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Identifying The Role Of Key Opinion Leaders (KOL) Towards Brand Awareness Through Customer Engagement On The Instagram Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta

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Abstract

This research aims to identify the role of Key Opinion Leaders (KOL) in brand awareness through customer engagement on the Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta Instagram account. Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta is the leading beauty clinic in Indonesia, offering superior service to its consumers. The method used in this research is a qualitative method with observational data collection techniques, in-depth interviews and supported by documentation so that the research becomes more credible. The results of this research explain that the role of KOLs as opinion leaders is considered quite significant in disseminating information through content aimed at attracting a wider range of potential consumers. This is then expected to bring organic customer engagement. Brand awareness can then be obtained by creating positive perceptions about the brand through engagement from consumers.

Keywords: ***Key Opinion Leader (KOL), Brand Awareness, Customer Engagement, Instagram, Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta, beauty clinic.***

INTRODUCTION

The beauty clinic industry in Indonesia has experienced rapid growth. Based on data from BPS, the income of the Indonesian beauty industry has reached 7.095 billion US dollars or the equivalent of IDR 99.33 trillion in 2020. This figure has grown by 2.84% from the previous year (Source: Republika.co.id, April , 2023). This increase was caused by the large growth in Indonesia's population which was then driven by the public's concern for caring for their skin. This high income figure is one of the factors in the

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proliferation of beauty clinics that have spread across Indonesia. Chairman of the Association of Indonesian Cosmetics Companies and Associations (PPAK) Solihin Sofian said, by mid-2023 there will be 1,080 companies operating in the beauty industry. Data from BPS shows an increase of 18.29% compared to mid-2022, when there were only 913 companies. (Source: Kontan.co.id, February, 2024).

The large number of beauty clinic companies that have spread throughout the country has caused quite tight competition in this industry. Consumers certainly want a beauty clinic that is able to provide products that suit their skin needs with the best experience. In response to this, beauty clinic companies must be able to meet consumer needs in order to excel amidst competition. What beauty clinics need to strive for is to increase the best perception of their brand in the minds of consumers through several promotional and branding efforts. The rapid development of technology nowadays has supported promotional and branding activities that beauty clinics can carry out via digital platforms. Utilizing this platform for promotional activities provides an opportunity for beauty clinic companies to disseminate information such as the best products and services offered to consumers with a wider network. This also aims to ensure that consumers can easily remember and think about the beauty clinic brand among other brands.

Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta has carried out various promotional and branding efforts to consumers through the use of digital platforms. Some of the promotions carried out by Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta include annual discount events, giveaways, vouchers, which are supported through digital platforms such as applications, websites and social media. This is done to make it easier for Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta to get direct responses from consumers regarding purchasing decisions. Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta chose Instagram social media as the main platform for carrying out various promotional and branding efforts with the account name @miracle_kuta. This use of social media is not only a collaborative environment that concentrates on content exchange, but also emphasizes the active involvement of customers in the creation of all published content (Alalwan, 2018). This is also considered to create value for business, because it helps organizations reach customers globally with the aim of establishing and maintaining a premium brand (Singh and Cullinane, 2010).

As one of the author's contributions to making Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta an increasingly trusted beauty clinic, the use of Key Opinion Leaders (KOL) is a promotional strategy that can be carried out. KOLs are people who can influence other people's

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thoughts and behavior on online social platforms (Palmer and Supuran, 2015; Zou and Peng, 2019; Shen et al., 2020; Shen et al., 2021). Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta embraces Instagram's role as the main platform by utilizing KOLs as a key element in its marketing strategy because they can strengthen the narrative and provide the best perception of the brand.

KOL can also be called an Influencer, whose opinion is considered valid or trusted by many people so that the information or opinion they convey will be heard by a wider community. When a KOL shares an opinion with his followers, that opinion can quickly be followed and disseminated, so that companies collaborating with the KOL can easily provide information related to the products or services they offer to consumers. Through collaboration with relevant KOLs, Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta can increase brand awareness by gaining customer engagement on its Instagram social media. This is also done not only as a marketing strategy, but also as a foundation for forming a close relationship between Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta and its consumers. This statement is supported by Vivek et al. (2012) who said marketing practitioners believe that customer engagement is an important strategy for building strong customer relationships.

The KOL collaboration process starts from selecting the best Influencers who have interests, types of content, and the number of target audiences that match the criteria required by Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta. Influencers then visit the clinic to carry out treatment according to their needs and skin condition, then share their experiences or reviews when carrying out the treatment. The review content carried out is usually made in the form of images or short videos which are then uploaded to the Influencer's personal social media, by doing reels collaboration with the Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta social media account.

Efforts to increase brand awareness in this process are determined by the arrival of feedback or engagement from consumers regarding the KOL content that has been uploaded. The feedback or engagement obtained is usually in the form of views, comments, likes, or direct messages (DM) that come to the @miracle_kuta account. A number of consumers usually ask several further questions regarding the specifications of skincare products, the types and benefits of treatments, as well as the price list offered. It is hoped that the emergence of these questions can increase understanding of the products and services offered, as well as increase consumer memory regarding the Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta brand.

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OBJECTIVES

Based on the background of the problem that has been presented previously, the author formulates the main problem:

"What is the role of KOL in Brand Awareness through Customer Engagement on Instagram Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta?"

Based on the research problem formulation, the researcher then determined The purpose of this research is to To explain the role of KOL in Brand Awareness through Customer Engagement on Instagram Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Key Opinion Leader (KOL)

KOLs as opinion leaders have been proven to be a source of decisions for other consumers (Casaló, et.al., 2009; Thakur, Angriawan, & Summey, 2016). They can influence consumer attitudes and behavior, such as the dissemination of product information, purchases, and product use, through sharing information and personal opinions that they share through their social media platforms (Casaló et al., 2020; Romero-Rodríguez et al., 2020). KOLs are considered capable of generating organic engagement from their followers on social media platforms (Li and Bernoff, 2011). When KOLs succeed in building strong relationships with their followers, those followers are more likely to actively engage with the content shared by those KOLs, without needing excessive encouragement. KOL is also considered effective because it can share objective product information and subjective customer experiences through reviews (Wang et al., 2023). This suggests that the trust and engagement built between KOLs and their followers can lead to more organic and sustainable responses in marketing campaigns.

In recent years, KOL has been actively adopted by various industries (De Veirman, Cauberghe, and Hudders, 2017; Lou and Yuan, 2019; Scott, 2015), one of which is beauty clinics in Indonesia. In Indonesia, beauty clinics have also adopted marketing strategies involving KOLs to expand their reach, build brand credibility, and attract the attention of relevant target markets. This shows that the use of KOLs in the beauty industry is a significant and effective trend in facing marketing challenges in this digital era. In this research, the KOL used is a combination of two categories adjusted to the number of followers they have, namely Macro and Micro Influencers.

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Macro Influencer

Macro influencers are Influencers who tend to have a larger audience reach, usually having a following of >100,000 followers on their social media. With the following they have, macro influencers tend to have significant influence in certain industries. According to McCole, et al. (2019), macro influencers have the potential to reach a larger audience, allowing a brand to increase visibility and brand awareness.

Micro Influencer

On the other hand, micro influencers are Influencers who have a smaller number of followers, usually between 10,000 to 100,000 followers. This category of influencer often has a highly engaged audience and is focused on a specific target market. According to De Veirman, et al. (2017), micro influencers tend to create greater engagement due to closer relationships with their followers because their opinions are considered more authentic.

Customer Engagement

According to Brodie et al., (2011) customer engagement is a psychological state that occurs based on interactive, customer experiences with agents/objects (eg brands) that focus on service relationships. In general, businesses consider customer engagement as the basis of customer awareness (Rather & Camilleri, 2019). Customer engagement in marketing refers to the interaction between customers as the subject of engagement and the focal engagement object, including content related to the company/brand or company/brand (Hollebeek et al., 2014; Hollebeek and Macky, 2019).

Customer engagement has developed as an important concept in the marketing field, especially due to the emergence of social media which allows interaction with other companies and customers (Kulikovskaja, et al., 2023). The interactive nature of social media is able to support two-way communication activities between companies and their consumers. This allows the company to not only convey messages, but also be able to create contributions from customers. Contribution can be measured by social media metrics, for example likes, shares, and comments (Demmers et al., 2020).

Brand Awareness

One important element in marketing efforts is increasing brand awareness, which is one of the factors customers consider before making a purchasing decision. Studies

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say brand awareness is an important variable that influences customer perceptions of a brand (Vanitha & Subramanian, 2020). Brand awareness means the extent to which consumers know the brand, which plays an important factor in the decision-making process (Seo and Park, 2018; Tabrizi and Valanejad, 2018; Hsin et al., 2019). If customers have sufficient information about the company and its products, product accessibility and recognition becomes easier (Khan, et al., 2020).

Brand awareness itself consists of brand memory and recognition; recall indicates the customer's ability to remember the brand name, while recognition refers to the customer's ability to identify the brand (Dabbous and Barakat, 2020). This research will focus on the extent to which consumers can increase their knowledge and understanding of brands through the social media platform Instagram before making purchasing decisions.

Research Framework



Figure 1. Research Framework

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach in its research methodology. Qualitative methodology is focused on identifying actual core meanings while addressing marketing objectives, allowing researchers to provide comprehensive interpretations of market events without relying on numerical measurements (Zikmund & Babin, 2006). The main focus on the analysis unit is at the team or group level, especially on several Influencers who act as KOLs in collaboration with Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta. Data collection techniques in this research include direct observation, in-depth interviews with one resource person who is the Marketing Manager at Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta, and documentation. Observations help in clearly understanding the context being researched, while in-depth interviews provide deep insight into the views and experiences of research subjects. Documentation is used as a complement to strengthen the credibility of research results and enable further testing of the findings obtained. The data analysis process is carried out interactively, including data collection, data reduction to focus complex

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information, data presentation to provide a clear picture, and drawing conclusions to present new findings and answer research questions. This method allows researchers to understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects in a holistic and in-depth manner, as well as providing comprehensive insight into KOL collaboration and its influence on brand awareness and customer engagement at Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

In this research, several personal data of customers who visited the Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta Instagram account were found as a consideration in drawing research conclusions. The data obtained includes demographic data such as age, gender and country of origin which are described in the following graphs.

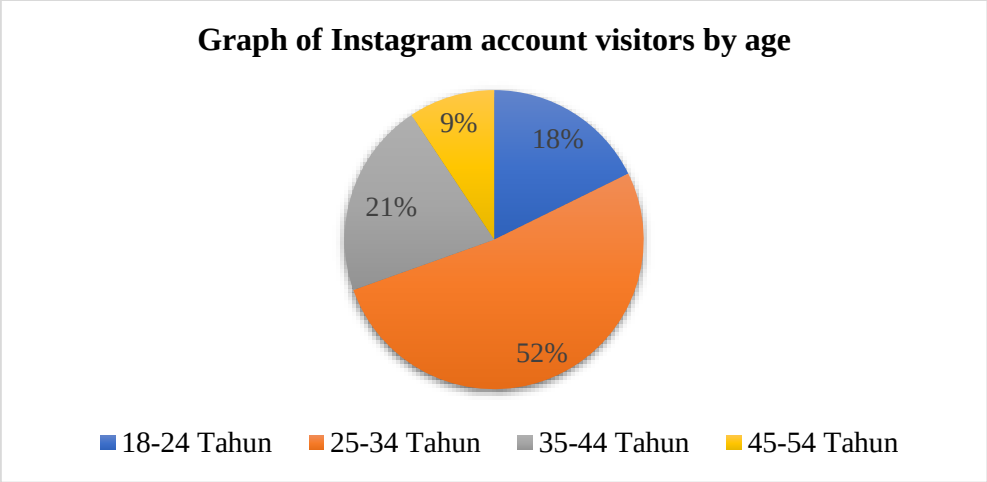


Figure 2. Graph of Instagram account visitors by age

The data obtained above shows that visitors to the Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta Instagram account are dominated by those aged 25 to 34 years with a percentage of 52 percent. This number exceeds the accumulated number of the other two age categories, namely the 35 to 44 year old category which is 21 percent, while the 18 to 24 year old category is 18 percent. The age category 45 to 54 is the lowest category because it only accounts for 9 percent.

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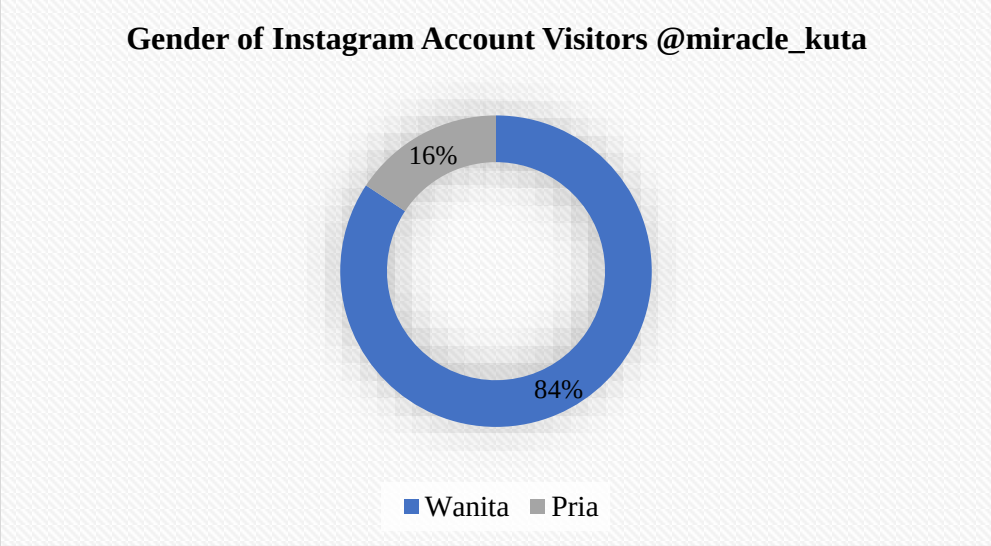


Figure 3. Graph of account visitors by gender

There is a significant difference in the number of visitors to the Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta Instagram account based on gender. Female visitors received 84 percent, while male visitors received only 16 percent. This reinforces the perception that women tend to dominate the beauty industry more than men.

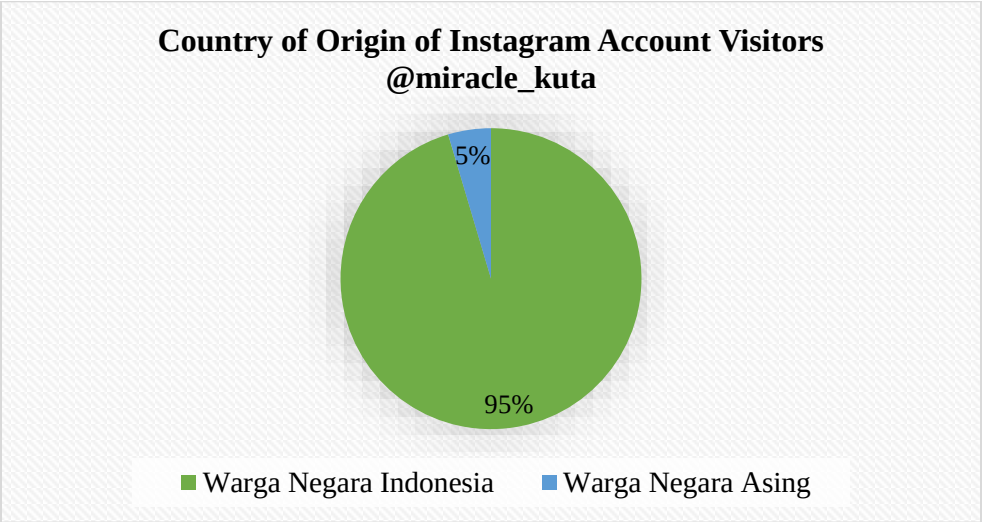


Figure 4. Country of Origin of Instagram Account Visitors @miracle_kuta

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The graph shows that visitors to the Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta Instagram still seem to be dominated by Indonesian citizens. The comparison is quite significant with 95 percent of Indonesian citizens and 5 percent of foreign nationals. Based on local visitor data, it can be seen that Bali is still leading with the two largest areas in Badung City and Denpasar City. Followed by the positions of the two regions below, namely Jakarta and Surabaya.

DISCUSSION

The Roles Of Key Opinion Leader (KOL)

Based on the results of interviews with sources, information was obtained that the KOL campaign had never been implemented before. This is a consideration that requires the realization of the planned KOL role in an effort to increase brand awareness of Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta through customer engagement on Instagram accounts. Furthermore, the resource person explained the reason for the need to increase brand awareness of Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta so that the brand can become top of mind awareness for potential consumers by being more communicative in spreading the products and services offered to them through the role of KOL.

The increase in brand awareness is then analyzed in plain view by obtaining customer engagement on Instagram @miracle_kuta, where the analysis is based on obtaining inquiries or questions regarding the treatment catalog or price list of the products and services offered by Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta. This analysis process involved a total of 9 Influencers over a period of 6 months starting from February to July, where the number of KOLs had reached the initial target conveyed by the resource person during the interview process. KOL here has a significant role in efforts to increase brand awareness through customer engagement on the Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta Instagram account. Based on the results of researchers' observations, the role of KOLs during the campaign includes various aspects. These aspects include disseminating more detailed information, creating persuasive content, and communicating promos.

1. The first role of KOL is to disseminate more detailed information about the products and services offered by Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta. This role is the most important because it is the main aspect that supports the aim of increasing brand awareness of the clinic. Information such as the type, benefits, process and detailed stages of treatment is posted on the Influencers' personal accounts with the aim of reaching a wider reach of potential consumers. It is hoped that this can also attract engagement

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from audiences who are interested in asking further questions through inquiries submitted to the @miracle_kuta account.

2. The second role that will be discussed further in this section is KOL as a persuasive content creator. Persuasiveness here refers to how Influencers can present content with the impression of "inviting" their audience in an effort to attract consumer attention to generate engagement. The next hope is to attract them to undergo treatment or buy products at Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta. This form of persuasion can be in the form of a direct invitation shown visually in video content, or in the form of a post caption that is interesting to read.
3. The KOL's final role is as a communicator for ongoing promotions at the clinic. Influencers here play a role in conveying detailed information about the promotion. These include the type, amount, terms and conditions, and the promo period. The hope is that the promotions carried out can reach more potential consumers through content created by Influencers.

In an effort to bring organic engagement, KOLs are required to create content according to their respective delivery styles by using the SOW that has been created by the brand as a guideline. This is done so that the brand obtains a positive perception which can generate engagement from consumers. For example, one of the KOLs who works as a model said that treatment at Miracle was one of her beauty secrets, so this could give rise to the perception that if they want to look beautiful, consumers can try having treatment at Miracle. This will later bring in customer engagement in the form of further questions regarding treatments that have been posted by one of the Influencers on the Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta Instagram.

Table 1. Results of data on the dominance of visitors to Instagram accounts

No.	Categories	Account Visitor Domination
1.	Ages	25 – 34 Years Old
1.	Gender	Female
2.	Origin	WNI
3.	Region (WNI)	Badung
4.	Country of Origin (WNA)	Australia

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Next, an analysis of the acquisition of customer engagement from the ongoing KOL campaign is carried out. This data was collected by researchers during the internship process. Data is collected precisely when the Influencer starts posting content. This data will only be taken partially for further analysis. The form of data taken is only the acquisition of followers and inquiries. Meanwhile, other engagement data such as the acquisition of likes and comments is displayed in the attachment section because it only acts as supporting data.

1) Followers

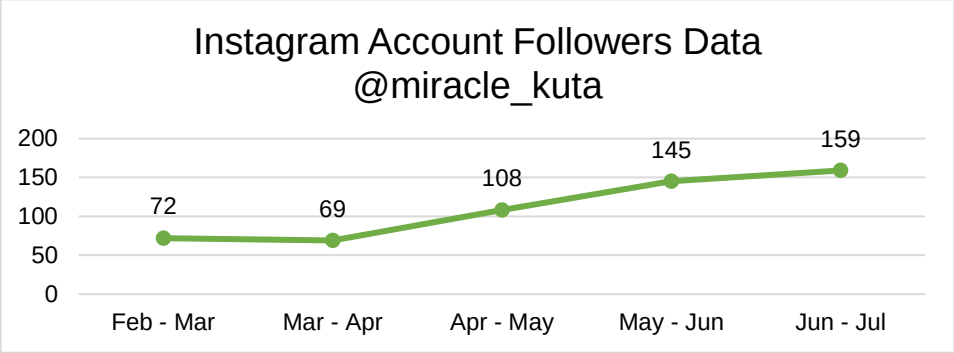


Figure 5. Follower growth graph

The graph above shows that follower growth seems to have increased when entering February to March, right when KOL activity is more productive. This is clearly considered a result that can be seen with the naked eye that with KOL campaigns, companies can reach more followers.

2) Direct Messages/ Inquiries

Table 2. Results of direct messages acquisition data

KOL	Categories	Followers	DM Acquisition
Influencer 1	*Micro Influencer*	53.100	24
Influencer 2	*Macro Influencer*	110.400	21
Influencer 3	*Macro Influencer*	*158.000*	*19*
Influencer 4	*Micro Influencer*	*77.600*	*13*
Influencer 5	*Micro Influencer*	*41.400*	*17*

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Influencer 6	*Micro Influencer*	*17.600*	*11*
Influencer 7	*Micro Influencer*	*24.500*	*4*
Influencer 8	*Micro Influencer*	*48.200*	*3*
Influencer 9	*Micro Influencer*	*72.200*	*10*
Total Direct Messages Acquisition			**122**

The table above shows that the total direct messages obtained a significant figure, reaching 122 accounts. Data was taken from a total of 9 KOLs combined with micro and macro influencers. This gain was recorded after each KOL posted content and collaborated on posts with the Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta Instagram account. Please also note that the data collected above is a comprehensive collection of direct messages, and has not been focused on specific inquiries or questions. Detailed data collection regarding types of inquiries will be discussed in the next category related to brand awareness.

3) Brand Awareness

Table 3. Number of inquiries obtained from treatment catalogs and price lists

KOL	Total Questions ***"Treatment catalogue"***	Total Questions ***"Pricelist"***	Total earnings ***Inquiries***
Influencer 1	6	2	8
Influencer 2	5	8	13
Influencer 3	5	5	10
Influencer 4	3	1	4
Influencer 5	2	7	9
Influencer 6	2	3	5
Influencer 7	1	1	2
Influencer 8	-	2	2
Influencer 9	2	2	4
Total	**26**	**31**	**57**

Based on the results of the data obtained above, it can be concluded that Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta's brand awareness has increased. This analysis was carried out by observing the contribution of the KOL role through obtaining

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customer engagement on the Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta Instagram account. Each participating KOL demonstrated increased interactions with customers, which is an indication that more people are aware of and interested in the clinic's services. However, these results are still temporary and cannot be considered definitive, because there are no clear and standardized measurements to quantitatively assess the increase in brand awareness. Therefore, although initial data shows a positive trend, more rigorous and structured evaluation methods are needed to ensure the validity and reliability of these findings.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research during the internship process at Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta, it can be concluded that the role of Key Opinion Leaders (KOL) is significant in increasing brand awareness. KOLs who have more than 100,000 followers, or macro influencers, have proven to be effective in spreading information through persuasive content that attracts potential consumers. Selecting the right influencer, according to their delivery style and audience, generates organic engagement and builds a positive perception of the brand. Instagram account visitor data shows that it is in line with the initial segmentation target, namely consumers over 25 years old who are dominated by Indonesian citizens from Bali and overseas visitors, especially from Australia.

Analysis of customer engagement from the KOL campaign shows positive results, with an increase in followers during the campaign. Questions on Instagram accounts regarding price lists are more dominant than treatment catalogues, indicating that price is the main determining factor for consumers. Overall, the role of KOLs in increasing brand awareness through customer engagement on Instagram appears to be increasing. Each KOL involved demonstrated increased customer engagement, indicating increased knowledge and interest in the clinic's services. However, these results are still preliminary and there are no standardized quantitative measurements to definitively assess the increase in brand awareness.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results of research during an internship at Miracle Aesthetic Clinic Kuta, several recommendations were given to the company. First, inquiries data on Instagram accounts shows the dominance of questions related to price lists, so it is recommended to increase price transparency by publishing complete price lists on social

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media. Apart from that, creating educational content regarding choosing treatments that suit consumers' needs and budget can help them make better decisions. High interest in price information indicates that potential customers are comparing prices with similar services elsewhere, so highlighting the price aspect in marketing communications needs to be considered.

Second, to increase brand awareness, companies should continue and strengthen collaboration with KOLs who are influential and relevant to the target market. Management needs to develop standardized measurement methods such as engagement rate, reach and conversion rate metrics from KOL campaigns. Sentiment analysis and customer surveys can also be used to quantitatively measure brand perception and awareness. This approach allows management to accurately assess KOL's contribution to increasing brand awareness and make data-based strategic decisions.

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