

Digital Communication in Music Industry: An Analysis of Instagram Management in Indonesia and Southeast Asia

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to explore the digital communication in Indonesia and ASEAN music industry as seen on the @playmusicindonesia and @axeanfestival Instagram accounts. The selection of the two accounts is due to the number of followers and the nuances of Indonesian and ASEAN music that still need to be learned from other Asian countries, such as South Korea. The concepts used are symbolic interaction theory, to dissect the meaning of symbols and their relationship with the self-concept of music fans and the concept of pop culture to ensure the reality of music as popular culture in Indonesia and ASEAN. The study used is qualitative methodology by conducting a comparative analysis of two social media accounts with data generated from five discussion group interviews. The findings answer three research questions: digital communication in Indonesia and ASEAN is still very segmented, hence it has not been able to possess an official license for carrying out global promotions. Indonesian music reflects the self-concept of its supporters, so that it is easily adapted in Malaysia which has cultural similarities; while ASEAN music is still in the process of developing its patterns through symbolic interactions. The representation of Indonesian music as a facet of popular culture has not been equally recognized within the broader ASEAN context.

Keywords: *Social media, Indonesian music, ASEAN music, pop culture, symbolic interaction.*

INTRODUCTION

Music is an art that has the capability to captivate and draw audiences (Yunus et al., 2021). Music becomes a branding tool for a place and even a country. Music also can depict the culture from which it was born. According to Dong, music carries the culture of the entire region where the music originated, so that local music is closely related to the national culture of a country. In the context of multicultural dissemination, cultural factors should influence and promote educational reform. Efforts to integrate the essence and characteristics of culture through music from different nationalities can make people more connected and improve cultural skills through music (Dong, 2022).

Communication allows culture and music to flow across time and space; meanwhile, music and culture also change in the process of communication. The spread of cultural music usually includes the music itself, and ideas are integrated into the work and reflected through the musical work. Meanwhile, the music business is an industry that requires musical skills complemented by management abilities, performing arts, and negotiation skills. In the music business, the process of making music stays close to a way to make money from the piece of music itself. Their profit comes from the production and distribution of widely distributed pieces of music. The industry needs a mass audience, not for the music itself, but also audio-visual, and sometimes entertaining content packaged in music performances, chart positions, music award ceremonies, festivals, concerts, etc. Music consumption continues to grow every

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year at an explosive pace around the world. Today, almost everyone listens to music anywhere: at home, on the street, in public transport, in the car, even at work. Music has always taken part of people's daily lives around the world. This has become a daily habit more than ever before (Danilova & Krupa, 2021).

Competition in music also continues tougher in today's digital era. It needs strategic communication management in carrying it out as a business, and one of the ways is to use social media to reach the expected target market. This is reinforced by the fact that as long as people are connected to the Internet, they may now quickly receive the most recent news as it happens from their smartphones and other mobile devices (Taibi & Na, 2020). Social media can be used to promote goods, services, and causes in order to have beneficial discussions (Ayub et al., 2024). Meanwhile, music that dominates Asia and penetrates to western countries comes from South Korea known as K-Pop. This music has dominated the market and the ASEAN country has become an easy target for the spread of K-Pop culture through its music performances. The promotion and distribution of K-pop on social media has grown rapidly and has increasingly brought a big influence in the seeding of Korean culture. Currently, in addition to pop music from the US and UK, K-Pop is released under an officially established global license. K-pop managed to create a sensation through live performances and had an impact on increasing enthusiasm in the global music market to penetrate into other traditional music. The results showed the effect of social media on the K-pop production environment proved to be very significant. Entertainment agencies invest heavily in music videos and devote extensive efforts to content on social media. One K-Pop music video has managed to garner over a million video views in a single day (Kim et al., 2021). This shows evidence that the music industry cannot be underestimated and requires qualified communication management. According to scholars' searches: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are social media platforms that have brought awareness of K-pop idols. K-pop companies or idols tend to use social media platforms to provide information about what their plans will be such as performances, concerts, etc. Whereas, fandoms use social media platforms to spread the word about their K-pop idols which eventually creates a community on social media platforms (Kanozia & Ganghariya, 2021).

Meanwhile, the digital revolution has caused music consumption to grow significantly, as evidenced by the results achieved in music transactions of US\$25.9 billion in 2021 (Noll, 2022). Statista (n.d., updated in March 2024) has recorded that the total revenue of the music segment in Indonesia reached US\$40.40m in year 2022. The data give hope that there is an interest in Indonesian people in music and it needs to be developed to the ASEAN level. Two dimensions of the music industry support this growth: (a) music production and distribution through physical and digital networks, and (b) live music production and distribution (Azzellini et al., 2022; Pizzolitto et al., 2023). The digital music industry has also changed the form of business in music services impacting creator royalty payments based on the number of subscribers. These royalty payments are based on agreements made with each major record label, the various rights holders of which vary according to the copyright management organization (Towse, 2020; Hesmondhalgh, 2021).

Based on the observed insights, the present study focused on exploring digital communication strategies within the music industry in Indonesia and Southeast Asia. It focuses on two Instagram accounts, namely @playmusicindonesia and @Axeanfestival, which both have been observed to adopt unique strategies to connect local and regional music communities. The former, associated with the Play Music Festival, underscores the diverse musical landscape of Indonesia, while the latter, which is the sole music export platform of

Southeast Asia, aspires to enhance the global representation of the region in the music industry. Despite the inherent potential, limited studies have been carried out to investigate how these accounts leverage digital communication strategies, portray contemporary musicians, and shape audience perceptions of pop culture.

This study aims to analyse digital communication strategies, the roles and representations of musicians on these platforms, and audience interpretations of music content. Through the achievement of these objectives, the exploration seeks to uncover valuable insights that can enhance the positioning of Indonesia and Southeast Asia as leaders in global music performance arts. Additionally, it aims to identify potential gaps in the strategic use of social media for promoting local music industries and offers recommendations to improve its global visibility.

LITERATURE REVIEW

a. Digital Communication of Music Industry

Music industry and its business operations are invariably related to the realm of communication, comprising both Public Relations programs managed by music management professionals and social media strategies. Effective communication management in the music industry typically spans various forms, including interpersonal communication and dialogue on digital platforms such as Instagram. For example, managing an Instagram account requires specific skills, including consistency in responding to and engaging with comments, showing a respectful attitude toward others, and crafting professionally written content (Wigati et al., 2022; Wert, 2021).

Interactive platforms such as Zoom, Skype, and Google Hangout have been observed to play an important role in the communication framework of the music industry. As suggested by Areiza-Padilla and Galindo-Becerra (2022), these tools are particularly useful for coordinating with sponsors, partners, and other stakeholders. In a business context, the platforms not only facilitate adherence to professional protocols but further help minimize meeting durations. It is also important to emphasize that establishing check-in points during virtual meetings typically ensures all participants feel included and can focus on essential discussion topics, thereby enhancing the entire efficiency and effectiveness of the engagements (Areiza-Padilla & Galindo-Becerra, 2022).

In managing the music business, Wibowo et al. (2023) have conducted research that discussed the communication management of Ngayogjazz music performances. Ngayogjazz consists of founders who have different work backgrounds. This condition does not hinder their coordination in carrying out a sustainable music festival. Limited time is the main challenge in the process of realizing the music festival. The research states that the Ngayogjazz community adopted horizontal communication patterns through informal communication models, complemented by vertical communication shown through reciprocal relationships in management functions. This approach was reported to foster a sense of loyalty among members of the group, enabling each individual to work collaboratively toward the objectives of the organization, which include providing unique entertainment for the local community, educating audiences, and introducing the traditional arts and culture of the village to Ngayogjazz festival goers (Wibowo et al., 2023). Within this context, communication management serves as a fundamental tool for optimizing both human resources and technology through effective communication strategies (Herdiati & Saputra, 2022).

Meanwhile, Zeng et al. (2023) has studied music production in the digital age. Their research concluded that in order to create better musical works, not only explore the development of the times, but also understand the advantages and disadvantages of various musical instruments and utilize the mixing management of various musical instruments, human voice, and harmony. Thus, it is expected to create musical works that can be enjoyed by many people (Zeng et al., 2023).

Yan et al. (2023) mentioned that there are three categories in strategic management, namely cost strategies, centralization strategies, and diversification strategies. The research is more about the third strategy. Diversification strategy theory focuses on the existence of different characteristics in a number of businesses with many industries at the same time (Yan et al., 2023).

b. Representations of music on social media as symbolic interactionism

Music on social media is a proof of symbolic interaction concept and representation of the music world and its account management as well. Music itself is a symbol of the reality and culture of its people. How people create meaning and structure in society is the focus of symbolic interactionism (Ridaryanthi, Ahmad & Dwityas, 2022). This perspective is further elaborated by Ji et al. (2019), as shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Music as symbol

Music as Symbol	Music is a symbol that mediates cognition and interpretation of the world.	Music is the essential vehicle by which humans build their conception of 'reality'.
	Semiotic theory: music is a typical type of symbol situation with its own unique semantic device of music.	The meaning of music has no set reference and is diverse, fluid and dynamic.

In accordance with the concept of symbolic interaction, there are two parts of consumer research related to meaning, namely symbolic consumption and self-concept, which provide the basis for the consumption of music as a self-representation in interaction thus entering into the division of consumer culture theory (Lindberg, 2023). Consumer culture theory explores how consumers actively rework and change the symbolic meanings encoded by brand owners or certain material goods that manifest consumers' personal circumstances and identities and characterize their lifestyles. Therefore, the theory of consumer culture explains the importance of symbolism in consumption. These symbols are concerned with self-concepts that are multidimensional and situational. This reference is useful to provide differences in interpreting how each individual varies in consuming music and being a representation of themselves in different social interactions. Self-concept has largely been developed from a psychological perspective and refers to "the totality of the thoughts and feelings of the individual referring to himself as an object" (Vaidya, 2023).

c. Music and pop culture in social media

Pop culture, as a concept, refers to the creation of commodities that are collectively appreciated and widely consumed, often originating from the consumption patterns of society (Ikhsano & Sianipar, 2021). Popular culture comprises more than entertainment, it is embedded in what people consume for sustenance, observe, listen to, and interact with daily (Ikhsano & Sianipar, 2021). However, the integrity of the genre typically relies on preserving

traditional elements, which are often undermined when commercialization takes precedence.

When music becomes overly commercialized, its connection to popular culture can diminish, as cultural roots of the art risk being overshadowed by profit-driven motives. Music, as a cultural phenomenon, has been observed to convey diverse meanings and functions, yet its evolution into a largely industrial enterprise has led to a significant distance from cultural origins of the art. A significant aspect of this detachment originated from the incomplete industrialization of certain musical elements, leaving traditional music, particularly those tied to folk traditions, as a contrasting remnant of cultural authenticity. Modernism has further accelerated this shift, particularly in the 21st century, where music production heavily relies on computer technology. This mechanized approach often strips the art of its nuanced tastes and melodies, transforming it into a standardized, mass-produced commodity (Günay, 2023).

Despite this, popular music has been observed to persist as a cultural phenomenon that extends beyond mere art or entertainment to reflect societal norms and industrial transformations. The genre thrives on its intensive consumption, by becoming deeply ingrained in everyday life and being established as a hallmark of modern society (Tyson, 2023). The prevalence of music within pop culture often shows the values and practices of dominant groups, shaping and reflecting societal trends. The rapid advancement of technology has further amplified the accessibility of music and videos through the internet, radio, and television, allowing the art to gain popularity within moments. Accordingly, the widespread habit of consuming popular music has evolved alongside the growth of popular culture. As stated in previous studies, this genre of music, which is often characterized by its entertainment value and association with dance, attracts younger audiences through the use of diverse electronic and acoustic instruments, memorable melodies, and rhythmic structures (Adekogbe, 2023; Dai et al., 2022).

The social media progression has created an expressway in the music industry. Social media became integrated into the music industry, especially after music streaming in the 2000s. The internet has made accessibility to music in mere seconds (Campoverde-Molina et al., 2023). Music lovers easily find out about new songs, new artists, and communicate with like-minded people through social media. Music fans are given the opportunity to correspond directly with their favourite artists by sending private messages or writing on public walls of social media. Musicians have the opportunity to reach fans directly by engaging in the community more closely and promoting their image through various social media features. (Turchet, 2023).

Social media content, in general, can be categorized into three primary types namely rational (focused on information, education, and current events), interactional (emphasizing shared experiences, brand community, and customer relations), and transactional (targeting remunerative activities, brand resonance, and sales promotions). Empirically, the data showed that rational content influenced engagement in the form of likes, but did not affect more active engagement, such as comments. The results showed that the appeal of rational content is not as effective as emotional appeal in attracting customer engagement (Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021). Instagram's algorithm is a great equalizer (Büchi & Hargittai, 2022), and how well an Instagram account manager understands this, will determine the success of his social media marketing strategy. Instagram's algorithm analyses every piece of content posted to the platform. It takes metadata (including text and alt text written on images), hashtags, and engagement metrics. Based on this information, account users will

have access to whichever they are most interested in. Instagram's algorithm will look at information about content (Reels, feed posts, and Stories) and information about the account owner, such as his or her interests and behaviour on the platform. Thus, the algorithm will work to present the content to the right people (Rezk, 2023).

Instagram serves as a rich platform for symbolic interaction, where symbols play a significant role in fostering communication. For instance, emoticons function as visual symbols in written communication, acting as digital equivalents of body language or gestures. Through Instagram accounts people can post and share stories through pictures and videos and they can comment on posts or send messages directly. The language used tends to be non-formal and uses emoticons (Sockett, 2023).

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted using a qualitative approach, and the primary data collection technique adopted was focus group discussions. Five discussion groups were conducted, each comprising six individuals who met the following criteria: a strong passion for music, being part of Generation Z, and active engagement on social media. Generation Z was selected as the informant for this study because they are the primary consumers of the contemporary music industry. The focus group discussions were conducted over three sessions, each addressing distinct topics: the state of digital communication in Indonesia and ASEAN music industries, based on reviews of Instagram accounts. The second session examined how the two Instagram accounts, namely @playmusicindonesia and @axeanfestival, represent symbolic interaction in music. Finally, the third session on the manner in which popular culture manifests through music in Indonesia and ASEAN countries.

This study used a descriptive-comparative method. The descriptive method includes an investigation of the current status of a group of people, an object, a set of conditions, or a system of thought. Its primary aim is to provide a systematic, factual, and accurate portrayal of the characteristics and properties of the phenomena being examined (Vincentia, 2023). Meanwhile, the comparative aspect of the methodology allows investigators to analyze differences between distinct phenomena. Comparative studies focus on juxtaposing one object or context with another to identify variations and similarities (Amigó et al., 2023). In accordance with these insights, the descriptive-comparative method in this study is to compare the data from two Instagram accounts, both of which are centred on music. One account, @playmusicindonesia, emphasizes music in Indonesia, while the other, @axeanfestival, showcases music across ASEAN countries, with Indonesia as a member.

In this study, the contents of the two accounts were presented solely to stimulate discussion and gain deeper insights from participants, rather than being subjected to a detailed content analysis. The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) participants evaluated the accounts in accordance with applicable concepts of digital marketing communication. These concepts include content excellence, reach in international markets, account metrics, and the scope of audience engagement. Questions include: How do you think Indonesian and ASEAN music, like K-pop, can stand out more internationally? Do you see yourself or your culture represented in the music and themes promoted by these Instagram accounts? and others. This study examined the results of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), categorized, then analysed the findings by comparing the answers of one group with another group, and then interpreting these results against data from literature reviews and previous research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a) *Digital Communication of Music in Indonesia and Music in South East Asia (ASEAN)*

In order to comprehensively understand how music communication management is implemented in Indonesia and ASEAN countries, the data collected from discussions with the five groups were analysed, and valuable insights were obtained. The results represent a consensus among the groups and are summarized in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2: Market segmentation seen in @playmusicindonesia

Geographic	Demographic	Behavioral
Indonesia Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gen Z and Millennials -16-33 years' old -University Student University -High School Student -Worker -Freelancer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extrovert -Enthusiastic -Music Lovers -Looking for Experience -FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) -Cheerful

Source: Primary data (2023)

Table 3: Market segmentation seen in @axeanfestival

Geographic	Demographic	Behavioral
Southeast Asia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gen Z and Millennials - 16-35 years 'old - University Student University -High School Student -Worker -Freelancer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Art enthusiasts -Freedom of expression - Fashionable - International knowledge - Acculturation - Ambivert personality - have habit to hangout - Active people - Regularly listen to music.

Source: Primary data (2023)

From the profiles and posts of the two Instagram accounts examined, the five discussion groups drew conclusions about the state of Indonesian and ASEAN music management. As stated by the informant, digital communication in Indonesian music was considered less varied and underdeveloped in its ability to reach international markets. Accordingly, the informants emphasized the need for improved marketing strategies similar to those adopted by the K-Pop wave. As stated by Areiza-Padilla and Galindo-Becerra (2022), the lack of effective promotion of Indonesian music is the main drawback. This is evident in the Instagram account @playmusicindonesia, which was observed to often feature posts overshadowed by other viral moments. Moreover, Indonesian music has a limited target audience and struggles to resonate with broader demographics, particularly Gen Z. This led to the invariable conclusion that the largest market segment in Indonesia remains underutilized.

As a brand, music in Indonesia has many genres that can be combined with modern music such as Weird Genius, Indonesian music has its own uniqueness as mentioned by Wibowo et al. (2023). Another advantage is to be a representative of Indonesian culture. Indonesian music is different and has its own characteristics compared to music from abroad. Creativity in Indonesian musical instruments and melodies has a distinctive characteristic.

Unfortunately, this is not exposed on social media accounts such as the Instagram accounts studied. In neighbouring countries, such as Malaysia and Singapore, Indonesian music is relatively well-known and this is primarily attributed to the shared cultural similarities of the countries.

The majority of music genres in Indonesia are melancholic which tells about romance and is packed with sad tones. This genre is used as a safe zone for musicians in Indonesia. Indonesian people believe that music that has a sad story and with a melancholy tone will have more fans. In addition, the majority of Indonesian musicians use Indonesian in song narration in their music. This makes it difficult for Indonesian music to penetrate the global market, because the world market does not understand the meaning of songs in Indonesian language. The title song "Why Don't You Stay" sung by Jeff Satur from Thailand became booming in Indonesia and even in the world. The song has two versions, namely English and Thai so it is easier to remember and to be pronounced; that is a communication strategy as mentioned by Herdiati and Saputra (2022).

The informants agreed that if an artist wants to successfully penetrate the global market, embracing more upbeat tones such as jazz or lo-fi could be advantageous. Observations of @playmusicindonesia account underscored the need for improved communication management. This includes fostering collaboration with more influential media partners to expand the target markets, as the current partners lack the necessary reach. Additionally, social media content @playmusicindonesia must be more interactive, engaging, and visually appealing. Leveraging influencers could also amplify awareness of Indonesian music. The venues showcased on the observed Instagram account are often limited in capacity, which typically restricts the reach of the audience. It is important to comprehend that Indonesian music faces stiff competition, particularly from Malaysia. Artist such as Siti Nurhaliza, who gained popularity with the song "*Bukan Cinta Biasa*" in 2003, has successfully captured the Indonesia market. The easy to pronounce the lyrics and melodious composition of the song underscored its competitive edge. Indonesian singers could draw relevant inspiration from and implement similar strategies.

Currently, some Indonesian musicians have started producing songs using English lyrics with the aim of making the songs accessible to international audiences. For instance, Sezairi's "It's you" went viral on TikTok, frequently used as background sound in videos, and subsequently gained international traction. A unique advantage of Indonesian music, which is often overlooked, is dangdut. This genre is claimed to originate from Indonesia; is characterized by its distinctive rhythm, lyrics, music, pronunciation, and vocal approaches. However, the authenticity of dangdut as exclusively Indonesian music is sometimes questioned due to its perceived similarities with Indian music.

ASEAN music accounts in managing their digital communication must concentrate on the segmentation, as outlined in Table 3. The COVID-19 atmosphere made @Axeanfestival launch its inaugural edition virtually, and the live broadcast was in the form of a pre-recorded performance video in September 2020. This event is an initiative to help national artists stay connected with their fan base; gaining new international fans; and open up opportunities for international tours in the future. They were seen meeting music business professionals from around the world through virtual meetings. With COVID-19 restrictions, the ASEAN Music Performance Festival (AMS) was held with the first in-person performances held on 10 and 11 September 2022 at Haw Par Villa, an 8.5-hectare Asian cultural park located in Singapore.

The primary limitation of the @axeanfestival account is the lack of sustainability in music events. ASEAN artists showcased on this platform often remain highly segmented, and this typically acts as a limitation to global recognition. In order to effectively address this issue, music produced must correspond with the dynamic preferences of international audiences by incorporating diverse genres that can appeal broadly. As stated in a previous study, this adaptability is essential for ASEAN music to gain a wider global audience (Zeng et al., 2023).

ASEAN music typically faces intense competition from the K-Pop and J-Pop genres of South Korea and Japan respectively. This competition is evident in the significant number of Southeast Asians auditioning for AKB48, a renowned Japanese idol group. In Indonesia, JKT48 has adopted the AKB48 concept, offering localized "idols you can meet every day." As stated by Yan et al. (2023), this serves as a brand differentiation, showcasing how cultural adaptation and engagement strategies can be leveraged within ASEAN music industry.

From the discussions of the five groups, several key suggestions were made to enhance communication management of the Indonesian and ASEAN music industries. First, it was elucidated that there is a need for a more diverse line-up of artists. This is particularly important because selecting performers with strong reputations and exceptional musical abilities can significantly elevate the experience of the audience. Furthermore, by incorporating a variety of music genres and blending local and international artists, performances can appeal to a broader range of musical preferences, creating a more engaging and dynamic atmosphere. Second, professional event management was considered essential for ensuring audience satisfaction. This includes meticulous planning and execution of elements such as stage design, sound systems, lighting, and other infrastructure. High-quality management typically enhances the comfort of the audience and optimizes the entire sensory experience of the event. Third, the groups elucidated that the selection of strategic event locations with adequate facilities is very important. Venues should typically offer easy accessibility and amenities such as ample parking, clean restrooms, and well-organized food and beverage areas. These factors contribute significantly to the convenience and satisfaction of the attendees. Fourth, ensuring a sense of security and comfort is of significant importance. Considering this point, events must prioritize the safety of respective audiences through the deployment of professional security teams and the implementation of rigorous safety protocols. A secure and orderly environment not only protects attendees but also enhances the entire enjoyment of the event. Finally, the groups suggested that performers should focus on being more interactive and engaging with respective audiences. This point is particularly important because incorporating creative zones and activities that foster audience participation can leave a lasting impression and make the event more memorable. This approach mirrors the atmosphere of world-class music festivals, where artists actively engage and communicate with fans, thereby creating a vibrant and inclusive experience.

With the data above, it can be said that music communication management in Indonesia and in ASEAN is still difficult to achieve global competition as done by South Korea. Music in Indonesia and ASEAN is difficult to achieve maximum profit because the distribution of musical works has not been widespread, the audience has not been massive like other world-class music. Music performances in Indonesia and ASEAN have not been able to become the highest entertainment tool because Indonesian and ASEAN music consumption has not reached optimum attention to the rest of the world as revealed by Danilova and Krupa (2021).

The promotion and distribution of Indonesian and ASEAN music on social media has not brought the influence of music from the UK and the US, as they have not dared to officially establish a global license. Music in Indonesia and ASEAN has not managed to create a sensation through performances that are aired through videos that go viral into millions of other video views in one day (success factor). In Indonesia and ASEAN, there has not been a fandom that willingly spreads the word about their idols on social media platforms. Communication management should be diversified, by making a number of prominent differences in Indonesian and ASEAN music (Yan et al., 2023).

b) Representation of Indonesia and ASEAN Music on Instagram Accounts

With the existence of social media such as Instagram, people now more easily see representations of reality, including with the reality of music. To see the reality of Indonesian music and ASEAN music, we can look at Instagram posts which amounted to 158 posts from @playmusicindonesia and 273 posts from @axeanfestival. From the hundreds of posts, the results of the group's analysis of the two accounts are:

In @playmusicindonesia, the designs created are contemporary, ranging from fonts, backgrounds, highlights, etc. Continuity in the design of this play music is tied to the element aspect with green light colour on the logo. Another colour that dominates is maroon, there are light and dark in each feed for the last four months. The font displayed feels funky and eye-catching because it uses contrasting colours such as rainbow, orange, and pearly white. This type of graphic has consistency in each post and shows that the target market is Gen Z. @playmusicindonesia has a colour theme for each year. The designs are categorized as funky bohemian. This type of typography is a type of hand-drawn font that is attractive and not rigid. Indonesian music accounts use linktree to facilitate access to landing pages that provide various kinds of information needed related to music events, sales contacts, sponsors, and also media partners.

With complete identity and access to information on @playmusicindonesia account, the profile looks professional and seems to represent the consumer behaviour habits of Gen Z as a target market. The dynamic nature of colours and font types as well as complete digital information shows readiness and understanding of consumer behaviour. The design template @axeanfestival displays blue light colours, in the first post the feeds are glued to RGB (red, green, blue). This becomes the core power branding. However, the continuity of the colour is not inconsistent with the use of element design as a whole. New blue light grading since July 18th, 2022. ASEAN music is considered to have an element of entertainment and can generate engagement through elegant video content. ASEAN Music Showcase Festival feeds have different themes for each content. They also provide various information that is connected to the official website using English so that each country can understand the content of the message in the media. The desire to reach international markets already exists in ASEAN music, one of which is by rebranding to "axeanfestival" which was previously "Aseanmusicshowcasefestival". This is an attempt to target an international audience by removing the word "ASEAN". ASEAN music competitors are South Asian music such as from India entitled "*Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*". In Indonesia, Indian film shows are present. The song and film shows have been around for a long time, but they are still popular in the ASEAN community, one of which is in Indonesia. In addition to South Asian music, there is also music from America (Western pop music), entitled "My Love" from Westlife. This song from Westlife can be called a competitor of ASEAN music because almost all countries know this song especially often used in weddings.

The ASEAN music event involves the collaboration of more than 40 artists from several ASEAN countries that can attract international followers. ASEAN music does not use very specific segmentation in instrumental or colour selection, so the content can be generally accepted by a wide range of international audiences. ASEAN music has a clearer mission to reach international markets, yet, the changes made show immaturity in the music campaign plan itself. The hope of going global is more visible in ASEAN music.

The symbolic consumption and self-concept that exist in the audience of the two music accounts show that there is a self-representation of Indonesian and ASEAN music enthusiasts. It has become part of Indonesian and ASEAN music consumer culture (Lindberg, 2023). Indonesian and ASEAN music audiences are actively working on the symbolic meanings posted from both accounts. Followers manifest their personal circumstances and identity and characterize their lifestyle by engaging passively (like), interacting (commentary) or transactionally buying the tickets (Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021) and come to event shows offered by both accounts. Thus, the theory of consumer culture explains the importance of symbolism in consumption. These symbols are related to self-concepts that are multidimensional and situational (Panadero, 2023).

On the @axeanfestival Instagram account, there are posts about singers from Indonesia with songs performed in English that can reach international markets including ASEAN. Some of the musicians chosen by this account are rising singers like: Raisa, Rizky Febian and JKT48. They are considered to have strong charisma with soothing music and using English words in their lyrics, which can open boundaries to the international market as mentioned by Lindberg (2023) in the cultural theory.

Singers and bands who perform at the music event represent the ideal image of music lovers, in this case fans in Indonesia and fans in ASEAN countries. On the Indonesian music account, all singers and bands that perform are Indonesian singers such as Tulus, Raisa, Mahalini who are popular artists in Indonesia. They are also representatives of Indonesia's millennial and Gen Z communities and as the self-concept for the fans as mentioned by Vaidya (2023).

The differences between the three principles of symbolic interactionism theory regarding meaning, language, and thought are evident in the two accounts. The @playmusicindonesia account is more concerned with the sense of various music trends in Indonesia, while the @axeanfestival account plays on the meaning of more varied symbols from different ASEAN countries. The language aspect is visible in the two accounts as a differentiating aspect. The storytelling tends to be news-based, while the @axeanfestival content is more like information. The aspect of thought as the basis for compiling message strategies in both accounts seems similar. So, the relevance of the data is very close to the theory that the symbols read are more meaningful.

c) Music and Pop Culture on Instagram Accounts @playmusicindonesia and @axeanfestival
The number of followers of Instagram @playmusicindonesia and @axeanfestival has a considerable difference. The @playmusicindonesia account has over 46 thousand followers while @axeanfestival only has 2,584 thousand followers. The greater number of followers is possible because the account is created @playmusicindonesia first and more often carries out events compared to @axeanfestival. Indonesian Music often holds music festivals and they are very consistent with the event so many audiences are waiting for the Indonesian music event. This is to use the technology to spread it as mentioned by Günay (2023).

The engagement rate for both accounts has been recorded. Figure 1 displays music engagement of @playmusicindonesia, while Figure 2 presents the @axeanfestival.

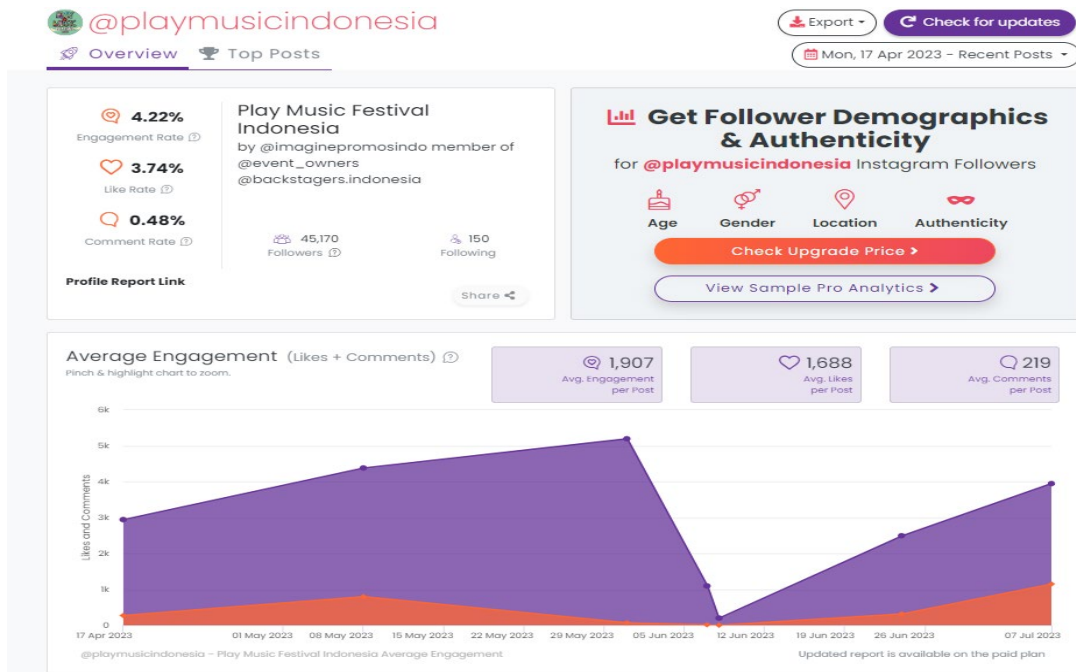


Figure 1: Engagement level of Indonesian music account

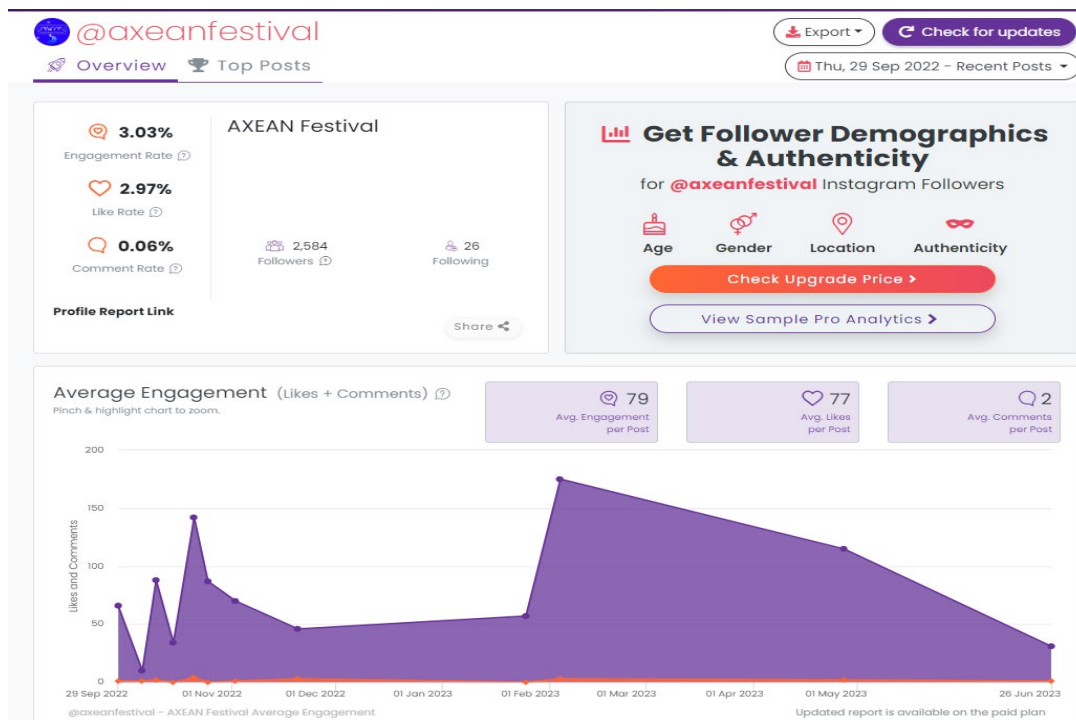


Figure 2: ASEAN Music's account engagement level

It can be seen that the engagement of Indonesian music accounts reached 4.22% while the engagement of ASEAN accounts had a smaller number of 3.03%. An average interaction per post for @playmusicindonesia stated they are getting 994 likes and has 88 comments, while Instagram @axeanfestival has an average interaction per post of only 77 likes and 1 comment on each post. In another comparison between both accounts,

@playmusicindonesia got the most post viewers and likes with a total of 20K to 100K while post viewers from the Instagram @axeanfestival only got 1K to 5K.

Indonesian music viewers come from Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, while ASEAN music viewers come from countries in Southeast Asia such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia. If you look at the origin of the country, ASEAN Music has reached various countries in ASEAN, so it can be considered successful. There are also differences in captions and hashtags. The most used words are about year, music, and play while the hashtags are #PlayMusicFestival2023, #PlayMusicFestivalMalang and #UnforgettableMoment. As shown in Figure 3 below:

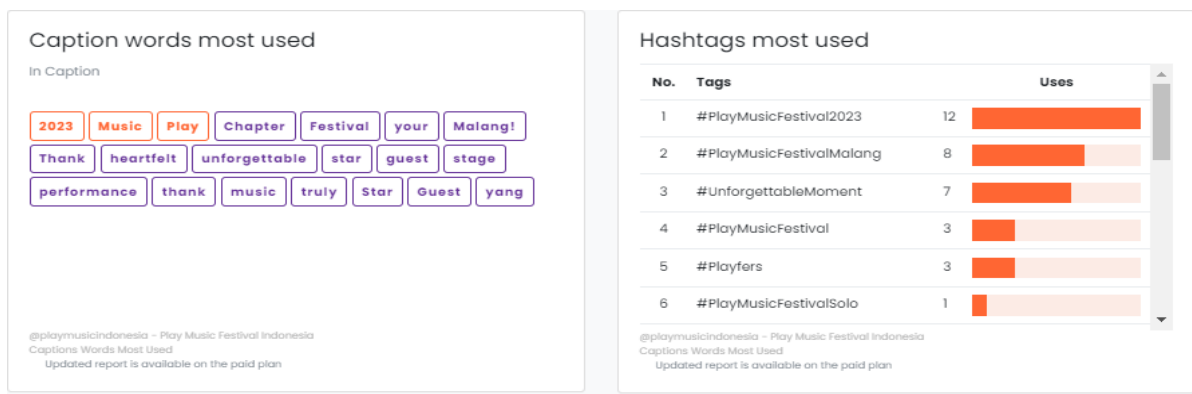


Figure 3: Captions and hashtags on Indonesian music accounts

It can be seen from the words and hashtags, Indonesian music made a comeback in 2023 with the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, because music performances can be carried out face-to-face (in-person). The manager of this account comes from the East Java region of Indonesia so the city of Malang often appears on their posts. The wordplay that often appears also describes the dynamic activities of music players in Indonesia. The word describes Indonesian culture that considers music as a distraction activity, not as a basic activity of every member of society in Indonesia. This is not in accordance with the original culture of Indonesia, which in every event there is always traditional music that accompanies it, happens in every Indonesian culture. The wordplay is actually not appropriate if it is associated with the culture (Tyson, 2023). However, there is a tendency now in Indonesia to make music only as an additional activity. As for the words and hashtags that often appear on ASEAN music Instagram accounts are as follows:

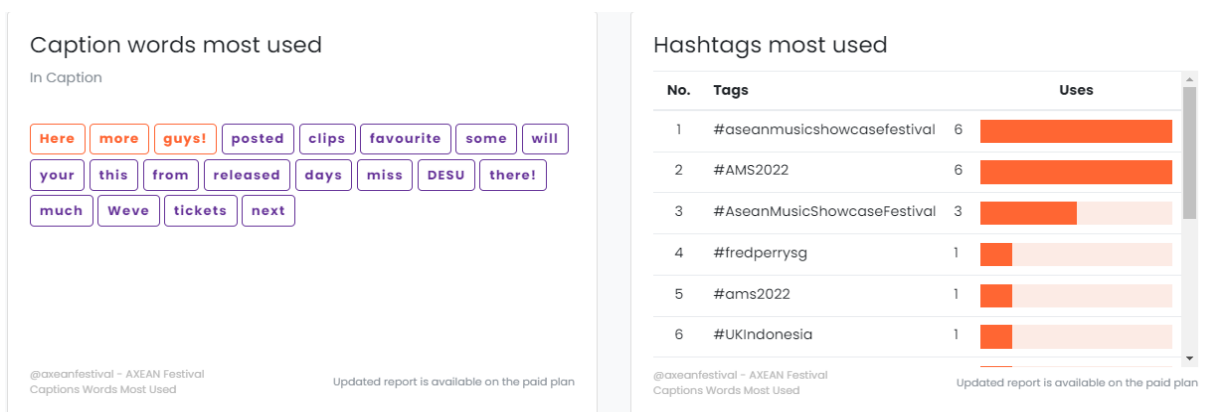


Figure 4: Captions and hashtags on ASEAN Music account

Meanwhile, the ASEAN account contains the words "Here", "more", and "guys" with the hashtags #Aseanmusicshowcasefestival, #AMS2022, and #Aseanmusicshowcasefestival. There are differences in the language of music performances in Indonesia and ASEAN. For @axeanfestival accounts run by the Singapore state, they prefer "Here" to indicate a word to show, such as "here I am" (Sockett, 2023) and memorable (Dai et al., 2022). Culturally, this shows pride in oneself and a willingness to accompany oneself. Then the word "more" is an optimistic word to develop "more", with the quality of "more" supported by the internet (Campoverde-Molina et al., 2023). Culturally, this also shows an attitude that encourages the audience. The word "guys" is a familiar and young greeting according to their target. Culturally, it can be interpreted that they are friends (Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021); ASEAN is a close friend that invites each other closer. This is also a characteristic of culture in Southeast Asia. As ASEAN started face-to-face activities at the end of 2022, this also showed a faster movement from ASEAN countries, especially Singapore, than Indonesia.

The picture above shows that music describes Indonesian culture according to the words and hashtags on the Indonesian music Instagram account and also the ASEAN culture from where the music was born (Turchet, 2023). As popular culture, music in Indonesia has been consumed intensively and is prevalent in the community, as evidenced by the number of followers, which has reached 46.6 thousand. This represents 10 percent of the number of Gen Z in Indonesia. The account has reached the right people (Rezk, 2023). Music in ASEAN has become an occurrence of folk culture in modern society, with words that often appear in captions that show the dominant culture of the Gen Z group. The support of technological advances like algorithms (Büchi & Hargittai, 2022) in Instagram has been proven to create the habit of listening to music in Indonesia, and ASEAN has developed into popular culture.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results obtained from this study showed the underdeveloped state of digital communication strategies within the Indonesian and ASEAN music industries, particularly when compared to the global success of industries such as the K-Pop of South Korea. Instagram was found to be an effective platform possessing the capability to foster symbolic interaction and audience identity. However, both Indonesian and ASEAN music industries failed to fully capitalize on its potential to establish strong cultural representation and expand respective global reach. Indonesian music, as exemplified by the @playmusicindonesia account, has significant untapped potential to emerge as a dominant cultural symbol in ASEAN. Regardless of the associated benefits, this potential was constrained by limited genre diversity and a lack of strategic internationalization. To compete on a global scale, Indonesian music must adopt more dynamic digital communication approaches, diversify its musical offerings, and incorporate multilingual content to connect with wider audiences. Meanwhile, ASEAN music, represented by @axeanfestival, showed aspirations for internationalization but lacked the consistent branding and event management necessary for long-term impact. Although its use of English and regional diversity is commendable, these efforts must be complemented by improved digital communication strategies and a stronger focus on symbolic representation to truly resonate with global audiences.

This study underscores the role of symbolic interactionism in understanding how digital platforms such as Instagram shape audience identity and cultural representation in the music industry. It also underscored the significance of popular culture as a tool for enhancing competitiveness in international markets. For future investigations, explorations can be carried out to examine interaction between fan engagement and cross-cultural identity

formation, providing a deeper understanding of the role digital media plays in global music communication.

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