How the sports’ leadership anticipate Instagram as an effective communication tool in managing football club

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Abstract. This study is aim to understand how the Instagram application being used as an effective communication tool for the Manager of Kelantan State’s football team or famously known as The Red Warriors (TRW) to manage the football team. The TRW is chosen because it was the first State football team in Malaysia that led by a female manager. The researchers reveal that the content posts in the Instagram can influence the readers to follow the Instagram and how they react towards all posts. Therefore, the researchers monitor the TRW manager’s Instagram account every day for one month to see how she anticipate the Instagram as one of the effective communication tool in managing the TRW. They also explore the visual identity of the content and observe the feedback received with regards to the content post in the manager’s Instagram account to manage her TRW. Using the content analysis research approach, this study find that it is very effective communication tool when the contents has visual identity impact based from the type of feedbacks received from followers. This study shows that the sport leadership does a good choice to use Instagram as main effective communication tool where direct communication process happen in place between the manager and her followers on Instagram. The results of the study also show that contents with video status get more feedbacks compare to pictures and some deficiencies in feedbacks have been identified based on the visual identity elements outlined in this study.

1. Introduction
Nowadays, social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and What’sapp are considered as the main choice of communication tools or platforms for business operators and service providers to market and do sale of their products and services. Nevertheless, it has also become very popular in sport industries especially in the international football where the managers of the football clubs communicate with and provide their current information and pictures to their fans and supporters beside their official website. This exercise has also been adapted by the management of local footballer teams in Malaysia for the past few years as Instagram is more convenient as their alternative official information platform to communicate with their followers and supporters compare to website which require time to access. The advantages of using social media are due to their wide coverage, easy to share and access information within a quick time, and also to avoid any miscommunication due to fake news and misleading information from the management team to their supporters.
Reed (2014) finds that in social media, the languages used to communicate are less formal and flexible to change. Therefore, as an interactive medium for communication, the language used on the Instagram site has a loose structure and uses many acronyms for words. The researchers want to understand how Instagram being used by the management of Kelantan State’s football team or will be referred by its famous name, The Red Warriors (TRW), to communicate with their fans and supporters that follow the manager’s Instagram account.

This study finds that it is important to understand how Instagram has the impact on disseminates the genuine information about the football team to the supports and fans. Based on Easy Instagram website (2014), Instagram is referred as a smartphone application for sharing photos launched in October 2010 and has led to 200 million active users on a monthly basis, 60 million photos uploaded daily, and 1.6 billion likes per day. This noticeable growth at the same time has also changed the way the social manager’s mind about visual content. So, the researchers want to study the Instagram of TRW manager and how it is effectively used as a medium of communication to the TRW fans and supporters. The content of the Instagram posting in the TRW manager Instagram account is done by analyzing from January 1st until Feb 1st 2018 for a month that involves 60 images status and 8 videos.

2. Literature Review
Adler (2012) states that Instagram or famously known as IG has become a very popular medium of communication among social media users. According to him, Instagram is a form of application that has a practical communication function and becomes a communication medium through photos Instagrammification. The statistics posted on the Instagram website disclose that on average there are about 60 million share photos, 1.6 billion likes every day and users spend 220 minutes on Instagram every month. The data proves that Instagram is an important social media platform used by the public (Bercovici, 2014).

On the other hand, Geher (2016) explains that communication through Instagram can also help in terms of social skills development. This is related to how social media Instagram can foster a person’s behavior regardless of teenagers or adults to stay connected. According to Marlowe (2017), as an evolutionary scientist who has been thinking about how by using Instagram can connect with these social developments, there are some important ways he suggests to help the society to develop social skills. Instagram is helping the community to develop a sense of reciprocity that is, if we like the pictures or videos that people share, then people will do the same. As for the case of TRW, the manager will follow the followers who follow her on her Instagram. So, it can be seen to be a reciprocal change in communication between her and the followers of TRW on Instagram.

In addition, there are other studies focusing on the understanding of the type of uploaded content such as the study undertaken by Hu (2014) which is about Instagram through analysis of image content and user types. He uses a sample of 200 pieces of users’ uploaded photos every day and forms eight categories of coded schemes by analyzing the contents of the image to identify the type of uploaded content and the most popular. Thus, no wonder why the manager has chosen the Instagram application as a medium of communication with the fans. She spends a lot of time sharing information about the TRW on the Instagram site. This evidence can be seen in her Instagram account where every month she will share pictures and videos about TRW more than ten times especially when there are new partnerships are being made where additional fans follow her Instagram.

Due to the tremendously growth of social media around the world (Kelly, 2012), the TRW manager has taken this opportunity to use the new communication media tool that is through Instagram application to introduce her account to fans and her followers at Instagram. She chooses and feels comfortable when use Instagram as the communication tool because of too many fraudulent Facebook accounts in which the person who created the account has used her name for attention.

Next, Katie (2014) does a research to identify whether the uploaded emotionally photographed image had an impact on the relationship and also to characterize the relationship between the two. The results show that photo content that includes emotional content has an impact on the relationships but does not explain the relationships as a whole. It also suggests that the importance of the pictures is
that every uploaded picture must have an explicit and implicit meaning (Katie, 2014). So, the communication between the manager and followers of the TRW when every content in the upload picture gives a thousand meaningful depths of TRW.

Thus, no wonder why the TRW manager has chosen the Instagram application as an effective medium of communication. In addition, she also spends a lot of time sharing information on the Instagram site. This is evidences by her Instagram account where every month she shares pictures and videos about TRW at least 10 and above. When more and more partnerships are being made, the more followers on her Instagram.

3. Research Method

This research adopts qualitative approach because it is the appropriate way to understand how the sport leadership anticipate the Instagram as an effective communication in managing the football club. It includes the methods used for data collection techniques, the description of the sample study procedures, and subsequently analyzing the data.

3.1. Study approach

The researchers find that qualitative research is a method of adding one another holistically, which provides descriptive statistical data and more in-depth explanations related to the phenomenon concerned (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). According to Bogdan (2008), qualitative methods also focus on how to explore a subject more comprehensively, which cannot be achieved through quantitative methods. In this study, researchers have chosen to use qualitative research approach to carry out content analysis through data collection from what have been posted and shared in the Instagram account of the manager before being analyzed for emerging theme for descriptive analysis.

3.2. Content Analysis Method

Various qualitative methods can be used to analyze this data but the researchers decide to run content analysis method as the best approach. Kerlinger (1986) explains that the content analysis method is a research technique that focuses on messages or content contained in a display. He adds that in general, this content analysis method may also be intended as a scientific study of content in communication. To him, content analysis is one of the methods for identifying and analyzing communication in a more systematic way, and also has objectives.

In this case, researchers use social media that is an Instagram account belongs to the TRW manager as the subject of the study. The content analysis method will be conducted to understand the type of content used as well as the feedback received on the Instagram account view. The purpose of this content analysis is to get themes and categories, and ultimately explore the applied communication types between her and the followers.

This method has many benefits to this study because not only the phenomena of the trends being understood, but also both text and visual content analysis show that the findings are unique and in-depth. This analysis method is often referred to as unobtrusive method where this method does not involve research participants and sometimes does not necessarily take into account the researchers themselves, and also known as reactive methods (Bryman, 2012). In this case, researchers only use content analysis where data is only available from the manager’s Instagram account content.

3.3. Sample of Research

Sample is representative of the population being examined using certain means (Arikunto, 1998). In this study, researchers use Instagram account to get the content samples owned by the manager of Kelantan State football team or TRW. The overall content post and use in the account will be explored by looking at elements such as visual identity used as a communication strategy through social media. The sample being collected are the type of content consisting of TRW team logo, caption, picture and also video that attracted to followers of the manager’s Instagram account. This
study is focused on the visual identity to analyze communication strategy through the social media that occurs between the manager and her followers as well as what influence it can be.

3.4. Research Design
The researchers opt for content analysis method which is qualitative approach to carry out this study because this method can examine in-depth the elements contained in the Instagram account of TRW manager. Instagram consists of visual identity to analyze the communication strategies that have been used by the manager and may not be used by any football managers in Malaysia yet. Each element of the visual identity is in terms of the use of logo, colour, picture, video and caption that will be analyzed to study the communication strategies conducted through social media Instagram. So, the shortage or the advantages gained can be improved on the content of Instagram’s account manager TRW to increase the attraction of TRW followers.

No doubt Instagram as a medium of communication can be non-verbal where communicating through photography (Khan, 2007). By sharing photos alone, people will know the meanings behind the shared photos and they do not have to write any description or sentences to explain the true meaning of the shared photos. This is also applied by the manager of TRW. The photographs and videos shared by the manager sometimes are without any description as well as a sentence to describe the photos and videos. However, TRW fans and followers can understand what she wants to say by the evidence from the feedback and comments given to each image as well as videos shared by her. Furthermore, much more feedback than pictures and videos that have the description as if it is likely that people prefer simple but meaningful things.

3.5. Data Analysis
The data is obtained from the content of the Instagram account of the TRW’s manager. The researchers read the manager’s posts every day for one month. The visual identity of the postings are observed and categorized into logo, pictures and videos, colours and captions. These visual identity elements are manually analyzed by the researchers for the purpose of finding their association with attraction or feedback to the followers. Then, the influence of the analyzed visual identity elements is justified as how the communication strategy through the social media being used by the TRW’s manager.

4. Findings
After a content analysis was made on Instagram account by the TRW’s manager, the researchers found that there were some visual identity elements used by the manager to inform the latest and current status about the TRW to followers and supporters. The visual identity was referred to the content display used in the Instagram account either in terms of photos, videos, logos and so on. The use of the proper visual identity posted in the manager’s Instagram content had affected the popularity of the manager to ensure the followers always got the latest information about the TRW team. Thus, the result of data analysis made by the researchers showed that the findings were based on the visual identity used such as logo, photos, videos, colour and feedback that had been collected. It is judged by following characteristics:

4.1. Visual Analysis

4.1.1. Logo. At the beginning of the study, the researchers found that the visual identity elements that could be seen on the Instagram content of TRW’s manager was the logo used. In Instagram, the logo could be seen on the shared image of TRW logo. The analysis revealed that the manager only used the TRW symbol or logo as a reflection of her being the latest manager of the TRW. So, each follower will be more familiar with her official account and remember the logo because she never missed sharing the TRW logo in her Instagram account. Figure 4.1 shows the logo for the TRW. In general, the logo that had been used by the manager really played an important role as it was a visual or a
visual impression of a football or organization team. This was supported by Miles (2014) statement stating that the logo is a visible symbol of an organization. Followers and supporters will easily remember the brand by just looking at the logo.

![Figure 4.1. Kelantan Team Logo](image)

4.1.2. Photo and Video. In terms of photo usage, the researchers obtained various types and lots of photos used in the Instagram content of the TRW’s manager. Linaschke (2012) also states that everything relates to Instagram is a photo. The results of the study showed that the manager mostly used the TRW team players pictures, and on average also uses her own pictures as a manager of the TRW. TRW players can be seen in Figure 4.2 below. In addition, she also used pictures took from the TRW’s supporters themselves regardless of the stadium or outside the stadium.

![Figure 4.2. TRW Player line](image)

In addition, the manager also used her pictures with children to attract her followers. Figure 4.3 showed the pictures of children taken during sang the national anthem, Negaraku. The pictures were taken not only by the mere children, but also by using the object’s use of creativity as well as an interesting location for example on a football field to make the picture she shared more interesting. Evidence could be seen in the picture below.

![Figure 4.3. Small children](image)
In addition to the pictures, the manager also uses a medium like video to attract her followers. The actual use of video shows the TRW that is the same in the picture but in the form of moving pictures. The video used is also a short and long-term video to show TRW more alive and more clearly than using pictures. The use of video actually improves the confidence of followers on her management on TRW which is shown through video compared to how to use pictures. Based on the data obtained, the researcher found that she used a lot of videos especially to introduce leadership and also the latest line of players. In addition, shared videos are also used for the launching of the new TRW jersey. Figure 4.4 shows videos for the occasion to introduce new players, leadership and launching of new jersey.

![Figure 4.4](image1.png)

**Figure 4.4.** The council introduces the line players, leadership and launch of a new jersey

In addition, the data also shows that the feedback attracted to the video as a whole is much higher than the photo. Among them are videos using montages and setting up appropriate songs such as songs that can bring to the spirits that flutter in players and supporters. Although the video shown is just a normal video, the appeal of the video is very high when compared with the use of the picture. In this case, the researcher also found that the manager also used motivational videos that is there are interesting and motivational words in the video that is usually motivated, but the appeal of the video is high. Motivational words can be referred to in Figure 4.5. So, this shows that the appeal to the video display is much higher than photo.

![Figure 4.5](image2.png)

**Figure 4.5.** Motivational Words
4.1.3. Colour.
The colour used in Instagram content should be closely related to the use of photos and videos in which it will be adapted to the type of picture displayed. Overall, Instagram’s own by TRW manager account uses vibrant colours and cheerfulness to suit the taste of today’s society or followers manager. Additionally, colours also play an important role in displaying images that will be shared with other followers. Based on the data analysis that has been made, the researcher found that she used a lot of bright colours in the pictures, including a background image to raise a cheerful mood to her followers. It can make the picture look more beautiful and interesting. Figure 4.6 shows the uploaded image using cheerful colours.

However, some are seen as less suitable to use as there are photos that are shared appear to be fuzzy and less interesting. So, it will sink the image to focus and look evenly with the background colour of objects such as the TRW logo itself. Based on the analysis of the data obtained, the researcher finds that sometimes the background image colour used is too bright that is probably in terms of the use light so that is submits the image of an object to be highlighted. The use of bright colours can be referred to in Figure 4.7. Although the object is beautiful, but the production of the image is less interesting and clearly disfigures the photo and makes it unattractive even though the object is beautiful. Additionally, the use of a rather dull colour can also be seen in some photos, and it is seen to have drowned her photo with the TRW fans even though it is beautiful and attractive. The use of dull colours can be referred to in Figure 4.8. So, the use of colours in photos or videos also plays an important role in representing the visual identity in the Instagram of TRW manager.
4.1.4. Caption.
Captions on image or video display play an important role in delivering messages to followers pertaining to information related to the TRW. Based on the analysis that has been made, it is arguable that the manager did not use a caption that remained within the content of the Instagram account as a medium of communication. Analysis shows that there are short and concise captions about shared photos and videos, and there are too long. This may be due to the need for information or important data about the TRW as appropriate, so that is why the caption is too long. The use of this long caption sometimes does not make the information they want to convey to the followers even though they can be communicated fully to them. So, that is why there is different attraction to each display. For the football manager Instagram, found that the average status of the upload was using a short and short caption which can be refereed in Figure 4.9 below.

![Figure 4.9. Short Caption](image)

In view of the content of Instagram TRW manager, most of the followers prefer to read short captions only in each photo or video view. Such captions are more attractive and cheerful than using long and boring captions. Additionally, the use of captions in the form of slogans, trademarks and phrases as well as sometimes more interesting than captions are long and run away from the main purpose. For example, if it is related to the purchase of imported players, the information about the import players is more interesting to the followers than other things. Figure 4.10 shows the manager with a new import player.

![Figure 4.10. Import Player](image)
4.2. View Received Feedback

In this research, feedback refers to the acceptance or response given by followers to TRW manager who actively use Instagram as one of the medium of communication. So, based on the findings of the study, the researcher found that the feedback given by her followers was average and even though there were hundreds of thousands of followers and also a favourable status and comment from followers who were interested in the TRW. Figure 4.11 shows one of the few feedback from the manager followers.

![Figure 4.11. One of the Lesser Feedback](image)

On the other hand, the manager was not much better with other football team managers as she was known to be the first woman manager in the Kelantan football team, especially as a successful batik entrepreneur. Furthermore, the researcher also found that the feedback received was higher and better for the status and display of the video than the display using the photo which can be referenced in Figure 4.12. Although the photos used are interesting and clear, but the appeal of the status by using the video gets more appeal and high feedback.

![Figure 4.12. Videos with High Feedback](image)

An analysis of the content made on Instagram’s TRW manager account begins on 1st January, 2018 and ends on 1st February, 2018 made for a month, and involves 64 image statuses and 10 videos and visual identity elements contained in the Instagram content. Based on the data obtained, the researcher found that feedback received from other followers showed the highest number in the eighth week of
the study of 8,968 views viewed from the video display showing herself in the video while holding the ball in where there were 37 comments, which averagely gave positive comments to the manager. The number of views and comments can be seen in Figure 4.13

![Figure 4.13. The Highest Number of Views and Comments](image)

In the circle of 15,300 followers, only about 136 comments provide positive feedback on the status of the upload status by the manager, which is also the highest number and average is seen only a few tens of thousands or even a dozen. So, it shows that there are dozens and even hundreds of active TRW manager Instagram accounts and provide positive feedback to her as thousands of followers are earned for each image status. Figure 4.14 and Figure 4.15 show the dozens and hundreds of comments that have been given by followers.

![Figure 4.14. Dozens of Comments](image)  ![Figure 4.15. Hundreds of Comments](image)

In view of the image status used in introducing new import players, the findings show that the photos in the seventh week show the highest acceptance of feedback among all the upload photos throughout the course of a month. The photos focused on Kelantan football manager, who is dressing and holding the latest jersey of the TRW team, had a total of 2458 likes and between the status of photos that got a lot like. Evidence can be seen in Figure 4.16. Based on the data, the researcher concluded that the photo displaying the diversity of objects, the image of the manager along with the supporters of the TRW team, had received such likes and comments as compared to the photos using the photos of the manager personally. In this status, a total of 59 comments were obtained which gave a positive reaction as shown in Figure 4.17. During that period, the average picture only got about a thousand or two thousand likes, though the photo was very interesting and beautiful.
Furthermore, the findings also show that there are some photos or status which are less responding than the number of followers of TRW manager. Among them is a photo of the first week in which the photo was uploaded before being appointed a TRW manager and still manages her batik business with only 150 likes and 3 comments only, and is among the least one-month-long of this research conducted has been shown in Figure 4.18. The photos taken are quite interesting, but may be taken from an inconsistent angle plus longer captions that are rather uninteresting and long.

The findings also showed that the photos at that time were less responding than photos and videos at the end of the study month. During the course of the study, researchers also found that the status of the photo at the beginning of the week was less welcome than in the final week. Based on the
findings, it also shows a less interesting reaction to the photo even if the photo is interesting even if the uploaded photo is related to her batik business.

Finally, the data obtained shows that the average uploaded photo status received an equal response of between 1 and 2 thousand likes with only a few comments. Sometimes photos show feedback that are only given to the photos in the form of likes only without any comment which can be seen on Figure 4.19. This may also be due to her own followers where they are not interested in upload images.

![Figure 4.19. Photo Without Comments](image)

However, there are some photo statuses that get three thousand likes upwards, but are still at a low level. Based on the data, the researcher found that the status of this kind of photo is getting more positive feedback as the former Kelantan import player Ghaddar has regained the TRW jersey this year. Photos uploaded by the manager with the import players are interesting with a good and appropriate caption added with the fanatic fans of the import. Photos of the manager and import players can be referred to in Figure 4.20. In terms of video status, it shows good feedback in terms of views, but rather in terms of comment on status. Most videos that have a lot of comments are probably due to the question asked in the caption of the status. On average, the average video is about the launch of the new jersey and the event introduces a new line of management and players which can be referenced in Figure 4.21. So, it looks interesting and convincing rather than using photos even if the pictures are beautiful and interesting.

![Figure 4.20. Photos That Get 3 in Thousand Likes and Up](image)

![Figure 4.21. Views That are Much But Less Terms of Comments](image)
5. Discussion

The analysis is done from the content on TRW manager’s Instagram that was collected for one month starting from 1st of January until 1st of February, 2018. These are four (4) types of content reviewed in the Instagram belongs to the manager such as photo, video, colour, and caption.

Figure 5.1 shows that the use of video in Instagram has received the most feedback from her followers. Additionally, it also indicates that the use of the video is the most dominant among the four types of content because video gets the highest feedback from her followers. Due to the uniqueness of the video that she posted, it made her gain high views from the followers. That’s why it attracted followers to watch the videos uploaded on Instagram’s site.

![Feedback on Content Types in Kelantan Football Manager Instagram](image)

**Figure 5.1.** Feedback on Content Types in Kelantan Football Manager Instagram

Photo appears to be less interesting because it only shows static pictures, compare to videos that use moving pictures. This is evident from the Figure 5.1 which shows that her followers are less likely to respond to the display of photos. Although the pictures used are interesting and clear, but the appeal of the status by using the video gets more appeal and high feedback.

Next, for the colour, it shows a decrease in the number of followers in terms of feedback received where in January, it exceeds the number that responds to posted photos compared to February which shows a slight decrease. This is because, in January, she uses a lot of cheerful interesting colours on the pictures that attract her followers to comment and also feedback on the colour display on the picture. Meanwhile, in February, the manager is less concerned about the use of colour in the pictures because of her busy schedule in managing TRW with lately, the unwanted things happened in the TRW team.

Lastly, for the caption, it shows an increase in feedback from followers as shown in Figure 5.1. There is a slight increase in January compared to February. This is because, during the month, managers often use long and boring captions. Therefore, the followers do not give their feedback because they do not like long sentences that make it difficult for them to read the caption. In contrast, in February it shows increased feedback from followers, where managers used a shorter caption to facilitate her followers to understand what she wants to say. In addition, the manager has also realized that her followers prefer simple captions as her followers are mostly teenagers.

6. Conclusion

For the conclusion, the researchers find that this study is very useful to any management of football teams in Malaysia. The findings from this study reveal that the use of appropriate types of content and multimedia elements that meet the interests of the followers can have a positive impact on feedback received. However, failure or lack of feedback received is not only due to the shortcomings that may arise in the use of Instagram content, but may also be caused by other factors such as threats from the haters that reduces the attraction of Instagram TRW manager. Everyone is aware that youngsters nowadays prefer simple and easy words to understand because they do not have to take a long time to understand something. One of the examples of abbreviations used by the manager on her Instagram
site is “tq 2 those who always s4 in any situation of Kelantan FA team”. This proves that she prefers to use short words because she wants to facilitate followers to read the verses as well as the information they share. Additionally, it also reveals that Instagram application is as a new medium for communication where it is unique in its own way.

Furthermore, Kim (2011) also agrees that communication through social media is able to enhance the level of human interaction. Based on this study, the researchers suggest that communication through social media, especially Instagram applications, has an impact on the interests and intentions or wants to communicate through social media, for example, the followers of TRW manager decide whether to communicate or not on Instagram's website. The communication process will occur if they always provide feedback and comments on images or videos uploaded by her. So, the level of relationships will always increase and continue if they are always connected with each other. In addition, the results of this study also show the importance of communicating through social media in ensuring the improvement of human needs.

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