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Digital Interaction Analysis of Instagram @Realmadrid in Strengthening Fan Engagement Among Indonesian Madridistas

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze how the official Instagram account @realmadrid is utilized to strengthen the fan engagement of Madridista Indonesia. This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data were collected through observation of @realmadrid's Instagram content, in-depth interviews with members of Madridista Indonesia, and documentation. Data analysis utilized the interactive model by Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was tested using technical triangulation. The results show that @realmadrid's Instagram serves as the primary source of information for Madridista Indonesia due to its speed, accuracy, and visual power. However, the established communication pattern tends to be one-way. Based on Affordance Theory, Instagram provides affordances for visibility, interaction, and participation. Nevertheless, the interaction affordance has not been optimally utilized by the club, making the communication relationship more informative than dialogic. Nonetheless, consistent content exposure continues to contribute to the formation of loyalty and fan engagement, which shapes the collective identity of Madridista Indonesia. This study contributes to the field of sports digital communication studies by demonstrating that social media can strengthen club image and fan loyalty, even though the established communication relationship is not yet fully two-way communication.

Keywords: *Digital Interaction, Instagram, Fan Engagement, Madridista Indonesia.*
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Indonesian Abstrak: *Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana akun Instagram resmi @realmadrid dimanfaatkan sebagai penguatan fan Engagement Madridista Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi terhadap konten Instagram @realmadrid, wawancara mendalam dengan anggota Madridista Indonesia, serta dokumentasi. Analisis data menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian*

data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Validitas data diuji melalui triangulasi teknik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Instagram @realmadrid berfungsi sebagai sumber informasi utama bagi Madridista Indonesia karena kecepatan, akurasi, dan kekuatan visualnya. Namun, pola komunikasi yang terbentuk cenderung satu arah. Berdasarkan Teori Keterjangkauan (Affordance Theory), Instagram menyediakan keterjangkauan visibilitas, interaksi, dan partisipasi. Akan tetapi, keterjangkauan interaksi belum dimanfaatkan secara optimal oleh pihak klub, sehingga hubungan komunikasi lebih bersifat informatif dibandingkan dialogis. Meskipun demikian, eksposur konten yang konsisten tetap berkontribusi terhadap pembentukan loyalitas, fan engagement yang membentuk identitas kolektif Madridista Indonesia. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi dalam kajian komunikasi digital olahraga dengan menunjukkan bahwa media sosial dapat memperkuat citra dan loyalitas penggemar, meskipun hubungan komunikasi yang terbangun belum sepenuhnya bersifat dua arah.

Kata Kunci: *Interaksi Digital, Instagram, Fan Engagement, Madridista Indonesia.*

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital communication technology has brought fundamental changes to organizational communication practices across various sectors, including the sports industry. This transformation has not only altered communication mediums but also shifted the communication paradigm from a one-way approach to a more interactive and participatory one. Social media is no longer viewed merely as a space for sharing personal information; rather, it has evolved into a strategic instrument used by global organizations to build their image, strengthen their reputation, and manage long-term relationships with their publics. The rapid flow of information, global reach, and ease of access make social media an effective communication channel in meeting the demands of the digital era. In the context of modern sports, social media holds a very central position. The sports industry is not only oriented toward on-field competition, but also toward brand management, fan loyalty, and global community engagement. Professional football clubs currently operate as business entities as well as social institutions with millions of followers across countries. Therefore, digital communication has become the primary means of maintaining existence, expanding the fan base, and preserving emotional closeness with audiences. Social media enables clubs to interact directly with fans without the intermediation of conventional mass media.

Real Madrid, as one of the largest and most influential football clubs in the world, utilizes various digital platforms to reach its global fan base. With supporters spread across different parts of the globe, the club requires a medium capable of connecting its global identity with local communities. Instagram has become one of the main platforms utilized through its official account, @realmadrid. This platform was chosen due to its strong visual appeal, broad content distribution algorithm, and relatively high user engagement rates compared to several other platforms. Instagram's visual character aligns well with the communication needs of a football club, which is rich in emotional moments, expressions of victory, match dynamics, and player figures with strong personal appeal. Through Instagram, Real Madrid shares various types of content, such as match results, fixture schedules, player statistics, training sessions, press conferences, and the club's social activities. This content is professionally packaged with high visual quality, thereby building an exclusive and prestigious image.

Based on data released by The Global Statistics (2026), Instagram is the most widely used social media platform among the Indonesian public at 84.80%, followed by Facebook at 81.30% and TikTok at 63.10%, as shown in Figure 1 below:

TOP SOCIAL NETWORK PLATFORMS IN INDONESIA	PERCENTAGE	ACTIVE USERS (IN MILLION)
Instagram	84.80%	173.59
Facebook	81.30%	166.42
TikTok	63.10%	129.17
Twitter	58.30%	119.34
Pinterest	36.70%	75.12
Kuaishou	35.70%	73.08
LinkedIn	29.40%	60.18
Discord	17.60%	36.03
Likee	14.20%	29.07

Figure 1: Top Social Networking Platforms in Indonesia
Source: https://www.theglobalstatistics.com/indonesia-social-media-statistics/

Figure 1 shows that as of 2026, Instagram users in Indonesia hold the highest ranking at 84.80%. This is made possible because consistency in the use of visual elements, colors, logos, and message delivery styles strengthens brand identity. Real Madrid is an elite club with a long history and illustrious achievements. Consequently, Instagram functions not only as an informational medium, but also as a tool for strengthening brand positioning and differentiation at the global level. Nevertheless, although Instagram provides two-way interaction features such as comments, direct messages, story replies, and live sessions, the communication practices observed on the @realmadrid account tend to be predominantly informative and one-way. The club actively publishes content, yet direct responses to followers' comments remain relatively limited. This indicates that although technological affordances for dialogic communication are available, the implementation of its communication still focuses on information delivery and image enhancement. In other words, the potential for interactivity has not yet been fully utilized to build intensive dialogue with fans.

In Indonesia, the Madridista Indonesia community is one of the active fan bases following the club's developments through social media, particularly Instagram. This community acts not only as consumers of information, but also as part of a global fan network that participates in re-sharing content, leaving comments, and building discussions among fellow community members. Instagram has become the primary source of information because it is perceived as faster, more practical, and more up-to-date than conventional media such as television or newspapers. This demonstrates a shift in information consumption patterns among sports fans, moving from a previous reliance on mainstream media to a reliance on digital social media.

This phenomenon is compelling for further investigation because it reveals a discrepancy between technological potential and actual communication practices. On one hand, Instagram provides opportunities for two-way interaction that can build dialogic relationships between the club and its fans. On the other hand, the established communication appears more dominant in the form of information dissemination rather than reciprocal dialogue. This condition raises questions regarding the extent to which social media is genuinely utilized as a means of relationship building, rather than merely as a content distribution channel.

From the perspective of organizational communication and digital public relations, strong relationships between an organization and its publics are ideally built through continuous, responsive, and dialogic interaction. If communication occurs mostly in one direction, the resulting relationship has the potential to be symbolic or emotional, yet does not

necessarily reflect deep reciprocal engagement. Therefore, it is crucial to analyze how the communication strategies implemented via Instagram affect the quality of the relationship between Real Madrid and the Madridista Indonesia community. Based on this background, this study aims to analyze how the @realmadrid Instagram account is utilized as an informational medium in an effort to strengthen the fan engagement of Madridista Indonesia.

Digital interaction is the communication process, information exchange, or reciprocal relationship between humans that occurs through the mediation of digital technology and the internet network (Irfan & Masyhuri, 2025). Unlike conventional interaction that relies on face-to-face contact, digital interaction utilizes electronic media such as smartphones, computers, or tablets to connect without being hindered by distance and time. Digital interaction also impacts cultural changes (Hutabarat, 2024); digital media has further expanded interaction and provided broader opportunities for humans to engage in extensive public discussions (Saputra et al., 2023). The digital space, as argued by Mackenziem (2020), has become a place where people gather and interact, share information, and form social bonds.

A redefinition of human interaction has also taken place, especially since the internet became a part of human life, creating unprecedented connectivity opportunities (Kiaritha et al., 2025). At the same time, this condition poses major challenges, including the erosion of non-verbal communication depth, algorithm-based echo chambers (Faiq & Rofiq, 2025), and pressures associated with digital identity formation.

Fan engagement in Indonesian means “involvement” or “interaction,” a term that describes the level of an individual's activity and participation toward something, within activities, content, and communities (tulisan.assetcareindia.com, 2026). In the context of sports, engagement encompasses various forms of involvement ranging from watching matches and providing support on social media to participating in sports activities themselves. This is important because the level of engagement serves as an indicator of how significant the influence of content or a sports brand is in reaching and affecting fans. Clubs or athletes with high engagement typically possess a solid and loyal fan base.

Fan engagement can be defined as a specific form of customer engagement within the sports context. Customer engagement is defined as a customer's spontaneous, interactive, and co-creative behavior, particularly in non-transactional exchanges between consumers and companies to achieve their individual or social goals (Biscaia, Gordon, Nakazawa, & Yoshida, 2014).

Involvement in sports is not limited solely to digital activities. There are several types of engagement (tulisan.assetcareindia.com, 2026):

1. *Sports Participant Engagement* Sports participants, both professional and amateur athletes, demonstrate engagement through routine training, participation in matches, and interaction with coaches and teammates. This involvement is essential for improving performance quality and building team chemistry.
2. *Spectator and Fan Engagement* Sports fans and spectators also demonstrate engagement by watching live matches, following news and updates, purchasing merchandise, and being active in sports-loving communities. They serve as a source of motivation for the athletes and teams they support.
3. *Sponsor and Business Entity Engagement* Companies and sponsors involved in the sports world use engagement as a benchmark for the success of their campaigns. Through fan involvement, they can increase brand awareness and commercial value.

The context used in this paper is spectator and fan engagement between Madridista Indonesia and the Real Madrid club located in Spain.

Affordance Theory was developed by Gibson (1977) through his writing "The Theory of Affordances," with the following assumptions:

1. Direct Perception

Assumption: Humans perceive the utility of an object directly without needing complex cognitive processes, memory construction, or symbolic interpretation.

2. Relational Property

An affordance is neither purely a property of the object itself nor an abstract idea in the observer's mind. Affordance exists in the physical relation between environmental properties and an actor's physical capacities.

3. Independent of Perception and Experience (Realist Existence)

Affordances are objective and always present in the environment, regardless of whether the agent is aware of them, knows about them, or desires them.

1. Rejection of the Subjective–Objective Dichotomy

Affordance bridges the boundary between the physical world (physics) and the behavioral world (psychology). It is simultaneously an environmental fact and a behavioral fact.

2. Ecological Orientation for Action (Perception for Action)

The primary purpose of biological perception is not to gather abstract information about the world, but to sustain life and guide action (survival).

Relationship Management Theory in the fields of communication and Public Relations was developed by John A. Ledingham and Stephen D. Bruning in the late 1990s, and was widely published academically between 1998 and 2000. This theory is rooted in a paradigm shift within Public Relations, moving away from a focus on one-way information exchange toward building, maintaining, and managing long-term relationships between organizations and their publics (relationship-oriented).

Ledingham and Bruning (1990) formulated several fundamental assumptions regarding how the relationship between an organization and its publics works:

1) Relationships Are the Core of Public Relations Practice

The main focus of Public Relations is not merely delivering messages or managing image, but creating and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and its stakeholders.

2) Effective Relationships Generate Mutual Interests

Quality long-term relationships are created when both parties (the organization and the public) equally experience benefits. The organization achieves its goals through profit or social support, while the public has its needs and expectations fulfilled.

3) Relationship Quality Can Be Measured and Evaluated

Assumption: A relationship is not an abstract or invisible concept, but can be measured through specific empirical dimensions. The determining dimensions according to Ledingham and Bruning (1990) are:

- Trust: The public's belief that the organization has integrity and is reliable.
- Control Mutuality: The degree to which both parties are satisfied with the distribution of power or influence within the relationship.
- Commitment: The extent to which both parties invest in and believe that the relationship is worth maintaining.
- Satisfaction: The positive feeling that the expectations from the relationship have been fulfilled.
- Exchange Relationship vs. Communal Relationship: Whether the relationship is based on pure economic benefit exchange (exchange) or sincere, immediate unselfish care (communal).

4) Relationships Influence Public Behavior

The assumption built by Ledingham and Bruning (1990) is that the quality of the relationship directly impacts public attitudes and behaviors toward the organization. If the relationship is positive and grounded in trust, the public will be more tolerant when the organization faces a crisis, more loyal, and more actively supportive.

5) The Relationship Management Process Is Dynamic

The underlying assumption is that relationship management is not a one-shot event, but rather an ongoing process. Organizations must consistently monitor public dynamics, engage in two-way communication, and adapt to changing public needs and expectations.

METHODS

The type of research is qualitative, namely research oriented toward understanding social or human phenomena in depth, naturalistically, and holistically, with an emphasis on quality, meaning, and process (Samatan, 2018). The paradigm employed is constructivist, an epistemological and methodological paradigm which views that social reality and knowledge are not objective or merely discovered, but are actively constructed by individuals or groups through experience, social interaction, and interpretation of their world (Samatan, 2017). The approach utilized is descriptive qualitative, which enables the researcher to comprehensively describe communication phenomena based on empirical data in the field (Samatan, 2018).

This research is grounded in the constructivism paradigm, which perceives social reality as the result of construction through interaction and meaning-making processes. The communication relationship between Real Madrid and Madridista Indonesia is understood as a reality formed through digital interaction on Instagram, whether via posts, comments, or other forms of participation. Instagram is positioned not merely as a technological platform, but as a digital social space where symbolic exchange and the formation of collective identity take place.

Through this approach, the study seeks to understand the communication process thoroughly, starting from message production, distribution via Instagram features, to the fan engagement of the Madridista Indonesia community. Systematic observations were conducted on the @realmadrid account for 3 months, from March to June 2026, alongside interviews with the head of the Madridista Indonesia community and several @realmadrid Instagram followers who have followed the account for at least 2 years and engage in communication and interaction with fellow Madridista Indonesia fans via Instagram or in-person watch-along gatherings.

The object of this research is the communication activity displayed through Real Madrid’s official Instagram account, @realmadrid. The observation focuses not only on the published visual content and captions, but also on posting intensity, consistency of information delivery, and forms of interaction emerging in the comment section. The research subjects are members of the Madridista Indonesia community who actively follow the @realmadrid account and rely on Instagram as their primary source of information regarding the club. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on the consideration that they possess direct experience in accessing and interacting with Real Madrid’s Instagram content. In addition to community members, this research also involves key informants, such as administrators or representatives of Madridista Indonesia, to obtain a more comprehensive overview of Instagram's role in community dynamics and fan engagement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The research findings indicate that the @realmadrid Instagram account is utilized by Real Madrid as the primary informational medium for delivering various club activities to global fans, including Madridista Indonesia. The information conveyed encompasses match results, fixture schedules, training sessions, player activities, and the club's social campaigns. For the Madridista Indonesia community, Instagram serves as the fastest, most up-to-date, and most accessible source of information compared to conventional media. This demonstrates a shift in information consumption patterns, where social media has become the primary reference for following the club's developments.

Beyond functioning merely as a one-way information dissemination channel, Instagram also serves as a digital interaction space that builds emotional closeness between the club and its fans. Although the communication carried out by the @realmadrid account tends to be informative and centered on content production, the availability of comment, like, story, and live features continues to open opportunities for audience participation. The resulting interaction, even though not always directly dialogic, fosters a sense of involvement and symbolic closeness between fans and the club.

Fans feel that they are part of the global Real Madrid community through this digital connectivity. The content published by @realmadrid exhibits a consistent, professional, and structured communication pattern. This consistency is evident in the uniform use of visual elements, a formal yet emotional message delivery style, and post scheduling that follows match momentum or the club's agenda. These patterns can be analyzed through social media affordance dimensions, namely visibility, persistence, interactivity, and networked connection. The visibility dimension is seen in the global reach of content accessible to millions of followers across various countries. Persistence is reflected in the archived content that remains stored and accessible as a digital communication record of the club. Interactivity is apparent through fan responses in the comment section and other features, despite the relatively limited intensity of direct responses from the club. Meanwhile, networked connection is visible through the use of hashtags, player account tags, and connectivity with the global fan community.

Furthermore, the research findings also reveal the presence of Relationship Management practices within the conducted digital communication. This is reflected through the indicators of trust, commitment, satisfaction, and mutuality. Trust is built through the consistency and credibility of the published information. Commitment is evident in the continuity of communication and maintained posting intensity. Satisfaction is experienced by fans due to the ease of accessing information and the emotional closeness created. Meanwhile, mutuality, although not entirely dialogic, is still realized in the form of active fan participation in providing responses, support, and engagement toward every published piece of content.

Information Visibility

The content published by @realmadrid has a high level of visibility because it maximizes Instagram's visual features. Every match post, score result, player training session, and celebration moment is presented in the form of high-quality photos and videos with informative captions. Informants stated that they almost always find out match results or the latest club updates through Instagram before accessing other media.

The high posting intensity makes Real Madrid's information easily accessible at any time. This visibility reinforces Instagram's position as the primary source of information for Madridista Indonesia. Thus, Instagram's visibility feature enables Real Madrid to reach a global audience rapidly and broadly.

Information Persistence

The information uploaded on Instagram is permanent and can be accessed again at any time. Fans can revisit match documentation, moments of victory, and official club announcements through the post archives. The highlights and feed features strengthen the retention capacity of this information. This information persistence provides a documentary experience for fans. Informants shared that they frequently look back at specific posts, especially crucial winning moments or player transfers. This demonstrates that persistence functions not only as a digital archive, but also as a means to reinforce the fans' collective memory of the club.

Interactivity

Observation results show the presence of two-way communication through the comment section, story features, and symbolic interactions such as likes. Although the @realmadrid account does not always reply to comments directly, the audience remains active in providing responses in the form of support, criticism, and emotional expressions regarding matches. This interactivity illustrates that fans are not merely passive recipients of information, but actively participate in building digital conversations. Informants noted that the comment section serves as a shared space of expression for Madridistas from various countries. This indicates the existence of participatory communication dynamics within the platform.

Networked Connection

Instagram enables the formation of a global communication network between Real Madrid and fan communities across various countries. Madridista Indonesia feels directly connected to the club despite being geographically far from Spain. Hashtag features, mentions, and content distribution algorithms expand the reach of the club's messages.

This connectivity strengthens a sense of togetherness and collective identity as part of the global Real Madrid community. Informants stated that following @realmadrid makes them feel closer to the activities of the club and its players.

Trust

Based on interview results, informants conveyed that the @realmadrid Instagram account is regarded as an official and reliable source of information. They place greater trust in transfer announcements, match results, and issue clarifications delivered through the official account compared to unofficial media.

This trust serves as a crucial foundation in the relationship between the club and its fans. The credibility of the official account reinforces the legitimacy of the information and reduces reliance on sources whose validity is uncertain.

Commitment

Commitment is evident in the club's consistency in uploading content routinely and relevantly. Real Madrid is not only active during matches, but also shares training activities, players' birthdays, and historical club moments. This consistency demonstrates organizational commitment to maintaining continuous communication with fans. Informants feel that the club is always present in their daily lives through the published digital content.

Satisfaction

The majority of informants expressed satisfaction with the completeness of the information provided via Instagram. They feel their informational needs are fulfilled without having to search for other sources. Appealing visual content also enhances satisfaction in consuming information. This satisfaction strengthens fan loyalty toward the official account and the club itself.

Mutuality

Although communication is not always direct, there is a reciprocal relationship reflected through fan responses to every post. Audience support and active participation serve as a form of contribution to maintaining the club's digital existence. This mutuality demonstrates that the established communication is relational and continuous, rather than merely one-way information dissemination.

Relevance to Communication Relationships

From all the findings, it can be concluded that the @realmadrid Instagram account functions as both an informational medium and a space for forming digital communication relationships between Real Madrid and Madridista Indonesia. Affordance features enable information to be widely disseminated, documented, and interactive. Meanwhile, Relationship Management indicators show that the formed relationship is grounded in trust, commitment, satisfaction, and emotional engagement. Thus, Instagram serves not only as an information delivery tool, but also as a strategic medium in building and maintaining communication

Discussion

Based on the research findings through in-depth interviews with members of the Madridista Indonesia community and the documentation of @realmadrid Instagram content, it is evident that the communication activities conducted via the account cannot be understood merely as the delivery of match information. The displayed content patterns indicate a structured, consistent digital communication strategy oriented toward building long-term relationships with global fans. Instagram is utilized as an organizational communication medium that builds emotional closeness, strengthens club identity, and sustainably maintains fan loyalty.

The content published by @realmadrid is not limited to match results or score updates; it also features training activities, locker room moments, player interviews, title celebrations, club history, and social activities conducted by the team. This pattern demonstrates that Real Madrid constructs comprehensive communication, allowing fans to not only receive factual information but also experience a symbolic journey as part of the club's narrative. Analysis through Affordance Theory shows that Instagram provides various features enabling the club to build effective communication with fans. The visibility dimension is apparent through the high and consistent frequency of posts, particularly during matches. Information regarding lineups, goals, final scores, and celebrations is uploaded in real-time so that fans in Indonesia can follow match developments live despite being in a different time zone. This high level of visibility establishes Instagram as the primary source of information for Madridista Indonesia compared to other media.

The persistence dimension is also highly prominent in Real Madrid’s digital communication practices. All uploads are stored permanently on the account profile and can be accessed again at any time. Fans frequently revisit old posts to commemorate significant moments such as Champions League victories or individual player achievements. This persistence creates a digital archive that builds collective memory among fans and strengthens their emotional bond with the club.

The interactivity dimension is visible through the presence of the comment section and story features, which allow fans to provide direct responses. Although the official account does not always reply to every comment, this space of interaction creates global conversations among fans. Madridista Indonesia feels they have a space to express support, pride, and criticism regarding team performance. This interactivity demonstrates that the communication occurring is not entirely one-way, but rather opens opportunities for public participation within the club's digital ecosystem.

Furthermore, the networked connection dimension illustrates how Instagram links Real Madrid with millions of fans worldwide, including in Indonesia. Features such as sharing, mentions, and content distribution algorithms allow information to spread widely in a short time. Members of the Madridista Indonesia community frequently re-share @realmadrid content to their personal accounts or community groups, creating a mutually connected communication network. This strengthens their collective identity as part of the global Madridista community.

Through the analysis of Relationship Management Theory, it is apparent that the communication relationship formed through Instagram reflects the indicators of trust, commitment, satisfaction, and mutual relationship. Fan trust is established because the official @realmadrid account is regarded as the most credible and valid source of information. Fans tend to await official announcements from the account before believing transfer rumors or specific news reports. This credibility reinforces the legitimacy of organizational communication. Commitment is evident in Real Madrid's consistency in managing the Instagram account professionally and actively. The club is present not only during matches but also throughout daily team activities, training sessions, and celebration moments. This consistency demonstrates a long-term commitment to maintaining communication with global fans.

Audience satisfaction arises from ease of access to information, high visual quality, and rapid content delivery. Informants stated that they feel their informational needs are sufficiently met solely through Instagram without needing to seek other sources. This satisfaction is not only informational but also emotional, especially when re-witnessing victory moments through uploaded videos. Mutuality is reflected in the active participation of fans in every post. Thousands of comments, symbolic support, and inter-fan interactions indicate a dynamic relational connection. Although communication does not always take the form of direct dialogue between the admin and individual users, this collective involvement demonstrates a sustainably maintained mutual relationship.

The interplay between Instagram affordances and Relationship Management shows that available technological features are optimally utilized to build an organization's relationship with its public. Visibility and persistence strengthen informational exposure, interactivity creates participation, and networked connection broadens communication reach. This combination generates a relationship grounded in trust, commitment, and satisfaction. The impact of this digital communication process is observed in the reinforcement of identity, fan engagement, and loyalty among Madridista Indonesia fans. The narrative of club history, trophy symbols, and slogans such as "Hala Madrid" continually repeated across various uploads heighten collective pride. The repetition of these symbols and messages builds strong identity awareness among fans, transforming them from mere spectators into individuals who feel they belong to the global Real Madrid community.

These research findings indicate that Instagram is not merely a medium for disseminating sports information, but rather a strategic communication space that builds emotional experiences, digital solidarity, and long-term relationships between the club and its fans. The success of Real Madrid's digital communication lies not solely in posting frequency, but in narrative consistency, visual quality, and the utilization of interactive features that enhance public involvement.

Consequently, it is understood that the @realmadrid Instagram account functions as an effective organizational communication medium bridging the geographical distance between the club and fans in Indonesia. Through the optimal utilization of affordance features and the application of Relationship Management principles, the established digital communication successfully reinforces the trust, engagement, and loyalty of Madridista Indonesia toward Real Madrid on a sustainable basis.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the utilization of the @realmadrid Instagram account plays a significant role in building and strengthening communication relationships, involvement, and fan engagement between the Real Madrid club and the Madridista Indonesia community. Instagram is not merely used as a medium for delivering match information, but functions as an organizational communication medium that showcases club activities consistently, structurally, and sustainably.

Analysis based on Affordance Theory demonstrates that Instagram features such as visibility, persistence, interactivity, and networked connection are optimally utilized by Real Madrid. Information visibility through real-time posts ensures that fans always receive the latest updates rapidly and accurately. Content persistence allows fans to revisit significant moments, thereby forming a collective memory. Interactivity through the comment section and story features creates a space for public participation. Meanwhile, networked connection expands the club's communication reach to the Madridista Indonesia community and other global fans. From a Relationship Management perspective, communication conducted via Instagram reflects an effort to build long-term relationships with fans. Trust is formed because the official @realmadrid account is regarded as a credible and valid source of information. Commitment is evident in the club's consistency in managing content professionally and routinely. Satisfaction arises from the ease of accessing information as well as appealing visual quality. Mutuality is reflected in the active participation of fans in every post, whether through comments, re-sharing content, or other symbolic interactions.

The interplay between the utilization of Instagram affordances and the application of Relationship Management principles indicates that social media serves as an effective communication bridge between a global sports organization and a local fan community. Consistency in information delivery, reinforcement of club identity through symbols and historical narratives, and emotional engagement created through visual content contribute to strengthening the loyalty and solidarity of Madridista Indonesia.

Thus, it can be concluded that Instagram, as a digital communication medium, serves as an effective strategy for Real Madrid in maintaining closeness with fans in Indonesia. Through the utilization of available technological features and continuous relationship management, the established digital communication not only delivers information, but also consistently and sustainably reinforces the collective identity and loyalty of the Madridista Indonesia community toward Real Madrid.

Limitations

This research focuses solely on fan engagement. Future studies are recommended to conduct in-depth investigations involving the social media managers of the @realmadrid account to gather more complete and accurate data

Recommendations

In line with the findings of this study on the fan engagement of Madridista Indonesia via the @realmadrid Instagram account, future researchers are encouraged to broaden the scope of their investigation by employing mixed methods in order to reach a larger number of informants in subsequent studies.

Author Contributions

All authors made significant contributions to this study. Frist author contributions included research conceptualization, development of the theoretical framework, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of results. Second and third authors contributions include manuscript preparation, scholarly revision, and final approval of the manuscript for publication. Fourth author contributions include data collection, informant interview and preparation manuscript.

AI Disclosure Statement

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used AI Gemini for purpose of use, to grammar editing.

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