

Instagram Brand Activation for Fashion Start Ups with Experiential Marketing

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Abstract. A lot of startup brands utilized Instagram to build their brand online and to raise awareness toward their brand. Fashion industry is one of the many industries that rely on Instagram heavily. Three Levels of Experiential Marketing was a new strategy that was built from 5 Strategic Experiential Modules (SEMs) from Schmitt such as Sense, Feel, Think, Act and Relate to make the 5 SEMs easily applicable to businesses in Instagram. To validate the application of those Three Levels of Experiential Marketing strategy, startup brands from Faculty of Creative Industry, in Fashion and Product Lifestyle Design program utilized the modules to help build their fashion brand from scratch. There are 20 subjects of students in Fashion and Lifestyle Product Design program in University of Surabaya. These subjects start their own fashion branding on Instagram and utilized the Three Levels of Experiential Marketing Strategy for 1 month. In conclusion, not every factor can be fully embedded, and factors under Sense, Feel and Relate SEMs are the most effective ones.

Keywords: Instagram, Fashion, Engagement, Experiential Marketing.

INTRODUCTION

Instagram is one of the most used social media amongst the vast technology development. As a photo and video-sharing platform, Instagram embedded many engagement features, such as Like, Comment, and Share. For the business version of Instagram, there is an extra feature in which enabled users to get the engagement data to analyze the how the viewers react to the post. Nowadays, a lot of marketing and branding strategies utilized social media to reach their potential customers, as social media is now reach 3.397 billion active users from the total worldwide population of 7.7 billion (Smith, 2019). Social media is also the most affordable promotion media compared to another mass media. A lot of start up businesses utilized social media, especially Instagram to gain their brand awareness to the potential customers.

Instagram with their specialty in visual media sharing, has successfully change the game in fashion industry (Alter, 2016). On the other hand, Instagram also took fashion as an important aspect in their business. Per 2015, Instagram has appointed ex beauty editor of Teen Vogue as their Head of Fashion Partnership. In Indonesia, Instagram fashion also took a big hit as it being the second most used social media. Instagram were heavily used as an information source for fashion. As many as 32.21% Instagram users followed fashion blogger on Instagram while 52.53% followed fashion brand (Chrisprastika, 2015). This social media utilization as a communication media occurs at the same time as the era of experience based economy.

Schmitt (1999) built a new marketing concept that focused on creative ways to appeal customers' senses through unforgettable experiences. To be able to apply this new marketing concept, he built a strategic framework to manage experiences with Strategic Experiential Modules that includes Sense, Feel, Think, Act and Relate. However, these 5 experiential modules are not yet easily applicable toward social media platforms especially Instagram in fashion business. Prianka, Ku and Cheng (2017) enhance these experiential modules into Three Levels Experiential Marketing strategy that are easily embedded into actions on Instagram to build awareness for a fashion brand. This strategy was built based from deep interviews with several fashion Influencers in Indonesia. However, this Three Levels Experiential Marketing strategy has not yet tested to start up fashion brands in Indonesia.

Fashion and Lifestyle Product Design program in Faculty of Creative Industry University of Surabaya aim to generate future entrepreneur in creative industries especially in fashion industry. Fresh graduates of this program are ready to start their own business based from the knowledge given throughout their study. Thus, the students will be the test subject of this experiment, given the Three Levels Experiential Marketing strategy by Prianka, Ku & Cheng (2017) the students are expected to embed the factors to their strategy in starting their own fashion brand in Instagram. Furthermore, by utilizing the factors from the Three Levels of Experiential Marketing strategy, this research aimed to test the factors (that has been verified from previous research) to the students of Fashion and Lifestyle Product Design program to build their own brands.

The main purpose of this research is to embed the students with digital marketing and branding strategy with Instagram in particular. Furthermore, by the application of the factors from the Three Levels of Experiential Marketing strategy from the previous research of Prianka (2017) this research could also work as a validation of the factors in order to be able to enhance their existence in Instagram. The conclusion of this research can be used for the part of learning process in Marketing and Branding class. Furthermore this research also can be used by the other start up fashion entrepreneur by utilizing the suitable factors for their own brand.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Experiential Marketing and Experiential Value

Experiential marketing is a new marketing concept that focusing on creative and innovative ways to appeal customers' senses, feelings, intellect, curiosity and self image rather than to rational, utilitarian notions of value (Schmitt, 1999). Schmitt contrasted traditional marketing's product oriented focus on functional features and benefits with experience marketing's customer-oriented focus on experiences. Schmitt argued that customers do not only engage in rational choice, but are just frequently driven by emotions. Nowadays, the customers want products, communications, marketing campaigns that dazzle the In the end of the data calculation, the top 5 factors of both tactical and practical factors drawn out and further analyzed along with the analysis of with Experiential Marketing SEMs that are mostly used. Senses, touch their hearts, and stimulate their minds. They want products, communications and campaigns that they can relate to and that they can incorporate into their lifestyles. They want products, communications and marketing campaigns to deliver an experience.

Schmitt also showed a strategic framework for managing experiences. The two most essential concepts of experiential marketing are strategic experiential modules (SEMs) and experience providers (ExPros). SEMs are strategic experiential modules that can be used to create different types of customer experiences for their customers. It includes sensory experiences (SENSE), affective experiences (FEEL), creative cognitive experiences (THINK), physical experiences, behaviours and lifestyles (ACT), and social-identity experiences that result from relating to a reference group or culture (RELATE). Furthermore, there is an assumption that each SEM has its own objectives, as well as internal structure and principles (Schmitt, 1999).

On the other hand, in his book about concepts, framework and consumer insights about experiential marketing, Schmitt (2011) stated that Experiential Value is one of the key concepts of Experiential Marketing. Value itself does not only reside in the object of consumption (products and services), and in seeking out and processing information about such objects, value also lies in the experience of consumption. Originates from Addis and Holbrook their research in Customer Experience, Gentile, Spiller & Noci (2007) created a distinction between two kinds of consumer value: utilitarian value (or functional value) and hedonic value (or experiential value). Gentile draws the distinction from the subject-object interaction described by Holbrook (1999) whereby the type of value depend on the relative weight of the objective (or functional) features of the product over the subjective responses of the consumer, which by Gentile et al., then refer to as

“experiential features”. Equally on the basis on the relative weight of the hedonic value over the utilitarian value, products can be classified into three groups: hedonic products, utilitarian products, and balanced products.

Three Levels Factors of Experiential Marketing

Prianka, Ku and Cheng (2017) utilized the 5 modules from Schmitt in building a personal brand on Instagram and tested and verify those modules to some Instagram personal brands to find out how they use each of the modules and how the modules actually helped them build their personal brand as influencers grow. Correlated with the use of experiential marketing, it is interesting to know how the 5 Modules (Sense, Feel, Think, Act and Relate) in Strategic Experiential Modules in Experiential Marketing theory by has the connection with the Instagram customer engagement.

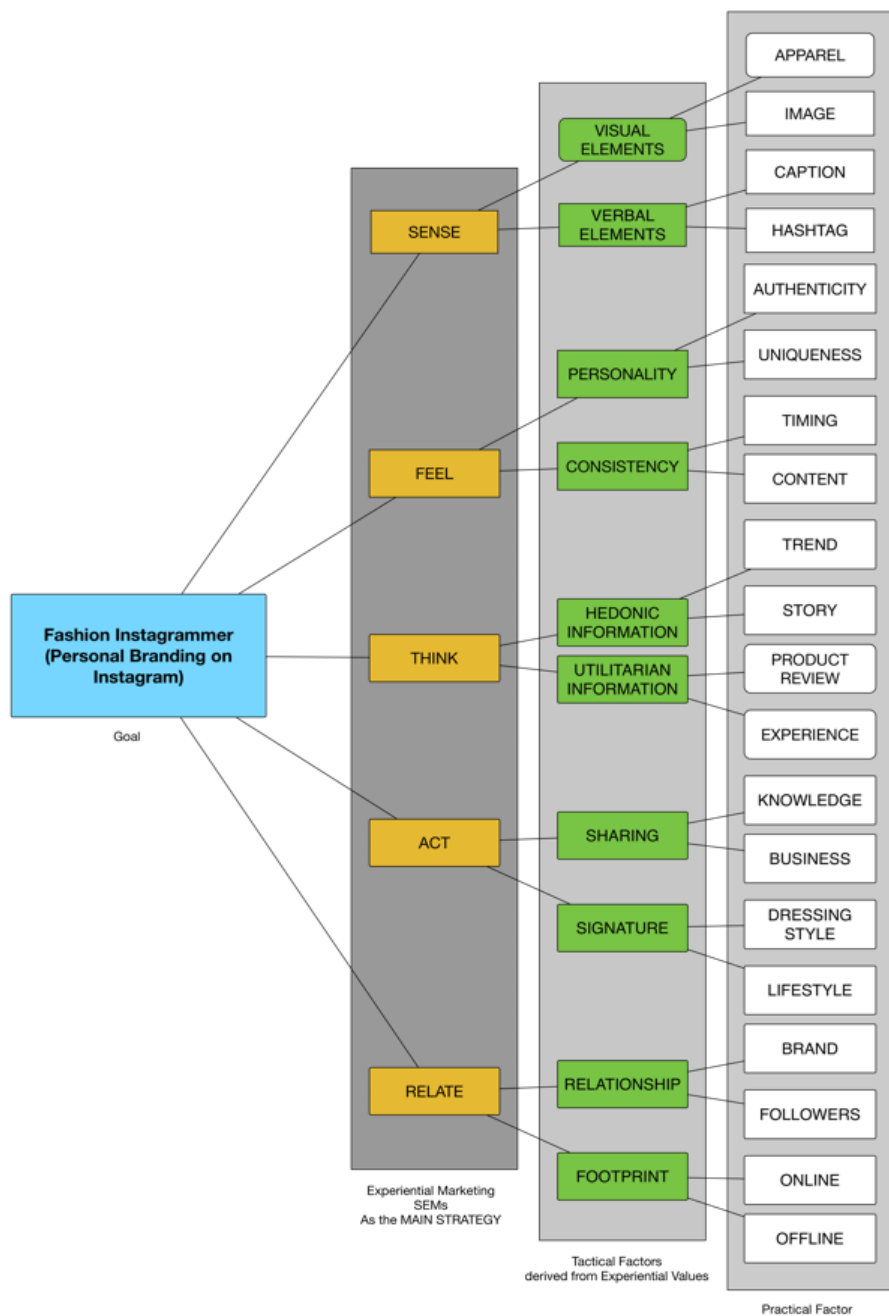


Figure 1. Three Levels Factors of Experiential Marketing

Furthermore, the 5 Modules above are considered as the main strategy, the big picture of the factors within. To be able getting the precise factor that could influence the engagement, the Customer-Based Experiential Value that consists of Hedonic and Utilitarian factors will work as the tactical factors to ‘translate’ modules into a more tactical factors, and at last, the practical factors will be the third level, which will be the factors that could work as the factors that are adjacent to the reality and feasible. The third level factors were derived from previous research by Prianka, Ku and Cheng (2017) by deep interviews with Instagram fashion influencers. However, these factors were not yet tested for startup personal brands, while previous research were conducted to verify the factors on the 5 modules (seen in Figure 1).

METHODS

This research utilized an experimental method, in which worked in the application of the factors from Three Levels of Experiential Marketing based on previous research. The students of Fashion and Lifestyle Product Design program in Faculty of Creative Industry University of Surabaya worked as the research subject, as they started their own fashion brand in Instagram as their final project of marketing and branding class. To be detail, Table 1 are the list of the students and the scope of their fashion business.

Table 1. Research Subjects

Fashion Business / Job	Number of Students
Fashion Blogger	12 students
Fashion Stylist	1 student
Fashion Illustrator	2 students
Fashion Photography	2 students
Fashion Retail Brand	2 students
Fashion Designer	2 students
Fashion Make Up Artist	1 students

Furthermore, the data expected were the data of which factors were used to raise the engagement rate and spread brand awareness (seen Figure 2). In addition, data of which of those factors successfully made an impact toward the engagement of the viewers also needed to validate the previous research.

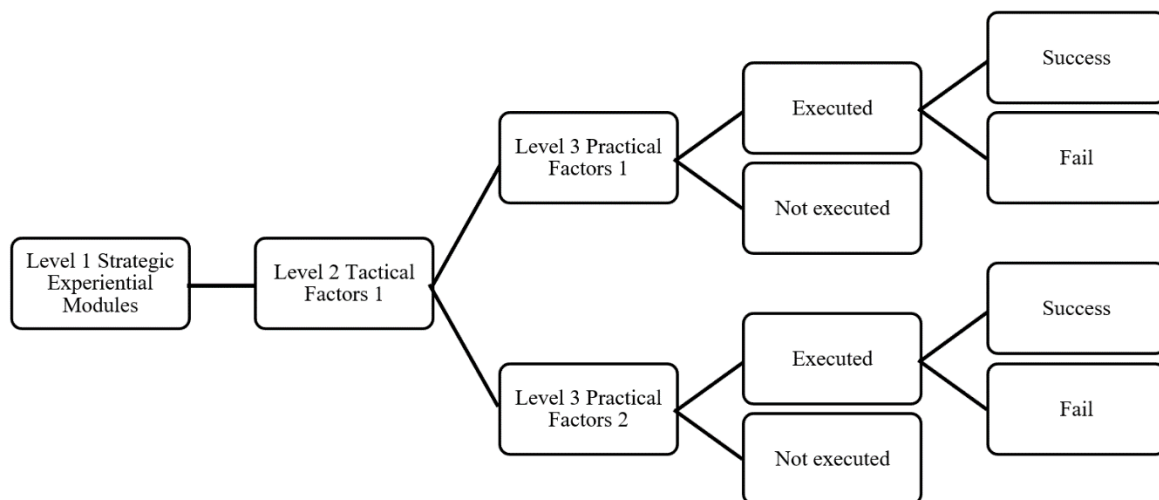


Figure 2. Expected Data

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research then resulted in analysis of the data contains of which factors executed and how it affects the engagement toward the viewers in Instagram for the startup fashion brand. Each of the subjects utilized the factors from Three Levels of Experiential Marketing Strategy, and test if it resulted in Instagram engagement level. The growing number of followers, posts like, comments worked as the control key. From the total of 21 subjects of students in Fashion and Lifestyle Product Design program in University of Surabaya, only 20 of them were eligible for data analysis (seen in Figure 3). The student then builds a startup brand on Instagram and utilized the factors for 1 month content creating period. After 1 month, then the subject was asked for focus group discussion to get the qualitative data of which factors were the most effective for their start up brand.

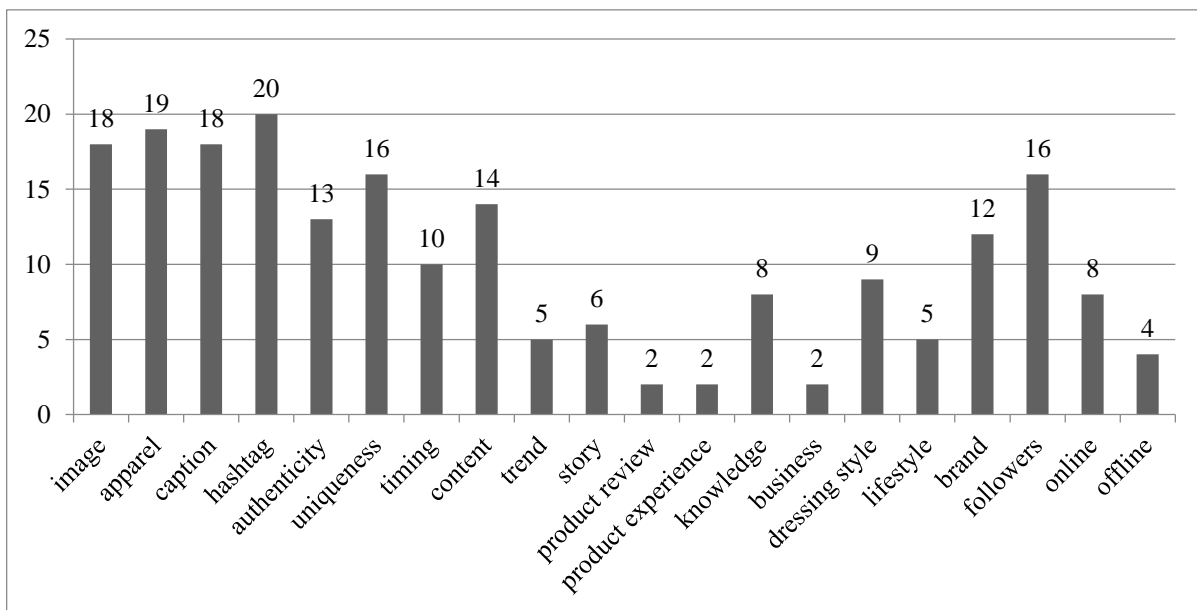


Figure 3. Number of Factors Used

As seen on Figure 4, the Sense factor were the most utilized factor amongst all, in which is suitable as Instagram were the social media that heavily rely on visual engagement. As many as 18 students chose to utilize the Sense factor with the implementation of Image factor to their posts in Instagram. They utilized a good imagery to attract viewers in Instagram, such as good photo taking angle and editing with an extra good imagery of Apparel mix and match. Verbally, many of the subjects also utilized the hashtag and captioning feature to help them communicate their products to their potential customers.

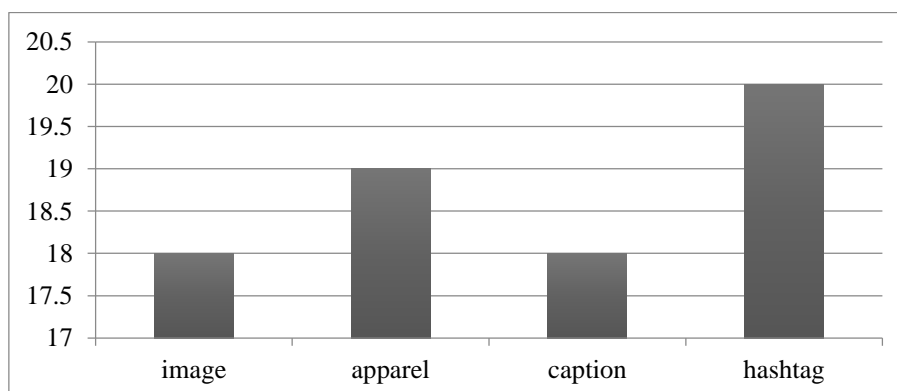


Figure 4. Number of Factor Used in Sense SEM

The Feel SEM factor came in second in the most utilized factor in building a start up business in fashion industry as shown on Figure 5. Feel consisted of 4 practical factors, Authenticity, Uniqueness, Timing and Content. Many of the subjects chose Uniqueness as they what to emphasize their differentiation with the other fashion brands on Instagram. Afterwards, many of the subjects also built consistency in Content design on their posts on Instagram. As many as 16 subjects chose to strive for Uniqueness and 14 of the total subjects chose to be consistent in their Content creator. As the Instagram rebuilt their algorithm in feed, consistency in Timing no longer the most important thing in the research subjects' mind. Only 10 of them utilized the consistency in posting timing.

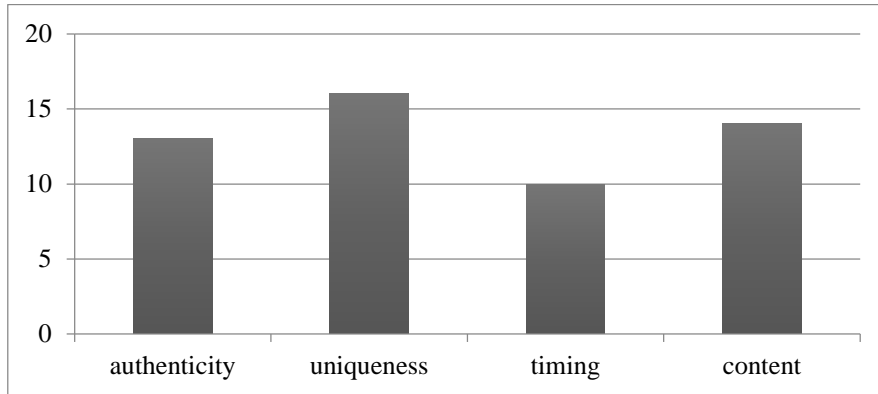


Figure 5. Number of Factors Used in Feel SEM

Furtherore, SEM Think was the less utilized factors amongst the 5 other SEMs (seen in Figure 6). Think was consisted of Trend, Story, Product Review and Product Experience. As many of 6 subjects chose to utilized Story factor as they think it is engaging to share their everyday story to the Instagram to attract viewers. 5 of the subjects chose to share the information of current Trend / issue to attract viewers. As low as 2 subjects both chose to share the reviews on certain products and share their expertise on the certain product usage.

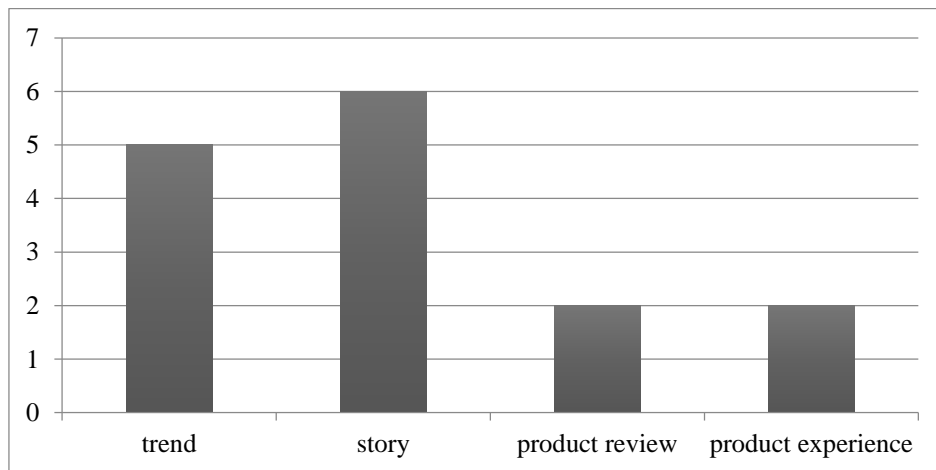


Figure 6. Factors in Think SEM

Next, SEM Act in Figure 7, in which consisted of Sharing > Knowledge, Sharing > Business, Signature > Dressing Style, dan Signature > Lifestyle. 8 subjects chose to utilize the Sharing > Knowledge factor by spreading information for their followers. However, 9 subjects chose to do the

Signature > Dressing Style factor, in which they tend to influence the viewers / followers in Instagram to follow their dressing style.

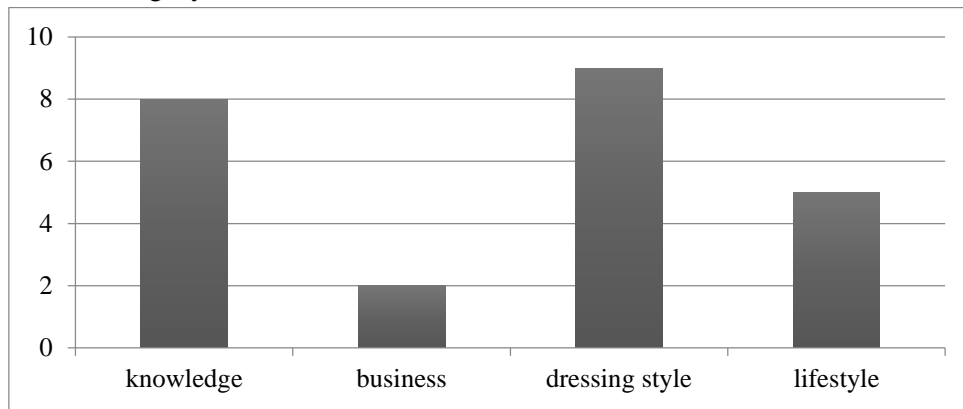


Figure 7. Number of Factors Used in Act SEM

Lastly, the SEM Relate in Figure 8, the factors under this SEM were tend to attract viewers on Instagram by combining all the aspects of Sense, Feel, Think and Act with the creation of positive perception in the mind of the viewers on Instagram. As many as 12 subjects chose to build a good relationship with other fashion brand to raise the engagement level on Instagram (seen in Table 2). Moreover, 16 of the subjects chose to build a good relationship with their followers on Instagram.

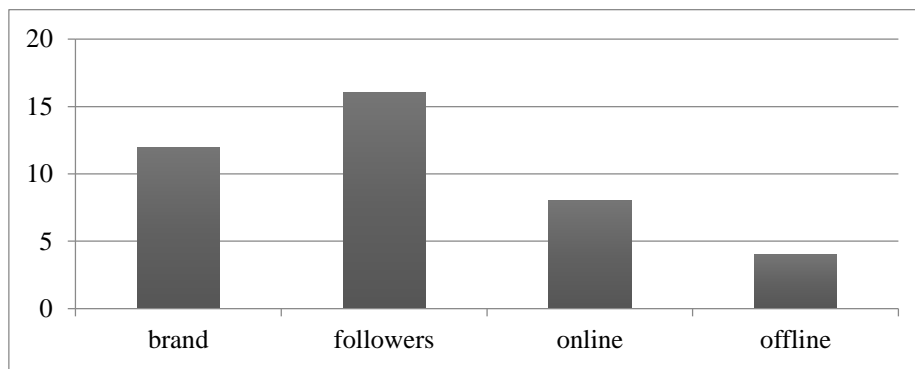


Figure 8. Number of Factors Used in Relate SEM

Table 2. Collected Data

5 LEVELS		Mahasiswa																		Done	Success	Fail	Success Rate	Fail Rate			
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20						
SENSE	Visual	Image	B	B	B	B	B	B	B				B	B	B	B	TB	B	TB	B	B	B	18	16	2	89%	11%
		Apparel	B		TB	B	B	B	B	B	B	B		TB	B	B	B		B	TB	B	B	17	14	3	82%	18%
	Verbal	Caption	TB		B	B	B	TB	B	B	B	B	B	B	TB	B	B	TB	B	TB	TB	TB	18	12	6	67%	33%
		Hashtag	B	B	B	TB	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	TB	B	B	TB	TB	20	17	3	85%	15%
FEEL	Personality	Authenticity	B	B	B		B	B	B	B		B	B		B	B							13	13	0	100%	0%
		Uniqueness	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B			B	B	B	TB	B	B		B	TB		16	15	1	94%	6%
	Consistency	Timing		B			B	TB					TB	TB	B	B	B		B	B	B		10	7	3	70%	30%
		Content	B	B			B	TB		B			B	B	TB	B	B	TB	B	B	B	B	14	11	3	79%	21%
THINK	Hedonic	Trend		B			B	TB							TB	B						5	3	2	60%	40%	
		Story			B			B					B		B				B	B			6	6	0	100%	0%
	Utilitarian	Product review				B									B								2	2	0	100%	0%
		Product experience			B																B		2	2	0	100%	0%
ACT	Sharing	Knowledge			TB		B		TB			B	B	TB	TB				TB			8	3	5	38%	63%	
		Business									B				TB								2	1	1	50%	50%
	Signature	Dressing style	B	B	TB		B	B					B			TB				TB	TB		9	5	4	56%	44%
		Lifestyle	B	B	B											TB					B		5	4	1	80%	20%
RELATE	Relationship	Brand	TB	B	B	B	B	B	B	B		B	B	B	TB							12	10	2	83%	17%	
		Followers	TB	B	B		B	B	B	B	TB	B		B	TB	B	B			B	B	B	16	12	4	75%	25%
	Footprint	Online		B	B			B	TB	TB					TB	B		B					8	5	3	63%	38%
		Offline			B	B									B	B							4	4	0	100%	0%

Based on the data compiled, it can be explained that not all the factors on Three Levels of Experiential Marketing strategy suitable for all business in Fashion Industry to raise awareness and engagement rate in Instagram. The most utilized factors were factors under the SEM Sense, Feel and Relate. As it was mention before by Prianka (2017), instagram is the platform that rich in visual imagery and creative verbal communication media. Sense became the most favorite SEM to raise the engagement and brand awareness, especially in fashion industry. Figure 9 are one of the research subjects that heavily use high quality visual imagery to attract viewers on Instagram.



Figure 9. Visual Example

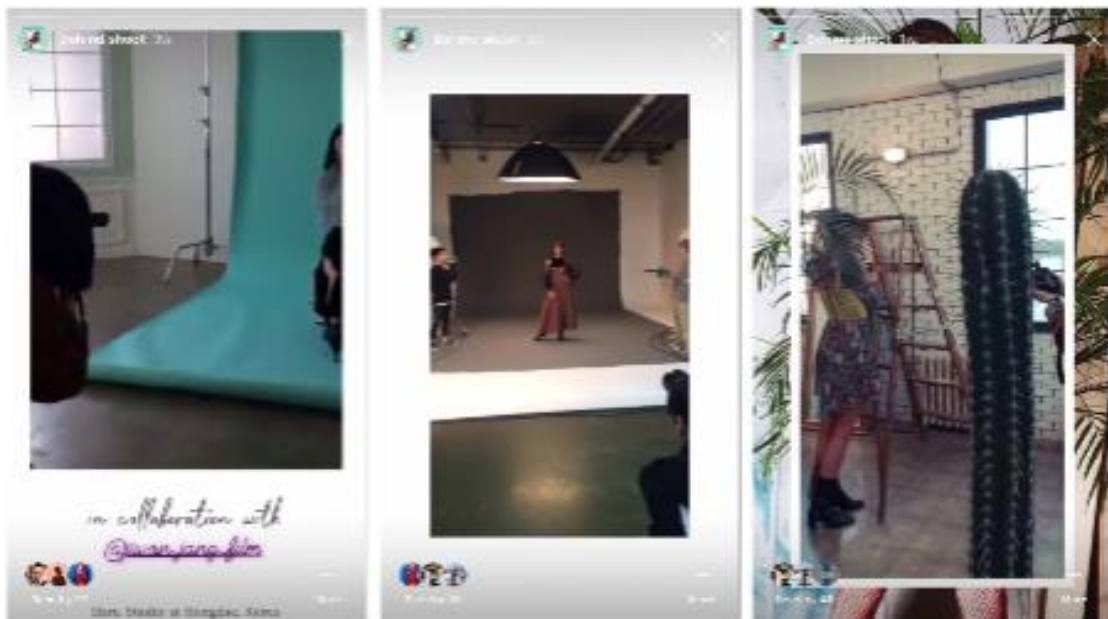


Figure 10. Feel Example

Students stated that they created a holistic look on my profile, to attract viewers while they visit my profile. But when they chose one post, they still can see the details. For the SEM Feel, another subject tend to choose to create a deep relationship with her followers by telling stories. An example likes in Figure 10. As a fashion stylist, she tried to share the behind the scene on fashion photoshoot to create engagement from the viewers. Furthermore, they also tends to be consistent in posting schedule. She consistently send a post in the same hour in 12 –1 in the afternoon and 6-7 evening.

Lastly, for SEM Relate, one of the subject chose to focus on building a good relationship with another brand and their followers. She chose to follow a few of fashion brands and fashion make up artist profile on Instagram, drop some comment and likes. The subject also got the positive feedback by getting follow backs and likes. Furthermore, the subject also gave responses to the followers on their comments section on posts.

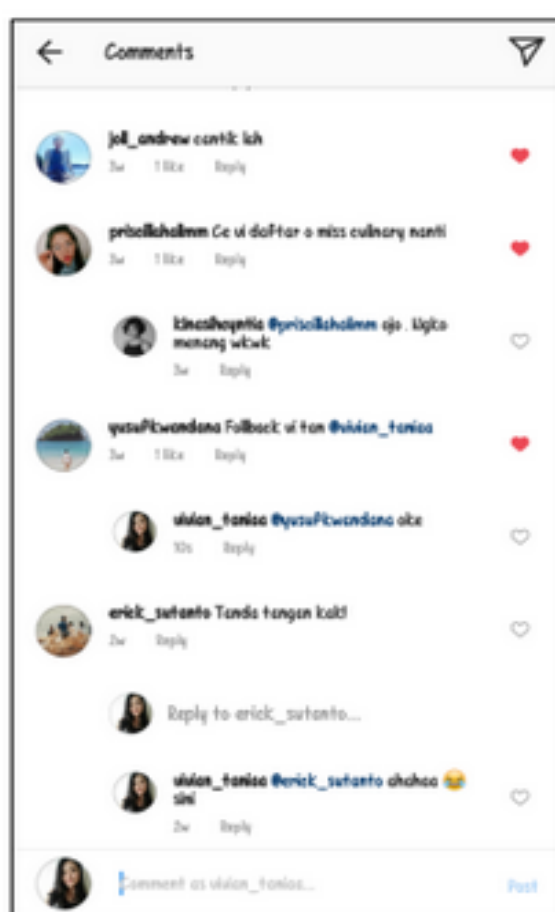


Figure 11. Relate Example

CONCLUSION

To increase awareness and engagement rate in Instagram, not all the factors on Three Levels of Experiential Marketing strategy is suitable for all business in Fashion Industry. The most utilized factors were factors under the SEM Sense, Feel and Relate. Sense SEM is to raise the engagement and brand awareness, especially in fashion industry. SEM Feel is to create a deep relationship with her followers by telling stories. SEM Relate is to build a good relationship with another brand and their followers. These are influenced by different individual characters and talent. These can grow with by live long learning..

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