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Local Content-Based Digital Advertising Strategy on Instagram @indomie:

Cultural Representation in the Geo-Cybernetic Era

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ABSTRACT

This study examines communication strategies in local content-based digital advertising on the Instagram account @indomie as a practice of cultural representation in the geo-cybernetic era. Within the field of communication studies, digital advertising is not merely a promotional tool but a cultural discourse that fosters symbolic interaction between brands and audiences. Through critical discourse analysis and virtual ethnography, this research explores how visual and verbal messages in @indomie's posts construct meanings of national identity, emotional intimacy, and collective belonging among Indonesia's digital communities. The findings reveal that Indomie's communication strategy emphasizes *cultural storytelling*—highlighting values of togetherness, nostalgia, and local pride as symbolic capital to enhance brand engagement. The study argues that in the geo-cybernetic context, social media serves as a hybrid arena where local culture is negotiated through interactive and participatory communication practices. This research contributes to cultural communication and digital marketing studies by underscoring the significance of local content in shaping social relations within digital spaces.

Keywords: digital communication, cultural representation, local content, Indomie, geo-cybernetic, social media

INTRODUCTION

In an era increasingly defined by the convergence of physical and digital realms, giving rise to what may be termed the "geo-cybernetic" age. In this context, social media platforms such as Instagram have transformed from mere digital storefronts into dynamic public arenas. These arenas have become spaces where symbolic interaction occurs, identities are negotiated, and cultural discourses are formed and disseminated (Castells, 2010). The profound shifts within this domain



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signify a fundamental change in brand management. It is no longer sufficient for brands to merely promote products; they are now impelled to participate in cultural discourse, act as facilitators of meaning, and cultivate communities (Muñiz & O'Guinn, cited in Kurnia, 2024).

This phenomenon is particularly relevant in Indonesia, a nation characterized by both high social media penetration and rich cultural diversity. A prominent case study within this dynamic is Indomie. Indomie has long transcended its status as a mere instant noodle product, transforming into a cultural icon or "cultural superbrand" imbued with affective meaning and nostalgia. The brand functions as "comfort food," a symbol of "a taste of home," and a fluid, accessible marker of national culinary identity.

The official @indomie Instagram account, boasting a large following and high engagement rates, serves as the digital epicenter of this cultural phenomenon. This account is no longer merely a one-way digital advertising tool. On the contrary, it operates as a "hybrid arena" where centrally managed communication strategies meet, collide with, and are frequently renegotiated by the participatory practices of its audience. Despite Indomie's anecdotal recognition as integral to Indonesian identity, there remains a scarcity of in-depth academic analysis dedicated to deconstructing how this identity is actively constructed and maintained within the digital sphere.

Therefore, this research seeks to answer the central question: How has the @indomie Instagram account, through its managed strategies and the participatory practices of its digital community, contributed to the representation of local culture in the cybernetic era.

Digital platforms like Instagram function as institutionalized socio-cultural spaces. This aligns with Castells' (2010) perspective on the network society, where the flow of information and digital imagery forms the core of social organization. Consequently, Instagram as a platform is not a passive mirror of reality, but a "space of flows" wherein identity and meaning are constantly negotiated. Instagram operates as a "hybrid arena" where public, commercial, and personal discourses are intertwined. Jenkins (cited in Jauhari, 2021) refers to this as part of a "participatory culture," where consumers are no longer passive audiences but also producers and distributors of content. Therefore, to comprehend the @indomie phenomenon, one cannot view it merely as an advertising strategy. Instead, it must be recognized as a living cultural discourse.



LITERATURE REVIEW OR RESEARCH BACKGROUND

This paper seeks to apply Holt's theory as a framework for analyzing how Cultural Branding and local identity, manifested through storytelling strategies on the @indomie Instagram account, foster consumer engagement.

Holt (2004) argues that the most iconic brands are those that succeed in forming cultural "myths." They not only sell functionality but also narrate stories relevant to addressing the collective anxieties and aspirations of their audience. This integration of functionality and cultural myth (cultural storytelling) constitutes the core of this research. To analyze cultural branding, it is necessary to apply the four interrelated stages proposed by Holt (2004), namely:

Cultural Contradictions This concept refers to the fundamental assumption that within any collective society, contradictions always exist between ideological values and the realities of everyday life. When ideology and reality are dissonant, a collective cultural anxiety emerges. Individuals feel unsettled and dissatisfied, unable to live their lives in accordance with their cultural ideals.

Myth Markets When these Cultural Contradictions become sufficiently potent, they, in turn, create a "demand" within society for narratives that can help alleviate this anxiety. Holt refers to this as the Myth Markets.

Identity Myths At this stage, brands begin to assume the role of supplying the narratives desired by society. Holt (2004) states that iconic brands take existing myths and retell them in the most relevant and potent manner through advertising.

Consumption as Ritual However, it is not sufficient for this myth to merely be presented in advertising. Consumers must be able to "experience" the myth. This is where the product functions as an artifact, enabling the consumer to perform rituals in order to internalize the desired myth.

In the context of Indonesia's highly diverse society, Indomie appears to leverage togetherness, nostalgia, and local pride as its symbolic capital to deliver this experience to consumers. Furthermore, this affective power is intrinsically linked to the use of nostalgia. Nostalgia, in turn, can be differentiated into two types: restorative nostalgia (reconstructing the past) and reflective nostalgia (reflecting upon the past) (Wheeler, cited in Paramanandana, 2025). @indomie appears to utilize reflective nostalgia, evoking collective memories of "childhood" or "eating with friends," thereby strengthening emotional bonds and a sense of belonging.

METHODOLOGY



This study employs a qualitative **Content Analysis methodology** to deconstruct how @indomie strategically represents local culture. Within the context of digital advertising, content analysis facilitates a systematic examination of the **textual, visual, and auditory elements** employed by @indomie. The analysis will be applied to dissect the official content published by @indomie, conceptualizing these posts as "identity myths" strategically aimed at constructing "Myth Markets." This comprehensive analytical approach will ultimately **elucidate** the mechanisms by which the @indomie account successfully builds its cultural branding.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Indomie is an Indonesian instant noodle brand manufactured by PT Indofood CBP Sukses Makmur Tbk. First introduced in the 1970s, Indomie has emerged as an authentic product from a national Indonesian corporation. The brand has garnered significant popularity in both domestic and international markets, and is renowned for its distinctive flavor profile.

A. *Cultural Branding*

The analysis of the @indomie account centers on the brand's selection of formats and narratives for disseminating its myths. This analysis is conducted on a sample of six Reels, chosen as representative instances of Indomie's digital communication strategy. The Reels format enables Indomie to present cultural storytelling through relatable vignettes, thereby positioning the brand as part of the dynamic "space of flows" of digital culture. The official posts from Indomie strategically **associate** the product with solutions for modern living.



Content 1. <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DPENdE1DkH4/?igsh=YzB0NXYxaGx2czNz>



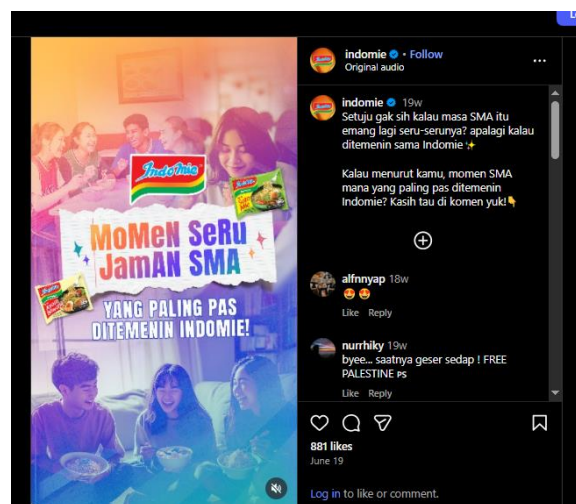
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This content post depicts two individuals consuming a meal from the Indomie brand. The background setting appears to be a domestic residence, suggesting a small family unit during a nighttime setting. The two individuals are observed engaging in conversation within a warm, tranquil ambiance. The accompanying caption states: *“From the awkward first meet to warm moments accompanied by Indomie Soto Koya Nagih and Indomie Soto Koya Pedes Dower~. Now it's time to feel the story of Rangga & Cinta, showing October 2nd in your favorite cinema! 🍷🍷”*. This text indicates that @indomie is positioning its product as a catalyst for enhanced enjoyment during specific shared moments. Furthermore, Indomie explicitly features its products by name: “Soto Koya Nagih” and “Soto Koya Pedes Dower.”

This content explicitly demonstrates @indomie's attempt to offer 'Consumption as Ritual' to consumers. It achieves this by presenting a portrayal imbued with a warm sense of togetherness, articulated in the caption: *“Sekarang saatnya ikut ngerasain cerita Rangga & Cinta, tayang 2 Oktober di bioskop favoritmu”* (Now it's time to feel the story of Rangga & Cinta, showing October 2nd in your favorite cinema). Furthermore, Rangga and Cinta are the main protagonists of the film *Ada Apa dengan Cinta?* (What's Up with Love?), which was released in 2002. The film achieved significant popularity among the Millennial generation, who were in their adolescence at the time of its release. Consequently, @indomie explicitly offers a consumption ritual: enjoying its product while reminiscing about the Millennial era. This act is simultaneously associated with the warm, familial atmosphere depicted.



Content 2. <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DLE4thuP0lu/?igsh=eTg5bnpiNGI4eWhw>



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This content is complemented by a gradient color scheme, featuring the text: “*Momen seru jaman SMA yang paling pas ditemenin indomie!*” (The most exciting high school moments are best accompanied by Indomie!). Additionally, it includes three images arranged in a top-and-bottom layout. This layout depicts a group of young people laughing together, alongside another image of a female individual smiling with her eyes closed. The Indomie logo is positioned above the text, and the product variants “Indomie Soto Ayam” and “Indomie Ayam Bawang” are also featured. The caption reads: “*Setuju gak sih kalau masa SMA itu emang lagi seru-serunya? apalagi kalau ditemenin sama Indomie 🌟 Kalau menurut kamu, momen SMA mana yang paling pas ditemenin Indomie? Kasih tau di komen yuk! 📌*” (Wouldn't you agree that high school is the most exciting time? especially when accompanied by Indomie 🌟 In your opinion, which high school moments are best accompanied by Indomie? Let us know in the comments! 📌).

This content showcases the cultural values of togetherness and warmth. It incorporates a color gradient—transitioning from orange, red, to blue—which visually conveys the impression that the high school period is a vibrant and "colorful" phase of life. The content invites consumers to reminisce about their youth and their time in school. In greater detail, Indomie depicts scenarios common to student life: young people engaged in group assignments, taking a break (recess) at school, and returning from extracurricular activities—all of which constitute the daily routine of youth during their school years.



Konten 3.

www.instagram.com/reel/DMuxDAkyUXm/?igsh=MTh3amQyenhueDdoMQ%3D%3D



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This content utilizes a red-to-orange color gradient, supplemented by the Indomie brand logo and an exclamation emoticon. It also features the text, “ayo kita rame-rame olahraga” (let's all exercise together). The subsequent visual sequence depicts a man preparing an Indomie product, presented in an accelerated time-lapse. The man is shown merely boiling the instant noodles and then adding 12 spoonfuls of the boiling water to create the broth. The background setting is a kitchen environment. The caption employed for this content reads: “*Walaupun olahragaku gak bikin keringetan, tapi bikin aku kalap dan kenyang 😊*” (Even though my exercise doesn't make me sweat, it makes me ravenous and full 😊).

This content demonstrates that the Indomie product can be prepared with ease and celerity, without requiring a significant investment of time. This attribute is highly relevant to the conditions of the contemporary era. Historically, meals were typically produced within the domestic sphere by an individual assuming the role of the household cook. Within a family unit, this role was traditionally held by the wife, who was often responsible for the domestic sphere.

However, in the current era, wives may no longer exclusively fulfill this domestic role; indeed, many now participate significantly in the external sphere. This shift can generate a longing for "home-cooked meals" (*masakan rumahan*) within the family. This is particularly salient for the male figure who, having culturally occupied the external sphere, returns home expecting to consume domestically prepared food.

Amidst these cultural shifts and the pressures of demanding work lives, the Indomie product emerges by interpreting the existing 'Myth Markets'. @indomie seeks to demonstrate how domestic memories can be evoked through its product, even when this preparation is undertaken by a man—an individual ostensibly occupying the external sphere. Consequently, this content infuses its product with cultural myths ('Identity Myths') while simultaneously offering 'Consumption as Ritual' through the process of cooking in the kitchen and consuming the meal (in this context, the instant noodles).



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Konten 4. www.instagram.com/reel/DMuZn2FMCaA/?igsh=MWlkcjZ4bGx5dzN6ag%3D%3D

This content employs a color gradient transitioning from light to dark orange, complemented by an image of a man enjoying noodles. Positioned behind him is a graphic depicting noodles and spices. The content is further enhanced with an explosion sound effect, which synchronizes with the man's expression of wide-eyed surprise upon his first bite, implying that the noodles possess an intensely rich spice profile.

@indomie also includes the caption: “*Gak heran kalo pas makan Indomie Banglahdes’e, suapan pertamanya langsung bikin kalap~ Soalnya Nyemeknya Baru, Rempahnya Sekalap itu! Absen dong di komen yang udah kalap juga pas nyobain*” (It's no wonder that the first bite of Indomie Banglahdes'e makes you go wild~ Because the 'Nyemek' [moist texture] is New, the Spices are That Wild! Roll call in the comments if you also went wild when trying it).

This content highlights the richness of Indonesia's local culinary identity, which is characterized by an abundance of spices. This spice-rich profile is encapsulated within an instant noodle product: the "Mie Banglahdes'e" flavor variant. This variant references a specific culinary specialty found in the region of Medan, North Sumatra.

Consequently, the content attempts to posit that this regional cuisine can represent a 'Cultural Contradiction'. It suggests that among Indonesia's vast array of local-themed foods, the noodle dish originating from Medan possesses a distinct character. Ultimately, this specific regional flavor is made accessible, allowing it to be enjoyed by consumers nationwide, transcending its geographical origins.

Furthermore, @indomie imposes its perception of the variant's flavor profile via the caption:



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“nyemeknya baru, rempahnya sekalap itu. Absen dong di komen yang udah kalap juga pas nyobain” (the 'nyemek' is new, the spices are that wild. Roll call in the comments if you also went wild when trying it). This caption functions as an invitation for consumers to engage participatively by recounting their own experiences with the product, describing its taste, and simultaneously recalling their own cultural experiences, particularly those originating from the Medan region.



Konten 5. <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DL9bffVNTL0/?igsh=djg2NGZzcHkxZjVk>

This content features an interview with Pak Agem, the proprietor of a *warung kopi* (traditional coffee stall, or *warkop*), who is identified as the original formulator of the "Mie Banglahdes'e" flavor variant. The introductory sequence depicts two men preparing the noodles, followed by a brief dance, after which they consume the meal together. The background setting is established as a *warkop*.

The caption employed reads: “Ngobrol-ngobrol santai bareng Bang Agem soal cerita tentang usaha Warmindo dan asal mula menu Indomie Banglahdes’e! 😊 Penasaran? Tonton videonya sampe abis ya~” (A casual chat with Bang Agem about the story of his Warmindo business and the origin of the Indomie Banglahdes’e menu! 😊 Curious? Watch the video until the end~).

The content demonstrates how Indomie, as a food product, maintains proximity to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), which, in this context, is the *warkop*. This affinity is further visualized by the two men dancing briefly while preparing the instant noodles and subsequently enjoying the meal together. The man in the red shirt is identified as the *warkop* proprietor, while



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the other man represents the Indomie corporation. Their shared actions of dancing and eating symbolize a collaboration between the corporation and the SME.

Beyond this immediate narrative, the content serves to remind the Indonesian populace that the *warkop* is an integral part of daily life, particularly for common citizenry, embodying values of communality and local specificity unique to Indonesia. This evokes a 'Cultural Contradiction' when juxtaposed with the third content piece, which depicted the hectic pace of the contemporary era.

Through the "Mie Banglahdes'e" flavor variant, @indomie endeavors to demonstrate its role in assimilating these traditional values into a commercial product. Consequently, this process can be conceptualized as an act of 'Identity Myths' perpetrated by @indomie. This, in turn, offers a 'Consumption as Ritual,' portrayed through the act of consuming the Indomie product communally within the *warkop* setting.



Konten 6. <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DPfpVxij60N/?igsh=czBwaGE3c3Q0aDBm>

This content utilizes a red base color, complemented by graphics of a sports field and athletic equipment, which visually convey motivation. The text “POV Obrolan Gen Z mode atlet” (POV: Gen Z Conversation, athlete mode) is displayed. This is juxtaposed with an image of a young man smiling at a mobile phone in his left hand, a towel draped over his right shoulder. Animations of a tennis racket and a barbell are also integrated. The subsequent sequence displays an online chat conversation, indicating a shared enthusiasm for exercise despite busy schedules. The content concludes by featuring the “Mie Goreng Jumbo Rasa Ayam Panggang” (Jumbo Fried Noodles, Roasted Chicken Flavor) product variant. The caption employed states: “Buat jadi atlet mode gini,



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emang butuh Indomie JUMBO, buat ngadepinnya! 🏃‍♂️” (To be in athlete mode like this, you really need Indomie JUMBO to face it! 🏃‍♂️).

The content suggests that a 'Cultural Contradiction' is formed around the cultural values of "Generation Z," which include being active, and upholding sportsmanship and discipline. This is reflected in the portrayal of the young man who, having seemingly just completed an athletic activity, is immediately invited by a friend via smartphone to exercise again. However, the fulfillment of this active lifestyle is contingent upon sufficient nutritional intake; otherwise, such rigorous activity becomes untenable.

It is at this juncture that the Indomie brand intercepts the values and anxieties experienced by "Generation Z." @indomie attempts to provide a solution by creating an 'Identity Myth' through this content. This is substantiated by the caption, which claims: “Buat jadi atlet mode gini, emang butuh Indomie JUMBO, buat ngadepinnya! 🏃‍♂️”. @indomie endeavors to convince consumers that consuming the JUMBO variant will fulfill their nutritional requirements, which, by implication, facilitates the realization of these "Generation Z" cultural values. It is this persuasive effort that, in turn, positions the product within the framework of 'Consumption as Ritual'.

B. Community within the @indomie Account: Rituals and a Digital Space of Negotiation

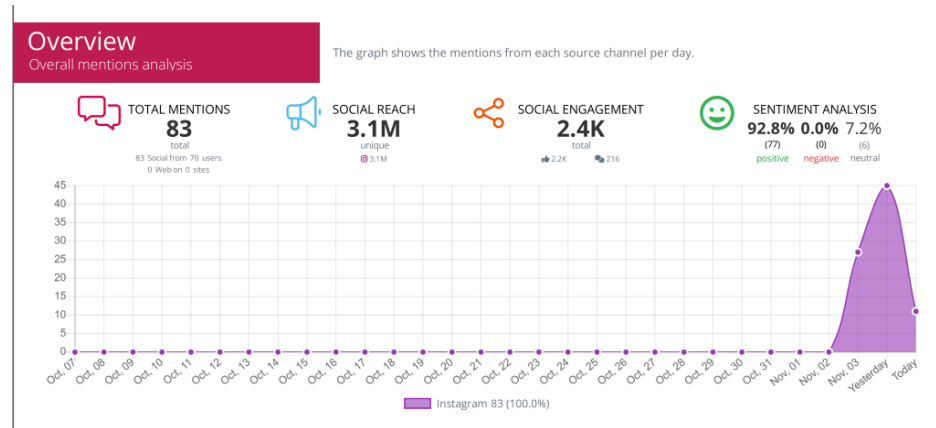
This subsection elucidates how local cultural rituals are negotiated through interactive and participatory communication practices. Netnography is employed to validate whether the strategies utilized are received and internalized by the digital audience. Analysis of 'mentions' data provides evidence that the digital community within the @indomie account exhibits remarkable affection and cultural participation. To facilitate data retrieval, this research utilized the social media analysis tool www.mentionlytics.com. The selected timeframe encompasses the recent period from October 7, 2025, to November 5, 2025.



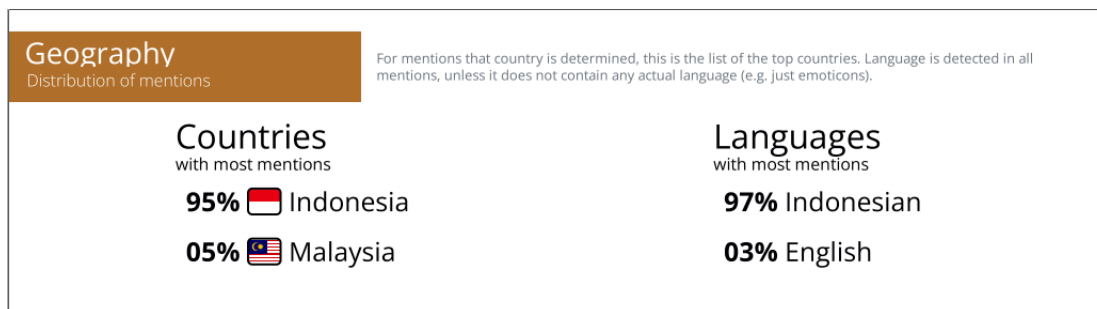
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The data analysis results, encompassing 83 mentions, reveal distinct characteristics of Indomie's status as a cultural icon. The data demonstrates a predominance of Positive sentiment (92.8%), with "Joy" being the primary automatically detected emotion. This exceptionally high level of affect indicates that Indomie has transformed into a symbol of pride or a cultural icon, a status wherein criticism of the product registered at 0.0% (Negative sentiment). This absence of critique is presumably avoided, perhaps unconsciously, because Indomie has become an integral part of the collective identity.



Although Indomie has become a globalized brand, the digital community active on Instagram remains deeply rooted in Indonesia (accounting for 95% of mentions) and predominantly uses Bahasa Indonesia (97%). However, the presence of mentions from Malaysia and Taiwan corroborates the theme of "comfort food" (*rasa rumah*) for the diaspora. This demonstrates that the Indomie brand has successfully preserved its national identity even beyond the geographical confines of Indonesia.

Three Markers of a Brand Community

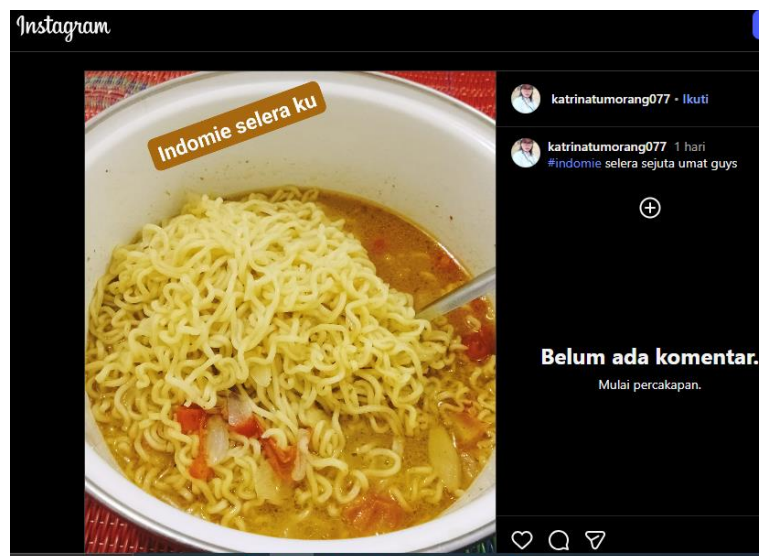


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This analysis affirms that the Indomie digital community is defined as a non-geographical community based on social relations. Based on this premise, it can be asserted that members of this brand community maintain their communal affiliation with the brand through three characteristic markers: shared consciousness, rituals and traditions, and moral responsibility (Muñiz & O'Guinn, cited in Kurnia, 2024).



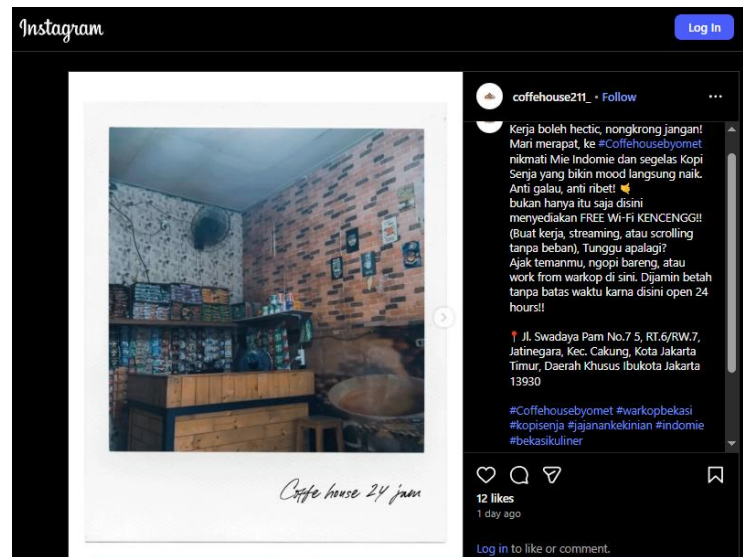
- *Shared Consciousness (Consciousness of Kind)*: Users celebrate their collective identification with the brand, employing phrases such as “*selera sejuta umat*” (the taste of millions) or “*Indomie selera ku*” (Indomie is my taste). Indomie is also utilized metaphorically to express emotional intimacy and personal desire, as exemplified by the post: “*Apa aku harus jadi Indomie biar jadi selera mu #Indomie #Seleraku*” (Must I become Indomie to be your taste? #Indomie #Seleraku).



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- **Rituals and Traditions:** Indomie is integrated into contextual consumption rituals, such as breakfast, late-night snacks ("at 3 AM"), or during rainy/cold weather. Most significantly, the "Warmindo Culture" (*Warung Makan Indomie*) is prominent. References to "Warmindo" and "work from warkop" indicate that Indomie consumption is an institutionalized communal social practice.



- **Moral Responsibility (Kewajiban Moral):** Moral responsibility manifests as support for the economic ecosystem constructed around the brand. Several posts promote Warmindo and 'small-scale vendors' (*pedagang kecil*) who sell Indomie-based creations, indicating a sense of obligation to preserve the brand's traditions at the grassroots level. Posts explicitly utilize hashtags and text that support Warmindo as an enterprise, exemplified by the following: "#CapCut tetep aja mie nyemek wareg_warmindo yg di cari ya ga sini uhuyyy ☺ 📍 WAREG_WARMINDO #fypage #warmindo #umkm #indomie #pedagangkecil"



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Cultural Myths and Digital Participation

The success of Indomie resides in the synergy between its branding strategy and the validation received from the consumer community formed on social media. Findings from its discourse-creation efforts demonstrate that Indomie successfully reproduces its 'identity myths' through various forms of 'cultural storytelling'. This identity is continuously reproduced through Instagram Reels content. This identity appears to resonate deeply with the public and is, in turn, internalized both consciously and unconsciously. This is substantiated by validation from the digital community (netizens), manifested in their posts, hashtags, and other utilized symbols. The digital community does not merely accept these myths; they actively legitimize them through their participation.

Consequently, Indomie has successfully transitioned into a cultural facilitator, rather than merely selling a product based on its functionality. The Instagram platform, operating as a 'hybrid arena', is no longer merely a promotional channel but has evolved into an arena of constant negotiation. The dominance of the Reels format, coupled with the high volume of Indomie-related content reproduction originating from the digital community (netizens), indicates that the flow of meaning is not unidirectional. This flow is bidirectional, cyclical, and continuously reproduced organically. Indomie interacts with the content it receives from the digital community, which subsequently triggers new responses, thereby perpetuating the cycle of cultural identity and ensuring it remains both vibrant and authentic.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that the @indomie Instagram account effectively employs cultural branding strategies to nurture national identity and collective togetherness in the geo-cybernetic era. This success is attributed not merely to the functional promotion of the product, but rather to @indomie's capability to establish itself as a cultural facilitator for society. The efficacy of this strategy is robustly validated through a netnographic analysis of digital community participation. It was determined that the audience does not passively accept the myths offered; on the contrary, they actively legitimize, reproduce, and negotiate these myths within the digital space. Indomie has successfully transcended its status as a mere product to become a fluid marker of national identity, one that is continuously negotiated and perpetuated by its own community within that digital domain.



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