

The Elements of Social Media Marketing in University During Pandemic Covid-19

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Abstract— Social media is the right solution for the promotion of various fields in the midst of a pandemic. The same goes for marketing at universities. Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII) as one of the most popular university in social media among the best private universities in Indonesia, uses the @uiiyogyakarta Instagram account as an effort in social media marketing (SMM) during a pandemic. This paper aims to determine the elements of the SMM carried out by UII in @uiiyogyakarta. This research uses qualitative methods using interview data collection techniques and online observations on the @uiiyogyakarta account. From the research results it can be seen that the @uiiyogyakarta account SMM during the pandemic includes four elements, namely having an explorer scope, a hierarchical structure, a modern culture and an autocratic government.

Keywords— social media, marketing, university

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media is an effective means of increasing the university's brand image and brand awareness [1][2]. Moreover, in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic, the use of social media as a marketing tool for higher education is increasing [3]. The study of Prihadini et al. [4] shows that private universities that use digital marketing media professionally have increased the number of registrants. This shows that social media marketing (SMM), as defined as an effort to use social media to influence customers in choosing products or services from a company or organization as a whole, is important for universities [5].

Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII) as one of the best private universities in Indonesia is a university that uses social media marketing intensively. This can be seen from several achievements in the field of digital marketing including being the most popular private university on social media [6]. Also awarded as Industry Marketing Champion Jogja 2019 for the education service sector, in the event of The 7th Annual Indonesia Marketeers Festival 2019 [7]. The Instagram account of UII @uiiyogyakarta has become a social media which is quite interesting to study seeing its very significant development over the last two years. Based on data obtained from the UII Marketing Directorate, in 2018 @uiiyogyakarta has about 19 thousand followers and in 2020 it has increased by more than 300% to 67 thousand followers.

Many studies have discussed social media marketing at universities from a variety of strategies that have been carried out, but not many have discussed social media

marketing strategies at universities in terms of their holistic elements. Holistic, as used in this study, refers to the notion that the components of the overall construct cannot be divorced from the whole [8]. The discussion of social media marketing by discussing its elements in this paper will use the theory of R. Felix et.al who tries to dissect social media marketing from four central dimensions: SMM scope, SMM Culture, SMM Structure and SMM governance. This discussion of SMM elements can complement the perspective of marketing in the digital age which is referred to by Arons et al as something that is extremely dynamic in which the tools and strategies that were cutting-edge just a few years ago are fast becoming obsolete, and new approaches are appearing every day [9]

Based on the very rapid development of the @uiiyogyakarta Instagram account as well as the SMM development implemented by UII in its marketing strategy and the lack of research that focuses on elements of SMM in universities, this paper aim to analyze the elements of SMM in the university buy taking case study in UII instagram account.

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method, where this research explains how the elements of SMM in universities during a pandemic, especially on the Instagram account of the UII @uiiyogyakarta. This research was conducted online with observations on the @uiiyogyakarta Instagram account and online interviews with UII social media managers and admins via zoom meeting and email. Data collection was carried out in a period of 7 months from March to December 2020.

II. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Many studies found the objectives of SMM [10] including increasing brand awareness, improving brand image, stimulating sales, generating traffic to online platforms, reducing marketing costs, and creating user interactivity on platforms by stimulating users to post or share content. Significantly different from conventional marketing strategies, SMM offers three distinct advantages [5]. *First*, it provides a window for marketers to not only present products / services to customers but also to listen to customer complaints and suggestions. *Second*, it makes it easier for marketers to identify different peer groups or influencers among different groups of groups, which in turn can become brand followers and help a brand's organic growth. And, *third*, all of this is done at almost zero cost

(compared to conventional customer outreach programs) because most social networking sites are free.

Social media marketing consists of the attempt to use social media to persuade consumers that one's company, products and/or services are worthwhile. Social media marketing is marketing using online communities, social networks, blog marketing and more [5]. In the discussion regarding the definition of SMM, Felix et al stated that SMM is an interdisciplinary and cross-functional concept that uses social media (often in combination with other communications channels) to achieve organizational goals by creating value for stakeholders [8]. Furthermore, Felix et al stated that in understanding SMM holistically, there are four elements in SMM, as shown in the figure below.

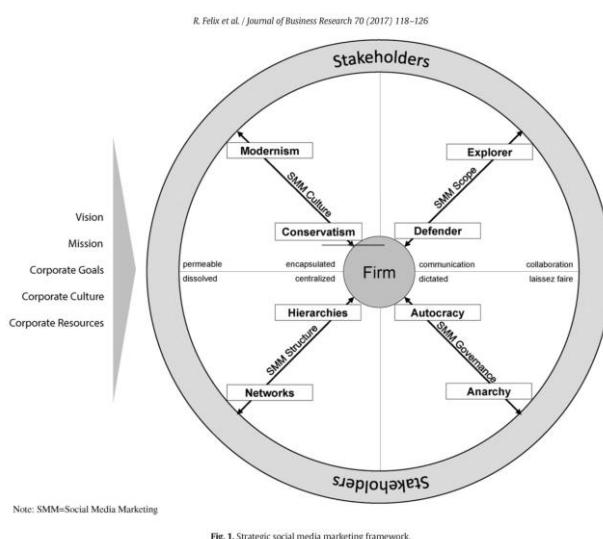


Fig. 1. Strategic social media marketing framework

A. Social Media Marketing Scope: Defender or Explorer.

The defender approach usually focuses on one or several stakeholder groups. Defenders only focus on the client / customer side of social media marketing, which they take seriously. In general, this type of approach is used in reaching the market for this type of B2B business.

The defender's approach stands in stark contrast to the explorer's approach, which is centered on exploiting the integrative, interactive and collaborative potential of social media technologies. Explorer focuses on a collaborative approach to social media marketing that includes multiple company stakeholders, such as current and potential customers, current and potential employees, suppliers, or social in general. Obtaining and using the feedback provided via social media platforms from each of these different stakeholders is at the heart of this approach and includes determining how different stakeholders can contribute to the company's value creation process.

The explorer approach facilitates integrated two-way communication and collaboration that is completely open, not just broadcasting information. Collaboration in the context of an exploratory approach refers to one of several possible types of collaboration, such as collaboration between a company and a customer or among many employees.

The @uiiyogyakarta Instagram account in its scope is explorer because its content is aimed at many stakeholders, including students, lecturers, staff as internal stakeholders, as well as prospective new students, parents of new students, alumni and the wider community as external stakeholders.

The @uiiyogyakarta account during the pandemic did not only focus on supporting the promotion of new student admissions and disseminating information to prospective new students, but also played a significant role in disseminating information for pandemic mitigation by spreading information about Covid-19. This information is intended for a wide audience so that it can be a common concern to reduce the spread of the covid-19 outbreak. more than that, the @uiiyogyakarta account also continues various information regarding policies taken by UII regarding the pandemic. This variety of information is more of an effort to disseminate information to UII internal audiences such as students, lecturers and staff regarding the development of the Covid-19 UIISiaga Team in responding to the pandemic conditions that have occurred. Some screenshots of the observations on the @uiiyogyakarta account can be seen in the image below.

In fig 2 it can be seen that the message conveyed is more aimed at providing information to a wider audience to better comply with health protocols by maintaining a safe distance. Information about developments around covid-19 was also provided @uiiyogyakarta through various information such as updating information on the number of patients affected by Covid-19 in Indonesia, how it spreads and how to prevent it. The @uiiyogyakarta account also gives advice to the academic community to stay in place and reduce the intensity of outside activities with the hashtags #dikosanlebihaman and #dirumahlebihaman. In addition, UII also shows its concern through fundraising efforts with the title UII Peduli aimed at a wide audience to contribute to channeling funds owned to victims affected by the pandemic. In fig 3, it can also be seen how the @uiiyogyakarta account plays a role in the dissemination of information about the policies taken by UII related to the pandemic, such as the policy of implementing online classes and the elimination of face-to-face services during the pandemic. This policy is aimed at internal stakeholders such as students, lecturers as well as employees to be able to mitigate disasters due to the pandemic. Another policy that was also disseminated by @uiiyogyakarta was also aimed primarily at students regarding the policy of reducing tuition fees which was adjusted to the impact faced by each student.



Fig. 2. Information and recommendations to comply with health protocols in a pandemic covid 19 on the @uiiyogyakarta account



Fig. 3. UII policy information during the pandemic which is disseminated through the @uiiyogyakarta account

The explorer approach taken by @uiiyogyakarta can also be seen from how the content created is aimed at obtaining feedback from each of the different stakeholders and using this feedback for improvement and value creation in the UII brand itself. By focusing on a variety of audiences and trying to accommodate these various stakeholders, @uiiyogyakarta strives for each stakeholder to contribute to further content development and increase engagement with all audiences from this account.

B. Social Media Marketing Culture: Conservative or Modern

The research findings articulate two extreme positions related to social media marketing culture. The first position, conservatism, reflects a packaged, internally focused, risk-averse view of social media marketing. Meanwhile, a modern social media marketing culture, generally supported by top management, can force companies to reassess how an idea or initiative can be carried out within the organization.

The second element is related to the structure in the SMM. In terms of this second element, structurally the SMM UII in @uiiyogyakarta is under the control of a special centralized and controlled department. It is the UII Marketing Directorate, especially the Media and Research Development Division which is the control center of SMM activities from the @uiiyogyakarta account.

There is a fairly detailed division of labor regarding how the SMM management system is in @uiiyogyakarta. Headed by the Head of the Media Development and Research Division, the social media team consisting of marketive apprentices and design teams collaborates. Almost all of the content ideas created are in-house product content from the UII social media team. However, this does not rule out the possibility of various inputs as well as content orders from various other parties inside and outside UII. Collaboration with other parties is seen in organizing other academic activities such as graduation. Graduation is generally done face-to-face by bringing together all graduates and their families in the Abdulkahar Muzakkir building, with a pandemic that limits face-to-face encounters, then graduation is done online. In supporting the online graduation, the @uiiyogyakarta account also promotes and reports on the online graduation website address and enliven it with various gimmicks such as twibbon and online graduation filters (fig 4).



Fig. 4. Support @uiiyogyakarta in UII online graduation with twibbon in online graduation

C. Social media marketing structure: hierarchies to networks

Current research identifies two extreme positions for social media marketing structures: hierarchies (representing centralized files and concentrated social media marketing structures) and networks (i.e., where social media marketing controls are fragmented, decentralized, and cross-functional). The hierarchy represents companies with a high need for military quasi-military control and organization.

Whereas the idea of the structure of 'networks' for social media marketing implies that social media activity is a shared responsibility for all employees regardless of the department to which they are assigned. This perspective suggests that social media marketing should be a function that permeates all processes and departments of an organization, and thus a social media marketing director or specialist will take the role of directing, rather than executing, a company's social media marketing efforts, if the service is needed at all.

The third element is related to culture in SMM. In running his SMM @uiiyogyakarta seems to use more modern cultural elements. The management of all @uiiyogyakarta content under the Marketing Directorate has always received full attention from the top management, the rector and his staff since the beginning of this social media. This can be seen from how the Rector is always willing to appear in various SMM run @uiiyogyakarta. Some of the content ideas even received direct directions from the UII's Rector. For example, when UII was dragged down when a

case of an alumni suspected of committing sexual harassment emerged. The case that emerged in early May 2020 received enough attention from many local as well as national media. The case that emerged at the same time as this pandemic received a serious response from UII. One of these seriousness is shown in the selection of methods and how to package the efforts to resolve cases that have been carried out. In creating hashtags and content in the releases issued by UII, the chancellor in this case as top management intervened to provide direct directions (see fig 6). Thanks to the serious efforts and best efforts given by the content, it has received a pretty good response from netizens.



Fig. 5. Hashtags #UIIMengawal and #UIIBersamaPenyintas showing UII's attitude towards the case that occurred which received direct direction from the rector as top management

From the description above, it can be seen that culture elements are carried out in a modern way and strived not only to focus on the internal but also not only to avoid risks. In fact, @uiiyogyakarta is used by top management as a medium to inform the public about the efforts made by UII to minimize risks and negative responses from crises that may occur in the organization. Ideas and initiatives can also come from many parties, even one of them from the Chancellor and his staff as top management. These ideas usually arise especially in special conditions and require a leadership approach.

D. Social media marketing governance: autocracy to anarchy

The fourth dimension refers to how social media marketing is organized within the company. Several informants emphasized the importance of guidelines and policies for employees to determine who in the company is empowered to provide the type of content where social media applications are. The continuum of possibilities suggests two extreme positions called "autocracy" and "anarchy." In an "autocracy," one department centralizes and

manages control of social media communications. On the contrary, anarchy is represented by a laissez-faire mentality where there are no such rules and departments / employees are free to communicate at will on social media platforms.

The @uiiyogyakarta account tends to adhere to an autocratic type of governance, where there is a department that is the control center of social media communication, especially those related to the university's official social media. Regarding the presence or absence of guidelines used by the marketing directorate, these guidelines do not seem to be owned by UII. There are no written rules regarding the limits of which content is good and which is not, which content can be uploaded and which is not. These rules are usually based on social norms in general or are also related to momentum and habits. To anticipate the emergence of controversial content created by the team, a control effort system was created. For example, a team meeting on content ideas which is held once every two weeks as well as an approval system involving the Director of the Marketing Directorate which strives to be carried out on every content to be uploaded. This content approval can also involve top management if the content is sensitive and requires further consideration. The guidelines that are owned by the Marketing Directorate so far are only in the form of guidelines in the social media management system and guidelines that regulate UII branding which are usually used by the design team in displaying the logo, writing, to UII's distinctive colors.

III. CONCLUSION

Social Media Marketing (SMM) is important in marketing activities for higher education, especially in a pandemic situation. UII implements SMM in its social media management, especially in the @uiiyogyakarta Instagram account. The implementation of the SMM @uiiyogyakarta Instagram account is understood by elaborating the elements in the SMM. *The first element* in SMM is scope. The @uiiyogyakarta Instagram account in its scope is explorer because its content is aimed at many stakeholders, including students, lecturers, staff as internal stakeholders, as well as prospective new students, parents of new students, alumni and the wider community as external stakeholders. The explorer approach taken by @uiiyogyakarta can also be seen from how the content created is aimed at obtaining feedback from each of the different stakeholders and using this feedback for improvement and value creation in the UII brand itself.

The second element is related to the structure in the QMS. In terms of this second element, structurally the SMM UII in @uiiyogyakarta is under the control of a special centralized and controlled department. It is the UII Marketing Directorate, especially the Media and Research Development Division which is the control center of SMM activities from the @uiiyogyakarta account. In this division, there is a team that manages the creative idea collection system, to the design process which is also carried out in-house within the team. *The third element* is related to culture in SMM. In running his SMM @uiiyogyakarta seems to use more modern cultural elements. The management of all @uiiyogyakarta content under the Marketing Directorate has always received full attention from the top management, namely the Chancellor and his staff since the beginning of

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UII through its @uiiyogyakarta Instagram account has not only used all elements of SMM but has also used various strategies in increasing audience engagement with the content created. The implementation and strategy of SMM has been proven to increase the number of followers and increase the number of applicants in UII new student admissions. Therefore, this research is very useful, especially in providing an overview of the importance of using social media not only as a marketing tool in private universities but also as a holistic framework to understand the process of SMM itself. This research also provides input to universities to implement a more comprehensive range of strategies in using social media marketing.

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