
**THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING CONTENT ON THE
NUMBER OF LEADS THROUGH DIRECT MESSAGES FOR EXCEL
PRODUCTS AT EDSPERT**

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of social media advertising content on the number of Direct Message (DM) leads for Edspert's Excel training product, as well as coordination between the Marketing and Sales teams in approving incoming leads. The research was conducted during an internship program at PT Widya Kreasi Bangsa, an EdTech company specializing in professional competency development through the Edspert.id platform. The method used was a qualitative case study approach. Data collection was conducted through in-depth semi-structured interviews, observation, and documentation. The interviewees included the Performance and Growth Marketing (PGM) team, Edspert's Business Development & Sales team, and Excel training participants as supporting sources. Data validity was tested using source triangulation. The results revealed two main findings. First, the social media advertising content used by Edspert was not fully optimal in encouraging audiences to engage with Direct Messages. This was due to the lack of differentiation in content types tailored to the characteristics of each platform, a content strategy that was not fully relevant to the target audience segment, and limited human resources within the PGM team. Second, there are still gaps in coordination between the Marketing and Sales teams, particularly in the delivery of campaign information, which is not always fully conveyed to the Sales team, leading to miscommunication that impacts lead follow-up. Nevertheless, the overall lead handling process is quite structured, and the quality of incoming leads is considered quite good. This study recommends that Edspert differentiate content based on platform and audience segment, strengthen cross-divisional coordination, and ensure information alignment between the Marketing and Sales teams to improve the effectiveness of digital campaigns and the conversion of leads into training participants.

Keywords: Advertising Content, Coordination, Direct Messages, Edspert, Inter-Team Coordination, Leads, Social Media Marketing

INTRODUCTION

Social media has now become an important channel for building direct relationships with consumers, expanding market reach, and shaping brand perception. Several previous studies have highlighted the importance of social media marketing across various sectors, including the education industry. For instance, Gibson & Harris (2012) emphasized the role of social media in marketing educational institutions, while Lin (2018) examined online marketing strategies for language learning products. Unlike previous studies, this research specifically discusses marketing design and the influence of SMM on the sales of learning media products.

The theory proposed by Al-Assaf et al. (2025) further strengthens the urgency of this research by showing that every element in digital marketing, including social media marketing, content marketing, email marketing, and online advertising such as Google Ads, significantly contributes to improving promotional effectiveness and increasing sales of local products. In their context, social media has proven to be a strategic tool that not only enhances awareness but also drives sales leads when utilized effectively. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, online learning has become an urgent necessity in Indonesia's education sector. This was caused by social restriction policies that forced face-to-face teaching and learning activities to stop in order to prevent the spread of the virus. In response to this condition, the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) immediately issued Circular Letter Number 36962/MPK.A/HK/2020, encouraging the implementation of learning from home through the use of digital technology. To support this initiative, Kemendikbud actively collaborated with educational technology developers such as Google, Microsoft, Ruangguru, Zenius, and others to provide free online learning platforms for students and teachers throughout Indonesia. Although challenges such as limited internet access and the readiness of educators remain obstacles, the presence of various digital platforms has created significant opportunities to ensure that learning processes continue effectively.

One online learning platform that emerged as an innovative solution is Edspert.id, an EdTech (education technology) platform that provides online training and courses in various fields, including technical skills such as Microsoft Excel. Edspert is designed to support professional competency development through a flexible, structured learning system that can be accessed online anytime and anywhere. In the context of the increasing demand for digital skills in the industrial era, mastery of Microsoft Excel has become one of the essential competencies in business, finance, data analysis, and administration. Edspert provides Excel materials ranging from beginner to advanced levels, accompanied by case studies and exercises relevant to workplace needs. Through its practical approach, expert mentor support, and well-directed self-learning system, Edspert serves as a concrete example of how online learning can provide effective solutions for improving people's skills quickly and efficiently, particularly in mastering Excel applications that are crucial across various industrial sectors.

In an effort to attract more participants, Edspert relies on social media as its primary channel for promoting the Excel program. Through advertising content displayed on platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, Edspert targets prospective participants and

encourages them to show interest by sending Direct Messages (DMs). This activity is considered a form of initial interest or leads, which are then followed up by the sales team. However, in practice, not all advertising content successfully encourages audiences to take concrete actions such as sending Direct Messages. Although advertising campaigns may generate high numbers of impressions and interactions, not all content is capable of converting audience interest into tangible leads. This indicates that the effectiveness of advertising content elements such as copywriting, visuals, and calls-to-action still requires further evaluation.

In addition, another challenge arises in the follow-up process for incoming leads. Coordination between the marketing team, which creates and distributes advertising content, and the sales team, which follows up on messages from prospective participants, is often not yet optimal. Delayed responses, miscommunication, or discrepancies in data between the two teams may cause potential leads to fail to convert into participant registrations. Therefore, this research is important not only to evaluate the extent to which social media advertising content influences the number of leads for Excel products at Edspert, but also to examine how coordination between the marketing and sales teams can effectively manage and follow up on those leads. The results of this study are expected to provide strategic recommendations for Edspert in improving the effectiveness of digital campaigns and strengthening internal synergy between divisions to drive participant growth.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Marketing Management Theory (MMT)

Marketing Management Theory explains that marketing is the process of creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers in order to build long-term and mutually beneficial relationships (Kotler & Armstrong, 2020). In the digital era, marketing is no longer limited to selling products but also involves the use of social media, digital technologies, and data analytics to enhance customer engagement (Kotler, Keller, & Chernev, 2022). In this study, Marketing Management Theory is used to explain how Edspert designs advertising content on Instagram and TikTok to create value for prospective participants and encourage them to contact the company through Direct Messages (DMs) as an initial form of leads.

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) is a strategic approach that integrates various marketing communication activities, including advertising, social media, sales promotion, and public relations, to deliver a consistent message to consumers (Butkouskaya et al., 2024). The effectiveness of IMC depends not only on external communication but also on internal coordination among organizational functions, particularly between the Marketing and Sales teams (Abdellatif et al., 2025). In this study, IMC is used to explain the importance of message consistency and cross-functional coordination in ensuring effective lead management through Direct Messages.

Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) states that individuals make decisions by evaluating the perceived benefits and costs of a social exchange. In the context of digital marketing, consumers are more likely to respond when they perceive that advertising content provides valuable and relevant information. Therefore, advertising content that is informative, relevant, and aligned with audience needs is more likely to encourage prospective participants to send Direct Messages as an expression of initial interest. In this study, Social Exchange Theory is used to explain the relationship between the perceived value of social media advertising content and the generation of leads through Direct Messages.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Approach

The method used by the researcher is a qualitative method, specifically a qualitative case study approach. The qualitative case study approach is employed in this research because it enables an in-depth exploration of experiences, perceptions, and dynamics occurring in the digital marketing process at Edspert. According to Sugiyono (2019), a qualitative approach is used when researchers aim to understand the meaning behind human behavior, work processes, and social interactions within a natural context. Meanwhile, Moleong (2017) states that qualitative research emphasizes meaning, processes, and an in-depth understanding of phenomena, making it highly relevant for examining the effectiveness of social media advertising content and the process of handling leads through Direct Messages.

Research Sources

The informants in this study consist of members of the Performance and Growth Marketing (PGM) team and the Business Development & Sales team, particularly the Edspert division at PT Widya Kreasi Bangsa, especially those involved in managing social media advertising content and handling leads through Direct Messages. The selection of these informants aims to obtain in-depth and relevant data regarding how advertising content strategies are designed, how leads are generated and followed up, and how coordination between divisions takes place in supporting the effectiveness of digital campaigns. In addition, the researcher also involved several Excel training participants as supporting informants to understand the audience's perspective toward the advertising content displayed.

The number of informants in this study was not determined precisely from the beginning, but instead followed the principle of data saturation as explained by Miles and Huberman, where data collection is stopped when the information obtained becomes repetitive and no new significant data are found. Through this approach, the researcher ensures that the data obtained truly reflect the conditions occurring in the field and are capable of providing a comprehensive understanding of the influence of social media advertising content on the number of leads through Direct Messages for Excel products at Edspert. Therefore, the researcher selected informants as one of the accurate and trustworthy sources of data in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Identification of Advertising Content That Has Not Yet Been Optimized

In today's digital era, the use of social media as a marketing tool plays an important role in increasing the number of prospective participants. Advertising content delivered through various social media platforms has become one of the main factors in attracting audience attention and encouraging them to interact, such as contacting the company through Direct Messages (DMs). On the other hand, internal company factors also influence the effectiveness of advertising content. One of the obstacles faced is the lack of human resources (manpower) with competencies in managing and optimizing social media advertising. This limitation affects the planning, creation, and evaluation processes of advertising content, making them less than optimal. Given these issues, the company needs to conduct an in-depth identification of the influence of social media advertising content on the number of prospective participants.

Differentiating Content Types Across Social Media Platforms

Several informants stated that content plays a major role in attracting audience attention, but its effectiveness is strongly influenced by the suitability of the message, visuals, and platform characteristics used. This was expressed in the following statement:

"In my opinion, there are two main things that need to be considered. The first relates to the content used in advertising because content greatly influences audience interest, both on social media and toward the Ads displayed...." (Leonardus, Head of PGM, January 8, 2026)

Mr. Leon emphasized that content is the primary factor influencing audience interest in advertisements. This indicates that content must not only be visually attractive but also tailored to the characteristics of the social media platform being used. Each platform has different target audiences and content consumption patterns, so companies need to differentiate the types of content used on each platform. However, the company must still maintain consistent branding or brand messaging.

"In my opinion, the most important thing is that the brand message remains the same. In one campaign, many channels are used, such as Meta Ads channels and social media channels. Even though many channels are used, we must still ensure that the brand message or message delivered to the audience remains consistent so there are no differences or branding miscommunication." (Leonardus, Head of PGM, January 8, 2026)

Mr. Leon also stated that differences in content types on each platform are indeed necessary to suit audience characteristics, but the main message conveyed to the audience must remain the same. This is intended to ensure that audiences have a consistent understanding of the product, its benefits, and the company's image, even when they encounter the campaign on different platforms.

Lack of Manpower in Managing Advertisements

"Manpower because there is a shortage of people, and it becomes less efficient because we are managing 3 brands with 9 channels." (Ms. S, social media PGM, December 11, 2025)

Ms. S explained that one of the main obstacles in managing social media content is

follow-up stages between teams, particularly in terms of information delivery and strategic alignment. In the context of this research, the interaction does not stop when audiences send DMs, but continues through the follow-up process conducted by the Sales or CRM team.

From the perspective of lead generation, the results of this study support previous research by Rahmawati and Nugroho (2021), which stated that social media advertising is effective in generating leads through digital interactions. This can be seen from the ability of the marketing team to generate leads through engaging content and ads.

Miscommunication between teams has become one of the most common obstacles, particularly between the Marketing and Sales teams, such as differences in delivering campaign information. Specifically, campaign information is not always fully communicated to the sales team, indicating that the implementation of IMC has not yet operated optimally. This results in inconsistencies in the information delivered to prospective participants, potentially causing confusion and reducing trust levels. These findings show that although coordination systems such as weekly meetings have been implemented, communication gaps still exist at the operational level. Such inconsistencies in messaging affect prospective participants' understanding and may reduce both trust and conversion opportunities. Therefore, having a coordination system alone is insufficient; it must also be supported by openness and clear communication flows among team members.

CONCLUSION

The content strategy implemented by the Marketing team plays a crucial role in attracting audience interest and influencing the quality of leads generated. Content created through social media and digital advertising has been proven to encourage audiences to engage with them through initial Direct Messages (DMs). However, in practice, several issues remain, preventing the advertising content from optimally generating quality leads. The first finding indicates that the advertising content used by Edspert has not been fully differentiated based on the characteristics of each social media platform. Each platform has different audience characteristics, content consumption patterns, and formats. Instagram is more effective with informative and comprehensive carousel content for the working segment, while TikTok is more effective with trend-following video content for the student segment. This mismatch between the content type and the platform characteristics results in the message being delivered less than optimally in reaching the intended audience.

The second finding indicates that the content strategy used is still not fully relevant to the target audience segment. The differences between student and working audiences require different content approaches. Student audiences tend to be more attracted to trending video content with messages emphasizing skill and portfolio development, while working audiences prefer informative and comprehensive carousel content with messages emphasizing the benefits of increasing productivity and income. When the content displayed is not relevant to the audience's needs and characteristics, the likelihood of them engaging in a Direct Message as an initial expression of interest is reduced. The third finding indicates that limited human resources within the Performance and Growth Marketing (PGM) team is an internal factor affecting the effectiveness of advertising content management. The team,

which must manage three brands simultaneously across nine social media channels, faces a significant workload, resulting in the planning, creation, evaluation, and optimization of advertising content being less than optimal. This limitation results in a suboptimal content strategy, resulting in the potential leads generated from each campaign not being fully realized.

Based on research, coordination between the Marketing and Sales teams in handling leads at Edspert has been implemented through several mechanisms, such as weekly meetings between division heads and daily discussions between the Ads, social media, and CRM teams. However, in practice, miscommunication between the teams is still found, particularly in the delivery of campaign information. Coordination between the Marketing and Sales teams in following up on leads received via Direct Message plays a crucial role in determining the success of converting leads into training participants. Overall, the lead handling process at Edspert is quite structured, but there are still some gaps that need to be addressed.

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