

Celebrities and Digital Marketing: The Importance of Celebrity Engagement on Instagram Social Media Platform

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Abstract

Today, celebrities enjoy numerous advantages and benefits from their use of social media platforms. This study examines how celebrities interact with fans on social media, specifically on Instagram, to better understand the motivations behind their constant presence. The study also aims to determine the likelihood and outcomes that prompt celebrities to interact with their fans online. The data for this study comprises eight current Malaysian celebrities with Instagram followings of more than five hundred thousand. Thematic analysis techniques were employed to examine the study's findings. According to this survey, celebrities who have amassed a sizable following on Instagram actively interact with their fans to generate revenue. Additionally, this study demonstrates that certain celebrities are likely to become Instagram ambassadors by promoting their own companies, products, and services, as well as those of others. The study's findings also highlight the importance of Instagram for business marketing and promotion, as it is a practical and affordable platform. Despite the scope of this study being restricted to specific celebrities on Instagram, the practical implications are closely tied to the level and type of interaction with followers on social media in general. This understanding is essential for comprehending social media influencers and the range of creative marketing strategies used by Malaysian celebrities.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Celebrity, Engagement, Business Management, Instagram.

Introduction

Building 'connections' with individuals via social networks, such as Instagram, represents a savvy approach to business expansion or fostering social relationships (Appel et al., 2020). The widespread adoption of Instagram as a popular communication platform highlights its viral growth (Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021). With over one billion users globally and the majority accessing social networking via computers and smartphones, online social

networking presents a relatively recent innovation fraught with research opportunities and challenges (Appel et al., 2020).

Celebrities encompass individuals involved in sports, movies, music, and other cultural domains. They serve as captivating figures in visual media, amassing considerable support and influence from followers through the expression of their lifestyles and the ostentatious display of wealth via images (Gong & Huang, 2022). This inclination enables the leveraging of products and brand promotion by celebrities (Jun et al., 2023). Renowned for their fame, celebrities are often characterized as 'famous for being famous,' underlining their significant influence in the media landscape (Pedalino & Camerini, 2022). Given their elevated social status, maintaining active social media profiles is paramount for celebrities to sustain their following and remain pertinent within their respective industries (Kim & Kim, 2020).

Undoubtedly, technology is actively transforming the interactions between celebrities and their followers. The shift from conventional celebrity-oriented outlets like television programs and magazines to interactive platforms like celebrity websites and social media profiles has fundamentally transformed the way fans connect and engage with celebrities. As communication scholar Wilbur Schramm in 1954 elucidated, engagement denotes the degree of involvement in two-way communication, fostering interactional dialogue. The proliferation of social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook has democratized access to celebrity-related information. Celebrities now possess unprecedented control over their online personas and can directly engage with their followers, a paradigm shift facilitated by the advent of social media (Schouten et al., 2020). This phenomenon reflects the changing dynamics of celebrity-fan connections in the digital era, marked by more availability and engagement.

Celebrities wield considerable sway in society, often enlisted to endorse products, brands, and social causes as part of the advertising strategy (Jun et al., 2023). In contemporary discourse, celebrities are increasingly recognized as "human brands," indicating their role as entities with distinctive identities and marketable appeal (Hee-Eun Han & Jin, 2021). Similar to traditional brands, celebrities meticulously curate their online personas to resonate with their followers. Leveraging social media platforms, celebrities actively cultivate and refine their personal brands by sharing updates, expressing preferences through likes, showcasing product endorsements, and engaging with followers' feedback and comments (Balaban et al., 2022). The intentional implementation of social media technologies highlights the ability of celebrities to control and shape their public image, while also strengthening their connection with their audience and increasing their significance as influential figures.

Conde & Casais (2023) highlighted that through such active engagement, celebrities have the opportunity to solidify their online presence and nurture a dedicated fan base. Social media platforms offer these stars unprecedented avenues to sculpt their public image and manage the narratives surrounding their personal lives. By strategically sharing glimpses of their daily routines, philanthropic initiatives, and career milestones, celebrities can meticulously craft their image to resonate with their desired audience and align with their brand identity. Furthermore, social media facilitates direct interaction between celebrities and their fans, fostering a more intimate connection and sense of accessibility. Through interactive features like live streams, Q&A sessions, and exclusive behind-the-scenes content, celebrities can deepen their engagement with followers, cultivating a loyal and enthusiastic fan base. This

direct engagement not only enhances the celebrity's influence but also extends their reach within the digital landscape, solidifying their status as influential figures in the online sphere. As a result of this virtual interaction, followers feel a stronger sense of appreciation and inclusion in the celebrity's journey, thereby forging deeper connections. This heightened level of engagement and transparency has sparked a notable shift in society's perception of celebrities and their interactions with fans. Celebrities are no longer seen as distant, untouchable figures elevated on pedestals; rather, they are viewed as relatable individuals who actively interact with their admirers in online spaces.

This evolving dynamic has effectively eroded the traditional boundaries between celebrities and their fans, leading to a more egalitarian relationship. The once-clear distinctions and hierarchies between celebrities and their followers are becoming increasingly blurred, fostering a more equal and interactive dynamic. This shift signifies a departure from the traditional celebrity-fan dynamic, paving the way for a more collaborative and inclusive relationship between celebrities and their audience.

Undoubtedly, social media has become a ubiquitous means of communication, benefiting both companies and individuals by offering a platform to grow connections and foster partnerships. The phenomenon of social networking, with over one billion users worldwide, is a relatively new technological advancement that comes with its own set of issues. The extensive utilization of this mass media technology in Malaysia has significantly influenced celebrities, compelling them to effortlessly include social media platforms in their everyday routines. These platforms allow celebrities not only to express themselves but also to showcase their financial success via visually appealing material. In addition, due to the ongoing progress of technology, social media platforms such as Instagram have seen substantial growth and development, resulting in their growing popularity among the younger age group.

In today's digital realm, celebrities and athletes frequently assume the mantle of brand ambassadors, harnessing their online influence to endorse various products and services. They capitalize on their social media profiles, particularly on platforms like Instagram, known for their visual-centric approach. This study focuses on Malaysian celebrities who actively utilize Instagram, aiming to uncover the factors driving their participation on the platform and the depth of their engagement with it.

Literature Review

The utilization of social media platforms has witnessed an exponential surge in recent times (Wong et al., 2021). Platforms such as Instagram and Snapchat, which emphasize visual content, have experienced remarkable growth (Van Oosten et al., 2023). Consequently, celebrities have amassed increasingly large followings on their social media profiles Brooks et al (2021) amplifying their influence across these platforms. Recognizing this potential, digital marketers are capitalizing on celebrities to endorse a wide array of products, services, and ideas. A prime example is Selena Gomez, who commands a staggering 400 million followers across Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter.

The emergence of social media platforms has revolutionized how consumers access and share product information. Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) allows users to contribute their

opinions, experiences, and recommendations about products and services, creating a valuable source of information for other users (Ismagilova et al., 2020). This dynamic mirrors the traditional concept of word-of-mouth communication, but in an electronic format accessible to a wider audience. Social media platforms serve as digital arenas where users can engage in conversations, share content, and interact with others. Unlike traditional eWOM channels like community websites and forums, social media offers a more interactive and dynamic environment for communication (Verma & Yadav, 2021). Users can engage with content in real-time, react to posts, and share their own experiences with a broader audience.

Recent research highlights the effectiveness of leveraging celebrities in social media marketing strategies. By incorporating celebrities into promotional campaigns, companies can tap into the power of first-person storytelling. Celebrities add a personal touch to brand messaging, making it more relatable and engaging for users. This approach has been shown to be more successful than traditional advertisements in capturing user attention and driving engagement (Haleem et al., 2022).

The evolution of marketing strategies has been deliberate, aiming to captivate and sway consumers in their purchasing decisions, as noted by (Dwivedi et al., 2021). In today's digital age, celebrities or opinion leaders play a pivotal role in brand management, acting as conduits for social connections both online and offline (Ahmadi et al., 2022). With their vast follower base on social media platforms like Instagram, celebrities wield significant influence over their audience.

Celebrities leverage their online presence to disseminate information and promote products to their followers. This form of influencer marketing allows businesses to reach their target audience in a more organic and relatable manner. Sponsored posts by celebrities are often seamlessly integrated into their feeds, blending in with regular content and avoiding the overtly promotional tone of traditional advertisements. This approach tends to be more effective as users tend to have a distaste for blatant advertising (Otamendi & Sutil Martín, 2020). Company owners and organizations have increasingly turned to marketing strategies such as celebrity endorsements to bolster the promotion of their products (Lili et al., 2022). Celebrities often endorse products by showcasing their usage, effectively signaling their endorsement and alignment with the sponsored content (Venciute et al., 2023).

On platforms like Instagram, the level of engagement, often measured by the engagement rate, serves as an indicator of a product's likability. This metric reflects the number of likes received from followers. Research by Emma and Matilde (2017) suggests that product promotion featuring celebrity endorsements on Instagram can lead to heightened follower interest and increased engagement rates, potentially translating into a greater propensity for followers to purchase the endorsed products.

Most celebrities now acknowledge the ability and power of this degree of engagement. Celebrities understand the influence their social media profiles have on their fans and the connections they foster (Barta et al., 2023). As a result, superstars must maintain a high level of engagement with their social media fans (Barta et al., 2023). Cristiano Ronaldo, the most followed individual on Instagram with over 600 million followers across his social media platforms (The Top 20 Most Followed Instagram Accounts), is one of the best examples.

In order to maintain a dynamic and influential image, celebrities must actively engage with their audience on social media platforms like Instagram, where they can regularly share updates about their activities, latest projects, and personal insights (Barta et al., 2023). It's essential for celebrities to ensure they have sufficient exposure to manage events or announcements that capture the attention of their extensive social media following (Dwivedi et al., 2021). However, celebrities must also be cognizant of the fact that interactions with social media users can yield both positive and negative outcomes, significantly impacting their personal brand and any products they endorse as ambassadors (Marickar & Rajasekhar, 2020).

This underscores the importance of maintaining a careful balance in their online interactions, fostering genuine connections with followers while also managing potential risks to their reputation and brand image. Celebrities need to navigate this landscape with strategic planning and thoughtful engagement, leveraging their platform to cultivate a positive and impactful presence in the digital sphere.

Eyal et al (2020), conducted a content analysis study, identifying four distinct categories of celebrity engagement on Instagram: career, personal, fan, and celebrity interactions. Career posts encompass activities related to the celebrity's profession, such as music-related achievements, promotional events, and endorsements. Personal posts, on the other hand, delve into the celebrity's private life, including likes, dislikes, family activities, and exclusive events not accessible to the public. Fan posts are directed towards the celebrity's fan base, often indicated by the use of the term "fan" in the caption, facilitating direct communication with followers. Lastly, celebrity interaction posts involve tagging other celebrities or media entities to acknowledge their involvement or connection (Eyal et al., 2020).

Research Method

Qualitative techniques were employed due to their ability to provide explanations and facilitate the collection of descriptive information, aligning with the study's purpose and research methodology (Ford et al., 2018). Snowball sampling was utilized to identify eight informants, consisting of four males and four females. The selected informants are national celebrities, with ages ranging from 22 to 37 years, and they work as singers, actors, hosts, and other professions. Additionally, all informants are business owners.

The informants' educational levels range from SPM to Master's Degree. They reside in Selangor, the Federal Territory, and Johor Bahru. This study's informants include three married individuals and five unmarried individuals. The number of Instagram followers of informants ranged from 258 thousand to 1.2 million. Informants' jobs are similarly diverse, including roles as actors, singers, lawyers, and business owners.

Findings and Discussion

This study is thematically analyzed, and the data selected is pertinent to constructing a topic that meets the study's goals, based on information provided by informants during in-depth interview sessions. Thematic analysis is employed to gather data that differs from previous research (Naeem et al., 2023). Thematic analysis allows for a comprehensive exploration of the informants' experiences and perspectives, shedding light on various factors that may

influence their lives and choices. By examining the data thematically, this study aims to uncover new insights and contribute to the existing body of knowledge in this field.

Several themes were discovered, identified, and derived from the feedback of the informants involved in this study (Naeem et al., 2023). The following criteria influence celebrity participation on the Instagram social media platform:

1. Adhering to prevailing trends.
2. Enhanced business and marketing management efficiency
3. Refreshing personal and career details to foster increased engagement with followers.
4. Sharing information that is not for income generation

Table 1

Themes and Categories

Themes	Categories
1. Adhering to prevailing trends.	-following the current trend
2. Enhanced business and marketing management efficiency	-promote their own products, -endorse offerings from other brands -gather immediate feedback from customers -generate substantial income streams
3. Refreshing personal and career details to foster increased engagement with followers.	-sharing daily activities -actively engaging with followers through likes, comments, and other interactions -updating career information -Utilizing activities to generate income.
4. Sharing information that is not for income generation	-sharing personal photo albums -staying updated with current news -distributing entertainment or inspirational content.

Theme 1: Adhering to prevailing trends

The findings from the data collection revealed that half of the informants, specifically four out of eight, indicated that their initial reason for joining the social media platform Instagram was to follow the prevailing trend at the time. These informants expressed that they never envisioned this social media platform would eventually become instrumental in advancing their careers as celebrities. Among the informants who aligned with Theme 1, two were female, identified as W10 and W11, while the other two were male, identified as L06 and L05.

Informant W10 joined Instagram to stay updated with current trends and developments, following the widespread adoption of the platform. Informant W11 joined Instagram primarily because it focused on sharing pictures, offering a unique feature compared to other platforms. Informant L06 joined Instagram simply because it was trending at the time, aligning with the prevailing social media trends. Meanwhile, informant L05 joined Instagram out of

curiosity for new platforms, having previously explored platforms like Friendster, MySpace, and Facebook. The allure of trying out something new led them to download Instagram, particularly as they had already established themselves as an artist by then. This assertion is supported by the following dialogues:

Table 2

Adhering to prevailing trends

Theme	Informants
Adhering to prevailing trends.	" I initially joined Instagram because everyone was doing it at the time. I followed the trend and joined Instagram to stay updated with current developments." - Informant W10
	"I'm just following the trend. Initially, we had another platform apart from Facebook. So, for me, the best thing about Instagram was that it focused solely on uploading pictures at that time." - Informant W11
	"The reason I got an Instagram account was to keep up with the trend. Everyone had Instagram, so I wanted to have it too." - Informant L06
	"Alright, I joined Instagram because it was the trend back then. Before Instagram, there was Friendster, MySpace, and Facebook. Then came Instagram, something new. I'm fond of trying out new things, so I downloaded Instagram. By that time, I had already established myself as an artist. So it was easy for me." - Informant L05

These findings underscore the importance of social trends in shaping the adoption behaviors of celebrities on social media platforms. The decision to join Instagram was not initially driven by a calculated effort to enhance their careers but rather by a social impetus to remain current and connected with the evolving digital landscape.

The provided dialogues reinforce these points, showcasing the informants' perspectives and reasons for joining Instagram during its rise in popularity. This trend-following behavior eventually positioned Instagram as a vital tool in their professional lives, even though that was not the original intention.

Theme 2: Enhanced business and marketing management efficiency

Most of the informants utilize the social media platform Instagram as a tool for efficient business management and marketing. Instagram facilitates easy and effective promotion, as the content generated by users, including celebrities, positively influences consumer spending within the social media brand community (Wei et al., 2023). Among the informants, five individuals (L09, W10, W11, W07, W12) promote products belonging to others, while six informants (W10, W12, W11, L04, L06, L05) promote their own products. It's worth noting that 'own products' here can be categorized into two definitions: the first being the talents of the celebrity, and the second being products unrelated to the celebrity's talents, such as sambal coffee and similar items. This activity is significant for celebrities as it serves as an additional source of income, supplementing their earnings from acting, singing, and other endeavors.

This finding is further corroborated by a study conducted by (Belanche et al., 2021) which highlights that celebrities utilize their social media platforms to promote either their own products or those of others. This practice often occurs when they are appointed as product ambassadors or when they seek to venture into entrepreneurship. One informant (L05) emphasized that Instagram usage enables him to receive immediate feedback on his activities or business—a stark contrast to the past, when celebrities had to rely on journalists and newspapers for feedback, a process that was notably time-consuming. The evidence from dialogues regarding the efficient management of business and product marketing through Instagram is illustrated below:

Table 3
Enhanced business and marketing management efficiency

Theme	Informants
Enhanced business and marketing management efficiency	"I utilize Instagram as a platform to promote various products, including brownies and clothing items. Additionally, I serve as a product ambassador and leverage my Instagram account to endorse these products." - Informant W10
	"The reason I joined Instagram in 2010 was to showcase and advertise my own talent, which I consider to be my product. Additionally, I promote products from other individuals by serving as an ambassador for their brands." - Informant W12
	"As of now, I have developed my own food-based product. Additionally, I serve as an ambassador for various other products. Therefore, I use Instagram as a platform to introduce both the products I create and those I endorse as an ambassador." - Informant W11
	"Currently, I don't have my own product, but I've promoted other products as I've been appointed as an ambassador for them. Therefore, I have to post about them to attract attention. Being a public figure, it's essential to keep my audience engaged, especially during events or new product launches, to ensure people notice it through my platform." - Informant W07
	"People often provide me with items or products, which I carefully assess to ensure they align with my interests and values before sharing them. For instance, I am currently exploring mustache grooming, and someone has offered me a mustache product. Therefore, I will share the benefits and advantages of using the mustache product, providing information to those interested in maintaining a mustache like mine." - Informant L09
	"Yes, I promote my songs, which are essentially my product—my singing and musical work constitute what I sell. This is the method I employ, and I find Instagram to be the most effective medium for this purpose." - Informant L06
	"Instagram serves as a vital business platform where I can directly interact with buyers. Previously, updates were shared through print media like Malay magazines, but now the shift to online platforms has been significant. Fans prefer real-time updates, and Instagram allows

	celebrities to share pictures, shooting locations, and details about their projects instantly. Unlike before, when fans had to wait for magazines to be published, now they can access information on the spot." - Informant L05
	"I previously had my own products, but I've reduced their production as I prioritize quality over quantity. I aim for the products to maintain a high standard to ensure customer satisfaction. Therefore, I may release products seasonally to maintain this standard. Additionally, I've observed that others often overlook the importance of product reviews." - Informant L04

The analysis reveals that Instagram is an essential tool for celebrities in managing and promoting their businesses efficiently. The platform allows for diverse promotional activities, direct audience engagement, strategic product endorsements, and immediate feedback, all of which contribute to enhanced business and marketing management. Instagram supports a wide range of promotional activities, from personal talent showcases to product endorsements. The platform's ability to maintain audience interest and provide real-time interaction is vital for celebrities. Strategic and authentic endorsements help maintain the credibility and personal brand of celebrities. Immediate feedback mechanisms enable quick adaptation and improvement of business strategies. These findings underscore the significant role Instagram plays in the professional and business lives of celebrities, highlighting its impact on contemporary marketing strategies and operations.

Theme 3: Refreshing personal and career details to foster increased engagement with followers.

The study further delved into the strategies adopted by six informants (W10, W12, W07, L04, L06, L09), who utilize Instagram as a means to keep their followers abreast of both personal anecdotes and career-related developments. This proactive approach is aimed at not only fostering deeper engagement but also at leveraging their online presence to generate income. These individuals regularly share insights into their careers, spanning various fields such as entertainment, current political affairs, or sports. The findings shed light on the pivotal role social media platforms play in facilitating direct communication between celebrities and their fan base. By actively encouraging followers to "follow" or "like" their updates, celebrities cultivate a sense of community and foster meaningful interactions within their respective spheres of influence. This interactive dynamic underscores the importance of maintaining a strong online presence, not just for promotional purposes but also for establishing genuine connections with followers.

On Instagram, the sporadic use of hashtags in celebrity posts doesn't guarantee consistent visibility to their target audience. The platform's algorithm plays a crucial role in determining the order in which posts appear on users' feeds. Celebrities must grasp and adapt to this algorithm to ensure their posts reach and engage their followers effectively for successful marketing on Instagram (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

For four informants (W12, W07, L04, L09), Instagram serves as a powerful tool to captivate fans who eagerly seek content related to them. These informants recognize the importance of fostering two-way interaction with their followers, aiming to cultivate meaningful engagement. They understand that such engagement is not only crucial for maintaining their

fan base but also for attracting job opportunities and generating income. This is particularly vital in today's digital age, where companies often gauge the level of interaction between celebrities and their followers before deciding to collaborate on marketing campaigns or product endorsements. Therefore, leveraging Instagram effectively as a platform for engagement and interaction has become indispensable for celebrities looking to succeed in their careers and monetize their online presence.

The level of engagement is quantified by dividing the number of likes on a photo by the total number of followers. Celebrities further enhance their engagement by actively responding to interactions initiated by their fans through a variety of Instagram features. These include replying to comments, liking their fans' photos or comments, tagging them in posts, and even reposting content created by their fans.

These dialogues collectively highlight the instrumental role Instagram plays in the lives of these individuals, particularly in their careers as public figures and entertainers. Informant W10 emphasizes the platform's utility in sharing real-time updates about career-related endeavors and ongoing projects. Informant W12 underscores the importance of Instagram as a means to showcase talent, provide updates on events, and engage with followers, thereby maintaining their interest and support. Informant W07 discusses their predominant use of Instagram for work-related purposes, noting its significance in maintaining their professional presence and generating income as a public figure and singer.

Meanwhile, informant L04 highlights the indispensable nature of Instagram in today's industry, emphasizing its role in facilitating engagement with followers and providing valuable insights for strategic promotion and project management. Informant L06 describes Instagram as a crucial tool for disseminating information to fans, particularly regarding new releases and updates, fostering direct communication and engagement with their audience. Informant L09 emphasizes their use of Instagram to share personal and professional updates with fans, recognizing the platform's ability to cater to diverse interests and facilitate meaningful engagement.

In summary, Instagram serves as an essential platform for these individuals to connect with their audience, share updates about their careers, promote their work, and engage with fans on a personal level, ultimately contributing to their success in the entertainment industry. This hands-on approach to interaction is supported by dialogues from the informants, as evidenced below:

Table 4

Refreshing personal and career details to foster increased engagement with followers

Theme	Informants
Refreshing personal and career details to foster increased engagement with followers.	"Currently, my primary focus on Instagram is to share the latest updates about my career endeavors. I use this platform to keep my followers informed about my ongoing projects and activities in the field. For instance, I often share insights into my current work commitments, such as shooting schedules or upcoming programs." - Informant W10
	"I regularly share cover songs, update followers about upcoming events, and provide insights into my daily activities to showcase my talent. Fans are eager to stay informed about my whereabouts and activities, making Instagram an ideal platform for providing these updates. Its user-friendly interface allows me to easily connect with my audience and keep them engaged with my content." - Informant W12
	"I primarily use Instagram for work-related purposes, as it seamlessly integrates with my professional life. A significant portion of my Instagram activity revolves around my career responsibilities. As a public figure and singer, attending events necessitates posting on Instagram to maintain my presence. Therefore, around 80% of my Instagram usage is dedicated to 'work', as it serves as a key platform for income generation." - Informant W07
	"In today's industry, being active on social media is imperative. TV stations and clients gauge a celebrity's influence by looking at their followers and the level of engagement. Even if my follower count is high, without significant interaction, it may not be deemed sufficient. Therefore, I maintain a professional Instagram account rather than a personal one. This type of account provides valuable insights into my audience's demographics and peak activity hours, allowing me to strategically schedule posts and boost promotions for dramas and other projects. Without Instagram, it would be challenging for the audience to connect with a newcomer like myself and stay informed about my work." - Informant L04
	"Instagram serves as a vital tool for disseminating information to my fans, particularly when releasing new singles or updates about my work. It provides a convenient and efficient platform to communicate directly with my audience and keep them informed. Therefore, whenever I have news to share, such as the release of a new single, Instagram becomes my go-to platform for reaching out to my fans." - Informant L06
	"I joined Instagram with the intention of sharing my journey and progress with my fans. Additionally, I use the platform to promote myself and provide insights into my daily activities. Some fans may be curious about my professional endeavors, while others might seek glimpses into my personal life beyond singing. Instagram, therefore, serves as the perfect medium to cater to these interests and engage with my audience on a more personal level." - Informant L09

Theme 4: Sharing Information That Is Not For Income Generation

The comparative analysis of Theme 4 reveals significant insights into how celebrities utilize Instagram for non-monetary purposes, aligning with and extending existing literature.

Existing literature indicates that social media platforms like Instagram play a crucial role in allowing individuals to document and share personal moments, fostering a sense of intimacy and connection with followers (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Current findings from this study support this, with informants W07, W10, and L09 using Instagram to curate personal photo albums and share daily activities, reinforcing the creation of personal connections with their audience.

Furthermore, celebrities are known to use social media to entertain and inspire their followers (Kim & Kim, 2020). The interactive nature of platforms like Instagram allows for the dissemination of uplifting and motivational content (Richter et al., 2022). This study found that informants W07, W10, W11, and L05 blend entertainment with inspiration in their posts, aiming to uplift and motivate followers, thereby supporting the existing theory that celebrities use social media not only for self-promotion but also to engage and positively influence their audience.

Additionally, research indicates that celebrities often engage in advocacy through social media, using their platforms to raise awareness for social and political causes (Brockington & Henson, 2015). Social media also provides stress relief through humorous content (Stieger et al., 2023). This study found that informant L05 and others use Instagram to advocate for causes and alleviate stress among their followers, consistent with existing literature on the dual role of social media in advocacy and providing psychological relief through entertainment.

This study contributes new insights into the diverse use of Instagram beyond monetization. While existing literature primarily focuses on the commercial use of social media by celebrities, this research highlights significant non-monetary uses. Informants use Instagram to share personal experiences and provide moral support, showcasing a broader spectrum of social media utilization. The study provides specific motivations behind different types of content shared by celebrities. For instance, informant L09's selective sharing of personal moments suitable for their spouse adds a nuanced understanding of content curation not extensively covered in existing research.

Moreover, by emphasizing the intentional use of Instagram to engage and inspire followers, the findings offer deeper insights into how celebrities cultivate and maintain a loyal fan base. This extends the understanding of engagement strategies beyond mere content sharing to include emotional and psychological connections with followers. The seamless integration of professional updates and personal life glimpses, as practiced by informants like W10 and L05, highlights a strategic approach to maintaining a holistic online persona. This dual approach contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of social media strategies employed by celebrities. Each informant's perspective on this matter is as follows:

Table 5

Sharing Information That Is Not For Income Generation

Theme	Informants
Sharing Information That Is Not For Income Generation	<p>"When I encounter memorable moments, I make sure to capture them through photos, ensuring they are preserved and easily accessible online. This way, nothing gets lost in the depths of my mobile phone. Additionally, I regularly share snippets of my daily life, such as my outfit of the day or photos from my travels. When it comes to work-related updates, like participating in the Kuala Lumpur Drama Festival, I ensure to post a promotional poster to inform my fans about my upcoming performance. This helps garner significant attention and engagement from my followers. Moreover, I take advantage of my platform to shed light on important causes, such as the 'Dapur Kasih Buat Syria' mission, aiming to raise public awareness and advocate for meaningful change." - Informant W07</p>
	<p>"My content mainly revolves around my professional endeavors, with occasional glimpses into my personal life, particularly family-related updates. However, as my career in the industry progresses, the focus of my sharing has shifted towards work-related content. I strive to inspire my audience by sharing meaningful insights and experiences from my journey in the industry." - Informant W10</p>
	<p>"I've ventured into creating entertaining videos for sharing on Instagram, and as our follower base grows, it becomes essential to sustain this momentum." -Informant W11</p>
	<p>"I typically share a picture depicting my activities of the day. However, my content primarily focuses on work-related updates. Recently, I've started sharing more personal moments, but only those deemed suitable for sharing with my wife. So, I'm a bit selective with what I post, but the important aspect is that I continue to engage and share with my audience." -Informant L09</p>
	<p>"I enjoy sharing content that brings a sense of joy and relief to my audience. This includes humorous posts and content with elements of comedy, aimed at entertaining my followers, fans, and anyone browsing through my Instagram account." - Informant L05</p>

In conclusion, the comparative analysis illustrates that the findings of this study both align with and extend existing literature. The study supports established theories on the use of social media for personal connection, entertainment, inspiration, advocacy, and stress alleviation. Additionally, it contributes new insights into the diverse, non-monetary motivations behind celebrity social media use, the specific motivations for content sharing, and the strategic integration of professional and personal content to enhance audience engagement. These contributions provide a richer, more nuanced understanding of celebrity engagement on social media platforms, particularly Instagram, and underscore the platform's multifaceted role in contemporary celebrity culture.

Limitations of the Study

Exploring the evaluation of celebrity involvement in social media usage presents both limitations and numerous opportunities for further research and discovery. While this study provides valuable insights, there are aspects that warrant attention in future investigations. Firstly, the sample in this study comprises celebrities from varying age groups and professions, primarily actors and singers within the Malay community. To enhance the breadth of understanding, future studies could include non-Malay celebrities in Malaysia, enabling comparisons across ethnic groups. Additionally, examining celebrities with different follower counts, particularly those with substantial followings exceeding 5 million, would offer deeper insights into the dynamics of celebrity engagement on social media platforms. Moreover, diversifying the types of celebrities studied beyond entertainers to include politicians, prominent entrepreneurs, and influencers from various domains could provide a comprehensive understanding of social media dynamics across different sectors. Furthermore, exploring additional social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok would offer a more holistic view of celebrity engagement strategies across various digital channels. By addressing these considerations, future research endeavors can contribute significantly to brand research and shed light on the evolving landscape of celebrity influence in the realm of social media.

Conclusion

The emergence of social media platforms has fundamentally transformed the dynamic between celebrities and their followers, reshaping how information is disseminated and accessed. Unlike in the past, where celebrity narratives were predominantly crafted by press agents and public relations specialists and conveyed through traditional media channels like radio, television, magazines, and newspapers, the advent of social media has democratized this process. Platforms like Instagram have revolutionized the relationship between celebrities and their audience, granting celebrities unprecedented autonomy over their content and allowing for direct interaction with followers. This shift has dismantled barriers that once existed between celebrities and their fans, enabling a more authentic and immediate form of communication.

With the rise of Instagram and similar platforms, celebrities now possess absolute control over the content they share, including their personal photos and updates. This newfound control has enabled celebrities to cultivate their unique brand identities and connect with their audience on a more personal level, fostering deeper engagement and loyalty. Moreover, the interactive nature of social media platforms facilitates real-time communication between celebrities and their followers, creating opportunities for genuine dialogue and connection. Followers can now directly engage with their favorite celebrities through likes, comments, and messages, fostering a sense of community and intimacy previously unattainable through traditional media channels.

In essence, the advent of social media, particularly platforms like Instagram, has revolutionized the celebrity-follower dynamic, empowering both parties to engage in a more meaningful and immediate exchange of information and interaction. This paradigm shift underscores the transformative impact of technology on celebrity culture and communication in the digital age.

The motivation behind this study stems from the need to understand how celebrities navigate and leverage social media platforms to maintain and enhance their professional presence. By

investigating the strategies employed by celebrities on Instagram, this study aims to provide insights into the evolving landscape of celebrity-fan interactions and the implications for marketing and public relations practices.

In today's digital age, both mass media and social media stand as indispensable tools for communication and dissemination of information. However, with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, the landscape of celebrity engagement has undergone a profound transformation. In Malaysia, the average celebrity has increasingly relied on platforms like Instagram for income generation in light of the widespread cancellation of large-scale entertainment and art events. Concerts, film productions, award ceremonies, and other high-profile gatherings have been indefinitely postponed, dealing a severe blow to the traditional avenues through which celebrities typically generate income. As a result, social media platforms have emerged as crucial lifelines for maintaining visibility, fostering audience engagement, and exploring new avenues for monetization amidst the unprecedented disruptions caused by the pandemic.

Celebrities have adeptly navigated these challenges, leveraging technological advancements to thrive in the new normal while also ensuring a steady stream of income. With many now working remotely, celebrities have embraced various technology applications to stay connected and maintain their relevance in the industry. This strategic adaptation not only fosters continued engagement with their fanbase but also serves as a platform to monetize their personal brand. The findings of the study underscore a fundamental shift: celebrities no longer rely solely on traditional mass media and journalists to bolster their popularity. Instead, they wield the power of platforms like Instagram to autonomously promote themselves, showcase their talents and daily endeavors, and endorse both their own products and those of others. This autonomy has liberated celebrities from the constraints of traditional media, empowering them to directly engage with their audience and cultivate lucrative opportunities for income generation.

Celebrities gravitate towards Instagram due to its user-friendly interface, which facilitates efficient business management and cost-effective marketing strategies. By leveraging this platform, celebrities can streamline their promotional efforts, saving both time and resources. Advertisers and companies stand to benefit greatly from observing celebrities with substantial followings and active engagement on their social media profiles, gaining valuable insights into effective audience engagement strategies. Through Instagram and similar platforms, celebrities have the autonomy to generate income by sharing posts that promote their own career endeavors or brand products. Research suggests that these endorsements can significantly impact a celebrity's credibility, further underscoring the influential role of social media in shaping consumer perceptions and behavior (Patel et al., 2023).

Furthermore, this study reveals that celebrities utilize their Instagram accounts not only for self-promotion but also as a platform to advocate for charitable causes. By sharing news and updates about philanthropic endeavors, celebrities inspire their fans and followers to emulate their altruistic actions, fostering a sense of social responsibility within the community. Additionally, celebrities leverage Instagram to engage with their audience, seeking support for new projects and initiatives while disseminating timely information. The widespread reach of celebrities' social media platforms accelerates the spread of news, amplifying the impact

of their messages. Moreover, celebrities play a role in alleviating their followers' stress by sharing lighthearted and entertaining content on Instagram, providing moments of relief and amusement amidst challenging times. This multifaceted approach underscores celebrities' commitment to using their influence for positive change and supporting their followers in diverse ways, reflecting their individual capacities for making a difference.

The contribution of this study lies in its exploration of the nuanced ways in which celebrities use Instagram to navigate their professional and personal lives. By highlighting the strategic use of social media for business management, personal branding, and community engagement, this research offers valuable insights for practitioners in marketing, public relations, and media studies. It underscores the pivotal role of social media in contemporary celebrity culture and provides a foundation for future studies on digital communication strategies.

In conclusion, the phenomenon of celebrity engagement on social media sites, particularly Instagram, has revolutionized marketing strategies, offering a highly effective platform for promoting products. Celebrities leverage their vast social media following to showcase brands to a large audience, enhancing brand visibility and engagement. Maintaining an active presence on social media is crucial for celebrities to sustain relevance and popularity among followers, businesses, and entertainment industry stakeholders. As such, celebrity involvement in social media usage plays a pivotal role in income generation, underscoring the significance of their presence on these platforms.

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