

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Title of the Study

Engagement Through Words: An Analysis of Shopee Indonesia's Caption Strategy on X (Twitter)

1.2. Background of Study

In the era of digital transformation, social media has become an important platform for businesses to communicate with their audiences. According to (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010), social media provides a unique opportunity for companies to engage directly with users, build brand awareness and influence consumer behavior through effective marketing communication strategies. Beyond social media, the broader landscape of digital technology has revolutionized how businesses operate and compete. Digital tools and platforms enable companies to collect and analyze consumer data, automate marketing processes, personalize customer experiences, and expand market reach beyond geographical boundaries. As digital technology continues to advance, businesses that leverage it effectively can operate more efficiently, build stronger relationships with customers, and grow within an increasingly competitive market.

Among the various digital platforms that support marketing and customer engagement, X (formerly known as Twitter) has emerged as one of the most influential and widely used. This platform plays a significant role in enhancing companies' digital communication strategies. Originally launched as Twitter in 2006, the platform was rebranded as X following Elon Musk's acquisition in 2022 and has since undergone further ownership changes, including its transfer to the AI company X AI in 2025. As a microblogging platform, X facilitates real-time communication through short messages, enabling users to convey information, opinions, or promotional content in a fast and concise manner (Putri, 2018). This immediacy and simplicity make it an effective tool for businesses to respond quickly to trends, address customer concerns, and maintain active engagement

with their audience. In addition, The Twitter algorithm plays a significant role in determining the content that appears on users' timelines, thereby influencing the visibility and dissemination of political and commercial messages; simultaneously, the use of hashtags facilitates user participation in conversations and trending topics by organizing and increasing the discoverability of content, while features such as promoted tweets and targeted advertising are widely employed by political campaigns and brands to reach specific demographics; furthermore, the analysis of engagement metrics such as retweets, likes, and replies provides researchers and marketers with insights into user behavior and content resonance (Schlessinger et al., 2023). These advantages make X a strategic channel for companies aiming to enhance brand visibility, foster community interaction, and implement timely marketing communication strategies. According to (Kietzmann et al. 2011), platforms like Twitter are part of the larger social media ecosystem that enables companies to listen, interact, and co-create with customers in a dynamic and transparent environment.

Following the discussion on how platforms like X contribute to effective marketing communication, Shopee is another strong example of how digital tools can support business growth. Shopee is a popular e-commerce platform that was first launched in Singapore in 2015, and is owned and operated by Sea Limited (formerly Garena), a Singapore-based technology company founded by Forrest Li. It quickly expanded its operations to several Southeast Asian countries, including Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, and Taiwan. In Indonesia, Shopee has become one of the most widely used e-commerce platforms, and in 2017 it achieved the top rank among Indonesian e-commerce applications in terms of user activity.

As one of the leading e-commerce platforms in Indonesia, Shopee Indonesia actively utilizes social media to maintain its competitive advantage. According to data from (*We Are Social and Hootsuite* 2023), the growth of e-commerce in Indonesia continues to increase, driven by high internet penetration (77.02%) and widespread smartphone usage. In this context, Shopee Indonesia's social media campaign is relevant as it addresses the needs of an increasingly

digitally connected audience (Indonesia Digital Report, 2023). Therefore, Shopee Indonesia's social media strategy plays a crucial role in maintaining its position amidst the rapid growth of e-commerce and the high level of digital connectivity among Indonesians.

As part of its digital communication strategy Shopee Indonesia also uses platform X to increase user engagement. By leveraging the platform's real-time features and concise message format, Shopee is able to respond quickly to trending topics and foster more dynamic two-way interactions (Dharmawan et al., 2024). The company frequently utilizes X to share promotional content, directly address its followers, and incorporate humor or culturally relevant references to create a sense of emotional connection with users. These interactive practices contribute to a more personalized digital experience, which in turn supports higher engagement levels and strengthens customer loyalty.

To remain competitive in the fast-paced digital marketplace, Shopee Indonesia continuously refines its social media strategies to capture audience attention and sustain engagement. Among the various strategies used, caption writing is one of the communication elements that is quite significant in building relationships with the audience. Captions are not just a visual complement, but a form of strategic communication that can influence consumer perceptions and decisions (Ashley and Tuten, 2015). Through the choice of the right words, interesting language style, and the insertion of humor elements or current trends, Shopee Indonesia tries to create emotional closeness with social media users, especially on the X platform (Twitter). This aligns with Customer Engagement Theory, which explains that engagement consists of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions that are activated through a brand's interactive communication, including the language and tone used in its content (Hollebeek et al., 2014). By delivering clear information, persuasive messages, and emotionally engaging or entertaining captions, Shopee stimulates these dimensions of engagement, encouraging audiences to process, feel connected to, and respond to its content.

According to (Ashley and Tuten 2015), captions play a vital role in conveying brand messages, attracting audience attention, and encouraging user interaction. Shopee Indonesia utilizes captions to create user engagement, promote offers, and strengthen its brand image. An analysis of Shopee Indonesia's captions on platform X can provide insight into how the company adapts its communication strategy according to the preferences and behaviors of its target audience.

Previous research from (Wulandari et al., 2023) investigated Shopee Indonesia's digital communication strategy in response to the lifestyle of urban Muslim consumers in their article, "Shopee's Digital Communication Strategy in Response to the Lifestyle of Urban Muslims in Indonesia." Their study centers on how Shopee integrates religious and cultural values into its digital messaging to strengthen brand consumer relationships. Employing a qualitative literature-based approach, they analyzed company documents, advertising campaigns, and social media content. Although their analysis was grounded in a different set of theoretical lenses, their finding that Shopee's contextualized, value-driven content such as educational COD (Cash on Delivery) campaigns effectively enhances engagement and brand image among Muslim urbanites resonates with the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions of Customer Engagement Theory (Hollebeek et al., 2014) underpinning the present study. Where (Wulandari et al. 2023) approached engagement primarily through religious and cultural meaning-making, this study instead positions caption-level linguistic strategies on X as the direct stimulus of consumers' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement with the Shopee Indonesia brand.

Previous research from (Rumapea et al., 2022), in "Social Network Analysis About Brand Awareness of Shopee Indonesia on Twitter," examined Shopee's brand awareness via the hashtag #ShopeeID on Twitter. Using a quantitative Social Network Analysis (SNA) framework with Netlytic and Gephi, they mapped name networks ("who mentions whom") and chain networks ("who replies to whom") over a one-week giveaway period. Drawing on Keller's brand awareness theory and Eriyanto's network communication metrics, they

demonstrated that repeated hashtag use significantly boosts brand recognition. However, their results also revealed predominantly one-way communication patterns and limited community interaction.

(Nursyamsi et al. 2022) examined Toska Fashion's Instagram-based strategy to boost customer engagement. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, they concluded that interactive features such as Instagram Ads, prize-based campaigns, and Instastory tools effectively increased consumer involvement and sales.

Based on the previous studies, while previous studies have addressed digital communication strategies and social media use in e-commerce, none have specifically focused on caption usage as a branding communication strategy on the X (Twitter) platform. Therefore, there exists a significant research gap in the literature, specifically the need to analyze captions as a form of verbal communication employed by Shopee Indonesia to encourage audience engagement on X. In relation to this gap, this study examines Shopee Indonesia's caption strategy by focusing on the characteristics of captions, the language techniques used to encourage audience engagement, and visible engagement metrics such as likes, replies, and reposts as supporting descriptive data. These metrics are not used to measure causal relationships, but to provide contextual information about audience responses toward Shopee Indonesia's captions.

1.3. Formulation of the Problem

Based on the background described above, the following research questions are formulated:

1. What are the characteristics of the caption strategy utilized by Shopee Indonesia on the X (Twitter) platform?
2. What language techniques are used in the captions to build engagement with the audience?

3. How do visible engagement metrics, including likes, replies, and reposts, reflect audience responses toward Shopee Indonesia's captions on X (Twitter)?

1.4. Limitation of the Study

This study is limited to captions posted by Shopee Indonesia on its official X (Twitter) account, @ShopeeID, during February to March 2026. It does not analyze captions from other social media platforms, other Shopee accounts, or other time periods.

The analysis focuses solely on the textual elements of captions, particularly the characteristics of caption strategy and the language techniques used to encourage audience engagement. The caption strategy characteristics examined include informational clarity, persuasive orientation, emotional and entertainment appeal, and contextual and audience relevance. The language techniques examined include call-to-action expressions, informal language, slang, code-mixing, emojis, capitalization, humor, promotional diction, and storytelling. Therefore, this study does not analyze visual elements, image design, videos, embedded links, or the detailed content of audience replies. Hashtags are only considered when they appear as part of the caption text or call-to-action, but this study does not analyze hashtag performance or hashtag networks.

To support the analysis, this study also records visible engagement metrics limited to likes, replies, and reposts as supporting descriptive data. This study does not analyze quote posts, views, reach, impressions, or algorithmic visibility. Moreover, this study does not conduct statistical correlation or causal analysis between caption characteristics and audience engagement outcomes.

1.5. Purpose of the Study

Based on the problem formulation previously stated, this research has several purposes including the following:

1. To identify and describe the characteristics of the caption strategy utilized by Shopee Indonesia on the X (Twitter) platform.
2. To examine the language techniques used in the captions to build engagement with the audience
3. To describe visible engagement metrics, including likes, replies, and reposts, as supporting descriptive data for audience responses toward Shopee Indonesia's captions.

1.6. Significance of the Study

1.6.1. Theoretical Significance

This study is expected to contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of marketing communication and digital linguistics, particularly in understanding how language strategies on social media platforms influence audience engagement. The findings may also serve as a reference for future research exploring the intersection of language use and marketing effectiveness in digital contexts.

1.6.2. Practical Significance

Practically, this study can provide valuable insights for marketing practitioners, especially social media managers and content creators, in designing effective caption strategies that resonate with their target audiences. The analysis of Shopee Indonesia's approach may serve as a model or guideline for other e-commerce brands aiming to enhance engagement through strategic language use on platforms like Twitter.