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Hyperlocal Visual Content and Audience Engagement: A Comparative Study on Instagram (Developing a Conceptual Model for Digital Branding)

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Abstract. The digital age has transformed culinary marketing strategies, with social media, particularly Instagram, becoming the primary platform for building audience engagement through visual content. Hyperlocality in visual communication not only emphasizes geographic location, but also integrates elements of culture, tradition, and community identity. Previous studies have shown that visual storytelling can increase engagement, but research on how hyperlocal visual content specifically affects audience engagement is still limited. This study uses a qualitative approach with visual analysis methods, in-depth interviews, and participatory online observation to explore hyperlocal visual content strategies in culinary marketing on Instagram. A comparative study was conducted on two Instagram accounts, @jajan.sawangan and @sawangankuliner, to understand how visual elements such as composition, color, typography, and narrative influence engagement. The results showed that using visual elements that are more aesthetically pleasing, consistent, and reflective of local identity can significantly increase audience engagement. Accounts with more structured visual strategies and stronger narratives have higher levels of interaction than accounts with less cohesive visual approaches. Based on these findings, the study developed a conceptual model of audience engagement with hyperlocal visual content that can be used to guide community-based digital branding strategies. This study contributes to the study of digital communication, hyperlocal marketing, and social media branding, and provides recommendations for culinary business professionals to optimize visual strategies on Instagram.

Keywords: hyperlocality, visual content, audience engagement, Instagram, culinary marketing.

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INTRODUCTION

The digital age has brought about profound changes in the realm of communications and marketing, particularly in the context of the interaction between brands and consumers. This paradigm shift has underscored the significance of hyperlocality in digital content strategy. This concept transcends mere geographical considerations, encompassing cultural narratives, local traditions, and community identities. The integration of these elements has the potential to enhance consumer engagement and brand loyalty, while optimizing social budgets (Cavero 2022; Shahid and Qureshi 2022). The paradigm shift towards consumer empowerment, precipitated by digital technology, has profoundly transformed the dynamics of conventional marketing, enabling consumers to proactively engage with the brand narrative (Shahid and Qureshi 2022). Furthermore, multi-sensory marketing has emerged as a vital strategy, appealing to consumers' senses to create memorable experiences that resonate with local cultures (Aslaner 2022). In this rapidly evolving landscape, brands must adapt and leverage digital platforms to cultivate a robust brand identity and fortify consumer relationships (Arsenijević and Arsenijević 2022; Nesterenko et al. 2023).

The substantial discrepancy in the quantity of followers and engagement levels between the @jajan.sawangan and @sawangankuliner Instagram accounts can be ascribed to a multitude of factors associated with hyperlocal content strategies. Research indicates that the number of followers exerts an inverted "U"-shaped influence on engagement, where a moderate number of followers can enhance interaction, while higher numbers can diminish personal connections, resulting in diminished engagement levels (Wies et al. 2022). Furthermore, the efficacy of food bloggers in attracting millennial audiences is contingent on the caliber of their content and promotional strategies, with a pronounced emphasis on context, communication, and collaboration (Julita 2022). Visual depictions of food have been shown to play a significant role in fostering user engagement, as they transform the act of eating from a basic biological necessity to an artistic and social experience, thereby encouraging community interaction and collaborative decision-making processes in culinary choices (Vivas and Sánchez 2020). Consequently, the interplay among follower dynamics, content strategy, and visual appeal exerts a substantial influence on audience engagement within the context of hyperlocal culinary practices.

A thorough examination of hyperlocal visual content on Instagram discloses noteworthy insights into audience engagement, particularly in the context of local cuisine. Research indicates that aesthetic perceptions significantly influence the reception of destination images, with natural elements often perceived as more appealing than those created by humans, thereby enhancing engagement (Hauser et al. 2022). Furthermore, the integration of informative and entertaining high-quality visuals into visual content has been shown to foster stronger consumer-brand relationships, suggesting that the nature of visual content directly influences user interactions on social media (Kujur and Singh 2020). Furthermore, research indicates that particular content categories, such as food imagery, elicit heightened engagement when augmented with filters, underscoring the significance of visual effects in capturing audience attention (Bakhshi et al. 2019). Furthermore, an analysis of Instagram data from local neighborhoods reveals that both residents and tourists exhibit distinct preferences in visual elements, underscoring the significance of hyperlocality in shaping user engagement (Gomez et al. 2018). In sum, these findings underscore the necessity for targeted visual strategies to optimize audience engagement in local culinary contexts.

While prior studies have underscored the significance of visual content in enhancing social media engagement, there is a paucity of understanding regarding the role of hyperlocal visual elements in this regard. This creates a knowledge gap regarding the specific visual elements that are

effective in increasing user engagement, especially in the context of local cuisines that are increasingly growing on digital platforms. Therefore, this research focuses on an in-depth exploration of “**how hyperlocal visual content can attract audience engagement on Instagram**”.

The objective of the present study is twofold. Firstly, it seeks to analyze the visual elements in hyperlocal content that contribute to the engagement level of Instagram users. Secondly, it investigates how Instagram users respond to hyperlocal visual content, both cognitively and emotionally. The study aims to develop a conceptual model that explains the relationship between hyperlocality of visual content and audience engagement level. Moreover, it seeks to provide visual design recommendations based on visual communication theory and Gestalt theory to increase engagement in local culinary digital marketing strategies.

Recent studies in the domain of social media and digital communication have investigated various aspects of user engagement and the role of visual content. Coelho et al. (2016) and Mohammed (2020) found that visual content that reflects local identity tends to generate higher engagement on Instagram. Concurrently, Susanti & Harto (2024) conducted a study to ascertain the efficacy of visual storytelling in enhancing consumer engagement with local culinary brands. In the context of hyperlocal news, Rusdi (2023) examined the role of hyperlocal news in the formation of online communities and the empowerment of grassroots communities through social media. However, these studies have not specifically highlighted how hyperlocal visual elements influence audience engagement on social media such as Instagram.

Moreover, research conducted by Nurhayati & Wolff (2024) on social media trends in Indonesia demonstrates considerable promise for hyperlocal content in capturing users' attention. However, studies that link specific visual elements to audience engagement in a hyperlocal context are limited. Consequently, this study aims to address this knowledge gap by developing a more systematic approach to analyzing the relationship between the hyperlocality of visual content and engagement on social media.

The novelty of this research lies in developing a conceptual model of the relationship between visual content hyperlocality and Instagram audience engagement through five stages of systematic analysis visualized through the following table:

Table 1
Problem Solving Approach

No	Stage Approach	Activity Description
1	Visual Response Experiment	Giving 50 images to 10 respondents to see the first visual response when the eye sees visual content.
2	Visual Communication Theory Analysis	The results of analysis 1 are identified visual elements using visual communication theory and gestalt theory to theoretically examine the visual response of activity number 1.
3	Respondent interviews	Conducted to 10 respondents who are active Instagram users to retrieve more in-depth information on how their engagement behavior towards an Instagram account post.
4	Online Participatory Observation	Observing the interaction in the comment section to analyze the relationship between the interview results and strengthen the results of activities 1 and 2
5	Conceptual Model Development	Formulate a conceptual model of the relationship between hyperlocality of visual content and engagement of followers to find out what kind of hyperlocal visual content has high engagement.

Source: *Researcher's Process (2025)*

Through this approach, this research not only provides an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of hyperlocality in visual content strategy but also offers theoretical and practical contributions to the field of digital communication. The results of this study are expected to provide insights for culinary businesses in designing more effective visual content-based marketing strategies on social media. In addition, the results of this study also have the potential to become a reference for visual communication academics and practitioners in developing the concept of hyperlocality in the digital era.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a qualitative approach with visual analysis (Rose 2022) and in-depth interviews (Brinkmann and Kvale 2018) to understand audience engagement with hyperlocal content on Instagram (Leaver et al. 2020). A comparative case study (Yin 2017) was conducted on the @jajan.sawangan and @sawangankuliner accounts to explore the impact of visual strategies on audience engagement, measured through follower counts, interactions, and post responses (Abell and Biswas 2023). The analysis encompassed visual elements, including composition, color, typography, and narrative (Honders 2023), as well as users' cognitive and emotional responses (Carah and Shaul 2016). This multifaceted approach ensures the validity and credibility of the data (Creswell and Creswell 2017) and contributes to the study of digital communication and social media marketing strategies (Abidin 2021).

The present study focuses on two culinary Instagram accounts in Sawangan, selected due to the mounting prevalence of digital marketing (Lepkowska-White et al. 2019). The subjects of this study encompass visual content from both accounts, as well as the audience members who engaged with them (Valentini et al. 2018). The subjects were selected using purposive sampling (Etikan et al. 2016) based on the consistency of hyperlocal elements, frequency of posts, and level of interaction (Jang et al. 2015). The analysis encompassed audience engagement, measured through comments, likes, and content sharing (Leaver et al. 2020), to elucidate the dynamics of digital interaction in local culinary marketing (Qin 2020).

Data were collected through a variety of methods, including visual analysis (Bell 2012), in-depth interviews (DeJonckheere and Vaughn 2019), and online participatory observation (Airoldi 2018). The visual analysis of posts from the previous six months was informed by the principles of visual communication and gestalt theories (Baldwin and Roberts 2006; Wagemans et al. 2012). In-depth interviews were conducted with ten active Instagram users to understand their preferences and drivers of engagement (Phua et al. 2017). Online observations were conducted to monitor interactions in comment sections and other engagement features, with the aim of capturing live audience engagement patterns (Argyris et al. 2020).

The data were analyzed thematically by identifying patterns of audience engagement with hyperlocal visual elements (Nowell et al. 2017). Interview data were analyzed to identify user response patterns (Terry et al. 2017), while observations of digital interactions were used to understand engagement dynamics (Irawan and Mangruwa 2024). This comprehensive approach yielded profound insights into the efficacy of hyperlocal visual strategies in the context of social media marketing (Lou and Xie 2021).

The conceptual model was developed inductively based on findings from content analysis, interviews, and observations (Saunders and Townsend 2018). The model integrates visual, emotional, and cognitive factors to elucidate audience engagement (Bapat and Hollebeek 2023). The validity of

the model was tested through comparison with visual communication and digital marketing theories (Chan et al. 2014), and confirmed through discussions with experts (Thurmond 2001)

Research validity was assured through triangulation of methods (Fusch et al. 2018), which entailed the comparison of data from multiple sources to reduce bias. Conceptual validity was strengthened by referring to theories of visual communication and digital marketing (Murshed and Ugurlu 2023). Reliability was ensured through the use of intercoder reliability as described by (O'Connor and Joffe 2020) and member checking as outlined by (Birt et al. 2016) to ensure accurate data interpretation. Participatory observation was conducted with systematic recording to ensure the results of the study could be tested and contribute scientifically to the study of hyperlocality in digital communication (Jati 2021).

RESULTS

Visual Response Experiment

The initial stage of this research was conducted through a visual response experiment that aims to understand how audiences respond to visual elements in hyperlocal content on Instagram. In this experiment, 50 images consisting of 25 images from the @jajan.sawangan account and 25 images from the @sawangankuliner account were selected and paired. Two respondents were asked to provide responses to the images based on their initial perception of the visual elements displayed.

The results of this experiment showed a certain pattern in how audiences process visual information. Respondents tend to be more attracted to images that have a balanced composition, contrasting but harmonious colors, and typography that is not too diverse so that it is easy to read. Dominant colors such as red, yellow and orange were found to be the most frequently used elements in both accounts, creating a strong visual identity. The color red, for example, is psychologically associated with increasing appetite, while yellow gives a cheerful and attention-grabbing impression.

Furthermore, the experiment demonstrated that incorporating human elements into images, such as models engaged in culinary activities, can augment the emotional dimension of visual communication. Furthermore, the incorporation of food images within the context of a domestic setting, such as a kitchen or dining table, was found to be more effective in establishing a relevant context pertaining to the culinary theme. However, certain constraints in visual design were identified, including the utilization of disparate fonts, which can lead to visual confusion and diminish aesthetic appeal. Furthermore, the use of overly ostentatious color combinations and the presence of text overlapping with the background can compromise the readability of the message.

This experimental study offers preliminary insights into the visual elements that effectively enhance audience engagement on social media platforms. These insights are further analyzed using visual communication theory and Gestalt theory. The findings from this experiment provide a basis for understanding audience preferences for hyperlocal content and designing more optimized design strategies in visual-based digital marketing.

Visual Element Analysis with Visual Communication Theory and Gestalt Theory

This study uses visual communication theory (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2020) and Gestalt theory (Wagemans et al. 2012) to analyze the visual elements of Instagram hyperlocal content and understand their impact on audience engagement. The first theory evaluates the effectiveness of

design elements (color, typography, composition), while the second theory identifies how principles of visual perception shape audience comprehension.

The @jajan.sawangan and @sawangankuliner accounts consistently use red, white, yellow, and orange colors, which strengthen the visual identity and build emotional appeal (Carah and Shaul 2016). However, the dominance of certain colors sometimes leads to overlapping elements that reduce the readability of the text. In terms of typography, excessive variations in font type and size distract the audience (Baldwin and Roberts 2006). Although bold fonts are effective in highlighting promotional messages, some designs lose balance because the text is not in harmony with the visual elements, and placing text too close to food images reduces the visual appeal of the product.

In the Gestalt perspective, the principle of similarity is applied through the use of consistent colors, thereby creating a uniform visual identity (Bell 2012). The proximity principle is employed by arranging text and images in close proximity to each other, thereby reinforcing the relatedness of information (Jones, 2016). However, certain designs exhibit suboptimal contrast between text and background. The figure-ground principle, which involves the use of light colors to accentuate significant information, is employed in some designs; however, the outlines in these designs are sometimes too thin. The continuity principle is evident in the design elements, manifesting as curved lines that guide the viewer's attention between elements. In conclusion, the effectiveness of hyperlocal visual content depends on the balance of color, typography, composition, and Gestalt principles in creating optimal readability and visual appeal (Murshed and Ugurlu 2023). Adjustments to these principles have the potential to enhance audience engagement and fortify hyperlocal-based digital communication strategies.

Respondent Interviews

This study entailed the conduction of in-depth interviews with ten active Instagram users who regularly access culinary content (DeJonckheere and Vaughn 2019). The objective of these interviews was to ascertain the factors that influence audiences' visual preferences, interaction patterns, and motivations for commenting, liking, or sharing content. The results of the study indicated that the majority of respondents found food visuals with detailed textures, natural colors, and adequate lighting to be more appealing than images that had been excessively edited. Furthermore, content incorporating storytelling elements, such as food origins or recommendations grounded in real-life experiences, has been found to foster stronger emotional connections with audiences (Phua et al. 2017). However, despite a clear preference for informative and authentic content, not all respondents actively engage with it.

From a typographic perspective, text in captions plays an instrumental role in enhancing engagement, particularly when pertinent information such as location, price, and brief reviews is present (Leaver et al. 2020). Conversely, text that is excessively lengthy or lacks interactivity is often disregarded by viewers. Research has demonstrated that incorporating call-to-action (CTA) strategies within captions can effectively foster active engagement, as evidenced by studies conducted by (Ashley and Tuten 2015). Furthermore, the interviews indicated that audience engagement is not necessarily directly proportional to the number of followers. Some respondents are more likely to follow accounts that match their preferences without always interacting with every post. This finding underscores the importance of content relevance and personalization in fostering sustained engagement (Britt et al. 2020).

The efficacy of hyperlocal visual content strategies on Instagram is contingent upon achieving an equilibrium between visual quality, information delivery, and interactive elements that foster

audience engagement (Mayrhofer et al. 2020). These findings underscore the significance of optimizing visual and narrative components to enhance the efficacy of content in social media-based digital marketing strategies.

Online Participatory Observation

Online participatory observation was conducted to identify audience interaction patterns on @jajan.sawangan and @sawangankuliner Instagram posts (Kozinets 2019). This method aims to verify the conformity between interview results and real user behavior, and analyze the influence of visual elements and communication strategies on engagement. The ten most recent posts from each account were observed (Argyris et al. 2020).

The results of the study indicate that audience engagement is influenced by both the quality of the visuals and the interaction strategy employed in the caption. Posts containing open-ended inquiries or call-to-actions (CTAs) have been observed to elicit a greater number of comments when compared to static information posts (Ashley and Tuten 2015). For instance, inquiries such as "*Siapa yang pernah makan di sini?*" elicited a higher response rate compared to product promotion posts. This finding aligns with the interview results, which indicated that audiences are more inclined to engage when content facilitates dialogue.

However, observations also revealed that not all followers actively interact in the comments section. Furthermore, accounts with a high number of followers often received a limited number of comments, which is consistent with the interview results that most audiences prefer to consume content passively (Waterloo et al. 2018). The relevance of content to audience preferences also impacts engagement levels. Non-culinary posts, for instance, garnered less interaction, underscoring the significance of thematic consistency (Leaver et al. 2020).

From a visual standpoint, food images that are well-lit and aesthetically composed tend to garner more engagement. The harmonious integration of colors and typography has been demonstrated to enhance visual appeal, while text with low contrast or overly complex designs has been shown to compromise readability and the appeal of the content (Bakhshi et al. 2019). Based on these observations, it is recommended that individuals managing culinary Instagram accounts optimize their interaction strategies. This optimization should include increasing relevant CTAs, paying attention to the balance between visual aesthetics and text readability, and ensuring content consistency with audience interests (Chan et al. 2014). The integration of visually appealing components with interactive communication strategies has been demonstrated to enhance audience engagement with hyperlocal content.

DISCUSSION

Comparison of Results with Related Literature

The present study demonstrates that hyperlocal visual elements—comprising color, typography, and composition that reflect local identity—exert a substantial effect on audience engagement on Instagram. This finding aligns with prior studies that underscore the pivotal role of visual elements in enhancing engagement, wherein the visual appeal of the content is the predominant variable (Bakhshi et al. 2019; Arifah and Anggapuspa 2023).

The results align with studies indicating the significance of an aesthetically pleasing and professional visual presentation on Instagram feeds in fostering brand awareness and enhancing

audience engagement (Valentini et al. 2018; Awaludin and Wardhana 2024). The utilization of consistent colors, precise typography, and organized layouts has been demonstrated to fortify brand identity and stimulate user interaction, thereby aligning with the findings that meticulously crafted visual components enhance audience engagement.

The present study found that interaction strategies, such as the use of call-to-action (CTA) in captions, can increase the number of comments and user interactions. This finding aligns with the conclusions of previous research indicating that visual components, including but not limited to color, typography, and other design elements, can exert a significant influence on audience emotions, thereby fostering heightened emotional interaction (Ashley and Tuten 2015; pji.uma.ac.id 2024). The integration of visually appealing components and efficacious communication methodologies has been demonstrated to enhance audience engagement on social media platforms (Chan et al. 2014).

The findings of the present study are consistent with extant literature emphasizing the pivotal role of well-designed visual elements and effective interaction strategies in enhancing audience engagement on social media platforms. The strategic incorporation of hyperlocal visual elements can fortify brand identity, thereby fostering heightened audience engagement (Jati 2021; Lou and Xie 2021).

Comparison of Results with Related Literature

This study shows that hyperlocal visual elements (colors, typography, and compositions that reflect local identity) have a significant effect on audience engagement on Instagram. This finding is in line with previous studies that emphasize the importance of visual elements in increasing user engagement, with attractive visual quality as the dominant variable (Jang et al. 2015; Arifah and Anggapuspa 2023).

The results are also consistent with studies that state that an attractive and professional visual display on Instagram *feeds* is essential in building *brand awareness* and increasing audience engagement (Awaludin and Wardhana 2024). Consistent use of color, appropriate typography, and organized layout reinforce brand identity and encourage user interaction, supporting our finding that well-designed visual elements increase audience engagement (Lepkowska-White et al. 2019).

The study also found that interaction strategies, such as the use of *call-to-action* (CTA) in captions, increase the number of comments and user interactions. This is in line with research showing that visual elements that consider design aspects can influence audience emotions and increase emotional interaction (Phua et al. 2017; pji.uma.ac.id 2024). The combination of compelling visual elements and effective communication strategies has been shown to increase audience engagement on social media. Overall, the results of this study confirm existing literature that well-designed visual elements and effective interaction strategies play an important role in increasing audience engagement on social media platforms (Valentini et al. 2018; Wies et al. 2022).

The Impact of Hyperlocality on Audience Engagement

This study reveals that the application of hyperlocality in Instagram visual content has a significant impact on audience engagement. Elements that reflect local identity (color, typography, and cultural representation) increase relevance and emotional closeness to local audiences (Argyris et al. 2020; Choiri and Ariescy 2024). These findings reinforce previous studies that show that content tailored to local characteristics increases user engagement on digital platforms (Mayrhofer et al. 2020).

Interaction strategies that invite the participation of local communities, such as the use of contextual *call-to-action*, are proven to be effective in encouraging more intensive interaction with the content presented. This is consistent with research that states that audience engagement increases when the content reflects their local environment (Jati 2021; Srikandi et al. 2023).

The application of hyperlocality in visual content strategies not only strengthens local identity but also plays an important role in increasing audience engagement on social media (Leaver et al. 2020). This approach allows audiences to feel more connected and have an emotional attachment to the content, which can increase loyalty and active participation in online communities (Chan et al. 2014).

Implications for Digital Marketing Strategy

The findings of this study carry profound implications for the development of digital marketing strategies, particularly within the context of hyperlocality. The incorporation of visual elements that reflect local identity, including the use of colors, typography, and images that align with local culture or community, has been shown to enhance audience relevance and engagement. This strategy aligns with the marketing concept that emphasizes the importance of adapting content to local characteristics to enhance the effectiveness of marketing communication (Jati 2021; Wies et al. 2022).

Furthermore, the incorporation of hyperlocal elements within visual content has the potential to fortify brand identity and forge a more profound emotional bond with the audience. This approach enables brands to appear more authentic and relevant to consumers, thereby fostering increased loyalty and engagement (Chan et al. 2014; Lou and Xie 2021). Consequently, digital marketers are advised to adopt strategies that incorporate hyperlocal visual elements to enhance audience engagement and achieve more effective marketing goals (Valentini et al. 2018; Argyris et al. 2020).

Conceptual Model Development

Based on the findings from visual analysis, respondent interviews, and online participatory observation, this study developed a conceptual model that explains the relationship between hyperlocal visual elements and audience engagement on Instagram (Saunders and Townsend 2018). The model identifies key factors that contribute to audience engagement and provides strategic guidance for social media account managers.

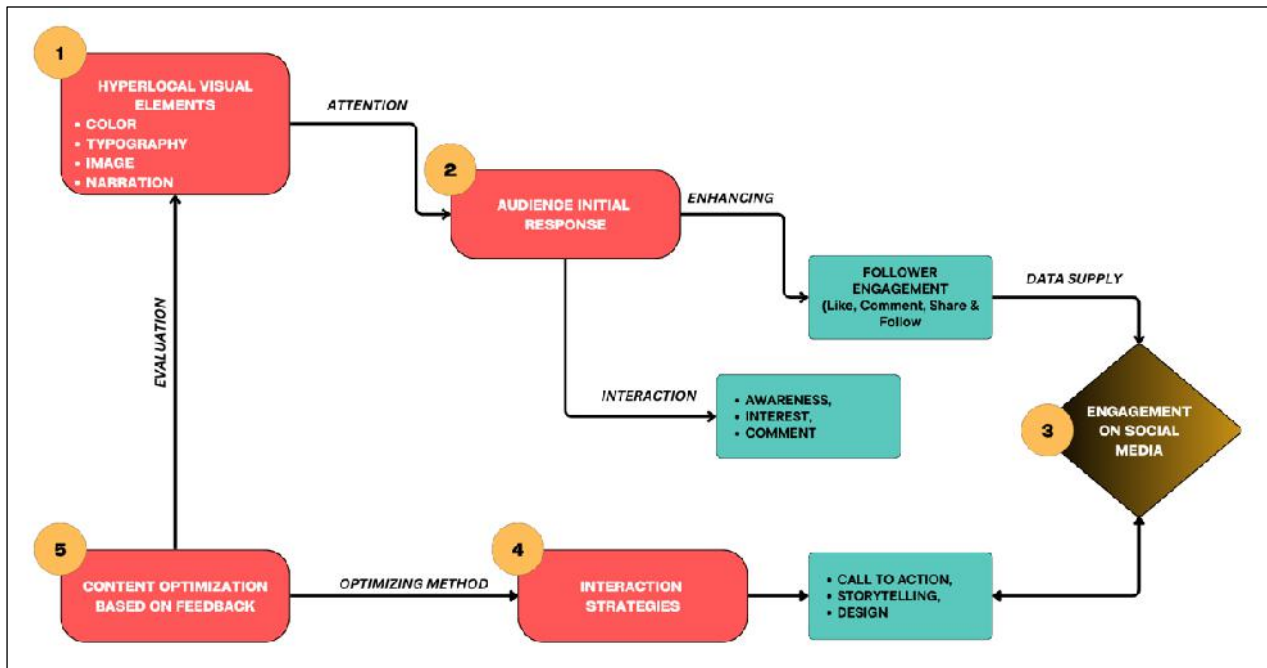


Image 1. Conceptual Model of Audience Engagement with Hyperlocal Visual Content

Source: Researcher's Process, (2025)

As illustrated by the conceptual model diagram in Figure 1, there is a relationship between hyperlocal visual elements and audience engagement. It demonstrates how visual elements influence the audience's initial response, which contributes to engagement on social media. Furthermore, it elucidates how these elements can be enhanced through interaction and call-to-action (CTA) strategies. Additionally, it discusses how these elements can be used to optimize content based on feedback, thereby creating a continuous cycle of content quality improvement.

The conceptual model under consideration consists of five primary components: (1) hyperlocal visual elements, (2) initial audience response, (3) engagement on social media, (4) interactive factors in captions and communication strategies, and (5) content optimization based on audience feedback (Bapat and Hollebeek 2023). Hyperlocal visual elements, as previously defined by Kress and van Leeuwen (2020), encompass the use of color, typography, composition, and the integration of local cultural elements, which collectively form the visual identity of the account.

The extent of audience engagement, as measured by the number of likes, comments, and other forms of interaction, is contingent upon the relevance of the content and the efficacy of the communication strategy (Chan et al. 2014). Observational findings demonstrate that engagement is positively correlated with the visual appeal of content and the presence of CTA strategies that encourage interaction. This model underscores the necessity of a balanced integration of visual components and communication strategies to effectively cultivate audience engagement.

The model also reflects a continuous feedback cycle, in which content optimization is based on audience interaction patterns (Lou and Xie 2021). Feedback from comments, number of shares, and user preferences can serve as the foundation for refining visual strategies and enhancing the effectiveness of hyperlocal-based digital communication. Consequently, this model contributes to the development of visual communication theory in the digital context, particularly regarding the utilization of hyperlocal elements to increase audience engagement. The practical implications of this

model can be utilized by culinary business owners and social media managers to design more relevant and interesting content strategies. Further studies can test the validity of this model in other social media platforms or different industry contexts to expand the understanding of digital engagement in the hyperlocal communication landscape.

Research Limitations and Suggestions for Further Study

Although this study provides in-depth insights into the role of visual elements in audience engagement with hyperlocal content on Instagram, it has several limitations. First, the focus on two local culinary Instagram accounts does not fully represent the dynamics of engagement on accounts at a larger scale or with different audience segments. The findings need to be confirmed with a larger sample and a variety of visual strategies.

Second, the limited number of interview respondents (ten users) may affect the generalizability of the findings. It is recommended that future studies include more participants with diverse demographic backgrounds. Finally, this study did not specifically analyze the psychological aspects underlying the audience's interaction with visual content. Future studies can integrate a communication psychology approach to better understand the mechanism of audience engagement.

Third, the research is still limited to visual analysis methods and interviews without a more measurable quantitative approach. Future studies can consider big data analysis of user interactions, including sentiment analysis techniques or machine learning to identify patterns of engagement. Finally, this study focused only on Instagram, while the dynamics of engagement on other platforms were not explored. Future studies can broaden the scope with cross-platform comparisons to understand the effectiveness of visual strategies in different digital ecosystems.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the essential role of hyperlocal visual elements in driving audience engagement on Instagram. Through an in-depth analysis of visual components, interviews, and online participatory observation, key factors such as color, typography, composition, and cultural integration were identified as crucial in strengthening brand identity and fostering user interaction. Specifically, vibrant colors like red, yellow, and orange effectively capture attention, while well-selected typography enhances readability and message clarity. Moreover, integrating interactive elements, such as call-to-action (CTA) prompts, significantly contributes to audience participation. These findings suggest that the success of digital marketing strategies depends not only on visual appeal but also on the strategic combination of these elements to create emotional connections and encourage active engagement.

Despite the potential of hyperlocal content strategies to generate high engagement, audience participation remains largely passive, with limited interaction in the form of comments or shares. From a visual communication perspective, Gestalt principles—including similarity, proximity, figure-ground, and continuity—shape how audiences perceive and process visual content. These principles enhance the aesthetic appeal of digital materials while also improving information retention and interaction. Consequently, digital marketing strategies incorporating hyperlocal elements can substantially boost audience engagement and loyalty.

Based on the research findings, here are recommendations for digital marketers and social media account managers to increase engagement through hyperlocal content strategies: (1)

Optimizing visual elements in hyperlocal digital marketing strategies is an important step in increasing communication effectiveness. Use distinctive colors that are relevant to the local identity by paying attention to balance and contrast to maintain readability. Choose a uniform and easy-to-read typography to improve the clarity of the message. Design the composition so that there is no overlap between text and images, so that the information is conveyed clearly; (2) Strengthening the interaction strategy is an important factor in increasing engagement. Include a relevant call to action in every upload to encourage active participation. Combine visual stories with valuable information such as culinary origins or recommendations based on experience to increase emotional closeness with the audience. Use various content formats (short videos, carousel posts, interactive content) to enrich the user experience; (3) Perform analysis and adapt content based on engagement data on a regular basis. Evaluating audience interaction patterns provides insight into effective content preferences. Leverage data from social media insights to adjust strategy in real-time. Consider using user-generated content to increase community engagement and build trust; and (4) For the development of further studies, expand the scope of analysis by exploring audience engagement on other platforms such as TikTok or YouTube. Integrate quantitative methods such as big data analytics or A/B testing for a more in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of visual elements. Study the influence of psychological and cultural factors in audience engagement with hyperlocal visual content. The right application of hyperlocal strategies can increase the effectiveness of visual communication, strengthen relationships with audiences, and create a greater impact in digital marketing.

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