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## Covid-19 and Cinemas: The Importance of Creating the Engagement with Customers through Social Media

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### **Abstract**

The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in one of the largest cinema companies in Indonesia, Cinema XXI, to temporarily close their business. Despite the closing, Cinema XXI is still trying to build the engagement with their customers on social media by carrying out marketing activities through the Instagram @Cinema.21. Therefore, the aim of this study is to find out how Cinemas utilizing social media in creating customer engagement during Covid-19. This study is a quantitative research and data is obtained through survey using questionnaire. This research questionnaire was distributed to 400 respondents. Based on the result of this study, it is known that Read Dimension has the highest influence on Engagement. Furthermore, Social Media Marketing was found to significantly influence Customer Engagement.

**Keywords:** Covid-19, Cinema XXI, Social Media, Social Media Marketing, Customer Engagement.

### **INTRODUCTION**

After a week full of hard work, some people choose to go to the cinema to relieve their stress. Unfortunately, that activity has to stop due to Covid-19 virus outbreak. Covid-19 began to spread in Indonesia since early March 2020 (Mukaromah, 2020). Until the end of September, the number of positive victims of Covid-19 has increased to a total of 177,571 people (Tionardus, 2020). Therefore, the government immediately took firm action by issuing a regulation to close all sectors of the entertainment industry in order to break the chain of spread of the virus. One of those affected is the cinema network in Indonesia. Reported by the [cnnindonesia.com](http://cnnindonesia.com) (2020), the spread of the Covid-19 virus is assumed to have had a significant impact on the film industry globally, which suffered losses of up to US \$ 5 billion or equivalent to Rp71.2 trillion. Although cinema networks in Indonesia cannot operate physically, these conditions can provide opportunities for them to continue to build relationships with customers through activities on social media.

One of the cinema networks in Indonesia that focused in establishing relationships with customers through social media in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic situation is Cinema XXI. For almost 32 years, Cinema XXI has been committed to always providing the

experience and enjoyment of watching the best quality movies for Indonesian people (21cineplex.com). Cinema XXI also has owned social media such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, TikTok and YouTube. Technology advances, especially in the field of information have changed human communication patterns. The form of technological advances in information is the emergence of social media as a means of modern communication (Martanatasha & Primadini, 2019).

Social media is an internet-mediated technology that allows its creators to share information, ideas and other forms of expression through virtual community networks (Quesenberry, 2019, p. 8). With the Covid-19 outbreak and the closing of all cinema networks, Cinema XXI must modify their strategy in reaching audiences or the public through social media by maximizing creative content on the digital platform. The use of social media used is also seen from the number of active users who follow it. All cinema networks in Indonesia get around their losses by taking advantage of technological sophistication to stay connected with customers and regain people's trust to watch movies in theaters (Tionardus, 2020). According to Bredl (2014, p. 1) in Benedict & Arestyta (2020), Instagram is one of the most influential communication channels for marketing activities.

This study only focuses on the Instagram Cinema XXI because the intensity of the use of Instagram is more dominant than other social media, such as Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube. This is due to the superiority of Instagram which has a variety of features to be able to produce many types of content (Primadini, 2019). Instagram is one of the increasingly popular communication platforms and is considered to represent a company to carry out activities that can build relationships with consumers. According to Miles (2019, p. 66) in creating content, Instagram has three effective ways to publish the content. Among them, you can use features such as feeds, stories, and IGTV.

The activities currently being carried out by Cinema XXI through its Instagram account are part of social media marketing activities. According to Tuten & Solomon (2018, p. 53), social media marketing is the use of social media technology, channels, and software to create, communicate, deliver, and exchange offers that have value for organizational stakeholders. Social media marketing activities are often used by an organization or company as an option for building relationships with customers through social media. This term is known as customer engagement, which is a representation of how customers who are interested and psychologically invested in a brand feel, as well as their feelings and emotions about the brand (Smith, 2016, pp. 126-127). Therefore, it is important for a company to continue to build customer engagement, especially in the current difficult conditions which have resulted in the entire cinema network in Indonesia having to temporarily close, and to restore public confidence to watch movies in theaters.

The benefits of customer engagement from the company's perspective, including being able to increase customer satisfaction, acquire new customers, increase market share, and increase customer retention (Zyminkowska, 2019, p. 128). There is also a relationship between social media marketing and customer engagement, as stated by Chaffey (2016)

in (Utami & Saputri, 2020) that in social media marketing there is an interaction that can produce positive engagement between consumers and brands. Therefore, this study wants to find out how Cinemas utilizing social media in creating customer engagement during Covid-19.

Gunelius (2011, pp. 16-21) stated that to be successful in social media marketing, a company must review the four dimensions of social media marketing and commit to incorporating these four dimensions into social media marketing activities at all times:

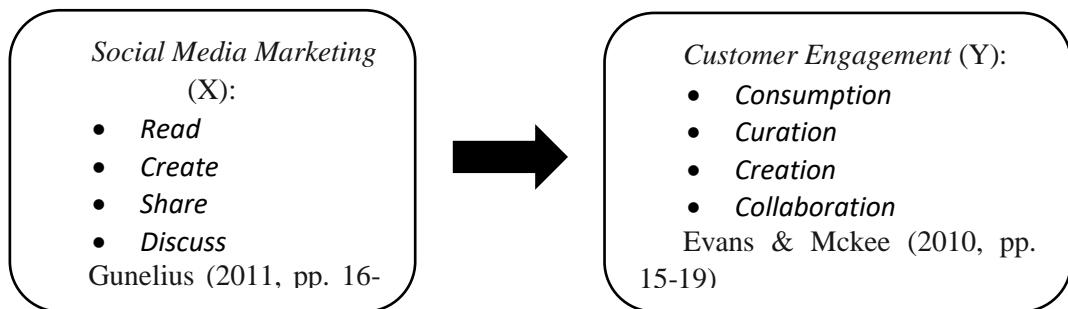
1. Read: A successful social media marketing plan should start with research. The company keeps abreast of the latest news and information, dig up as much information as possible related to the business;
2. Create: Creating great content is the most important part of any social media marketing plan. Companies must create interesting content, upload content consistently, and be transparent (honest and reliable);
3. Share: A unique aspect of social media marketing design is content sharing as a method of indirectly marketing a business. Companies can share useful content so that it can be distributed more and more online;
4. Discuss: When companies create and share engaging content, online audiences will naturally grow. These audiences can interact through their responses on social media and build relationships from the responses given by the company.

Meanwhile, according to Evans & McKee (2010, pp. 15-19), the process of customer engagement has moved consumers or customers into a conversation related to brands, products, or services outside the act of consumption and work together to collaborate, as well as generating experiences that increase over time.

To achieve this process, there are four dimensions of customer engagement to be applied:

1. Consumption: Social media context in which there are activities to read, view or watch, and download or store digital content;
2. Curation: An action taken by consumers to provide value, comment on, and name accounts on digital content;
3. Creation: A way to create digital content by itself, often involve community members in it;
4. Collaboration: A form of collaboration that involves consumers and companies through digital content to get feedback.

In general, Chaffey & Chadwick (2016, pp. 308-309) states that proactive customers will be more likely to seek information and interact with brands through content, search, and social media marketing. By implementing an engagement process, customers will continue to have repeated interactions so that they can strengthen the emotional, psychological, or physical properties of the customer in a brand. The two of them also complement and relate to each other. The analysis model in this study can describe the relationship between the two variables, namely social media marketing (X) and customer engagement (Y) as seen in Figure 1 below:

**Figure 1. Analysis Model**

Source: Research Data, 2020

## METHODS

This study is a quantitative research and the data is collected through questionnaires. Neuman (2014) characterized quantitative research as survey research in which the researcher efficiently requests an enormous number of individuals similar questions and records their answers afterward. Quantitative research uses instruments and statistical analysis with the aim of testing hypotheses or predetermined temporary answers. This study aims to explain the relationship between the variables and generally uses a correlation or regression hypothesis test. Later, the data will be processed using IBM SPSS version 24 to see the final results and draw conclusion.

The population this study is the followers of @Cinema.21 Instagram account, amounted to 1,230,670 followers when this research was conducted. This study uses purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, which is a sampling technique by considering certain conditions and does not provide equal opportunities for each member of the sample taken from the population (Sugiyono, 2013, p. 85). Based on the information from medium.com (2020), the target audience of @Cinema.21 Instagram account are men and women who are movie lovers with the age range of 16-30 years. Therefore, the sample criteria specified in this study are as follows:

- a. Age 15-34 years
- b. Follow the Instagram account @Cinema.21
- c. An active user of Instagram

The criteria were chosen based on the concept of customer engagement so that not all followers Instagram account @Cinema.21 can become the sample. Only those who meet the criteria can fill in the questionnaire. The sample size was 400 participants, which was calculated by using Yamane formula, and having the acceptable sampling error of 0.5.

Of all 400 samples, there were 7 samples that had to be removed after doing the boxplot, because the data had a score that was quite extreme or often referred to as outlier data,

with far different numbers from one another. Therefore, it was decided to use data from 393 participants.

We developed a 83-item questionnaire from the literature review. The questionnaire assessed the participants' perception of the read, create, share, and discuss dimensions of the social media marketing in different media, i.e. feed, Instastory, and IGTV, featured by @Cinema21 Instagram account. It also evaluated the participants' consumption, curation, creation, and collaboration in engaging on social media. We used four-point Likert scale to calculate the summation of the user's acceptance of social media marketing, which has been doing by the @Cinema21, and also to calculate their engagement with the account. The questionnaire was piloted prior to the study and demonstrated a good validity, reliability, and normality.

Data were analyzed using univariate analysis to describe the participants' characteristics and their perception of the social media marketing strategy implemented by @Cinema21 through the contents (feed, Instastory, IGTV) and their engagement with the account. We then analyzed both variables (social media marketing and engagement) using correlation analysis. Correlation analysis is a method for analyzing and identifying the relationship between the two variables to form a correlation coefficient in a research (Sarwono, 2012, p. 57).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Through the frequency data in table below, it can be shown that most respondents were female (52,4%) and aged 20-24 years (60,1%).

**Table 1. Gender Frequency Data**

Jenis Kelamin					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<i>Valid</i>	Laki-laki	187	47.6	47.6	47.6
	Perempuan	206	52.4	52.4	100
	Total	393	100	100	

Source: Research Data, 2020

**Table 2. Age Frequency Data**

Usia					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<i>Valid</i>	15-19	68	17.3	17.3	17.3
	20-24	236	60.1	60.1	77.4
	25-30	49	12.5	12.5	89.8
	31-34	40	10.2	10.2	100
	Total	393	100	100	

Source: Research Data, 2020

This survey found that the overall perception on the social media marketing through Instagram contents was good. This can be seen from the mean values of all the variables which are above 3 (table 3). On the social media marketing variables, respondents agreed that @Cinema21 allows followers to give feedback on the IGStories (mean = 3.59), yet they rated the lowest that @Cinema21 responding to followers' comment on IGstories (mean = 3.11). On the engagement variable, the highest rating was given by the respondents both on the statement of "noticing the feeds uploaded" and "liking the feeds" (mean = 3.46). While the lowest rating was on the statement "Creating IGTV content with #RinduNontondiXX1 theme" (mean = 2.73). Overall, it can be concluded that the use of feeds in delivering the messages is better accepted than other contents.

**Table 3. Perception on the @Cinema21 Instagram Contents and Customer Engagement**

Variables	Highest Indicators	Mean	Mode	Lowest Indicators	Mean	Mode
Read (X1)	Feeds provide the latest information about film industry	3.49	4	Stories provide information about health protocol in the cinema	3.24	3
Create (X2)	Feeds provide truthful information	3.47	3	IGStories & IGTV provide interactive captions	3.22	3
Share (X3)	@Cinema21 allows followers to share feeds	3.51	4	IGTV shares useful information	3.27	3
Discuss (X4)	@Cinema21 allows followers to give feedback on the IGStories	3.59	4	@Cinema21 responding to followers' comment on IGstories	3.11	3
Consumption (Y1)	Noticing the feeds uploaded	3.46	4	Keep the feeds with screenshot	2.95	3
Curation (Y2)	Liking the feeds	3.46	4	Mentioning @Cinema21 on IGTV	2.96	3
Creation (Y3)	#RinduNontondiXX1 Hashtag reflects the audience's longing	3.42	4	Creating IGTV content with #RinduNontondiXX1 theme	2.73	3
Collaboration (Y4)	Recommending the @Cinema21 feeds on personal social media	3.25	3	Receiving feedback from others on IGTV	3.03	3

Source: Research Data, 2020

The finding that feeds provide the latest information about film industry was supported by statement by Gunelius (2011, p. 17) who said finding the idea from current situation can create a content with good quality. In addition, using feeds to provide the latest information about product or service offered by the organization can strengthen the

company branding (Sirclo, 2020). Thus, @Cinema21 Instagram account should always post the latest information about film industry.

An interesting result in this study showed that most of participants agreed that feeds provide information about the ticket prices in Cinema XXI (mean = 3.43) and less agreed with feeds provide information about Dapur XXI menu prices (mean = 3.27). The finding is relevant with to Mardiastika's (2012) notion that public perception of ticket prices is the main reference to watch movies, other prices as cinema snacks are considered afterwards.

The result that @Cinema21 allows followers to give feedback on the IGStories has the highest score was supported by Miles (2019). In his book, Miles (2019) stated that Instagram stories have a variety of features that can be used to make it easier to get feedback from the audience. That is the reason why @Cinema21 Instagram account used the available feedback features on IGStories, such as polls, emoji slider, quiz, and questions box to develop engagement with their audience.

A contradictive result related IGStories showed in “@Cinema21 responding to followers' comment on IGstories” statement which gained a less positive approval from the respondents. It means, although @Cinema21 Instagram account has already use various features on IGStories, they haven't actively responding to the feedback given by their followers. According to Erdogan & Cicek (2012) in (Imron, Wardani, & Rokhmawati, 2018), it is said that to achieve the success of a brand on social media, the company should updating the content which is still not optimal in involving the audience. Therefore, the possibility of getting the involvement from the customers is also increasing.

The finding that most respondents agreed that they are liking the feeds is supported by previous study by Rohadian & Amir (2019) which stated that the more the number of likes given on their feed, it means that the content is interesting. It can be concluded that the company has succeeded in creating initial engagement with its followers.

The lowest rating given by respondents was on statement “Creating IGTV content with #RinduNontondiXX1 theme.” There is an article on cermati.com (2019) which states that IGTV content allows its users to make a video vertically with a longer duration. IGTV content is more suitable for people who like to make videos, and it means not all respondents want to create IGTV content with specific theme.

In this study, to be able to determine the cause and effect relationship between the social media marketing variable (X) and the customer engagement variable (Y), correlation and regression analysis were performed. From the study, it is known that the social media marketing was significantly related with customer engagement (Pearson Correlation value 0.657). According to Sugiyono (2019, p. 274), the number 0.657 is in the range of the coefficient interval from 0.60 to 0.799 which means that it has a strong and positive relationship to the dependent variable.

**Table 4. The Relationship between Social Media Marketing and Customer Engagement**

Variables (X)	R-square
Read	0.325
Create	0.405
Share	0.431
Discussion	0.443
Social media marketing	0.432

\*Variable Y: Engagement

Source: Research Data, 2020

From the table above, it is known that Discussion has the highest correlation with engagement while Read has the lowest correlation. Another result found from this study is the value of R Square of social media marketing is 0.432 or the equivalent of 43.2%. Thus, customer engagement was influenced by social media marketing by 43.2%, while the remaining 56.8% was influenced by several other factors not mentioned in this study.

The finding that social media marketing has correlation with customer engagement is supported by previous study of Syifa (2017). She mentioned that the content marketing has a correlation of 59.9% with customer engagement. She also stated that to build customer engagement, especially on Instagram, was not only influenced by social media marketing activities but also other factors such as content marketing which consists of aspects of reader cognition, sharing motivation, persuasion, decision making, and life factors that are possible to have a significant effect.

In addition, according to Forbes (2015) in Toor, Husnain, & Hussain (2017), social media marketing is significantly related to customer engagement. Thus, companies must take advantage of social media to create interactions with consumers, serving as a platform for improving products and promoting brands. Furthermore, if companies want to restore public confidence related to the safety of watching movies in theaters during Covid-19, they have to implement several stages in building customer interaction on social media, i.e. connection, interaction, satisfaction, retention, commitment, advocacy, and engagement (Sashi, 2012).

## CONCLUSION

From the results of the study, it is known that social media marketing applied by @Cinema21 Instagram account was perceived good by the respondents. For social media marketing variables, respondents mostly agreed that @Cinema21 allows followers to give feedback on the IGStories. However, respondents also assumed that although @Cinema21 Instagram account has already allowed the followers to give feedback on IGStories, they haven't actively responding to the feedback given by their followers. On the engagement variable, most respondents stated they were noticing and also giving 'likes' to the feeds uploaded by Cinema21 Instagram account. Yet, creating content on IGTV was perceived to have a minimum impact on customer engagement. Overall, respondents considered that the use of feeds in delivering the messages is better accepted than other contents. Furthermore, social media marketing influenced 43.2% of

consumer engagement, while many other factors not listed in this study influenced the remaining 56.8%.

Suggestions that can be given to Cinemas that utilizing social media marketing on Instagram are:

1. Maximizing the use of feeds in conveying the information about the film industry, general information about Cinema XX1, and health protocols in the form of captions and visuals.
2. The use of features on IGStories were well-received in creating engagement with followers and hence needs to be maintain regularly. While at the same time, the @Cinema21 account needs to respond actively to the feedback from their followers by replying the message or reposting the stories.
3. IGTV was identified to have minimum impact on creating customer engagement so more efforts should be made to persuade the followers in creating content and mentioning @Cinema21 on IGTV.

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