

Content Analysis of Food Instagram Account

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Abstract

Instagram has become one of the fastest growing social networks of all time, reaching 400 million users since it was launched in October 2010. As Instagram is the most popular photo capturing and sharing application, food blogger use it as the main social media for their blog. However, this food blogging phenomenon on social media has attracted relatively less attention from the research community. The purpose of this study is to decipher food Instagram account strategy by analyzing 40 food Instagram accounts in Indonesia. The popular posting time and user engagement have revealed the best time to post on Instagram. There is a new phenomenon in Instagram content which can lead higher engagement. Food blogger as independent marketer should consider using hashtag as marketing tool that can reach particular segmentation.

Keywords: food blogging; Instagram; content analysis

1. Introduction

Instagram is one of the popular social media platforms that provide users an instantaneous way to capture and share their life moments with friends through a series of (filter manipulated) pictures and videos (Hu, Manikonda, & Kambhampati, 2014). Since it was launched in October 2010, it has significant increase in both of active users and photos uploaded. Due to the popularity of Instagram, many of food bloggers use Instagram as their main social media to be integrated with the blog.

Food blogging is a phenomenon as a part of the ongoing evolution of food-related media and review sharing technologies (Cox & Blake, 2011). Although food blogging seen as hobby, some of food bloggers make it as a career. Food industries and enterprises contact bloggers to promote the food products on their blog and social media, they call it endorsement. The distinctive characteristic of food bloggers is they perform independent marketing activities in promoting product/place.

Although most often reported with interest, criticism of food bloggers as information sources is a theme in journalistic treatments (Prince, 2010). People tend to find the information about place or product on blogger's review rather than the news, because it looks more credible and actual. The winning point of blogger is the personal touch and strong engagement with audience. Amateurism of food blogger is seen as "citizen journalism" that has already established key features of the role of information in food-related media (Hartel, 2010).

Despite the importance of Instagram as social media for food blog, the number of researches focused in food Instagram account is very low. The fundamental question which is "what are the food blogger's strategies?" remains unanswered. Hence, the content analysis is carried out to know the strategy in Instagram features on food Instagram account.

2. Objective

The objective of this study is to decipher food Instagram account strategy by analyzing 40 food Instagram accounts in Indonesia. The following are attributes that were analyzed from the data collection in 13 weeks starting from January, 20th 2016 – April, 22nd 2016:

- Frequency of likes and comments from each photo and video
- Frequency of posting daily and weekly
- Posting timing each day
- The use of hashtag as marketing tool
- The effect of using video

To this end, the content was categorized and analyzed using Microsoft Excel. Based on the analysis, several insights about Instagram user engagement and the use of hashtag are revealed. First, from the frequency of posting daily and weekly from each photo and video can reveal the most popular time to post on Instagram among 40 food Instagram accounts. Instagram user engagement can be seen from the posting timing and type of content toward the sum of number of likes, comments and the growth of followers. The content was divided into: (1) original or regram, (2) photo, video or collage, (3) food & beverage, place, advertisement, selfie, endorsement, captioned photo, friends, fashion, and pet. Furthermore, the video content also will be discussed because of its significance attraction.

Instagram is not merely as photo collection but also as a search tool, therefore hashtag feature on Instagram is very powerful. This paper explores the use of hashtag related to food Instagram account. The data collection was input manually because hashtag can be on caption and comment section, so need further search to get the whole hashtags in each post.

3. Discussion

This section presents analysis of Instagram user engagement and the use of hashtag. From the data categorization, there are 3 components that need to be addressed which are: timing, engagement in video content, and hashtag. Timing analysis divided into weekly to know the most popular day to post in a week and daily to know the most popular hour to post in a day. Compare the frequency of posting to engagement can reveal the best time to post. Based on the Fig. 1, the most popular day is Friday (16.9%) which has the most photos uploaded. However, in the engagement data, the strongest engagement is on Monday (17.5%). As shown in this figure, weekdays (Monday-Friday) have average higher engagement score than weekend (Saturday-Sunday). It is assumed that users engage more in food Instagram account as preparation for weekend activity.

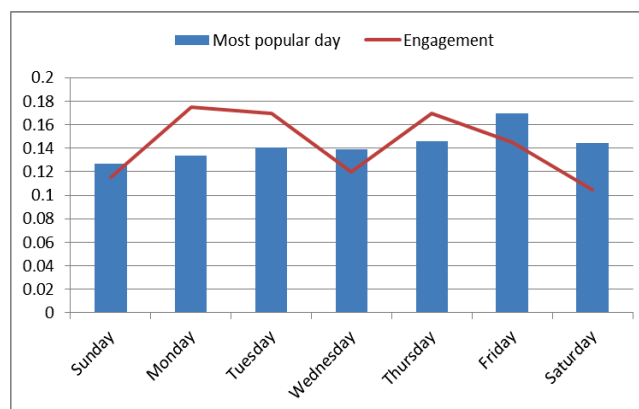


Fig. 1 Most Popular Day to Post on Instagram

Going more deeply into the daily posting time, it turns out that there is a relationship between posting time and the engagement. On Sunday, the most popular posting time is 12.00-13.59 (16.10%) and the highest engagement is 14.00-15.59 (25%) which means time lag occurs in that interval. It also happens in Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday (Fig.2). The time lag is the time when the interaction and conversation happen a lot between the users in the form of likes and comments.

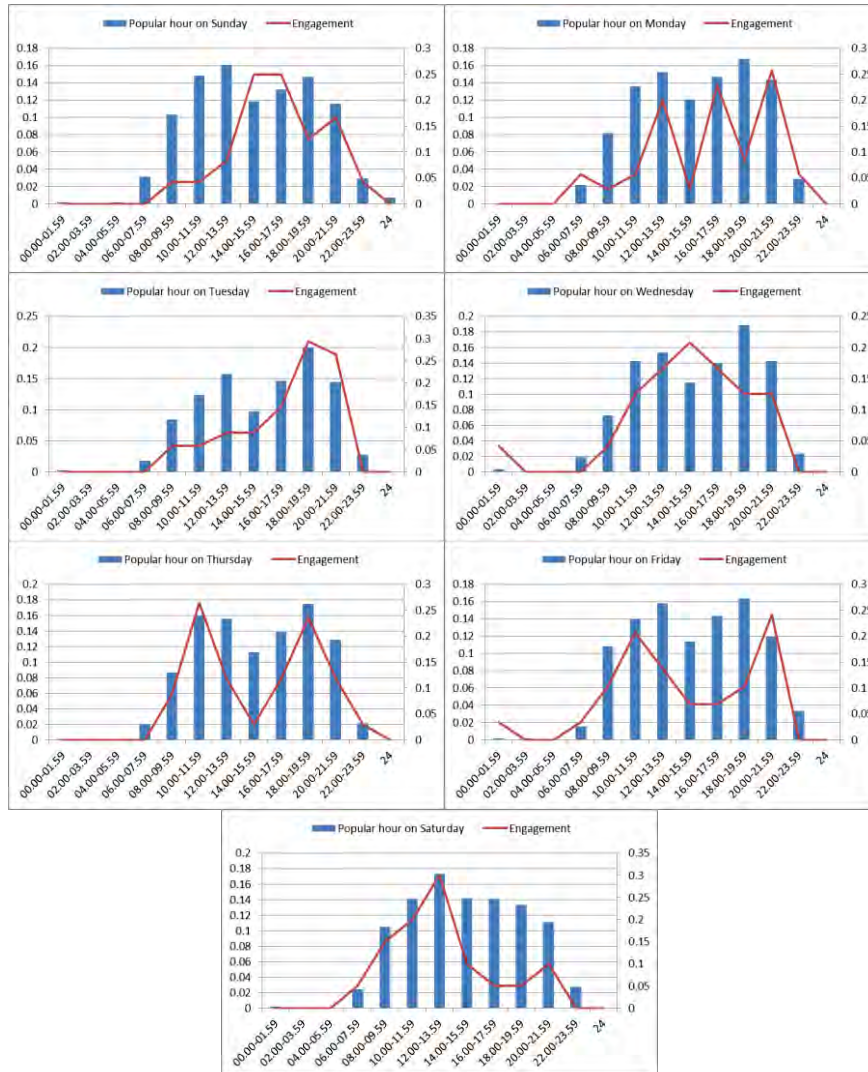


Fig. 2 Most Popular Hour to Post on Instagram

Next, for the content itself, the top type of content beside food (92%) is about the place (6%). It is assumed that food bloggers promote place as the value proposition of the restaurant. It is important to note that the content was collected manually to provide an evaluation of photo content, not to hypothesize on the motivation of the user who is posting the photos. The interesting phenomenon in Instagram content is video which has high engagement in some accounts that posted video. From 16 accounts, video content ranks 1-5 in the engagement score and mostly gain 3 times number of comments than other content such as photo portrait and photo collage. Until the paper is written, video content is considered rare because higher difficulty level of video creation. Furthermore, there is a lot of photo content so it has reached the diminishing return.

Figure 3 and 4 illustrate the result of hashtag ranking for some food Instagram accounts. They are arranged from the highest rank to the lowest. 90% accounts use their username as hashtag in every post and 67.5% accounts make it the most used hashtag. Food bloggers use hashtag mostly for tell the location (14.2%), food and beverage (16.8%), food-related on Instagram (18.7%), photo technique and editing (16.4%), event and campaign (12.5%), account categorization (5.2%), community (8.8%), etc. Some food bloggers have already made the hashtag searchable. However, if look up to the purpose of hashtag, this feature has not been optimized by many food bloggers. There is no distinctive segmentation towards the target market that shown in the hashtag.

a		
ceritamakan		
#ceritamakan	0.061296859	
#jogjakarta	0.028199932	
#onthetable	0.026511314	
#vsco	0.022289767	
#vscodaily	0.021952043	
#foodvsco	0.021614319	
#foodporn	0.021107734	
#foodstagram	0.021107734	
#instagram	0.02077001	
#foodgasm	0.020432286	
b		
anakjajan		
#anakjajan	0.352816153	
#travelwithAnakJajan	0.15727949	
#AnakJajanVideo	0.030818278	
#icecream	0.025504782	
#anakjajanmoment	0.024442083	
#coffee	0.015940489	
#cake	0.01487779	
#pik	0.01487779	
#dessert	0.012752391	
#coffeeshop	0.010626993	

Fig. 3 (a) Top 10 Words of @ceritamakan Instagram Account;
(b) Top 10 Words of @anakjajan Instagram Account

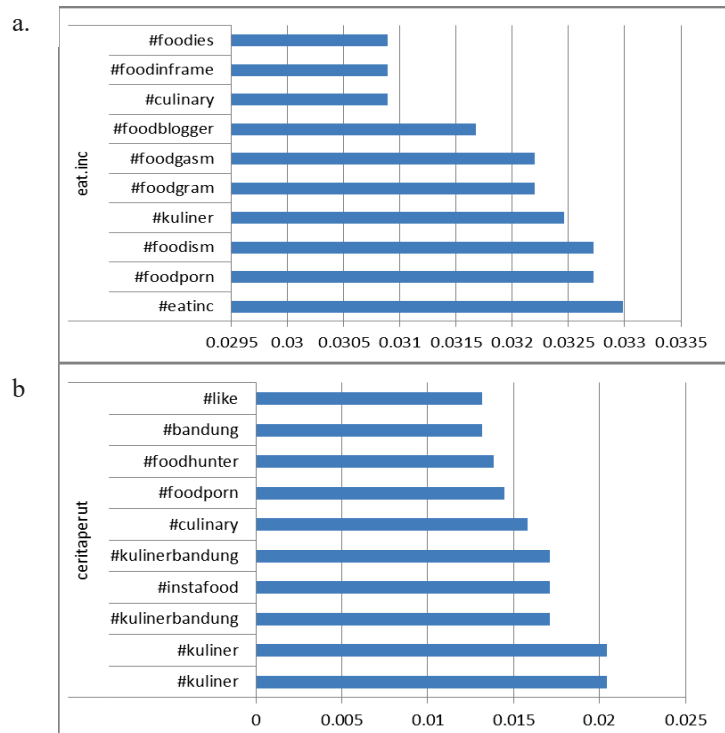


Fig. 4 (a) Top 10 Words of @eat.inc Instagram Account;
(b) Top 10 Words of @ceritaperut Instagram Account

4. Conclusion

In this paper, the analysis of Instagram features and user engagement have revealed food blogger's strategy on Instagram. Based on the popular posting time, the engagement occurs on the weekdays as preparation for real activity on weekend. Also there is time lag between posting time and engagement because of the interaction that happen among the users. Video content can attract more attention than regular photo as video is a new phenomenon which still rare and limited. Even though food bloggers use searchable hashtags, the results show that hashtags have not been used as marketing tool. Food bloggers as independent marketer that promote product/place should consider the system for hashtag. As a part of future work, analysis of engagement and hashtag system can be considered to have deeper understanding on Instagram account.

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