

The Strategy of Saling Silang Communities on Instagram Platform in Promotion of Minimizing Consumerism to Create Ecological Citizenship

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Abstract

In the modern era, many humans have become culturally consumptive. One of the countries with high consumerism is Indonesia. This research aims to analyse the role of Saling Silang Community @lyfewithless, which has more than seventy thousand members, in improving ecological citizenship and minimising consumptive culture in Indonesia in the context of sustainable urban development. A qualitative approach was used to gain in-depth insights into the experiences, perceptions, and practices of the community. This study takes Saling Silang Community as a case study, which is active in promoting sustainable lifestyles and reducing consumption. Through a digital netnography approach, data was collected by means of documentation and observation, we identified the strategies, activities, and interactions undertaken by the community in building awareness and encouraging sustainable actions. The results show that this community plays an important role in improving ecological citizenship in Indonesia. They mobilise active participation such as cross-exchange of goods and reduction of consumption as a tangible expression of commitment to forming ecological citizenship. This community is also a forum for sharing knowledge, experiences and resources that support efforts to minimise consumptive culture in society. The government needs to support and strengthen the role of communities in sustainable urban development policies, and provide a platform that facilitates collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Keywords: lyfewithless communities, consumerist culture, digital, ecological citizenship.

Introduction

Ecological citizenship is a concept that involves citizens' responsibility towards the environment. It emphasises the importance of individuals' participation in environmentally friendly practices as part of their social responsibility. In the age of social media, ecological citizenship is becoming increasingly relevant, as such platforms allow for rapid information dissemination and mass mobilisation. While various scholars' theories of citizenship, such as Marshall (1964) and Turner (1993), emphasise the rights and duties of citizens, Dobson's (2003) and MacGregor's (2008) ecological citizenship theories add the dimension of ecosystem dependency.

The @lyfewithless community was formed by the need to exchange information

and support in living an environmentally conscious lifestyle. Naturally, the formation of this community was initiated by pressing global environmental issues, such as pollution and climate change.

The main objective of @lyfewithless with the Saling Silang programme is to promote a minimalist lifestyle, reduce over-consumption and extend the useful life of items. The community seeks to create awareness of the importance of reducing attachment to material objects for the well-being of individuals and the environment.

The Saling Silang community has made a significant impact on environmental awareness through educational and informative campaigns that utilise the power of social media. Platforms such as Instagram allow for the wide and effective dissemination

of messages, a role recognised by scholars such as Boyd and Ellison (2007). This success is supported by Putnam's (2000) community theory, which describes the importance of social capital, as well as Kaplan and Haenlein's (2010) digital platform theory.

The Saling Silang programme is part of the lyfewithless initiative that was formed in response to the increase in unsustainable consumption. The community was originally founded by a group of environmental activists who were concerned about the negative impact of consumptive lifestyles on the earth.

The community not only focuses on environmental education but also involves collaborative activities among its members. Some of the educational programmes include workshops on household waste utilisation and the use of eco-friendly products. Collaborative projects such as the joint decluttering movement resulted in a significant impact on the wider community. The decluttering results programme, for example, teaches the importance of reducing excess consumption and waste management.

Literature Review

Lyfewithless is an "Indonesian minimalist community" that aims to be 'the most influential platform for minimalist living in Indonesia' (About Lyfe with Less, nd). Founded in 2018 by lyfewithless founder Cynthia Lestari, it started as a self-healing journey for Cynthia herself in facing her quarter-life crisis.

As it turned out, this platform received a positive response from others, resulting in the formation of a community over time. Through its programme, Saling Silang cross provides education to the public online to create ecological citizenship in wise consumption. When they decide to buy new goods they are ready with various responsibilities for use and maintenance and when the goods are no longer used, decluttering is done by selling or crossing with fellow members of this community.

Some examples of successful campaigns from this community include the #SalingSilang, #zero-waste and #plasticfree movements that changed the behaviour of many of its members in the long run.

Evaluations of the success of these campaigns show increased awareness and sustained behaviour change among community members. In addition, reports and case studies also show positive long-term social and environmental impacts.

However, the role of the government in promoting and educating citizens is very important because the government has the tools to force, bind and sanction its citizens in protecting the environment. This is also reinforced by Barry's (2006) view that state-based campaigns are very effective in promoting environmental citizenship without ignoring the socio-economic and political dimensions of sustainability.

In essence, ecological citizenship is a new idea as an effort to form citizen awareness in forming a whole human being in involvement in preserving the environment. So, the government and institutions should be able to encourage the formation of citizens who care about the environment. Because of the importance of forming ecological citizenship through personal commitment to learn more about the environment and then take action by committing to protect it, manage it properly and preserve the environment responsibly (Szerszynski, 2006).

To achieve such a goal, the concept of civic education is clear that a good state must be able to develop three domains of civic competence, namely *civic knowledge*, *civic skills*, and *civic disposition*. In line with this, it is reinforced by the opinion Cogan & Derricot (1998) that citizens today must have multidimensional characteristics that have the characteristics of identity; freedom to obtain certain rights; fulfilment of related obligations; interest and involvement in public affairs; and ownership of basic societal values. This is one concept to create ecological citizenship with the role of government, schools, communities and society.

This lack of understanding has led to the overlap of ecological literacy citizenship and literate citizenship, which results in citizens on the one hand understanding the concept of ecological literacy but on the other hand not being able to act towards the environment. Berkowitz, et. al's (2005) environmental citizenship framework includes

five components that must be developed to avoid overlap as follows:

- 1) Civic literacy encompasses key social, economic, cultural and political systems of understanding using necessary critical thinking skills;
- 2) Ecological literacy includes understanding ecological systems and using ecological thinking but must also be able to understand the relationship between ecology and society;
- 3) Value consciousness which means an awareness of personal values in relation to the environment and the ability to connect these values with knowledge and practical wisdom to make decisions and act;
- 4) Self-efficacy which means having the capacity to learn and act in relation to personal values and interests in the environment and
- 5) Practical wisdom which means having the wisdom and practical skills for decision-making and acting in relation to the environment.

Ecological citizenship aims to promote globally so that citizens are aware of protecting their environment, consume more wisely, are able to behave responsibly and are aware of attitudes that are able to show positive and supportive responses in daily interactions to the creation of a good environment.

This research focuses on several studies such as: 1) the concept of *ecological citizenship*; 2) creating community-based ecological citizenship through an environmental online community, online workshops with live instagram, feeds, stories and reels about the importance of environmental conservation and promotion of a cross-border programme of reused goods.

Method

In qualitative research, the researcher becomes the key instrument, this research examines natural objects (Sugiyono, 2019). Therefore, research in understanding the success of this community uses qualitative research with a digital netnography approach.

Netnography is defined as an online

research method that is an adaptation of ethnography applied in the context of digital communication (Nasrullah, 2018). The definition of netnography as a research methodology from experts with the understanding and terms used, are:

- (a) According to Kozinets, netnography can be defined as a qualitative research methodology that adapts ethnographic research techniques to study cultures and communities that occur in *computer-mediated communications* (Kozinets, 2002) and is developing into a research technique for the field of social media (Kozinets, 2015);
- (b) *Online ethnographical* according to Jørgen Skågeby in (Daniel, 2011) is a method used qualitatively to understand what happens in virtual communities. Using *online* observations or interviews, this technique exposes more specific community habits and the use of technology in communication;

Data collection was carried out by direct observation on the @lyfewithless Instagram account, and documentation, it was found that there was support from various circles of society for this initiative. Especially the community on the @lyfewithless account with its flagship programme Saling Silang is active in promoting sustainable lifestyles and seeks to reduce overconsumption by increasing the useful life of an item. Understanding the idea of the importance of ecological awareness in order to create a balance between the needs of citizens and the ability of the earth to sustain them. This is also known as *ecoliteracy*. *Ecoliteracy* is defined as the ability to use ecological understanding, thinking and habits of mind to learn to care for the environment (Berkowitz, 2005).

Data processing was done by categorising the information according to relevant themes and compiling a pie chart of the observations. The analysis showed that success lies in the combination of educational content and active engagement with the audience online.

Saling Silang Community utilises Instagram as the main platform to promote ecological messages. Some of the strategies used include:

1. Create engaging and easy-to-understand visual content and information to get the

audience interested and motivated to follow the sustainable lifestyle trail.

2. Collaboration with influencers who have similar vision and mission in spreading ecological messages can reach a wider audience.
3. The use of hashtags such as #sustainable living, #crosslinking, #lesswaste, or #ecological can help audiences find content more easily and increase message visibility.
4. Exchanging goods between members encourages community members to exchange goods that are no longer in use, with the aim of reducing the purchase of new goods and reducing waste.

Thematic analysis to identify key themes related to the strategies used, member interactions, and impact on behaviour change.

Analisis Tematik Komunitas Instagram @lyfewithless
Dampak pada perubahan perilaku

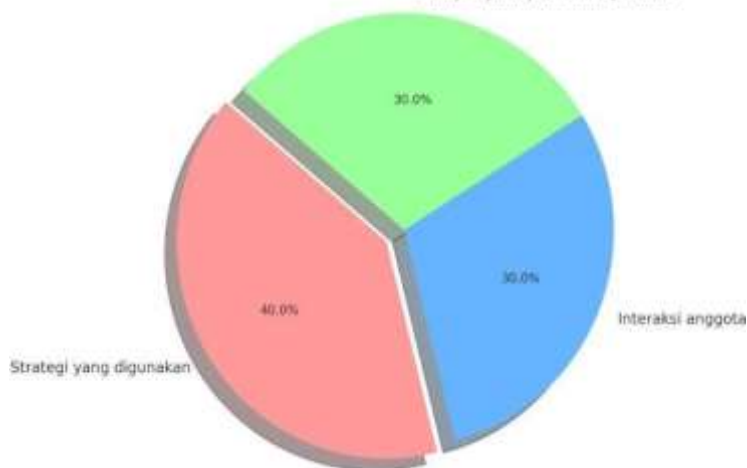


Figure 1. Thematic analysis

Result and Discussion

The research shows that Saling Silang Community plays a major role in improving ecological citizenship among its members. From observing the campaign content on Instagram @lyfewithless, the content posted on the Instagram account is in the form of images and videos that are packaged in such a way in stories, feeds and even Instagram reels. Image posts are supported by illustrations and photos that support message visualisation. While video posts are packed with informative

video concepts that lead to an invitation to live minimalist or certain messages that intersect with a minimalist lifestyle, are sustainable and extend the value period of an item by crossing each other between community members.

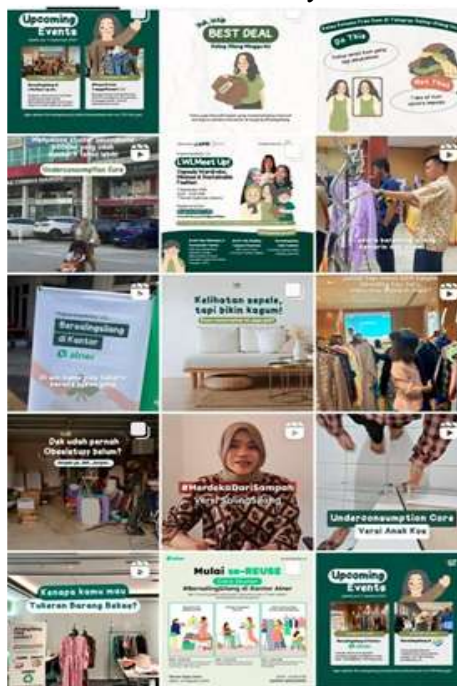


Figure 2: Examples of @lyfewithless' Instagram feed and reel posts

The community provides a platform for members to share knowledge, experience and resources in living a sustainable lifestyle. Observational data showed an increase in awareness and active participation in environmental activities among members. It has proven to be effective in reducing excessive consumption and increasing environmental awareness. However, there are some areas that can still be improved.



Figure 3: Example of @lyfewithless Instagram story post



Figure 4: Sample comment on @lyfewithless' Instagram feed



Figure 5: Use of @lyfewithless Instagram Highlight Feature

One of the biggest challenges is capturing the audience's attention amidst the competitive flow of information. In addition, consistency in message dissemination is important to ensure that ecological messages are not just momentary but sustainable in the long run.

Meanwhile, changes in people's behaviour are strongly influenced by the fast and wide flow of information through social media in the midst of the current era of globalisation. Of course, this is also irrelevant in the values of Pancasila, namely the 5th principle.

In the environmental context, the promotion of ecological citizenship on social media plays an important role in raising environmental awareness and responsibility. With the widespread use of platforms such as Instagram, ecological messages can be spread more effectively and reach a wide range of people. The importance of environmental responsibility does not only lie with government policies or large corporations, but should also be a part of people's daily lives. Effective dissemination of information on environmentally friendly practices can inspire individual behavioural change towards a more sustainable direction.

Conclusion

The *Saling Silang* community on Instagram has successfully leveraged social media to promote a more sustainable lifestyle by minimizing consumerism. The key strategy employed involves educational content through Instagram live sessions, stories, reels, and feed posts, as well as interactive features that encourage active audience participation. By emphasizing ecological values, this community has managed to raise awareness about the importance of being an ecological citizen—individuals who are environmentally responsible in their daily lives.

Through collaboration and the participation of its followers, the community also encourages a shift away from environmentally harmful consumer behaviors toward more sustainable practices. Instagram, as the primary platform, allows for broader reach and facilitates interaction, inspiring more people to take concrete steps in protecting the environment.

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