et al., 2024).

3. Data Informed Decision Making : The emphasis on systematic evaluation and performance measurement highlights the importance of evidence-based strategy refinement. Industry practitioners should establish regular review processes and develop key performance indicators aligned with business objectives (Darmawan et al., 2022).

4. Relationship First Engagement : The research reinforces that social media success in creative industries depends on genuine relationship building rather than transactional marketing. Businesses should prioritize

meaningful interaction and community building as core components of their digital strategy (Arfan & Hasan, 2022).

This expanded analysis demonstrates that @setangkaiproject's marketing communication strategy represents a sophisticated integration of theoretical principles and practical execution, offering valuable insights for both academic understanding and industry practice in the evolving landscape of digital marketing for creative services.

V. CONCLUSION

This phenomenological study reveals that the marketing communication strategy of @setangkaiproject on Instagram represents a complex process of meaning construction occurring at the intersection of business needs and audience preferences. The research shows that marketing communication decisions are not merely technical actions but profound meaning-making processes shaped by the dynamic interaction between brand identity and audience expectations. The findings illuminate three crucial aspects of this phenomenon. First, collaborative strategic planning between the owner and team reflects the application of Planning Theory where each action is directed toward clear goals. Second, strategy implementation through the four stages of the Circular Model of SoMe demonstrates systematic and sustainable social media management. Third, evaluation based on Instagram insights shows data-based adaptive capabilities in facing digital market dynamics.

Theoretically, this study contributes to marketing communication literature by illustrating how Planning Theory and the Circular Model of SoMe can be integrated in analyzing digital marketing strategies in the creative industry context. Practically, these findings suggest several important implications. For creative industry players, particularly photographers, there is a need to design structured strategies covering planning, implementation, and evaluation stages. For educational institutions, this research can be reference material for digital marketing education that integrates theory and practice.Several limitations warrant mention. The focus on one account limits generalizability, and the specific wedding photography context may affect result applicability to other creative sectors. Future research should involve more diverse photography business samples and use mixed methods to obtain more comprehensive data.

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