Phenomenological Study of Mixue Products Using Viral Marketing Through Social Media

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1. INTRODUCTION

According to the Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS), until the end of 2021 there were around 7.6 million students in Indonesia. This is a relatively large number and will increase every year. This amount is of course very tempting for those who have businesses that depend on students. Students have a habit of gathering with friends or what they usually call hanging out, which is currently a lifestyle that is common among students. The changes in lifestyle that are visible in students are mainly the ambition that their appearance and behavior can attract the attention of other people, especially their peers, because students want to gain recognition for their existence in the environment around them. The lifestyle of hanging out in cafes has become commonplace in all levels of society. By hanging out, everyone can relax and get rid of boredom after work, can chat with colleagues or family. Get together or socialize is one of the characteristics of humans as social creatures where humans need each other (Abdusshomad, 2021).

In the beginning, the tradition of hanging out was defined only as an activity to fill people's free time which was usually done by simply drinking coffee or tea with snacks with family and relatives at home. This tradition is not only carried out at night but can also be done during the day as a pastime. This is different from the phenomenon that occurs today when hanging out is mostly done in cafes to gather with friends, which influences the growth of cafes and gathering places to develop very rapidly. Rapid changes have occurred due to globalization and modernization, and additionally, society’s needs are growing day by day, meaning that society’s primary needs are not just clothing, food and shelter, but also secondary and tertiary needs seem to be developing into primary needs that cannot be replaced by anything. Each student has their own background in carrying out hanging out activities. The background of these hanging out activities includes establishing friendship, sharing experiences, seeking inspiration, productivity and recreation facilities (Marbawani & Hendrastomo, 2021).

With the increasing number of students who have lots of activities on campus, it seems like they often experience boredom with their daily routines, which then turns hanging out into entertainment. The trend of hanging out culture, which has long been considered a culture of lazy and useless people, has great potential to reduce the stress that often affects the younger generation (Fauzi et al., 2017). We cannot deny that many brilliant and creative ideas are created from the hanging out culture because currently the younger generation tends to like things that are out of the box. Creating something from a completely unexpected place.

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Mixue ice cream and tea is an ice cream and tea shop that is currently being loved by consumers, especially those who are still students. The background to this research begins with the number of Mixue shops in Indonesia, especially in Purwokerto, which is starting to increase significantly. This research aims to find out how Mixue uses indirect viral marketing strategies to maintain its business. Researchers want to know how the viral marketing process is carried out by Mixue with a phenomenological study through interviews with informants and participant observation as well as the use of triangulation to check the validity of the data. It can be concluded from this research that Mixue carries out viral marketing indirectly because consumers who play a role in this do it for free. Consumers carry out viral marketing and spread it widely through their social media. Students like hanging out and doing assignments at Mixue because the atmosphere is good and it is more productive than doing assignments at campus or school.

Keywords
Viral Marketing;
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Needs become something instinctive which then becomes a priority for humans which is then related to the effort expended to fulfill these needs. On the other hand, the current phenomenon of consumption is no longer related to use value in order to fulfill human needs but is also related to elements such as prestige, social status and certain social positions. Consumption expresses a person’s social position and identity in the social life of society where something they consume is not only a product or service but also something that contains special values in it (Estika, 2017). Don’t forget that the culture of hanging out has recently developed due to the influence of foreign culture. The sophistication of technology and social media has made students behave more consumptively. If we look at the meaning of consumptive behavior here, it means the behavior of young people related to the culture of society which consumes something as part of their lifestyle.

Mixue Ice Cream & Tea is a trademark originating from China. According to current data, the number of Mixue Ice Crea & Tea outlets in Indonesia has reached 317 outlets, which is predicted to continue to increase due to high public demand. The company that created Mixue said that they will continue to expand and are targeting the number of outlets worldwide to reach 30,000 outlets. This is of course interesting because this number is quite large. Usually those who have this many outlets are fast food outlets such as McDonalds or KFC. It is quite rare for us to find an ice cream shop that can survive for a long time.

![Mixue Ice Cream & Tea Outlet](https://langit7.id/read/19817/I/kehalalan-produknya-dipertanyakan-begini-jawaban-mixue-1658984864)

(Boentoro et al., 2020) found that in the era of digital communication which is currently booming, business actors should be able to utilize social media to communicate their brand to the public because it has proven to be more effective. This strategy is more effective and relatively cheaper when compared to conventionally produced advertising.

The changing era that occurred rapidly from the conventional era to the modern era marked by the presence of internet technology, especially social media has changed the behavior of people who use it both in personal life and in social interactions. The implementation of marketing strategies through social media based on social networks and websites is currently considered the most appropriate choice when compared to marketing through conventional methods. In the business world, this is a challenge and a big opportunity for marketers to get closer to consumers and expand their marketing reach in a short time at lower costs. The use of social media in marketing activities allows for fast and direct interaction with the audience. However, the ease of accessing and using social media must be balanced with the marketer’s ability to respond to various problems or obstacles as a manifestation of the weaknesses of social media itself.
The implementation of viral marketing must be included as part of the marketing campaign's strategic plan, so it requires careful planning, equipped with anticipatory steps that can be implemented immediately if something undesirable happens (Sari, 2019). This can be interpreted as viral marketing which is used as the latest marketing method which is profitable because it can bring in more visitors.

This research will reveal the phenomenological study conducted by Mixue Ice Cream & Tea for their marketing strategy through social media. Similar research has been carried out (Isnawati, 2022) stated about viral content phenomenon originates from the content sharing culture that exists in society, especially those who use social media. This culture was created due to the rapid development of technology which made social media evolve and made it easy for users to create, share and even reproduce content created by other social media users. This content virality phenomenon also has an impact on various aspects, one of which is the aspect of developing marketing communication strategies.

2. LITERATURE STUDY

A. Viral Marketing

Viral marketing is a marketing strategy currently used by many marketers. One of the reasons why viral marketing can be easily entered and used is because of the ease with which marketers spread information via social media. Based on (Qurniawati, 2018) it can then be said that knowing which social media sites are used by the company's target market is another key factor in guaranteeing that online marketing will be successful. Viral marketing is one of marketing strategies by making information going viral in cyberspace can spread information about products through messages or videos which are made. One video or upload reshared by others and so on is a smart way of promotion so that the promotion goal can be achieved and more and more people who came across the product accidentally (Surniandari, 2017).

Students as one of the active consumers are currently very potential target market for implementing viral marketing strategies. Students make decisions about whether to buy or not based on the references they get (Irwansyah et al., 2019).

Businesses that start with a viral marketing campaign have the potential to spread marketing messages rapidly and valuably. Viral marketing can entitle consumers, which means that if a business can satisfy consumers, the business will gain greater profits through consumer-consumer communication (Rollins et al., 2014).

Viral marketing techniques are easier to use nowadays because of increasingly rapid technological advances where people, especially students, are more often using their smartphones to surf the internet. With various services available, social media has changed the way communicate in society.

(Putra Perssela et al., 2022) found about turns the presence of social media that bring changes in ways communicating from conventional to modern and completely digital, but also causes communication to take place become more effective.

B. Social Media Sharing

It cannot be denied that the presence of social media in society has provided great liaison services, especially for connecting one human being with another. Social media belongs entirely to ordinary people who can control the world revolving around them and find something new to bring their voice to in order to get what they want (Force & Academy, 2012).

(Mulawarman & Nurfitri, 2017) said that human behavior, which is increasingly inseparable from reality in cyberspace, deserves serious attention. Because currently human life is dependent on social media and what is uploaded there. Social media nowadays seems to be a benchmark that what is posted there is absolute and indisputable, therefore teenagers tend to follow what trends are ‘in’ there.

Social media is actually media for socialization and interaction also interesting for people to see and visit links containing information about the product and others. So it's natural that it can be use as the easiest and cheapest marketing strategy by the company. The phenomenon of social media presence as the impact of technological developments information and communication are extraordinary.
Looking at this data, we can measure that social media users in Indonesia are very large and massive. This is in line with what (Puspitarini & Nuraeni, 2019) stated that social media, especially Instagram, has various advantages in promotional activities, such as being able to convey information to consumers does not require money and energy, in fact the time used to convey information to many people is very short. Through Instagram, the information we want to share doesn't have to be in the form of writing, we can share photos and even videos with consumers easily.

Consumers in Indonesia depend on everything that goes viral to feel different sensations when consume a brand. When we talk about how viral marketing has a big influence on current marketing strategies, we can see the massive shift in promotional methods through social media. If in the beginning brands will depend entirely on their marketing team, in viral marketing brands don't need to bother with promotion because consumers will be the ones who will help promote the brand themselves through their social media.

From the results of observations by researchers in the field, hanging out at Mixue is one of the activities for teenagers to show off their lifestyle to other people to get an assessment of their social class identity. They do this because they are used to looking at social media and using everything that goes viral as a benchmark that everything that goes viral should be tried. Today's teenagers, if they don't try something that is viral, will feel out of date and will be considered not up to date by the environment. They will also carry out further viral marketing because after trying it they will immediately show it off via their social media, showing the location of the Mixue outlet they visited, and even providing a review of the drink they tried along with the price.

After asking several questions to the informants, researchers was able to draw the conclusion that of the many activities carried out by teenagers when they visited Mixue, in practice they showed excessive characteristics and gave away viral marketing on Mixue products for free, this was seen when they showed off their activities hanging out. in Mixue via social media.

The following is a data mapping of the answers obtained from five informants when they decided to visit the Mixue shop after seeing other people's posts on social media.

For the validity of the data, researchers used source triangulation techniques. Researchers carried out data validation by comparing what people said with what they said about the activities they carried out and comparing the results of informant interviews with the reality when they hung out at the Mixue outlet via social media. The advantage of using various data collection techniques through triangulation is for data consolidation purposes where the strengths of one method can be used to overcome the weaknesses of other methods.
3. METHOD

This research that refers to this phenomenon uses phenomenological methods. Phenomenology is both as theory and a method. As a philosophy phenomenology believes that it is in phenomena that knowledge resides. Apart from that, phenomenology is a measuring tool for obtaining knowledge about properties experience consciousness and special types of first-person knowledge, through forms intuition. Basically, phenomenology examines the essence of experience. From phenomena, data field, and interviews and then look for the meaning and essence behind the phenomenon (Muktaf, 2016).

(Petty Arisanti, 2021) stated this type of research is phenomenological research aimed at finding out the world from the perspective of someone who experiences it directly or is related to it the nature of human experience and the meaning contained in it. This research in practice, researchers are neutral. Researchers must be neutral so that research is not mixed with personal feelings and preferences. Researchers position themselves as individuals who want to find out about the phenomenon being researched.

This type of phenomenological research is a qualitative research approach. This study took place in Purwokerto. Denzin dan Lincoln in (Tumangkeng & Maramis, 2022) said there are two things that become main focus in phenomenology namely:

a. Textural description: which explains what the research subject experiences in the phenomenon being studied. What has been experienced is an objective aspect, the data produced is factual, things that happen empirically.

b. Structural description: how the subject experiences and uses his experiences to tell a story. This descriptive explanation contains subjective aspects. Aspects that concern opinions, judgments, feelings, hopes, and other subjective responses and research subjects are related to their experiences.

Basically, phenomenology examines the essence of experience. From phenomena, data field, and interviews and then look for the meaning and essence behind the phenomenon. Phenomenology refers more to the individual experiences of several people, which are then in interpret it as a certain meaning.

Data collection techniques use social media observation and interview with consumers. Interview were chosen because researchers could more easily dig in depth about the reasons why consumers come to Mixue outlets because they see how viral Mixue is through social media. Interviews were conducted in depth, open and unstructured. In this way, researchers can freely explore data as completely and deeply as possible so that the understanding of existing phenomena is in accordance with the understanding of researchers.

The selection of informants was carried out randomly but the informants were aged between 19 and 21 years, which is the age that is considered sufficient to provide clearer and unchanged interview answers. Those who become informants are students who like to do assignments outside the campus environment which is the target of viral marketing via social media by marketers.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theme 1. Fanatical about using social media

Researchers want to know how fanatical teenagers are about social media, which ultimately influences their behavior and the way they consume brands. When researchers asked about "how often do you use social media?" all informants answered using social media every day, even from opening their eyes until before going to bed at night. The reason they often open social media is fear and anxiety about missing important news which they think is beneficial for the smooth running of their lives in society.

This is in line with what was conveyed by (Azka et al., 2018) about students who have high levels of social anxiety or people who have disturbed social conditions in their environment which will encourage people to use social media excessively and engage in in-depth online communication. The following are partially summarized conversations with several informants about their fanatical using social media.
“I open social media all the time and I can’t live without it” (Informant 1).

“The first thing I look for when I open my eyes is my smartphone and the first thing I open is social media. I have to know what happens while I’m asleep and can’t miss anything. If I miss something, I feel like I’m behind the times.” (Informant 2).

“Social media is a part of my life. When I look at social media I feel like I’m already addicted, but what else can I do? It seems like stopping or retiring from using it is something I have never thought about in my life.” (Informant 3).

This is in accordance with the facts found by (Azka et al., 2018) in the field that if students do not receive notifications on their cellphones in a day, they will feel anxious due to the reaction of their dependence on social media.

“When within an hour I don’t get notifications from my social media, I think that maybe I did something wrong when I posted something.” (Informant 5).

“Sharing daily activities on social media is a must for me because I want to show people around me what I am doing.” (Informant 4).

Seeing how dependent teenagers are on social media, we can conclude that currently social media has become a necessity and even part of a lifestyle that cannot be separated from teenagers. Some even said how panicked they would be if they didn’t check their social media even for a moment. Opening their eyes, the update is social media first, when they want to sleep they don’t forget to open social media just to say good night to their mutual friends.

**Theme 2. Viral Marketing**

(Sari, 2019) stated that viral marketing, which is enlivening social media today, is believed to have great power in achieving marketing goals. Wide reach in a short time is the main reason for marketers to achieve profits at low costs. That’s why viral marketing is currently getting a lot of attention from marketers and Mixue is getting free marketing from consumers.

A person’s experience in using a particular product can also be a recommendation for other people to use or not use that product. At Mixue, consumers carry out viral marketing through their social media posts with invitations. Consumers who have tried Mixue upload their posts on social media and tell their followers about Mixue products. Which makes other people interested, plus hashtags which will make it easier for followers to find out about the Mixue products.

“I often try what my friends suggest via social media.” (Informant 2).

“I tried Mixue after seeing a post by a celebrity who had a lot of followers and he said that Mixue was very tasty and friendly for students” (Informant 3).

Mixue is consistent with their promotion which leverages popularity through uploads by people who have many followers on social media. (Prayogo et al., 2023) stated that viral marketing is one of the things that can influence consumers’ buying desires. Informants stated that when famous people tried Mixue products, it looked tastier and attracted attention.

“I follow several famous people and when they tried Mixue products, I was interested in trying them because it looked really delicious.” (Informant 4).

“After trying the Mixue product I feel confident that this is the best ice cream product, with an affordable price but we can see that the quality of the ingredients used is also good.” (Informant 1).

Consumers who are happy with the products they buy or the services they receive are automatically willing to share information and products with their families via their social media by adding location information, their favorite products, prices and their impressions when they try the product and this is where viral marketing comes in, it happens and runs naturally.

It may seem that Mixue is relaxing because of viral marketing, but it cannot be denied that the viral marketing influence usually does not last long if this is not accompanied by keeping consumers...
from switching to other products or leaving the product intact. Viral marketing must be on par with other marketing methods which are sometimes forgotten by brands.

Because of massive viral marketing, Mixue is developing on all sides and it is even common knowledge that they have branches in many places to the point where they are called "empty shophouse registrar angels" where they will always target shophouses or strategic places on the side of the road to open their business.

In this study, students love the reactions of people who like their posts when they share via social media. This is because they want to get recognition for their existence. They also want to be seen that they are up to date by visiting places that are going viral. Viral is everything they need in this era.

**Theme 3. Hangout Culture**

If we talk about teenagers and students, we will remember that they really like hanging out and in fact hanging out has become a sustainable culture. Hanging out has become a student's lifestyle and can never be separated from them. Through hanging out, information and even knowledge is exchanged. Therefore, we will easily find students in hangout places such as cafes and so on. Mixue is no exception. Hanging out culture has been interpreted as a necessity, especially by teenagers and students, where they will feel left behind if they don't hang out with friends their own age.

“I really like hanging out at Mixue because the place is cool and the ice cream is delicious.” (Informant 1).

This hanging out activity is a means for individuals to build relationships with other people, for example friendships. Hanging out activities are often carried out with friends in certain groups or friendship circles which are filled with talking, joking, and so on. The informants in this study admitted that they enjoyed hanging out at Mixue to meet friends. Apart from liking the atmosphere, the informants also liked the ice cream at affordable prices.

“I can exchange ideas with friends and sometimes while doing assignments from campus. Doing assignments while drinking something sweet makes the mind better and brighter.” (Informant 4).

This is in line with what (Marbawani & Hendrastomo, 2021) said that not only are the facilities offered at hangout places, comfort is also an important aspect that encourages them to do this activity by hanging out. Not only that, hanging out activities will form new relationships with new people, meaning that in this hanging out activity there will be interactions with new people, which then becomes something interesting for several people who want to share experiences.

**Theme 4. Productivity**

The comfort and various facilities provided by Mixue, especially those in Purwokerto, can currently be said to make it very easy for visitors to work, such as comfortable seating for doing assignments and cool and spacious rooms. This is used to facilitate students who feel more comfortable doing assignments in cafes, so that the current phenomenon is that students often hang out to do assignments, study, or complete work.

“I once did an assignment at Mixue because there were electrical outlets available and the place was spacious and comfortable.” (Informant 5).

“I often did assignments on Mixue with my friends. I feel more comfortable doing assignments there and more productive than doing assignments on campus.” (Informant 2).

Talking about productivity, we cannot escape from the sense of comfort it creates. If we are surrounded by feelings of comfort and joy, we will be more productive in producing something, but on the contrary, we will not be productive when we are in a rushed, unpleasant and threatened condition.

“Doing assignments in a pleasant place makes my mind brighter because I can feel comfortable accompanied by soft music that is often played on Mixue. I was able to order drinks twice while doing my work there.” (Informant 1).
It can be seen from Informant 2's answer about doing assignments in a comfortable place and even being able to order two drinks, which of course has an effect on sales at Mixue. Increased sales turned out to be related to how many people spent time hanging out and doing their work at the Mixue outlet.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the research that has been researched, it can be concluded that viral marketing via social media, which is unintentionally carried out by Mixue outlet consumers, indirectly helps marketing which makes Mixue products known in Indonesia. Mixue consumers initially found out about Mixue products through social media, especially those who are dependent on social media.

Consumers, especially those who are still students, visit Mixue outlets for various activities. These include hanging out with friends and doing assignments. These activities are used by Mixue as free promotions where they expect free marketing through social media used by students. By offering a pleasant place, affordable product prices and good ambience, Mixue fascinates students and likes it as a place to do assignments rather than working on campus or school.

As someone who works in the marketing field, it is important to understand consumers' desires for a comfortable and pleasant place as well as providing delicious food and drinks. Therefore, it is not only the issue of food and drink that must be considered, but the choice of location and the atmosphere offered are also no less important so that our business continues to run well. Optimizing social media and interacting with consumers is one of the easiest things to do, but there is no harm in paying attention to how consumers respond to products.

REFERENCES


