

# Comparative Analysis of Social Media Activities on Local Skincare Brands in Indonesia during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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## Abstract

Improvements in things done using Instagram have now made various skincare brands reach the broader community with two-way communication. The business value proposition of skincare brands requires a customer-centered approach that can understand their needs, wants, expectations, preferences, and behaviors. Generally, social media analytics tools for Instagram have three main features, namely activity, audience, and content in the form of data visualization. The result of visualizing data from Instagram analytics is called engagement. *Instagram engagement* are numbers that show the two-way interaction between the audience and the brand through their official Instagram account. The primary purpose of this scientific article is to analyze the comparison of Instagram engagement on well-known local skincare brands in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to identify the factors that influence the engagement of the skincare brand's Instagram account audience. This scientific article using qualitative research methods, from several previous research journal articles and data visualization results from social media analytics tool, namely analisa.io. The results of this scientific article obtained three main factors that influence the engagement of the Instagram account audience on skincare brands, including: (1) Brand Awareness and Brand Image, (2) Parasocial Interaction, (3) Brand Post or Type of Content.

## Keywords

Social Media Analytics, Instagram, Engagement, Skincare and Brand

## 1. Introduction

Currently, humans live in a digital era where there is an information technology revolution that creates a new civilization and culture, namely life that cannot be limited by time and has become an absolute necessity that provides many benefits at any time. According to the report "Digital 2021: the latest insights into the state of digital" from the results of a survey conducted by Hootsuite and We Are Social, it shows that as of January 2021, the number of internet users in Indonesia is 202.6 million, and the number of active social media users is 170 million people. The data also shows that the number of internet and social media users has increased in a year which can be seen in January 2020 and 2021, respectively, the increase is 15.5% (new users are 27 million) and 6.3% (new users are 10 million people) so it can be proven that most internet users are also social media users.

In fact, The Digital 2021 report noted that Indonesia is ranked 9th out of 47 countries addicted to social media. An average of people spends more than three hours a day accessing social media via mobile devices. Social media is not only used for communication, blogs, and discussion forums. There are 60% of social media users in Indonesia who use it to work, build relationships, and run a business. Forbes reports that 92% of marketers in business believe that social media is essential to their business and has a variety of benefits, including reduced marketing costs, increased conversion rates, increased revenue, efficiency, increased insight and loyalty (Lam et al. 2019). Currently, Instagram is one of the most frequently used social media in Indonesia, with 61 million active users with an average age range of 18-24 years.

The use of Instagram can have a positive impact on brands from various industries in Indonesia, especially the national beauty industry, which is one of the priority sectors, which plays an important role as the main driver of the national economy because it has experienced quite good growth from year to year and has been proven in 2018 experienced a growth of 20% from the previous year or four times the national economic growth which was supported by both domestic and export market demand. Instagram is the choice of social media that plays a major role in displaying trends in the beauty industry and is the main target for brands for direct marketing because people like to use brands they know, like, and trust (Ed and Goos 2021).

So with the development of technology, there is now a trend of people starting to pay more attention to physical care products as a primary need, so competition in the beauty industry is getting more challenging in Indonesia. Instagram is the main social media choice that plays a significant role in displaying trends in the beauty industry and is the main target for brands to market their products because people like to do business through brands they know, like, and trust. It is proven that almost all brands in the beauty industry must have an official Instagram account (Vinaika and Manik 2017). According to previous studies, physical appearance is the center of one's self-identity, especially the face (Dai and Pelton 2018). This makes the need for even greater attention to maintaining facial skin health with skincare. Skincare is where someone specifically treats or pampers the skin, especially the face, according to the type of skin itself, using one or a series of products that contain various nutrients so that the skin becomes more well-groomed.

In fact, in the last few years, skincare has dominated 19% of the entire beauty industry in Indonesia, such as facial cleansers, moisturizers, serums, essences, exfoliators, and collagen sold in large quantities. The number of requests is increasing because people perceive skincare as a product therapy so that it can affect the popularity of skincare. Euromonitor International data shows that in 2019 the total Indonesian skincare market has reached USD 2 billion or 33% of the total beauty market revenue, contributed by various local to non-local skincare brands. This allows people to seek and collect information first before deciding to purchase skincare related to its content, function, for what skin type, and the condition of their skin (Lam et al. 2019). Purchasing skincare can be seen as a function of two primary self-concept motives, namely self-esteem (i.e., self-concept enhancement) and self-consistency (i.e., self-concept verification) (Dai and Pelton 2018).

Since the emergence of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Indonesian economy throughout 2020 fell drastically, which harmed several industries. The beauty industry also experienced a decline and difficulties. Then, in 2021 there will be positive growth in several sectors where the beauty industry tends to grow steadily and survive despite the Pandemic. With the implementation of the lockdown in this country, it is increasingly making people, both men and women spend more time at home, have a higher interest in skincare, and shop for skincare online where they compete in such a way and are willing to spend a lot of money. Only to buy various skincare products to have clean, bright, soft, well-groomed skin, no wrinkles, and glowing without having to use make-up (Ścieszko et al. 2021). Likewise, various skincare brands are increasingly using Instagram as the primary means of online promotion, displaying trends, monitoring trends, and audience behavior, with special strategies constantly being developed (Rejeki and Kussudyarsana 2020).

Thus, various indicators or factors that influence interaction or enthusiasm for a skincare product or brand based on their Instagram account include brand reputation, Instagram activities, marketing, number of likes, comments on posts, tags or mentions, and giveaways held (Reddy 2021). The parasocial interaction factor directly influences the marketing of skincare products from various brands in Indonesia because brands are considered more trustworthy and attract more audience interest (Sanny et al. 2020). The business value proposition of skincare brands requires a customer-centered approach that can understand their needs, wants, expectations, preferences, and behaviors (Watanabe et al. 2021). Analytics tools using big data are crucial for monitoring social media activity. The phenomenon of big data being applied to social media has triggered a new field of study to develop, namely "social media analytics." Social media analytics is an analytical method or process of extracting, collecting, analyzing, and visualizing semi-structured and unstructured data from social media to become structured data of high value according to the needs of analysts. In summary, social media analytics is defined as an interdisciplinary field of research that aims to combine, extend and adapt methods to analyze social media data (Alfajri et al. 2019).

Generally, most social media analytics tools for Instagram have three main features, namely activity, audience, and content available in data visualization (Alfajri et al. 2019). Visualizing data from Instagram analytics is called audience engagement. Without that engagement, Instagram is just a medium. Instagram audience engagement is numbers that

can show a two-way interaction between an audience and a brand from their official Instagram account. A business or professional Instagram account has been called a critical space in the media landscape due to its popularity and ability to engage users (Romney and Johnson 2018). Instagram profile for the Lifestyle brands category (one of which is skincare) has the highest engagement compared to brands in the food, health, and other industries (Klassen et al. 2018). If Instagram audience engagement on skincare brands increases well, brands can positively impact and attract more target audiences. Instagram audience engagement can be successful if the brand attracts attention, starts a conversation, builds audience trust, and satisfies the audience according to the promises offered. The satisfaction provided by the skincare brand can affect the involvement of customer attitudes (customer engagement) (Adzimaturrahmah et al. 2019). This makes customers voluntarily share their experiences, express their preferences, participate in discussion forums and events, and recommend the product or brand (Purwardhana and Mujiasih 2020).

Therefore, the rich two-way online interaction can create and deepen the bond between the audience and the skincare brand (Martiyanti 2019), resulting in positive results such as brand loyalty, brand usage, and brand recommendation (Meek et al. 2019). It makes researchers interested in analyzing the comparison of Instagram audience engagement on well-known local skincare brands in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic so that factors that influence audience engagement with the brand can be found such as brand awareness value, brand image, and so on.

This scientific article focuses on analyzing studies related to the comparison of audience engagement on several Instagram skincare brands. Thus, the formulation of the problem that becomes the main question of this research is how the comparison of Instagram engagement on well-known local skincare brands in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic. And also, what are the factors that influence the audience engagement of the skincare brand's Instagram account. Reporting from Stylo Indonesia and USS Feed, Table 1 below shows the top 5 well-known local skincare brands in Indonesia during this pandemic (2020-2021) and their Instagram account followers.

Table 1. Instagram Followers of 5 Local Skincare Brands

Number	Local Brand Name	Official Instagram Account (followers)
1.	Brand A	431K followers
2.	Brand B	497K followers
3.	Brand C	1.2M followers
4.	Brand D	5M followers
5.	Brand E	1M followers

The primary purpose of this scientific article is to analyze the comparison of Instagram engagement on well-known local skincare brands in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic. Besides that, it also aims to identify the factors that influence the audience engagement of the skincare brand's Instagram account. In addition, this scientific article opens up new horizons in academic research that are beneficial for researchers for future research

## 2. Methods

This scientific article was prepared using qualitative research methods with the type of case study and supported by secondary data. This research case study is in the form of data that has been processed through a social media analytics tool. In addition, the secondary data of this research is in the form of previous research journal articles indexed in the Scopus database and the Web of Science (2015-2021). This qualitative research relies on the process and the meaning of the results based on systematic and strict standards that aim not only to summarize the journal articles found but also to add elements of analytical criticism. Several journal articles from several online research databases that have been collected are then reviewed and analyzed. The keywords used to search and answer the research questions are ("Social Media Analytics" AND "Instagram Analytics" AND "Engagement" AND "Skincare" AND "Brand"). Meanwhile, the social media analytics tool chosen to analyze the engagement of the official Instagram accounts on several well-known local skincare brands in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic was analisa.io. Researchers manually categorize, review, and analyze journal articles and engagements from the social media analytics tool based on the research focus and research questions (RQ) as follows:

- RQ1: How does the comparison of Instagram engagement on well-known local skincare brands in Indonesia during the COVID-19 Pandemic?
- RQ2: What are the factors that influence the engagement of the skincare brand's Instagram account audience?

### 3. Results and Discussion

The researcher uses analisa.io because it comes from Indonesia. What sets it apart from other tools is that it allows for twice as many data points and deeper insights, allowing users to freely analyze multiple public Instagram profiles with a full range of actionable features, especially during the period. It can freely set the time according to what the user wants, while other tools limit the user's analysis to several profiles and only specific periods.

#### 3.1 A Critical Discussion on Comparison Instagram engagement, towards Well-Known Local Skincare Brands in Indonesia during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Several journal articles have been selected. Then, the data visualization results Analisa.io answered the first research question 'RQ1: How does the comparison of Instagram audience engagement on well-known local skincare brands in Indonesia during the COVID-19 Pandemic?'. The increase in the number of followers is not the only indicator of the success of a skincare brand, but its content that is unique, quality, relevant, attracts attention, and audience interest by measuring its engagement based on a specific period (Wiedmann and Mettenheim 2020). The following is a comparative analysis of the Instagram engagement data visualization using analisa.io on the top 5 well-known local skincare brands in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic from March 2, 2020, to November 8, 2021:

##### 3.1.1 Profile Report Link

Average engagement rate is also one of the KPIs that can determine the success of a brand in managing its Instagram account by measuring the performance of its content (audience engagement with all posts that have been published on a brand's Instagram account). According to research, generally, a reasonable Instagram engagement rate ranges from 1% to 5%, whereas if it is less than 1%, it can be said to be less good. However, the percentage of these numbers will vary for each brand account because it is influenced by various factors such as niche, audience demographics, and also the number of followers. The more the number of followers on the account owned by the brand, the more difficult it will be to get a reasonable engagement rate. The following is a visualization of the Profile Report Link data containing the Engagement Rate (like and comment), Like Rate, and Comment Rate on every Instagram account of 5 well-known local skincare brands in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic has been determined by simply setting the date on custom range.

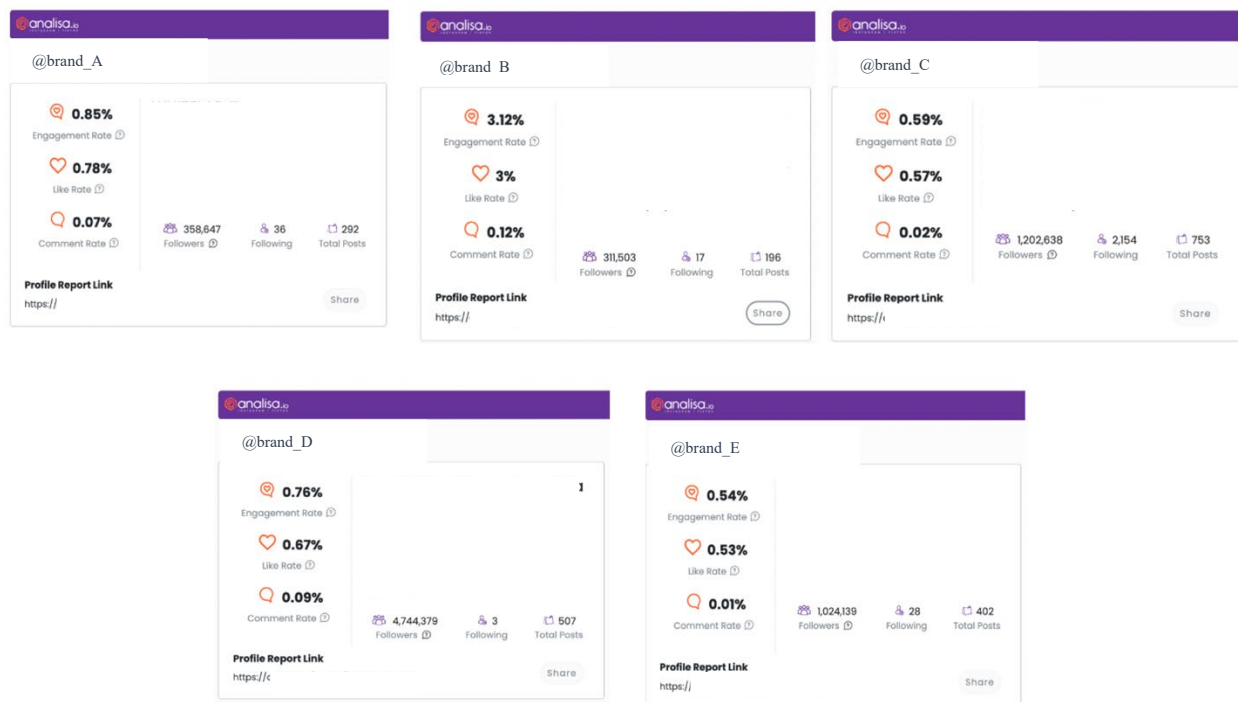


Figure 1. Comparison of Profile Report Link of 5 Local Skincare Brands

Figure 1 above shows the comparison profile report link of 5 local skincare brands, we can see that, in general, the Brand B brand account has the highest Engagement Rate of 3.12%. It can be reasonable compared to the other four

brands accounts that have an engagement rate of less than 1%. It proves that the higher the Engagement Rate, the better the content and interaction between the audience and the brand on Instagram. Whereas the other three brand accounts have far more followers than Brand B, one brand has a slightly lower number of followers than Brand B. Most of the audience for skincare brand Instagram accounts are connected and interact with posts based on their interests and preferences. The audience as Instagram users has five main social and psychological motives, including social interaction, archive, self-expression, escape and peek (Kang et al. 2019). Thus, it turns out that a large number of followers does not have much effect on the success of a brand if the audience does not consume the content and there is no good interaction between the audience and the brand. For the other four brands with poor engagement rates, the brand must change or improve its marketing strategy and overall content strategy from the information presented to the design (Vinerean and Opreana 2019).

### 3.1.2 Average Engagement

Each brand's Instagram account audience can engage or participate in the brand by liking or leaving comments on brand posts. The brand post that is interested in and like which engagement is a measurable embodiment of the audience contribution that is important to express their value so that the closeness between the two can grow together (Oliveira and Fernandes 2020). Likes and comments are the broadest and most basic level of engagement (Kang et al. 2019). The following is a visualization of Average Engagement data containing Average Engagement per Post, Average Likes per Post, and Average Comments per Post on each Instagram account of 5 well-known local skincare brands in Indonesia during the specified COVID-19 pandemic period. And we are also accompanied by a line chart (detailed graph) of each brand regarding its Average Likes and Comments per Post from posts on the same date. Likewise, in the line chart of each of these brands, it is noted that if the line chart goes up, the Average Likes and Comments per Post increases. If the line chart goes down, it means that the line chart goes up, and if the line chart is horizontal, it means Average Likes and Comments per Post on some posts are equivalent (up and down only slightly).

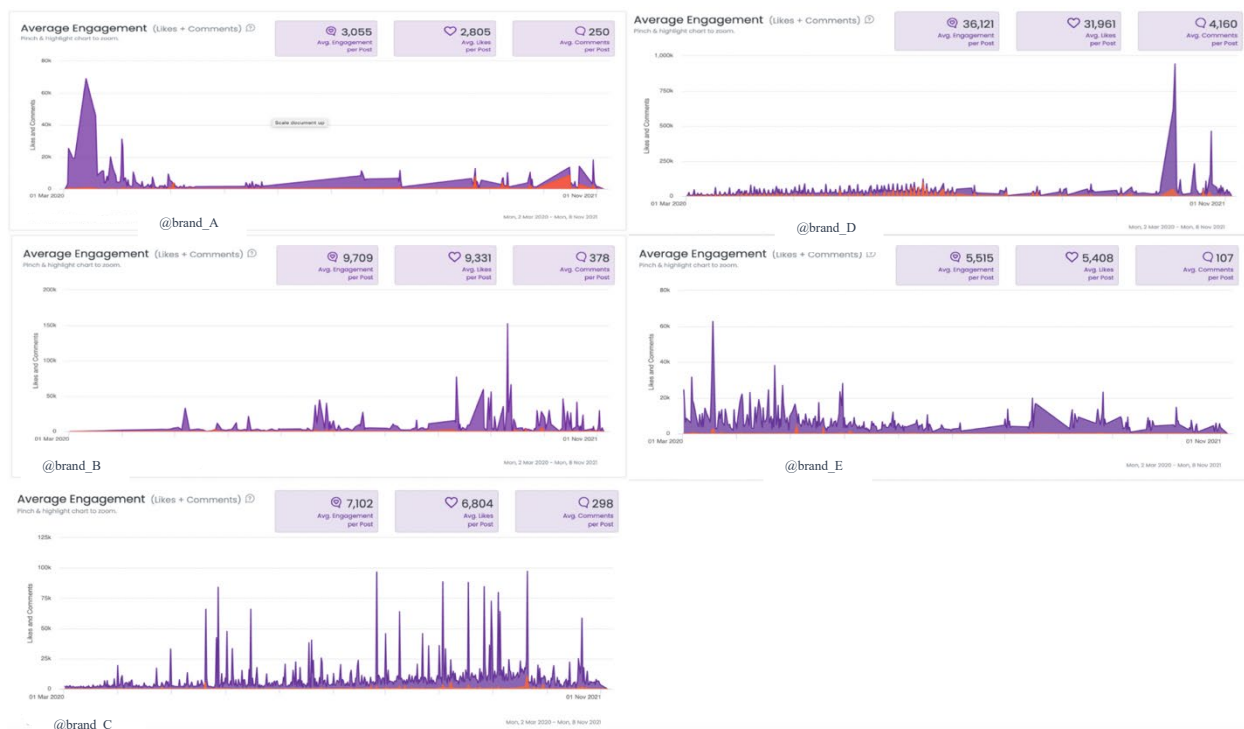


Figure 2. Comparison of Average Engagement of 5 Locals Skincare Brands

Figure 2 above shows the comparison average engagement of 5 local skincare brands, we can see that the Brand D brand account had the highest Average Engagement per post during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is 36,121, so we can say that it is perfect compared to four other brand accounts with an Average Engagement per post below 10,000. If you look at the line chart of the Brand D, it turns out that there is a spike in Average Likes and Comments per post on a content post which is very high compared to other content posts starting from 3 to 5 September 2021. The spike

occurred because the brand started announcing its newest brand ambassador, a Korean actor. He is currently much-loved and widely discussed by the Indonesian people because of his latest drama which is presently viral. Experts argue that audiences have a more profound interest in characters they know (Romney and Johnson 2018). It proves that brand ambassadors can increase Average Engagement and attract audience enthusiasm easily and quickly in a short time, even more for the skincare brand.

### 3.1.3 Posting Activity

Social media is the most prominent and influential content marketing channel to reach a wider audience (Garczynski 2016), one of them is Instagram. The company started to professionally manage content on social media to get maximum results (Putranto 2018) by validating whether posting time on Instagram is significant for an effective brand marketing strategy (Vinaika and Manik 2017). The following is a visualization of the Posting Activity of the five local skincare brands' Instagram accounts during the COVID-19 Pandemic:



Figure 3. Comparison of Posting Activity of 5 Local Brands Skincare

Figure 3 above shows the comparison posting activity of 5 local skincare brands through analisa.io, explained, “the older the color, the more posts at that time”. From the five skincare brands we have analyzed, 4 out of 5 (Brand B, Brand C, Brand D, and Brand E) have a structured and consistent pattern of posting activity during Covid-19. In contrast, the Brand A brand does not have a structured way. Brands that already have a structured and consistent activity posting pattern have the possibility of using Instagram Scheduling Tools. They expect their promotional content to reach the optimal audience and become one of the guidelines for improving brand and product marketing strategies through the Instagram platform (Wahid and Wadud 2020). On the table 2 below shows summary of total posting activity for each brand, we can see that based on the day, 3 of the five skincare local brands post the most on Fridays while, based on the total time, it is 06.00 pm and 10.00 am.

Table 2. Summary of Total Posting Activity for Each Brand

Local Brand Name	Posting Activity		
	Day	Time	Total Post
Brand A	Thursday	12.00 am	22
Brand B	Thursday and Friday	6.00 pm	21
Brand C	Friday	10.00 am	71



<b>Brand D</b>	Friday	10.00 am	19
<b>Brand E</b>	Tuesday	6.00 pm	23

### 3.1.4 Audience Engagement

A previous study by Kang et al. (2019) said that likes and comments were greatly influenced by interactions, with confusion and curiosity being a big reason to engage. This study proves that the activity of an Instagram account, namely Like and Comment, is the most influential thing in increasing the engagement rate. Likes and Comments given by the audience to content can guide a brand to determine the best time to post their promotional content without having to spend a large amount of money (Priadana and Murdiyanto 2020).



Figure 4. Comparison of Audience Engagement of 5 Local Skincare Brands

Figure 4 above shows the comparison audience engagement of 5 local skincare brands, it explains that “the darker the color, the more the number of audience engagements”. Audience engagement tells how often activity the account gets based on audience likes & comments at any time. On the table 3 below shows the summary of total audience engagement for each brand, we can see that based on the day, 2 of the five skincare brands reached the largest audience on Tuesday, while based on the total time, it is 6.00 pm, and 12.00 am.

Table 3. Summary of Total Audience Engagement for Each Brand

Local Brand Name	Audience Engagement		
	Day	Time	Engagement (Likes + Comments)
<b>Brand A</b>	Thursday	12.00 am	70,632
<b>Brand B</b>	Saturday	6.00 pm	428,749
<b>Brand C</b>	Tuesday	10.00 am	511,843
<b>Brand D</b>	Friday	12.00 am	1,151,804
<b>Brand E</b>	Tuesday	6.00 pm	123,502

### 3.1.5 Average Engagement Rates Daily

Based on the theory explained by (Zerfass et al. 2017), as indicated by a recent study on corporate communication managers, organizations are increasingly interested in enhancing their digital communications through visual content that is engaging. Below is a visualization of the Average Engagement Rate daily by audience within a specific time and day of all activities during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Figure 5. Comparison of Average Engagement Rate Daily of 5 Local Skincare Brands

Figure 5 above shows the comparison average engagement rate daily of 5 local skincare brands, we can see that each account has a daily Average Engagement rate whose graph display varies depending on how their strategy is for each account. Engagement Rate is often used in social media marketing to measure the extent to which the users will show “interest” in and interact with the advertised (Alhaj et al. 2020). Congruence was also positively related to the engagement rate. However, the engagement rate was mostly explained by the age difference between the social media celebrity and the follower (Emma and Matilde 2017). The graph above shows a high engagement rate obtained from each account every day within a predetermined time, namely during the Covid19 pandemic. First, the highest daily engagement rate is from the Brand B brand, reaching 5.30% on Tuesday and other days getting an engagement rate of >1%. In contrast, Sunday is the lowest engagement rate by occupying only a 1.30% rate. Second, they only get an engagement rate of no more than 1% per day of the remaining four brands. Only the Brand A brand brings an engagement rate of 1.02% on Wednesdays.

### 3.2 A Critical Discussion on Factors that Influence the Engagement of the Skincare brand’s Instagram Account Audience

Several journal articles have been selected. The results of the visualization of the Top Post section of analisa.io can answer the second research question, ‘RQ2: What are the factors that influence the engagement of the skincare brand’s Instagram account audience?’. The below are the three main factors that most influence audience engagement on skincare brand Instagram accounts:

#### 3.2.1 Brand Awareness and Brand Image.

Brand image is what consumers think and feel when they hear or see the name of a brand. One way to achieve a competitive advantage in maintaining consumer loyalty is with a brand image that represents the brand’s overall perception. Brand Image is needed to give confidence to consumers in buying a product or service. Research by Febriyan (2018), shows that social media marketing has an influential and significant bond with brand awareness.



Based on the visualization of the top 5 skincare in Indonesia. It was analyzed using the Analisa.io tools for Instagram profile analytics; it clearly shows the brand image of each brand; for example, the top post on Brand D is about Brand D's own Brand Ambassador, different from the results of her entire post. The contents of Brand B and C is more focused on the product itself, for example, from the benefits and ingredients in the skincare. Then, Brand A products build a brand image by giving honest reviews from beauty vloggers. They have used Brand A products for a specific time so that the audience can see the before and after when using the product. The Brand E builds a brand image that is more suitable for teenagers by running a campaign, namely #EBeautyBestie. This campaign was introduced as a form of Brand E, a friend to the skin, who helps overcome facial skin problems that focus on teenagers in Indonesia (Harahap et al. 2021). It proves previous research which states that branding is considered an essential mission for the company. A strong brand image can lead to higher trust from consumers (Wajdi and Aji 2020).

### **3.2.2 Parasocial Interaction and Parasocial Relationships.**

Parasocial interaction can lead people to form interactions with well-known media figures, namely artists, actors, and public figures who have positive images so that brands make them as brand ambassadors (Wiedmann and Mettenheim 2020). Public figure followers who collaborate with brands can help increase the number of audiences for a brand's Instagram account if they are willing to like, comment, share, and repost their posts (Chan and Fan 2020). This is supported by the attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, and suitability of the public figure itself to related products in order to form an associative memory relationship between the public figure and the brand (Gong 2019). Based on the results of the comparison of Instagram engagement data visualization, that the highest engagement on 10 posts for each account from the five brands, there are two brands with the highest engagement due to parasocial interaction, namely the Brand 'D' where the ten posts are only related to the brand ambassador. Then, the Brand 'A', which is 5 out of 10 posts with the highest brand engagement related to reviews from media figures and brand ambassadors. From the two brands, it can be concluded that parasocial interaction can affect the increase in Instagram engagement, which means that the audience has great involvement with the brand. Moreover, parasocial interaction positively impacts attitudes toward advertising, attitudes toward products or brands, brand recognition, brand credibility, and purchase intentions (Yang 2018).

### **3.2.3 Brand Post or Post Content.**

The audience's enthusiasm is inseparable from the post content of the brand itself, as the brand introduces a new product or promotes other product variations, including the brand introducing a new product or enabling different product variations. According to previous studies, several variables impact consumer brand post engagement on social media sites; proposed posting time, media type and content type. They need visual brand communication to support this, allowing them to say more about their products (Hellberg 2015). As in the top 10 visualizations from Brand E, B and C's Instagram accounts, there is content with the highest engagement with product images, where the layout is natural and product-focused. Although overall, there is no specific type of visual that can attract an enthusiast audience. But we can conclude that most of it are content that contains colourful (Yu et al. 2020), framing (Swani et al. 2017) and aesthetics (Hellberg 2015).

## **4. Conclusion**

It is important to analyze the comparison of engagement on Instagram against well-known local skincare brands in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic to identify the factors that influence the skincare brand's Instagram account engagement audience. We can conclude that it has been proven that a large number of followers does not affect the success of a brand if the audience does not consume the content. There is no good interaction between audience and brand, so that it is assessed through engagement and has been proven to be parasocial Interaction through brand ambassadors, namely well-known media figures who are currently very popular, can increase engagement with likes and comments. These Likes and Comments can guide brands to determine the best time to post their promotional content. And can be found and identified three leading indicators or factors that influence the engagement or enthusiasm of the audience for the skincare brand Instagram account including: (1) Brand Awareness and Brand Image are needed to give consumers confidence in buying a product or service, (2) Parasocial Interaction because it can lead the public to form interactions with well-known media figures so that it will have a positive impact on a brand when collaborating with artists, actors, and public figures, (3) Brand Post or Type of Content to attract an enthusiast audience by posting photos/video that contains colorful framing and aesthetic images.

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